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THE HISTORY  
OF  
DAVID GRIEVE

BY  
MRS. HUMPHRY WARD  
AUTHOR OF 'ROBERT ELSMERE'

*IN TWO VOLUMES*

VOL. I

New York  
MACMILLAN AND CO.  
AND LONDON

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TO  
THE DEAR MEMORY  
OF  
MY MOTHER





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BOOK I  
CHILDHOOD



## CHAPTER I

‘TAK your hat, Louie! Yo’re allus leavin summat behind yer.’

‘David, yo go for ‘t,’ said the child addressed to a boy by her side, nodding her head insolently towards the speaker, a tall and bony woman, who stood on the steps the children had just descended, holding out a battered hat.

‘Yo’re a careless thing, Louie,’ said the boy, but he went back and took the hat.

‘Mak her tie it,’ said the woman, showing an antiquated pair of strings. ‘If she loses it she needna coom cryin for anudder. She’d lose her yead if it wor loose.’

Then she turned and went back into the house. It was a smallish house of grey stone, three windows above, two and a door below. Dashes of white on the stone gave, as it were, eyebrows to the windows, and over the door there was a meagre trellised porch, up which grew some now leafless roses and honeysuckles. To the left of the door a scanty bit of garden was squeezed in between the hill, against which the house was set edgeways, and the rest of the flat space, occupied by the uneven farmyard, the cart-shed and stable, the cow-houses and duck-pond. This garden contained two shabby apple trees, as yet hardly touched by the spring; some currant and gooseberry bushes, already fairly green; and a clump or two of scattered daffodils

and wallflowers. The hedge round it was broken through in various places, and it had a casual neglected air.

The children went their way through the yard. In front of them a flock of some forty sheep and lambs pushed along, guarded by two black short-haired colliers. The boy, brandishing a long stick, opened a gate deplorably in want of mending, and the sheep crowded through, keenly looked after by the dogs, who waited meanwhile on their flanks with heads up, ears cocked, and that air of self-restrained energy which often makes a sheep-dog more human than his master. The field beyond led to a little larch plantation, where a few primroses showed among the tufts of long, rich grass, and the drifts of last year's leaves. Here the flock scattered a little, but David and the dogs were after them in a twinkling, and the plantation gate was soon closed on the last bleating mother. Then there was nothing more for the boy to do than to go up to the top of the green rising ground on which the farm stood and see if the gate leading to the moor was safely shut. For the sheep he had been driving were not meant for the open moorland. Their feeding grounds lay in the stone-walled fields round the homestead, and had they strayed on to the mountain beyond, which was reserved for a hardier Scotch breed, David would have been answerable. So he strode, whistling, up the hill to have a look at that top gate, while Louie sauntered down to the stream which ran round the lower pastures to wait for him.

The top gate was fast, but David climbed the wall and stood there a while, hands in his pockets, legs apart, whistling and looking.

'They can see t' Downfall from Stockport to-day,' he was saying to himself; 'it's coomin ower like mad.'

Some distance away in front of him, beyond the

undulating heather ground at his feet, rose a magnificent curving front of moor, the steep sides of it crowned with black edges and cliffs of grit, the outline of the south-western end sweeping finely up on the right to a purple peak, the king of all the moorland round. No such colour as clothed that bronzed and reddish wall of rock, heather, and bilberry is known to Westmoreland, hardly to Scotland; it seems to be the peculiar property of that lonely and inaccessible district which marks the mountainous centre of mid-England—the district of Kinder Scout and the High Peak. Before the boy's ranging eye spread the whole western rampart of the Peak—to the right, the highest point, of Kinder Low, to the left, 'edge' behind 'edge,' till the central rocky mass sank and faded towards the north into milder forms of green and undulating hills. In the very centre of the great curve a white and surging mass of water cleft the mountain from top to bottom, falling straight over the edge, here some two thousand feet above the sea, and roaring downward along an almost precipitous bed into the stream—the Kinder—which swept round the hill on which the boy was standing, and through the valley behind him. In ordinary times the 'Downfall,' as the natives call it, only makes itself visible on the mountain-side as a black ravine of tossed and tumbled rocks. But there had been a late snowfall on the high plateau beyond, followed by heavy rain, and the swollen stream was to-day worthy of its grand setting of cliff and moor. On such occasions it becomes a landmark for all the country round, for the cotton-spinning centres of New Mills and Stockport, as well as for the grey and scattered farms which climb the long backs of moorland lying between the Peak and the Cheshire border.

To-day, also, after the snow and rains of early April, the air was clear again. The sun was shining;

a cold, dry wind was blowing; there were sounds of spring in the air, and signs of it on the thorns and larches. Far away on the boundary wall of the farmland a cuckoo was sitting, his long tail swinging behind him, his monotonous note filling the valley; and overhead a couple of peewits chased each other in the pale, windy blue.

The keen air, the sun after the rain, sent life and exhilaration through the boy's young limbs. He leapt from the wall, and raced back down the field, his dogs streaming behind him, the sheep, with their newly dropped lambs, shrinking timidly to either side as he passed. He made for a corner in the wall, vaulted it on to the moor, crossed a rough dam built in the stream for sheep-washing purposes, jumped in and out of the two grey-walled sheep-pens beyond, and then made leisurely for a spot in the brook—not the Downfall stream, but the Red Brook, one of its westerly affluents—where he had left a miniature water-wheel at work the day before. Before him and around him spread the brown bosom of Kinder Scout; the cultivated land was left behind; here on all sides, as far as the eye could see, was the wild home of heather and plashing water, of grouse and peewit, of cloud and breeze.

The little wheel, shaped from a block of firwood, was turning merrily under a jet of water carefully conducted to it from a neighbouring fall. David went down on hands and knees to examine it. He made some little alteration in the primitive machinery of it, his fingers touching it lightly and neatly, and then, delighted with the success of it, he called Louie to come and look.

Louie was sitting a few yards further up the stream, crooning to herself as she swung to and fro, and snatching every now and then at some tufts of



primroses growing near her, which she wrenched away with a hasty, wasteful hand, careless, apparently, whether they reached her lap or merely strewed the turf about her with their torn blossoms. When David called her she gathered up the flowers anyhow in her apron, and dawdled towards him, leaving a trail of them behind her. As she reached him, however, she was struck by a book sticking out of his pocket, and, stooping over him, with a sudden hawk-like gesture, as he sprawled head downwards, she tried to get hold of it.

But he felt her movement. 'Let goo!' he said imperiously, and, throwing himself round, while one foot slipped into the water, he caught her hand, with its thin predatory fingers, and pulled the book away.

'Yo just leave my books alone, Louie. Yo do 'em a mischeef whaniver yo can—an I'll not have it.'

He turned his handsome, regular face, crimsoned by his position and splashed by the water, towards her with an indignant air. She laughed, and sat herself down again on the grass, looking a very imp of provocation.

'They're stupid,' she said, shortly. 'They mak yo a stupid gonner ony ways.'

'Oh! do they?' he retorted, angrily. 'Bit I'll be even wi yo. I'll tell yo noa moor stories out of 'em, not if yo ast iver so.'

The girl's mouth curled contemptuously, and she began to gather her primroses into a bunch with an air of the utmost serenity. She was a thin, agile, lightly made creature, apparently about eleven. Her piercing black eyes, when they lifted, seemed to overweight the face, whereof the other features were at present small and pinched. The mouth had a trick of remaining slightly open, showing a line of small pearly

teeth; the chin was a little sharp and shrewish. As for the hair, it promised to be splendid; at present it was an unkempt, tangled mass, which Hannah Grieve, the children's aunt, for her own credit's sake at chapel, or in the public street, made occasional violent attempts to reduce to order—to very little purpose, so strong and stubborn was the curl of it. The whole figure was out of keeping with the English moorside, with the sheep, and the primroses.

But so indeed was that of the boy, whose dark colouring was more vivacious and pronounced than his sister's, because the red of his cheek and lip was deeper, while his features, though larger than hers, were more finely regular, and his eyes had the same piercing blackness, the same all-examining keenness, as hers. The yellowish tones of his worn fustian suit and a red Tam-o'-Shanter cap completed the general effect of brilliancy and, as it were, *foreignness*.

Having finished his inspection of his water-mill, he scrambled across to the other side of the stream so as to be well out of his sister's way, and, taking out the volume which was stretching his pocket, he began to read it. It was a brown calf-bound book, much worn, and on its title-page it bore the title of 'The Wars of Jerusalem,' of Flavius Josephus, translated by S. Calmet, and a date somewhere in the middle of the eighteenth century. To this antique fare the boy settled himself down. The two collics lay couched beside him; a stone-chat perched on one or other of the great blocks which lay scattered over the heath gave out his clinking note; while every now and then the loud peevish cluck of the grouse came from the distant sides of the Scout.

