

"The Quiet Life" *

IT WAS a happy thought—whether due to Mr. Dobson, Mr. Parsons or Mr. Abbey—for the three to unite their forces with those, still active, of dead and buried Andrew Marvel, Alexander Pope, Abe Cowley and Winthrop Mackworth Praed, in praise of Peace—which let us religiously hope that all, both living and dead, are now in full enjoyment of. The peace which they celebrate is not always that which passeth understanding; it is more often that which may both be understood and experienced in walled gardens, deep English meadows, and old low-ceiled rooms the leading of whose windows makes a trap to catch the sun, in company with Mrs. Praed's Vicar, listening to his

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stories 'of Julius Cæsar and of Venus,' or with 'Quince,' or with Marvel among the pumpkins, 'Casting the body's vest aside,' or with Pope's Solitary over his midnight toddy, preparatory to doing off said vest once more between a laven-dered pair of sheets. Such is 'The Quiet Life' to which Mr. Dobson's Prologue invites us, whose adepts Mr. Abbey pictures, and whose scenes, green caverns fretted with fruit and leaf, deer forests and lowland farms, Mr. Parsons. Many a sprig of flowers, Narcissus, broom and rose, are also offered by this last-named gentleman, that no page may be without its tribute to the quiet life.

It may seem hard, in such a case, to particularize, yet who ever forbore to pick and choose among the flowers in a garden? So we will say that our choice of those in this book would include Mr. Parsons's drawings to Marvel and Mr. Abbey's to Praed. Not that we think less of those which we leave for others to choose among. But what a cozy corner that is in which Mr. Abbey has 'planked' the Vicar, between the sideboard and the hearth, the kettle humming, the cat purring at his feet, while his talk runs on from politics to puns, from Mohammed to Moses; and what a pleasant nook it is that Mr. Parsons has drawn, tenanted only by books and ready for immediate occupation by ourselves! Nevertheless, Pope's studious fisherman may be said to show a way that has its advantages, and there will, doubtless, be some who will think that 'The Married Man' has the best of all; but let them read Mr. Dobson's Epilogue, and think well of the last line thereof:

There are volcanoes under snows.