



WIREPROOF.

SIR HARRY HARDMAN, MOUNTED ON "BEHEMOTH," GREATED RATHER A STIR AT THE MEET. HE SAID HE DIDN'T CARE A HANG FOR THE BARBED OR ANY OTHER KIND OF WIRE.

Trapper instinct, before alluded to, made me note heap of broken stones at this particular bifurcation. Here it is; no mistake about that; take other turning, and press on full speed; can't be more than two miles now; straight road, and there you are. Can do it under half-an-hour. Nothing so delightful as walk in country lane in cool of evening. This particular lane rather long; roads and lanes cutting off to right and left; at least no bifurcation. Not a house in sight; every soul in the country apparently turned in. Cottar's Saturday night, of course; should have thought of that before; explains everything.

Apparently no end to this road; suddenly seems to disappear: only a dip down a hill; think at first, from steepness, it must be road into Tipperton; but Tipperton is miles away. Getting on for dinner-time; better run down hill; do so; see light flickering at end; probably The Cottage windows; hum "A light in the window for me"; find I've no breath to spare for musical entertainments; shut up, and run. Light comes from farm-house; enter yard cautiously in case of another dog being there. In the twilight see second Old Gentleman; this time in his shirt-sleeves, sitting meditatively on an upturned bucket set on a barn floor. "Is this the way to Burrow-in-the-Corner?" I ask, a little out of breath. Old Gentleman stares; perhaps he is deaf; looks deaf, but find he is only chuckling; repeat question louder. "No," says he, "but that be;" and he waves a horny hand up the wall of a hill down which I had scrambled.

For the last twenty minutes I'd been running away from Burrow-in-the-Corner as if we didn't dine at 7.30.

Old Gentleman not accustomed to seeing joke; made most of this; when he recovered I learned that if I walked back up hill a mile, and took first turning to right, I should be on the road to Burrow-in-the-Corner. Nice pull up hill; kept keen look out for turn to right; after quarter of hour's rapid walking passed on left openings of two lanes in close contiguity. Through one I had forty minutes earlier walked on to this very road. If I had then turned

to left instead of going back I should have been at The Cottage by this time—supposing, of course, the road leads thither.

No use repining; must get on; feeling peckish; walk in middle of road to make most of twilight shut out by hedges; can't see time by watch; doing something more than four miles an hour. At end of what seems half-hour am apparently no forrader; no house; no passer-by; no friendly light over ghostly expanse peeped at through occasional gates.

Begin to think of story heard the other day. Belated parson went to take evening service for friend at church close by post-office where I made acquaintance of first Old Gentleman. Only three miles from his own house; after sermon set off to walk home; thinking of many things, turned off at wrong point; knew country pretty well, but darkness came on; hopelessly lost; found forlornly sitting on a gate at eleven o'clock by farmer's son fortuitously delayed on his return home; took stranger home with him; woke up family, and gave him shakedown for night.

"It was bad enough, Tony," rev. gentleman said, "and might have been worse. But what rankles most bitterly in my breast at present day is remark of farmer's wife when her son shouted up at open window that he had brought home a clergyman who had lost his way and wanted a bed. 'Clergyman!' she cried, with cruel scorn. 'Get away with you. No clergyman would be out at this time of night.'"

One comfort it's not raining; rained in torrents when my friend the parson had his Sunday night out. Road evidently not leading towards The Cottage; suppose that once more I am walking away from it! Trapper instincts already alluded to have evolved a plan which I hold in reserve. Remember (or think I remember) the turns on the way back to post-office where I made acquaintance of first Old Gentleman; terrible trudge, but better than sleeping in ditch or shed; shall turn back and face it. Halt and hesitate; no sign of Cottage or other light; hedges are black shadows; a few feet in front and an equal distance behind is wall of darkness; decide to take a hundred paces forward. If then no sign of habitation shall turn back and grope way by post-office.

At eightieth pace a turn in the road; a light across the roadway; then The Cottage, and through the open window, into the dark still night, floats the music of SCHUMANN'S "Frühlingsnacht." It is the Cook singing, while the Housemaid spreads the cloth for dinner.

NO RAISON D'ÊTRE!

["The custom of dancing, I am informed on good authority, has of late years lost its popularity with our gilded youth!"—*Mr. James Payn.*]

A SINGING-BIRD which will not sing, a watch that will not go,
A working-man who seems to work, a needle that won't sew,
Are things whose inutility are obvious at a glance,
But what are they compared with "gilded youth" who do not dance?

MYSTIFIED.—Somebody at Mrs. R.'s was saying that a certain friend of theirs, a well-known Queen's Counsel, was a first-rate pianist. "By the way," inquired a young barrister, "doesn't he usually practice in Mr. Justice ROMER's court?" Mrs. R. held up her hands in amazement. "Well," she exclaimed; "I had no idea that music was allowed in a law court. But I suppose it's in the interval, while the Judge is at luncheon."

An Expostulation.

(On the recent revision of "The Tempter.")

MR. TREE, what have you done?
Hang it all! there's no exempting
You from blame for risks we run
With *The Tempter* yet more tempting.

QUERY.—Has the want of rain this summer, and consequent failure of the hay crops, affected the market for Grass Widows?