Titus was now making his final assault on the Temple. The Zealots were gathered in the innermost court, frantically beseeching Heaven for a sign; the

walls, the outer approaches of the Sanctuary were choked with the dying and the dead. David sat absorbed, elbows on knees, his face framed in his hands. Suddenly the descent of something cold and clammy on his bent neck roused him with a most unpleasant shock.

Quick as lightning he faced round, snatching at his assailant; but Louie was off, scudding among the bilberry hillocks with peals of laughter, while the slimy moss she had just gathered from the edges of the brook sent cold creeping streams into the recesses of David's neck and shoulders. He shook himself free of the mess as best he could, and rushed after her. For a long time he chased her in vain, then her foot tripped, and he came up with her just as she rolled into the heather, gathered up like a hedgehog against attack, her old hat held down over her ears and face. David fell upon her and chastised her; but his fisticuffs probably looked more formidable than they felt, for Louie laughed provokingly all the time, and when he stopped out of breath she said exultantly, as she sprang up, holding her skirts round her ready for another flight, 'It's greened aw yur neck and yur collar—lively! Doan't yo be nasty for nothink next time!'

And off she ran.

'If yo meddle wi me ony moor,' he shouted after her fiercely. 'yo see what I'll do!'

But in reality the male was helpless, as usual. He went ruefully down to the brook, and loosening his shirt and coat tried to clean his neck and hair. Then, extremely stieky and uncomfortable, he went back to his seat and his book, his wrathful eyes taking careful note meanwhile of Louie's whereabouts. And thenceforward he read, as it were, on guard, looking up every other minute.

Louie established herself some way up the further slope, in a steep stony nook, under two black boulders, which protected her rear in case of reprisals from David. Time passed away. David, on the other side of the brook, revelling in the joys of battle, and all the more alive to them perhaps because of the watch kept on Louie by one section of his brain, was conscious of no length in the minutes. But Louie's mood gradually became one of extreme flatness. All her resources were for the moment at an end. She could think of no fresh torment for David; besides, she knew that she was observed. She had destroyed all the scanty store of primroses along the brook; gathered rushes, begun to plait them, and thrown them away; she had found a grouse's nest among the dead fern, and, contrary to the most solemn injunctions of uncle and keeper, enforced by the direst threats, had purloined and broken an egg; and still dinner-time delayed. Perhaps, too, the cold blighting wind, which soon made her look blue and pinched, tamed her insensibly. At any rate, she got up after about an hour, and coolly walked across to David.

He looked up at her with a quick frown. But she sat down, and, clasping her hands round her knees, while the primroses she had stuck in her hat dangled over her defiant eyes, she looked at him with a grinning composure.

'Yo can read out if yo want to,' she remarked.

'Yo doan't deserve nowt, an I shan't,' said David, shortly.

'Then I'll tell Aunt Hannah about how yo let t' lambs stray lasst evenin, and about yor readin at neet.'

'Yo may tell her aw t' tallydiddles yo can think on,' was the unpromising reply.

Louie threw all the scorn possible into her forced smile, and then, dropping full-length into the heather,

she began to sing at the top of a shrill, unpleasing voice, mainly, of course, for the sake of harrying anyone in her neighbourhood who might wish to read.

‘Stop that squealin!’ David commanded, peremptorily. Whereupon Louie sang louder than before.

David looked round in a fury, but his fury was, apparently, instantly damped by the inward conviction, born of long experience, that he could do nothing to help himself. He sprang up, and thrust his book into his pocket.

‘Nobory ull mak owt o’ yo till yo get a bastin twice a day, wi an odd lick extra for Sundays,’ he remarked to her with grim emphasis when he had reached what seemed to him a safe distance. Then he turned and strode up the face of the hill, the dogs at his heels. Louie turned on her elbow, and threw such small stones as she could discover among the heather after him, but they fell harmlessly about him, and did not answer their purpose of provoking him to turn round again.

She observed that he was going up to the old Smithy on the side of Kinder Low, and in a few minutes she got up and sauntered lazily after him.

‘T’ owd smithy’ had been the enchanted ground of David’s childhood. It was a ruined building standing deep in heather, half-way up the mountain-side, and ringed by scattered blocks and tabular slabs of grit. Here in times far remote—beyond the memory of even the oldest inhabitant—the millstones of the district, which gave their name to the ‘millstone grit’ formation of the Peak, were fashioned. High up on the dark moorside stood what remained of the primitive workshop. The fire-marked stones of the hearth were plainly visible; deep in the heather near lay the broken jambs of the window; a stone doorway with its lintel was still standing; and on the slope beneath

it, hardly to be distinguished now from the great primæval blocks out of which they had sprung and to which they were fast returning, reposed two or three huge millstones. Perhaps they bordered some ancient track, climbed by the millers of the past when they came to this remote spot to give their orders; but, if so, the track had long since sunk out of sight in the heather, and no visible link remained to connect the history of this high and lonely place with that of those teeming valleys hidden to west and north among the moors, the dwellers wherein must once have known it well. From the old threshold the eye commanded a wilderness of moors, rising wave-like one after another, from the green swell just below whereon stood Reuben Grieve's farm, to the far-distant Alderley Edge. In the hollows between, dim tall chimneys veiled in mist and smoke showed the places of the cotton towns—of Hayfield, New Mills, Staleybridge, Stockport; while in the far north-west, any gazer to whom the country-side spoke familiarly, might, in any ordinary clearness of weather, look for and find the eternal smoke-cloud of Manchester.

So the deserted smithy stood as it were spectator for ever of that younger, busier England which wanted it no more. Human life notwithstanding had left on it some very recent traces. On the lintel of the ruined door two names were scratched deep into the whitish under-grain of the black weather-beaten grit. The upper one ran: 'David Suveret Grieve, Sept. 15, 1863;' the lower, 'Louise Stephanie Grieve, Sept. 15, 1863.' They were written in bold round-hand, and could be read at a considerable distance. During the nine months they had been there, many a rustic passer-by had been stopped by them, especially by the oddity of the name *Suveret*, which tormented the Derbyshire mouth.

In a corner of the walls stood something more puzzling still—a large iron pan, filled to the brim with water, and firmly bedded on a foundation of earth and stones. So still in general was the shining sheltered round, that the branches of the mountain ash which leant against the crumbling wall, the tufts of hard fern growing among the stones, the clouds which sailed overhead, were all delicately mirrored in it. That pan was David Grieve's dearest possession, and those reflections, so magical, and so alive, had contrived for him many a half-hour of almost breathless pleasure. He had carried it off from the refuse-yard of a foundry in the valley, where he had a friend in one of the apprentices. The farm donkey and himself had dragged it thither on a certain never-to-be-forgotten day, when Uncle Reuben had been on the other side of the mountain at a shepherds' meeting in the Woodlands, while Aunt Hannah was safely up to her elbows in the washtub. Boy's back and donkey's back had nearly broken under the task, but there the pan stood at last, the delight of David's heart. In a crevice of the wall beside it, hidden jealously from the passer-by, lay the other half of that perpetual entertainment it provided—a store of tiny boats fashioned by David, and another friend, the lame minister of the 'Christian Brethren' congregation at Clough End, the small factory town just below Kinder, who was a sea-captain's son, and with a knife and a bit of deal could fashion you any craft you pleased. These boats David only brought out on rare occasions, very seldom admitting Louie to the show. But when he pleased they became fleets, and sailed for new continents. Here were the ships of Captain Cook, there the ships of Columbus. On one side of the pan lay the Spanish main, on the other the islands of the South Seas. A certain tattered copy of the 'Royal

Magazine,' with pictures, which lay in Uncle Reuben's cupboard at home, provided all that for David was to be known of these names and places. But fancy played pilot and led the way; she conjured up storms and islands and adventures; and as he hung over his pan high on the Derbyshire moor, the boy, like Sidney of old, 'sailed the seas where there was never sand'—the vast and viewless oceans of romance.

