

appointment that the glorious transformation of the freehold on the lines he had briefly sketched in a moment of indiscretion did not seem likely to come off, but the professional satisfaction of having Whitelands pass through his hands at all was thoroughly agreeable to him. Mr. Longcroft took the thought of parting with it uncommon well, he thought, on the whole. But there, 'twere only for his own good to sell it for as much as he could and be done with it, as he might have owned to a twelvemonth ago.

But to John Longcroft, the succeeding days—days of mellow September sunshine and gossamer haunted stillness—were the bitterest of his life. Weak as he was already, he was visibly wasting away, and when Mary heard from Barndon that the prospective purchaser was still anxious to buy if the place proved suitable, she wrote to Daniel Pigg to urge him to hurry things on to the climax as soon as possible. Daniel sent word in due course that his client was now in Barndon, and would come to inspect the property himself within the next few days, and then the time of waiting dragged on once more. Every day Tom Haygarth came to meet her at the farm or in the fringes of the woodland, and it was his presence and encouragement that seemed to give her strength to go on. Every day the old man wandered by himself over every nook and corner of the farm on which his days and the days of his race were numbered, or sat on some knoll of the down gazing vacantly before him into the far off scenes of the past. One golden windless afternoon he was sitting by the side of a hollow cart track that came over the down a little way below the farm, and caught the full view of the black barns with their yellow lichen roofs, the farmhouse with the row of great elms beside it, and the sweep of the hill above rested against the sky line with the graves of the men of old. Mary and Tom were talking together not far off, for one of Mary's self-imposed duties in these days was to shadow her father unseen wherever he went, for fear his feebleness should bring him into harm or difficulty; but seeing him safely settled there in the sunshine, they had wandered a little on. Then, as the old farmer sat there, a middle-aged man with a little boy topped the crest of the down and came slowly down the cart track toward him, stopping at last by his side. The old man turned his gaze and looked at them.

'Be you goin' to Whitelands, sir?' he said, while the little boy stared at him curiously.

The other looked him steadily in the face. 'Aye, I've come up to speak with Mr. Longcroft,' he said. 'Come up from Barndon—from Mr. Pigg,' he went on, and looked at him again. 'Father, do you know me?'

The old man fell to trembling as he sat and looked confusedly from one of the pair before him to the other.

'I—I knew the little 'un,' he faltered, holding out his arms to the child with the yellow hair. 'Thirty years ago, thirty years ago and more. Oh, Phil, Phil, is it thou at last, my son?'

But it was the grown man who caught his outstretched hand and answered him.

So that night there slept in Whitelands a Longcroft to the second and third generation, and, somewhat to the natural annoyance of Mr. Daniel Pigg, his client was able to dispense with all ordinary forms of purchase on entering into permanent residence upon the farm beneath the barrows.—*Ladies' Field.*

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