



## CHAPTER III.

### PREPARATIONS.

SHARPLY at four, Mabel appeared at the door of Minnie's home, and she, being quite ready, they proceeded without delay to carry out their purpose of "viewing the battle-field" as Mabel remarked.

Hollowmell was a lovely glade which lay at the foot of a gentle eminence, immediately behind which lay the pit whose ugly shaft was almost hid by it. No one would have imagined that such a thing lay in the immediate neighbourhood who saw the glade before the row of miner's cottages had been erected on one side of it by Mr. Kimberley for the convenience of his work-people, and even yet the beauty of the scene would not have been marred by the pretty picturesque-looking little red brick houses with their white-coppiced windows and green-painted sashes, if the carelessness and disorder which reigned within had not been reflected without in the neglected plots of ground attached to each cottage, in the dirty window-panes, and in the untidy women and children, and occasionally begrimed men who seemed to have no other object in life than to hang about