## CHAPTER II

ONCE safe in the Smithy, David recovered his temper. If Louie followed him, which was probable, he would know better how to deal with her here, with a wall at his back and a definite area to defend, than he did in the treacherous openness of the heath. However, just as he was settling himself down, with a sigh of relief, between the pan and the wall, he caught sight of something through one of the gaps of the old ruin which made him fling down his book and run to the doorway. There, putting his fingers to his mouth, he blew a shrill whistle along the side of the Scout. A bent figure on a distant path stopped at the sound. It was an old man, with a plaid hanging from his shoulders. He raised the stick he held, and shook it in recognition of David's signal. Then resuming his bowed walk, he came slowly on, followed by an old hound, whose gait seemed as feeble as his master's.

David leant against the doorway waiting. Louie, meanwhile, was lounging in the heather just below him, having very soon caught him up.

'What d' yo want 'im for?' she asked contemptuously, as the new-comer approached: 'he'd owt to be in th' sylum. Aunt Hannah says he's gone that silly, he owt to be took up.'



‘Well, he woan’t be, then,’ retorted David. ‘Theer’s nobory about as ull lay a finger on ‘im. He doan’t do her no harm, nor yo noather. Women foak and gells allus want to be wooryin soomthin.’

‘Aunt Hannah says he lost his wits wi fuddlin,’ repeated Louie shrilly, striking straighter still for what she knew to be one of David’s tenderest points—his friendship for ‘owd ‘Lias Dawson,’ the queer dreamer, who, fifteen years before, had been the schoolmaster of Frimley Moor End, and in local esteem ‘t’ eliverest mon abeawt t’ Peak.’

David with difficulty controlled a hot inclination to fall upon his sister once more. Instead, however, he affected not to hear her, and shouted a loud ‘Good mornin’ to the old man, who was toiling up the knoll on which the smithy stood.

‘Lias responded feebly, panting hard the while. He sank down on a stone outside the smithy, and for a while had neither breath nor voice. Then he began to look about him; his heaving chest subsided, and there was a rekindling of the strange blue eyes. He wore a high white stock and neckcloth; his plaid hung round his emaciated shoulders with a certain antique dignity; his rusty wideawake covered hair still abundant and even curly, but snow-white; the face, with its white eyebrows, was long, thin, and full of an ascetic delicacy.

‘Wal, Davy, my lad,’ the old man said at last, with a sort of pompous mildness; ‘I winna blame yo for ‘t, but yo interrupted me sadly wi yur whistlin. I ha been occupied this day wi business o’ *grät* importance. His Majesty King Charles has been wi me since seven o’clock this mornin. And for th’ fust time I ha been gettin reet to th’ *bottom* o’ things wi him. I ha been *probin* him, Davy—*probin* him. He couldno riddle through wi lees; I kept him to ‘t, as

yo mun keep a horse to a jump—straight an tight. I had it aw out about Strafford, an t' Five Members, an thoose dirty dealins wi th' Irish devils! Yo should ha yerd it. Davy—yo should, I'll uphowd yo!'

And placing his stick between his knees, the old man leant his hands upon it, with a meditative and judicial air. The boy stood looking down at him, a broad smile lighting up the dark and vivid face. Old 'Lias supplied him with a perpetual 'spectacle' which never palled.

'Coe him back, 'Lias, he's soomwheer about. Yo need nobbut coe him, an he'll coom.'

'Lias looked fatuously pleased. He lifted his head and affected to scan the path along which he had just travelled.

'Aye, I daur say he's not far.—Yor Majesty!'

And 'Lias laid his head on one side and listened. In a few seconds a cunning smile stole over his lips.

'Wal, Davy, yo're in luck. He's noan so onwillin, we'st ha him here in a twinklin. Yo may coe him mony things, but yo conno coe him proud. Noa, as I've fund him, Charles Stuart has no soart o' pride about him. Aye, theer yo are! Sir, your Majesty's obleeged an humble servant!'

And, raising his hand to his hat, the old man took it off and swept it round with a courtly deliberation. Then replacing it, he sat with his face raised, as though to one standing near, his whole attitude full of a careful and pompons dignity.

'Now then, yor Majesty,' said 'Lias grimly, 'I'st ha to put that question to yo, yance moor, yo wor noan so well pleased wi this mornin. But yo shouldno be soa tender, mon! 'Th' truth can do yo *noa* harm, wheer yo are, an I'm nobbut askin for *informashun's* sake. Soa out wi it; I'st not use it agen yo. *That—wee—bit—o'—damned—paper*,—man, what sent poor

Strafford to his eend—yo mind it?—aye, 'at yo do! Well, now'—and the old man's tone grew gently seductive—'*explain yersel*. We'n had *their* tale,' and he pointed away to some imaginary accusers. 'But yo mun trust an Englishman's sense o' fair play. Say your say. We' st gie yo a varra patient hearin.'

And with chin thrown up, and his half-blurred eyes blinking under their white lashes, 'Lias waited with a bland imperativeness for the answer.

'Eh?' said 'Lias at last, frowning and hollowing his hand to his ear.

He listened another few seconds, then he dropped his hand sharply.

'What's 'at yo're sayin?' he asked hastily; 'at yo couldno help it, not *whaticer*—that i' truth yo had nothin to do wi 't, no moor than mysel—that yo wor *forcit* to it—willy-nilly—by them devils o' Parliament foak—by Mr. Pym and his loike, wi whom, if God-amighty ha' not reckoned since, theer's no moor justice i' His Kingdom than yo found i' yours?'

The words came out with a rush, tumbling over one another till they suddenly broke off in a loud key of indignant scorn. Then 'Lias fell silent a moment, and slowly shook his head over the inveterate shuffling of the House of Stuart.

'Twinna do, man—'twinna do,' he said at last, with an air of fine reproof. 'He wor your *friend*, wor that poor sinner Strafford—your awn familiar friend, as t' Psalm says. I'm not takin up a brief for him, t' Lord knows! He wor but meetin his deserts, to *my* thinkin, when his yed went loupin. But yo put a blaek mark agen *yore* name when yo signed that bit paper for your awn skin's sake. Naw, naw, man, yo should ha lost your awn yed a bit sooner fust. Eh, it wor base—it wor cooardly!'

'Lias's voice dropped, and he fell muttering to him-

self indistinctly. David, bending over him, could not make out whether it was Charles or his interlocutor speaking, and began to be afraid that the old man's performance was over before it had well begun. But on the contrary, 'Lias emerged with fresh energy from the gulf of inarticulate argument in which his poor wits seemed to have lost themselves awhile.

'But I'm no blamin yo awthegither,' he cried, raising himself, with a protesting wave of the hand. 'Theer's naw mak o' mischief i' this world, but t' *women* are at t' bottom o't. Whar's that proud foo of a wife o' yourn? Send her here, man; send her here! 'Lias Dawson ull mak her hear reason! Now, Davy!'

And the old man drew the lad to him with one hand, while he raised a finger softly with the other.

'Just study her, Davy, my lad,' he said in an undertone, which swelled louder as his excitement grew, 'theer she stan's, by t' side o' t' King. She's a gay good-lookin female, that I'll confess to, but study her; look at her curls, Davy, an her paint, an her nakedness. For shame, madam! Goo hide that neck o' yourn, goo hide it, I say! An her faldaddles, an her jewels, an her ribbons. Is that a woman—a French hizzy like that—to get a King out o' trooble, wha's awready lost aw t' wits he wor born wi?'

And with sparkling eyes and outstretched arm 'Lias pointed sternly into vacancy. Thrilled with involuntary awe the boy and girl looked round them. For, in spite of herself, Louie had come closer, little by little, and was now sitting cross-legged in front of 'Lias. Then Louie's shrill voice broke in—

'Tell us what she's got on!' And the girl leant eagerly forward, her magnificent eyes kindling into interest.

'What she's got on, my lassie? Eh, but I'm feart

your yead, too, is fu' o' gauds!—Wal, it's but nateral to females. She's aw in white satin, my lassie,—an in her brown hair theer's pearls, an a blue ribbon just howdin down t' little luv-locks on her forehead—an on her saft neck theer's pearls again—not soa white, by a thoosand mile, as her white skin—an t' lace fa's ower her proud shooters, an down her luvly arms—an she looks at me wi her angry eyes—Eh, but she's a queen!' cried 'Lias, in a sudden outburst of admiration. 'She hath been a perseentor o' th' saints—a varra Jeezebel—the Lord hath put her to shame—but she's moor sperrit—moor o' t' blood o' kingship i' her little finger, nor Charles theer in aw his body!'

And by a strange and crazy reversal of feeling, the old man sat in a kind of ecstacy, enamoured of his own creation, looking into thin air. As for Louie, during the description of the Queen's dress she had drunk in every word with a greedy attention, her changing eyes fixed on the speaker's face. When he stopped, however, she drew a long breath.

