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Gray was near akin to Rob Hartop; and I'm afraid he takes after him."

This was startling. I pressed for an explanation, and it seemed that Rob was supposed to be rather given to betting.

We had a long consultation, and I agreed to speak to Rob. He and Eunice, like every one else, had no notion of their kinship. Gray had clean disappeared from our little world, even before his cousin Mrs. Hartop's death, and he was long since forgotten. We were bound to tell him about this, I thought, and I would tackle him on the betting question.

His evil-doing did not amount to much. He took a Yorkshireman's interest in all sports; that was about all, and he was rather fond of talking about it. The sad story of his sweetheart's mother made him very grave, and drew from him a promise which—for he was a young fellow whose word was his bond—set Richard Simperson's mind at rest on one score at least. For the rest he faced the suffering like a man.

"Mout a' been gentlefolks," grumbled Betty Sheard,

not in the least mollified by the half-crown which she, in common with other old bodies, had received. "Been to Filey for t' honeymoon? shoo'd a' better a' gone down to t' shippen to luik after t' coos."

The honeymoon which gave such dire offence was a very modest affair. Rob and Eunice went away for a bare fortnight, and were coming home to-day. The knowing-looking dog-cart was at the station. Did they look for a face to greet them—stern but loving, squarely set in its white frame of hair? They drove up the village, by the brook and past the many bridges, radiant with life and love. They leaped down by the little shop, and entered. The lad who helped was there, white-aproned. Mr. Simperson, he said, was in the parlour—asleep, he fancied. Yes; he sat there, in his leathern chair, his head so drooping that they could not see his face. He must be slumbering very heavily; their entrance did not rouse him. Eunice, with a loud cry, flung herself at his knee. His cold hand held her letter, warning him of their return.

He was not to live alone.

HENRY MALPAS.





