

So Arthur did go, and found himself on the steps of the rectory just as the church clock was chiming the hour of three. He was shown up into Reginald's room directly, and he certainly had not expected the kind reception which awaited him.

Reginald was lying on the sofa, but he held out his hand very kindly to welcome Arthur, and asked him to take a chair near him, adding—

“As I am the clergyman's son and Ernest's brother, I thought you would not mind my asking you to come and see me. I have so few visitors, and the sight of a new face is such a pleasure to me, in my unbroken confinement up here.”

Arthur coloured and stammered out something, he knew not what.

“You are living with the Dixons, are you not?” said Reginald.

“Yes.”

“Are they any relations to you?”