'It's aw lees!' she said scornfully.

'Howd your tongue, Louie!' cried David, angrily.

But 'Lias took no notice. He was talking again very fast, but incoherently. Hampden, Pym, Fairfax, Falkland—the great names clattered past every now and then, like horsemen, through a maze of words, but with no perceptible order or purpose. The phrases concerning them came to nothing; and though there were apparently many voices speaking, nothing intelligible could be made out.

When next the mists cleared a little from the old visionary's brain, David gathered that Cromwell was close by, defending himself with difficulty, apparently, like Charles, against 'Lias's assaults. In his youth and middle age—until, in fact, an event of some pathos and mystery had broken his life across, and

cut him off from his profession—'Lias had been a zealous teacher and a voracious reader; and through the dreams of fifteen years the didactic faculty had persisted and grown amazingly. He played schoolmaster now to all the heroes of history. Whether it were Elizabeth wrangling with Mary Stuart, or Cromwell marshalling his Ironsides, or Buckingham falling under the assassin's dagger at 'Lias's feet, or Napoleon walking restlessly up and down the deck of the 'Bellerophon,' 'Lias rated them everyone. He was lord of a shadow world, wherein he walked with kings and queens, warriors and poets, putting them one and all superbly to rights. Yet so subtle were the old man's wits, and so bright his fancy, even in derangement, that he preserved through it all a considerable measure of dramatic fitness. He gave his puppets a certain freedom; he let them state their case; and threw almost as much ingenuity into the pleading of it as into the refuting of it. Of late, since he had made friends with Davy Grieve, he had contracted a curious habit of weaving the boy into his visions.

'Davy, what's your opinion o' that?' or, 'Davy, my lad, did yo iver hear sich clit-clat i' your life?' or again, 'Davy, yo'll not be misled, surely, by sich a piece o' speshul-pleadin as that?'

So the appeals would run, and the boy, at first bewildered, and even irritated by them, as by something which threw hindrances in the way of the only dramatic entertainment the High Peak was likely to afford him, had learnt at last to join in them with relish. Many meetings with 'Lias on the moorside, which the old seer made alive for both of them—the plundering of 'Lias's books, whence he had drawn the brown 'Josephus' in his pocket—these had done more than anything else to stock the boy's head with

its present strange jumble of knowledge and ideas. *Knowledge*, indeed, it scarcely was, but rather the materials for a certain kind of excitement.

‘Wal, Davy, did yo hear that?’ said ‘Lias, presently, looking round on the boy with a doubtful countenance, after Cromwell had given an unctuous and highly Biblical account of the slaughter at Drogheda and its reasons.

‘How mony did he say he killed at that place?’ asked the boy sharply.

‘Thoosands,’ said Dawson, solemnly. ‘Theer was naw mercy asked nor gi’en. And those wha esaped knockin on t’ yeard, were aw sold as slaves—every mon jock o’ them!’

A strong light of anger showed itself in David’s face.

‘Then he wor a cantin murderer! Yo mun tell him so! If I’d my way, he’d hang for ‘t!’

‘Eh, laddie, they were nowt but rebels and Papists,’ said the old man, complacently.

‘Don’t yo becall Papists!’ cried David, fiercely, facing round upon him. ‘My mither wor a Papist.’

A curious change of expression appeared on ‘Lias’s face. He put his hand behind his ear that he might hear better, turned a pair of cunning eyes on David, while his lips pressed themselves together.

‘Your mither wor a Papist? an your feyther wor Sandy Grieve. Ay, ay—I’ve yeerd tell strange things o’ Sandy Grieve’s wife,’ he said slowly.

Suddenly Louie, who had been lying full length on her back in the sun, with her hat over her face, apparently asleep, sat bolt upright.

‘Tell us what about her,’ she said imperiously.

‘Noa—noa,’ said the old man, shaking his head, while a sort of film seemed to gather over the eyes, and the face and features relaxed—fell, as it were,

into their natural expression of weak senility, which so long as he was under the stress of his favourite illusions was hardly apparent. 'But it's true—it's varra true—I've yeerd tell strange things about Sandy Grieve's wife.'

And still aimlessly shaking his head, he sat staring at the opposite side of the ravine, the lower jaw dropping a little.

'He knows nowt about it,' said David, roughly, the light of a sombre, half-reluctant curiosity, which had arisen in his look, dying down.

He threw himself on the grass by the dogs, and began teasing and playing with them. Meanwhile Louie sat studying 'Lias with a frowning hostility, making faces at him now and then by way of amusement. To disappoint the impetuous will embodied in that small frame was to commit an offence of the first order.

But one might as well make faces at a stone post as at old 'Lias when his wandering fit was on him. When the entertainment palled, Louie got up with a yawn, meaning to lounge back to the farm and investigate the nearness of dinner. But, as she turned, something caught her attention. It was the gleam of a pool, far away beyond the Downfall, on a projecting spur of the moor.

'What d' yo coe that bit watter?' she asked David, suddenly pointing to it.

David rolled himself round on his face, and took a look at the bluish patch on the heather.

'It hasna got naw name,' he said, at a venture.

'Then yo're a stoopid, for it has,' replied Louie, triumphantly. 'It's t' *Mermaid* Pool. Theer wor a Manchester mon at Wigsons' last week, telling aw maks o' tales. Theer's a mermaid lives in 't—a woman, I tell tha, wi a fish's tail—it's in a book, an



he read it out, soa *theer*—an on Easter Eve neet she cooms out, an walks about t' Scout, combin her hair—an if onybody sees her an wishes for soomthin, they get it, sartin sure; an——'

'Mermaids is just faddle an nonsense,' interrupted David, tersely.

'Oh, is they? Then I spose books is faddle. Most on 'em are—t' kind of books yo like—I'll up-howd yo!'

'Oh, is they?' said David, mimicking her. 'Wal, I like 'em, yo see, aw t' same. I tell yo, mermaids is nonsense, cos I *know* they are. Theer was yan at Hayfield Fair, an the fellys they nearly smashed t' booth down, eos they said it wor a cheat. Theer was just a gell, an they'd stuffed her into a fish's skin and sewed 'er up; an when yo went close yo could see t' stuffin runnin out of her. An theer was a man as held 'er up by a wire roun her waist, an waggled her i' t' watter. But t' foak as had paid sixpence to coom in, they just took an tore down t' place, an they'd 'a dookt t' man an t' gell both, if th' coonstable hadn't coom. Naw, mermaids is faddle,' he repeated contemptuously.

'Faddle?' repeated 'Lias, interrogatively.

The children started. They had supposed 'Lias was off doting and talking gibberish for the rest of the morning. But his tone was brisk, and as David looked up he caught a queer flickering brightness in the old man's eye, which showed him that 'Lias was once more capable of furnishing amusement or information.

'What do they coe that bit watter, 'Lias?' he inquired, pointing to it.

'That bit watter?' repeated 'Lias, eyeing it. A sort of vague trouble came into his face, and his wrinkled hands lying on his stick began to twitch nervously.

‘Aye—theer’s a Manchester man been cramming Wigsons wi tales—says he gets em out of a book—bout a woman ‘at walks t’ Scout Easter Eve neet,—an a lot o’ ninny-hommer’s talk. Yo niver heerd nowt about it—did yo, ‘Lias?’

‘Yes, yo did. Mr. Dawson—now, didn’t yo?’ said Louie, persuasively, enraged that David would never accept information from her, while she was always expected to take it from him.

‘A woman—‘at walks t’ Scout,’ said ‘Lias, uncertainly, flushing as he spoke.

Then, looking tremulously from his companions to the pool, he said, angrily raising his stick and shaking it at David, ‘Davy, yo’re takin advantage—Davy, yo’re doin what yo owt not. If my Margret were here, she’d let yo know!’

The words rose into a cry of quavering passion. The children stared at him in amazement. But as Davy, aggrieved, was defending himself, the old man laid a violent hand on his arm and silenced him. His eyes, which were black and keen still in the blanched face, were riveted on the gleaming pool. His features worked as though under the stress of some possessing force; a shiver ran through the emaciated limbs.

‘Oh! yo want to know abeawt Jenny Crum’s pool, do yo?’ he said at last in a low agitated voice. ‘Nobbut look, my lad!—nobbut look!—and see for yoursen.’

He paused, his chest heaving, his eye fixed. Then, suddenly, he broke out in a flood of passionate speech, still gripping David.

‘*Passon Maine! Passon Maine!*—ha yo got her, th’ owd woman? Aye, aye—sure enough—‘at’s she—as yo’re aw drivin afore yo—hoontit like a wild beëast—wi her grey hair streamin, and her hands tied—Ah!’

—and the old man gave a wild cry, which startled both the children to their feet. ‘Conno yo hear her? eh, but it’s enough to tear a body’s heart out to hear an owd woman scream like that!’

He stopped, trembling, and listened, his hand hollowed to his ear. Louie looked at her brother and laughed nervously; but her little hard face had paled. David laid hold of her to keep her quiet, and shook himself free of ’Lias. But ’Lias took no notice of them now at all, his changed seer’s gaze saw nothing but the distance and the pool.

‘Are yo quite *sure* it wor her, Passon?’ he went on, appealingly. ‘She’s nobbut owd, an it’s a far cry fro her bit cottage to owd Needham’s Farm. An th’ ehilt might ha deed, and t’ cattle might ha strayed, and t’ geyats might ha opened o’ theirsels! Yo’ll not dare to speak agen *that*. They *might*? Ay, ay, we aw know t’ devil’s strong; but she’s eighty-one year coom Christmas—an—an——. Doan’t, *doan’t* let t’ ehilder see, nor t’ yoong gells! If yo let em see sich seets they’ll breed yo wolves, not babes! Ah!’

And again ’Lias gave the same cry, and stood half risen, his hands on his staff, looking.

‘What is it, ’Lias?’ said David, eagerly; ‘what is ’t yo see?’

‘Theer’s my grandfeyther,’ said ’Lias, almost in a whisper, ‘an owd Needham an his two brithers, an yoong Jack Needham’s woife—her as losst her babby—an yoong lads an lasses fro Clough End, ehilder awmost, and t’ coonstable, and Passon Maine—Ay—ay—yo’ve doon it! yo’ve doon it! She’ll mak naw moor mischeef neets—she’s gay quiet now! T’ water’s got her fasst enough!’

And, drawing himself up to his full height, the old man pointed a quivering finger at the pool.

‘Ay, it’s got her—an your stones are tied fasst!’

Passon Maine says she's safe—that yo'll see her naw moor—

While holly sticks be green,  
While stone on Kinder Scoot be seen.

But *I* tell yo, Passon Maine *lees!* I tell yo t' witch ull *walk*—t' witch ull *walk!*'

For several seconds 'Lias stood straining forward—out of himself—a tragic and impressive figure. Then, in a moment, from that distance his weird gift had been re-peopleing, something else rose towards him—some hideous memory, as it seemed, of personal anguish, personal fear. The exalted seer's look vanished, the tension within gave way, the old man shrank together. He fell back heavily on the stone, hiding his face in his hands, and muttering to himself.

The children looked at each other oddly. Then David, half afraid, touched him.

'What's t' matter, 'Lias? Are yo bad?'

The old man did not move. They caught some disjointed words,—'cold—ay, t' neet's cold, varra cold!'

''Lias!' shouted David.

'Lias looked up startled, and shook his head feebly.

'Are yo bad, 'Lias?'

'Ay!' said the old schoolmaster, in the voice of one speaking through a dream—'ay, varra bad, varra cold—I mun—lig me down—a bit.'

And he rose feebly. David instinctively caught hold of him, and led him to a corner close by in the ruined walls, where the heather and bilberry grew thick up to the stones. 'Lias sank down, his head fell against the wall, and a light and restless sleep seemed to take possession of him.

David stood studying him, his hands in his pockets. Never in all his experience of him had 'Lias gone through such a performance as this. What on earth

did it mean? There was more in it than appeared, clearly. He would tell Margaret, 'Lias's old wife, who kept him and tended him like the apple of her eye. And he would find out about the pool, anyway. *Jenny Crum's pool?* What on earth did that mean? The name had never reached his ears before. Of course Uncle Reuben would know. The boy eyed it curiously, the details of 'Lias's grim vision returning upon him. The wild circling moor seemed suddenly to have gained a mysterious interest.

'Didn't I tell yo he wor gone silly?' said Louie, triumphantly, at his elbow.

'He's not gone that silly, onyways, but he can freeten little gells,' remarked David, dryly, instinctively putting out an arm, meanwhile, to prevent her disturbing the poor sleeper.

'I worn't freetened,' insisted Louie; '*yo* were! He may skrike aw day if he likes—for aw I care. He'll be runnin into hedges by dayleet soon. Owd churn-yed!'

'Howd your clatterin tongue!' said David, angrily, pushing her out of the doorway. She lifted a loose sod of heather, which lay just outside, flung it at him, and then took to her heels, and made for the farm and dinner, with the speed of a wild goat.

David brushed his clothes, took a stroll with the dogs, and recovered his temper as best he might. When he came back, pricked by the state of his appetite, to see whether 'Lias had recovered enough sanity to get home, he found the old man sitting up, looking strangely white and exhausted, and fumbling, in a dazed way, for the tobacco to which he always resorted at moments of nervous fatigue. His good wife Margaret never sent him out without mended clothes, spotless linen, and a paper of tobacco in his pocket. He sat chewing it awhile in silence; David's remarks

to him met with only incoherent answers, and at last the schoolmaster got up and with the help of his stick tottered off along the path by which he had come. David's eyes followed the bent figure uneasily; nor did he turn homeward till it disappeared over the brow.

### CHAPTER III

ANYONE opening the door of Needham Farm kitchen that night at eight would have found the inmates at supper—a meagre supper, which should, according to the rule of the house, have been eaten in complete silence. Hannah Grieve, the children's aunt, and mistress of the farm, thought it an offence to talk at meals. She had not been so brought up.

But Louie this evening was in a state of nerves. The afternoon had seen one of those periodical struggles between her and Hannah, which did so much to keep life at Needham Farm from stagnating into anything like comfort. The two combatants, however, must have taken a certain joy in them, since they recurred with so much regularity. Hannah had won, of course, as the grim self-importance of her bearing amply showed. Louie had been forced to patch the house-linen as usual, mainly by the temporary confiscation of her Sunday hat, the one piece of decent clothing she possessed, and to which she clung with a feverish attachment—generally, indeed, sleeping with it beside her pillow. But, though she was beaten, she was still seething with rebellion. Her eyes were red, but her shaggy head was thrown back defiantly, and there was hysterical battle in the expression of her sharply tilted nose and chin.

‘Mind yorsel,’ cried Hannah angrily, as the child

put down her plate of porridge with a bang which made the housewife tremble for her crockery.

‘What’s t’ matter wi yo, Louie?’ said Unele Reuben, looking at her with some discomfort. He had just finished the delivery of a long grace, into which he had thrown much unction, and Louie’s manners made but an ill-fitting Amen.

‘It’s nasty!’ said the child passionately. ‘It’s allus porridge—porridge—porridge—porridge—an I hate it—an it’s bitter—an it’s a shame! I wish I wor at Wigson’s—at I do!’

Davy glanced up at his sister under his eyebrows. Hannah scanned her niece all over with a slow, observant scrutiny, as though she were a dangerous animal that must be watched. Otherwise Louie might have spoken to the wall for all the effect she produced. Reuben, however, was more vulnerable.

‘What d’ yo want to be at Wigson’s for?’ he asked. ‘Yo should be content wi your state o’ life, Louie. It’s a sin to be discontented—I’ve tellt yo so many times.’

‘They’ve got scones and rhubarb jam for tea!’ cried the child, tumbling the news out as though she were bursting with it. ‘Mrs. Wigson, she’s allus makin em nice things. She’s kind, she is—she’s nice—she wouldn’t make em eat stuff like this—she’d give it to the pigs—at she would!’

And all the time it was pitiful to see how the child was gobbling up her unpalatable food, evidently from the instinctive fear, nasty as it was, that it would be taken from her as a punishment for her behaviour.

‘Now, Louie, yo’re a silly gell,’ began Reuben, expostulating; but Hannah interposed.

‘I wudn’t advise yo, Reuben Grieve, to go wastin your breath on sich a minx. If I were yo, I’d keep it fur my awn eatin.’

And she calmly put another slice of cold bacon on his plate, as though reminding him of his proper business. Reuben fell silent and munched his bacon, though he could not forbear studying his niece every now and then uncomfortably. He was a tall, large-boned man, with weakish eyes, sandy whiskers and beard, grown in a fringe round his long face, and a generally clumsy and disjointed air. The tremulous, uncertain movements of his hand as he stretched it out for one article of food after another seemed to express the man's character.

Louie went on gulping down her porridge. Her plate was just empty when Hannah caught a movement of Reuben's fork. He was in the act of furtively transferring to Louie a portion of bacon. But he could not restrain himself from looking at Hannah as he held out the morsel. Hannah's answering look was too much for him. The bacon went into his mouth.

Supper over, Louie went out to sit on the steps, and Hannah contemptuously forbore to make her come in and help clear away. Out in the air, the child slowly quieted down. It was a clear, frosty April night, promising a full moon. The fresh, nipping air blew on the girl's heated temples and swollen eyes. Against her will almost, her spirits came back. She swept Aunt Hannah out of her mind, and began to plan something which consoled her. When would they have their stupid prayers and let her get upstairs?

David meanwhile hung about the kitchen. He would have liked to ask Uncle Reuben about the pool and 'Lias's story, but Hannah was bustling about, and he never mentioned 'Lias in her hearing. To do so would have been like handing over something weak, for which he had a tenderness, to be worried.

But he rummaged out an old paper-covered guide



to the Peak, which he remembered to have been left at the farm one summer's day by a passing tourist, who paid Hannah handsomely for some bread and cheese. Turning to the part which concerned Clough End, Hayfield, and the Scout, he found:—

‘In speaking of the Mermaid’s Pool, it may be remarked that the natives of several little hamlets surrounding Kinder Scout have long had a tradition that there is a beautiful woman—an English Hamadryad—lives in the side of the Scout; that she comes to bathe every day in the Mermaid’s Well, and that the man who has the good luck to behold her bathing will become immortal and never die.’

David shut the book and fell pondering, like many another wiser mortal before him, on the discrepancies of evidence. What was a Hamadryad? and why no mention of Easter Eve? and what had it all to do with the witch and Parson Maine and Lias’s excitement?

Meanwhile, the thump made by the big family Bible as Hannah deposited it on the table warned both him and the truant outside that prayer-time had come. Louie came in noisily when she was called, and both children lounged unwillingly into their appointed seats.

Nothing but the impatience and indifference of childhood, however, could have grudged Reuben Grieve the half-hour which followed. During that one half-hour in the day, the mild, effaced man, whose absent-minded ways and complete lack of business faculty were the perpetual torment of his wife, was master of his house. While he was rolling out the psalm, expounding the chapter, or ‘wrestling’ in prayer, he was a personality and an influence even for the wife who, in spite of a dumb congruity of habit, regarded him generally as incompetent and in the

way. Reuben's religious sense was strong and deep, but some very natural and pathetically human instincts entered also into his constant pleasure in this daily function. Hannah, with her strong and harsh features settled into repose, with her large hands, reddened by the day's work, lying idle in her lap, sat opposite to him in silence; for once she listened to him, whereas all day he had listened to her; and the moment made a daily oasis in the life of a man who, in his own dull, peasant way, knew that he was a failure, and knew also that no one was so well aware of it as his wife.

With David and Louie the absorbing interest was generally to see whether the prayer would be over before the eight-day clock struck nine, or whether the loud whirr which preceded that event would be suddenly and deafeningly let loose upon Uncle Reuben in the middle of his peroration, as sometimes happened when the speaker forgot himself. To-night that catastrophe was just avoided by a somewhat obvious hurry through the Lord's Prayer. When they rose from their knees Hannah put away the Bible, the boy and girl raced each other upstairs, and the elders were left alone.

An hour passed away. Reuben was dozing peacefully in the chimney-corner; Aunt Hannah had just finished putting a patch on a pair of Reuben's trousers, was folding up her work and preparing to rouse her slumbering companion, when a sound overhead caught her ear.

'What's that chilt at now?' she exclaimed angrily, getting up and listening. 'She'd owt ta been in bed long ago. Soomthin mischeevous, I'll be bound.' And lighting a dip beside her, she went upstairs with a treacherously quiet step. There was a sound of an opening door, and then Reuben downstairs was startled

out of his snooze by a sudden gamut of angry cries, a scurrying of feet, and Hannah scolding loudly—

‘Coom downstairs wi yo!—coom down an show your uncle what a figure o’ foon yo’n been makkin o’ yorsel! I’st teach yo to burn three candles down awbut to nothink ’at yo may bedizen yorsel in this way. Coom along wi yo.’

There was a scuffle on the stairs, and then Hannah burst open the door, dragging in an extraordinary figure indeed. Struggling and erylng in her aunt’s grip, was Louie. White trailing folds swept behind her; a white garment underneath, apparently her nightgown, was festooned with an old red-and-blue striped sash of some foreign make. Round her neck hung a necklace of that gold filigree work which spreads from Genoa all along the Riviera; her magnificent hair hung in masses over her shoulders, crowned by the primroses of the morning, which had been hurriedly twisted into a wreath by a bit of red ribbon rummaged out of some drawer of odds-and-ends; and her thin brown arms and hands appeared under the white cloak—nothing but a sheet—which was being now trodden underfoot in the child’s passionate efforts to get away from her aunt. Ten minutes before she had been a happy queen flaunting over her attie floor in a dream of joy before a broken, propped-up looking-glass under the splendid illumination of three dips, long since secreted for purposes of the kind. Now she was a bedraggled, tear-stained Fury, with a fierce humiliation and a boundless hatred glaring out of the eyes, which in Aunt Hannah’s opinion were so big as to be ‘right down oogly.’ Poor Louie!

Uncle Reuben, startled from his snooze by this apparition, looked at it with a sleepy bewilderment, and fumbled for his spectacles. ‘Ay, yo’d better luke at her close,’ said Hannah, grimly, giving her

niece a violent shake as she spoke; 'I wor set yo should just see her fur yance at her antics. Yo say soomtimes I'm hard on her. Well, I'd ask ony pusson aloive if they'd put up wi this soart o' thing—dressin up like a bad hizzy that waaks t' streets, wi three candles—*three*, I tell yo. Reuben—flarin away, and the curtains close to, an nothink but the Lord's mussy keepin 'em from catchin. An she peacockin an gallivantin away enough to mak a cat laugh!'

And Aunt Hannah in her enraged scorn even undertook a grotesque and mincing imitation of the peacocking aforesaid. 'Let goo!' muttered Louie between her shut teeth, and with a wild strength she at last flung off her aunt and sprang for the door. But Hannah was too quick for her and put her back against it.

'No—yo'll not goo till your ooncle there's gien yo a word. He *shan't* say I'm hard on yo for nothink, yo good-for-nowt little powsement—he shall see yo as yo are!'

And with the bitterness of a smouldering grievance, expressed in every feature, Hannah looked peremptorily at her husband. He, poor man, was much perplexed. The hour of devotion was past, and outside it he was not accustomed to be placed in important situations.

'Louie—didn't yo know yo wor a bad gell to stay up and burn t' candles, an fret your aunt?' he said with a feeble solemnity, his look fixed on the huddled white figure against the mahogany press.

Louie stood with eyes resolutely cast down, and a forced smile, tremulous, but insolent to a degree, slowly lifting up the corners of her mouth as Uncle Reuben addressed her. The tears were still running off her face, but she meant her smile to convey the indomitable scorn for her tormentors which not even Aunt Hannah could shake out of her.

Hannah Grieve was exasperated by the child's expression.

'Yo little slood!' she said, seizing her by the arm again, and losing her temper for good and all, 'yo've got your mither's bad blude in yo—an it ull coom out, happen what may!'

'Hannah!' exclaimed Reuben, 'Hannah—mind yoursel.'

'My mither's *dead*,' said the child, slowly raising her dark, burning eyes. 'My mither worn't bad; an if yo say she wor, yo're a *beast* for sayin it! I wish it wor yo wor dead, an my mither wor here instead o' yo!'

To convey the concentrated rage of this speech is impossible. It seemed to Hannah that the child had the evil eye. Even she quailed under it.

'Go 'long wi yo,' she said grimly, in a white heat, while she opened the door—an the less yo coom into *my* way for t' future, the better.'

She pushed the child out and shut the door.

'Yo *are* hard on her, Hannah!' exclaimed Reuben, in his perplexity—pricked, too, as usual in his conscience.

The repetition of this parrot-cry, as it seemed to her, maddened his wife.

'She's a wanton's brat,' she said violently; 'an she's got t' wanton's blood.'

Reuben was silent. He was afraid of his wife in these moods. Hannah began, with trembling hands, to pick up the contents of her work-basket, which had been overturned in the scuffle.

Meanwhile Louie rushed upstairs, stumbling over and tearing her finery, the convulsive sobs beginning again as soon as the tension of her aunt's hated presence was removed.

At the top she ran against something in the dark. It was David, who had been hanging over the stairs, listening. But she flung past him.

‘What’s t’ matter, Louie?’ he asked in a loud whisper through the door she shut in his face; ‘what’s th’ owd crosspatch been slanging about?’

But he got no answer, and he was afraid of being caught by Aunt Hannah if he forced his way in. So he went back to his own room, and closed, without latching, his door. He had had an inch of dip to go to bed with, and had spent that on reading. His book was a battered copy of ‘Anson’s Voyages,’ which also came from ‘Lias’s store, and he had been straining his eyes over it with enchantment. Then had come the sudden noise upstairs and down, and his candle and his pleasure had gone out together. The heavy footsteps of his uncle and aunt ascending warned him to keep quiet. They turned into their room, and locked their door as their habit was. David noiselessly opened his window and looked out.

A clear moonlight reigned outside. He could distinguish the rounded shapes, the occasional movements of the sheep in their pen to the right of the farmyard. The trees in the field threw long shadows down the white slope; to his left was the cart-shed with its black caverns and recesses, and the branches of the apple-trees against the luminous sky. Owls were calling in the woods below; sometimes a bell round the neck of one of the sheep tinkled a little, and the river made a distant background of sound.

The boy’s heart grew heavy. After the noises in the Grieves’ room ceased he listened for something which he knew must be in the air, and caught it—the sound of a child’s long, smothered sobs. On most nights they would not have made much impression on him. Louie’s ways with her brother were no more engaging than with the rest of the world; and she was not a creature who invited consolation from anybody. David, too, with his power of escape at any time into

a world of books and dreams or simply into the wild shepherd life of the moors, was often inclined to a vague irritation with Louie's state of perpetual revolt. The food *was* nasty, their clothes *were* ugly and scanty, Aunt Hannah *was* as hard as nails—at the same time Louie was enough to put anybody's back up. What did she get by it?—that was his feeling; though, perhaps, he never shaped it. He had never felt much pity for her. She had a way of putting herself out of court, and he was, of course, too young to see her life or his own as a whole. What their relationship might mean to him was still vague—to be decided by the future. Whatever softness there was in the boy was at this moment called out by other people—by old 'Lias and his wife; by Mr. Anerum, the lame minister at Clough End; by the dogs; hardly ever by Louie. He had grown used, moreover, to her perpetual explosions, and took them generally with a boy's natural callousness.

But to-night her woes affected him as they had never done before. The sound of her sobbing, as he stood listening, gradually roused in him an unbearable restlessness. An unaccountable depression stole upon him—the reaction, perhaps, from a good deal of mental exertion and excitement in the day. A sort of sick distaste awoke in him for most of the incidents of existence—for Aunt Hannah, for Uncle Reuben's incomprehensible prayers, for the thought of the long Puritanical Sunday just coming. And, in addition, the low vibrations of that distant sobbing stirred in him again, by association, certain memories which were like a clutch of physical pain, and which the healthy young animal instinctively and passionately avoided whenever it could. But to-night, in the dark and in solitude, there were no distractions, and as the boy put his head down on his arms, rolling it from

side to side as though to shake them off, the same old images pursued him—the lodging-house room, and the curtainless iron bed in which he slept with his father; reminiscences of some long, inexplicable anguish through which that father had passed; then of his death, and his own lonely crying. He seemed still to *feel* the strange sheets in that bed upstairs, where a compassionate fellow-lodger had put him the night after his father died; he sat up again bewildered in the cold dawn, filled with a home-sickness too benumbing for words. He resented these memories, tried to banish them; but the nature on which they were impressed was deep and rich, and, once shaken, vibrated long. The boy trembled through and through. The more he was ordinarily shed abroad, diffused in the life of sensation and boundless mental curiosity, the blacker were these rare moments of self-consciousness, when all the world seemed pain, an iron vice which pinched and tortured him.

At last he went to his door, pulled it gently open, and with bare feet went across to Louie's room, which he entered with infinite caution. The moonlight was streaming in on the poor gauds, which lay wildly scattered over the floor. David looked at them with amazement. Amongst them he saw something glittering. He picked it up, saw it was a gold necklace which had been his mother's, and carefully put it on the little toilet table.

Then he walked on to the bed. Louie was lying with her face turned away from him. A certain pause in the sobbing as he came near told him that she knew he was there. But it began again directly, being indeed a physical relief which the child could not deny herself. He stood beside her awkwardly. He could think of nothing to say. But timidly he stretched out his hand and laid the back of it against



her wet cheek. He half expected she would shake it off, but she did not. It made him feel less lonely that she let it stay; the impulse to comfort had somehow brought himself comfort. He stood there, feeling very cold, thinking a whirlwind of thoughts about old 'Lias, about the sheep, about Titus and Jerusalem, and about Louie's extraordinary proceedings—till suddenly it struck him that Louie was not crying any more. He bent over her. The sobs had changed into the long breaths of sleep, and, gently drawing away his hand, he crept off to bed.

#### CHAPTER IV

IT was Sunday afternoon, still cold, nipping, and sunny. Reuben Grieve sat at the door of the farmhouse, his pipe in his hand, a 'good book' on his knee. Beyond the wall which bounded the farmyard he could hear occasional voices. The children were sitting there, he supposed. It gave him a sensation of pleasure once to hear a shrill laugh, which he knew was Louie's. For all this morning, through the long services in the 'Christian Brethren' chapel at Clough End, and on the walk home, he had been once more pricked in his conscience. Hannah and Louie were not on speaking terms. At meals the aunt assigned the child her coarse food without a word, and on the way to chapel and back there had been a stony silence between them. It was evident, even to his dull mind, that the girl was white and thin, and that between her wild temper and mischief and the mirth of other children there was a great difference. Moreover, certain passages in the chapel prayers that morning had come home sharply to a mind whereof the only defi-

nite gift was a true religious sensitiveness. The text of the sermon especially—'Whoso loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen?'—vibrated like an accusing voice within him. As he sat in the doorway, with the sun stealing in upon him, the clock ticking loudly at his back, and the hens scratching round the steps, he began to think with much discomfort about his dead brother and his brother's children.

As to his memories of the past, they may perhaps be transformed here into a short family history, with some details added which had no place in Reuben's mind. Twenty years before this present date Needham—once Needham's—Farm had been held by Reuben's father, a certain James Grieve. He had originally been a kind of farm-labourer on the Berwickshire border, who, driven southwards in search of work by the stress of the bad years which followed the great war, had wandered on, taking a job of work here and another there, and tramping many a score of weary miles between, till at last in this remote Derbyshire valley he had found a final anchorage. Needham Farm was then occupied by a young couple of the name of Pierson, beginning life under fairly prosperous circumstances. James Grieve took service with them, and they valued his strong sinews and stern Calvinistic probity as they deserved. But he had hardly been two years on the farm when his young employer, dozing one winter evening on the shafts of his cart coming back from Glossop market, fell off, was run over, and killed. The widow, a young thing, nearly lost her senses with grief, and James, a man of dour exterior and few words, set himself to keep things going on the farm till she was able to look life in the face again. Her sister came to be with her, and there was a child born, which died. She was left better provided for

than most women of her class, and she had expectations from her parents. After the child's death, when the widow began to go about again, and James still managed all the work of the farm, the neighbours naturally fell talking. James took no notice, and he was not a man to meddle with, either in a public-house or elsewhere. But presently a crop of suitors for the widow began to appear, and it became necessary also to settle the destiny of the farm. No one outside ever knew how it came about, for Jenny Pierson, who was a soft, prettyish creature, had given no particular sign; but one Sunday morning the banns of James Grieve, bachelor, and Jenny Pierson, widow, were suddenly given out in the Presbyterian chapel at Clough End, to the mingled astonishment and disgust of the neighbourhood.

Years passed away. James held his own for a time with any farmer of the neighbourhood. But, by the irony of fate, the prosperity which his industry and tenacity deserved was filched from him little by little by the ill-health of his wife. She bore him two sons, Reuben and Alexander, and then she sank into a hopeless, fretful invalid, tormented by the internal ailment of which she ultimately died. But the small farmer who employs little or no labour is lost without an active wife. If he has to pay for the milking of his cows, the making of his butter, the cooking of his food, and the nursing of his children, his little margin of profit is soon eaten away; and with the disappearance of this margin, existence becomes a blind struggle. Even James Grieve, the man of iron will and indomitable industry, was beaten at last in the unequal contest. The life at the farm became bitter and tragic. Jenny grew more helpless and more peevish year by year; James was not exactly unkind to her, but he could not but revenge upon her in some degree that

ruin of his silent ambitions which her sickliness had brought upon him.

The two sons grew up in the most depressing atmosphere conceivable. Reuben, who was to have the farm, developed a shy and hopeless taciturnity under the pressure of the family chagrin and privations, and found his only relief in the emotions and excitements of Methodism. Sandy seemed at first more fortunate. An opening was found for him at Sheffield, where he was apprenticed to a rope-maker, a cousin of his mother's. This man died before Sandy was more than halfway through his time, and the youth went through a period of hardship and hand-to-mouth living which ended at last in the usual tramp to London. Here, after a period of semi-starvation, he found it impossible to get work at his own trade, and finally drifted into carpentering and cabinet-making. The beginnings of this new line of life were incredibly difficult, owing to the jealousy of his fellow-workmen, who had properly served their time to the trade, and did not see why an interloper from another trade, without qualifications, should be allowed to take the bread out of their mouths. One of Sandy's first successes was in what was called a 'shop-meeting,' a gathering of all the employés of the firm he worked for, before whom the North-countryman pleaded to be allowed to earn his bread. The tall, finely grown, famished-looking lad spoke with a natural eloquence, and here and there with a Biblical force of phrase—the inheritance of his Scotch blood and training—which astonished and melted most of his hearers. He was afterwards let alone, and even taught by the men about him, in return for 'drinks,' which swallowed up sometimes as much as a third of his wages.

After two or three years he was fully master of his trade, an admirable workman, and a keen politician to

boot. All this time he had spent his evenings in self-education, buying books with every spare penny, and turning specially to science and mathematics. His abilities presently drew the attention of the heads of the Shoreditch firm for which he worked, and when the post of a foreman in a West-end shop, in which they were largely interested, fell vacant, it was their influence which put Sandy Grieve into the well-paid and coveted post. He could hardly believe his own good fortune. The letter in which he announced it to his father reached the farm just as the last phase of his mother's long martyrdom was developing. The pair, already old—James with work and anxiety, his wife with sickness—read it together. They shut it up without a word. Its tone of jubilant hope seemed to have nothing to do with them, or seemed rather to make their own narrowing prospects look more narrow, and the approach of the King of Terrors more black and relentless, than before. Jenny lay back on her poor bed with the tears of a dumb self-pity running down her cheeks, and James's only answer to it was conveyed in a brief summons to Sandy to come and see his mother before the end. The prosperous son, broadened out of knowledge almost by good feeding and good clothes, arrived. He brought money, which was accepted without much thanks; but his mother treated him almost as a stranger, and the dour James, while not unwilling to draw out his account of himself, would look him up and down from under his bushy grey eyebrows, and often interpose with some sarcasm on his 'foine' ways of speaking, or his 'gentleman's cloos.' Sandy was ill at ease. He was really anxious to help, and his heart was touched by his mother's state; but perhaps there was a strain of self-importance in his manner, a half-conscious inclination to thank God that his life was not to be as theirs,

which came out in spite of him, and dug a gulf between him and them. Only his brother Reuben, dull, pious, affectionate Reuben, took to him, and showed that patient and wondering admiration of the younger's cleverness, which probably Sandy had reckoned on as his right from his parents also.

On the last evening of his stay—he had luckily been able to make his coming coincide with an Easter three days' holiday—he was sitting beside his mother in the dusk, thinking, with a relief which every now and then roused in him a pang of shame, that in fourteen or fifteen more hours he should be back in London, in the world which made much of him and knew what a smart fellow he was, when his mother opened her eyes—so wide and blue they looked in her pinched, death-stricken face—and looked at him full.

‘Sandy!’

‘Yes, mother!’ he said, startled—for he had been sunk in his own thoughts—and laying his hand on hers.

‘You should get a wife, Sandy.’

‘Well, some day, mother, I suppose I shall,’ he said, with a change of expression which the twilight concealed.

She was silent a minute, then she began again, slow and feebly, but with a strange clearness of articulation.

‘If she’s sick, Sandy, *doan’t grudge it her*. Women ‘ud die fasster iv they could.’

The whole story of the slow consuming bitterness of years spoke through those fixed and filmy eyes. Her son gave a sudden irrepressible sob. There was a faint lightening in the little wrinkled face, and the lips made a movement. He kissed her, and in that last moment of consciousness the mother almost forgave him his good clothes and his superior airs.

Poor Sandy! Looking to his after story, it seems

strange that any one should ever have felt him unbearably prosperous. About six months after his mother's death he married a milliner's assistant, whom he met first in the pit of a theatre, and whom he was already courting when his mother gave him the advice recorded. She was French, from the neighbourhood of Arles, and of course a Catholic. She had come to London originally as lady's-maid to a Russian family settled at Nice. Shortly after their arrival, her master shot his young wife for a supposed intrigue, and then put an end to himself. Naturally the whole establishment was scattered, and the pretty Louise Suveret found herself alone, with a few pounds, in London. Thanks to the kind offices of the book-keeper in the hotel where they had been staying, she had been introduced to a milliner of repute in the Bond Street region, and the results of a trial given her, in which her natural Frenchwoman's gift and her acquired skill came out triumphant, led to her being permanently engaged. Thenceforward her good spirits—which had been temporarily depressed, not so much by her mistress's tragic ending as by her own unexpected discomfort—reappeared in all their native exuberance, and she proceeded to enjoy London. She defended herself first against the friendly book-keeper, who became troublesome, and had to be treated with the most decided ingratitude. Then she gradually built herself up a store of clothes of the utmost elegance, which were the hopeless envy of the other girls employed at Madame Catherine's. And, finally, she looked about for serviceable acquaintances.

One night, in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, while 'The Lady of Lyons' was going on, Sandy Grieve found himself next to a dazzling creature, with fine black eyes, the smooth olive skin of the South, white teeth, and small dimpled hands, hardly spoiled at all by

her trade. She had with her a plain girl-companion, and her manner, though conscious and provocative, had that haughtiness, that implied readiness to take offence, which is the *grisette's* substitute for breeding. She was, however, affable to Sandy, whose broad shoulders and handsome, well-to-do air attracted her attention. She allowed him to get her a programme, to beguile her into conversation, and, finally, to offer her a cup of coffee. Afterwards he escorted the two to the door of their lodging, in one of the streets off Theobald's Road, and walked home in a state of excitement which astonished him.

This happened immediately before his visit to the farm and his mother's death. During the six months after that event Sandy knew the 'joy of eventful living.' He was establishing his own business position, and he was courting Louise Suveret with alternations of despair and flattered passion, which stirred the now burly, full-blooded North-countryman to his depths. She let him escort her to her work in the morning and take her home in the evening, and she allowed him to give her as many presents of gloves, ribbons, bonbons—for which last she had a childish passion—and the like, as he pleased. But when he pressed her to marry him she generally laughed at him. She was, in reality, observing her world, calculating her chances, and she had several other strings to her bow, as Sandy shrewdly suspected, though she never allowed his jealousy any information to feed upon. It was simply owing to the failure of the most promising of these other strings—a failure which roused in Louise one of those white heats of passion which made the chief flaw in her organisation, viewed as a pleasure-procuring machine—that Sandy found his opportunity. In a moment of mortal chagrin and outraged vanity she consented to marry him, and three weeks after-



wards he was the blissful owner of the black eyes, the small hands, the quick tongue, and the seductive *chiffons* he had so long admired more or less at a distance.

Their marriage lasted six years. At first Louise found some pleasure in arranging the little house Sandy had taken for her in a new suburb, and in making, wearing, and altering the additional gowns which their joint earnings—for she still worked intermittently at her trade—allowed her to enjoy. After the first infatuation was a little cooled, Sandy discovered in her a paganism so unblushing that his own Scotch and Puritan instincts reacted in a sort of superstitious fear. It seemed impossible that God Almighty should long allow Himself to be flouted as Louise flouted Him. He found also that the sense of truth was almost non-existent in her, and her vanity, her greed of dress and admiration, was so consuming, so frenzied, that his only hope of a peaceful life—as he quickly realised—lay in ministering to it. Her will soon got the upper hand, and he sank into the patient servant of her pleasures, snatching feverishly at all she gave him in return with the instinct of a man who, having sold his soul, is determined at least to get the last farthing he can of the price.

They had two children in four years—David Suveret and Louise Stephanie. Louise resented the advent of the second so intensely that poor Sandy became conscious, before the child appeared, of a fatal and appalling change in her relation to him. She had been proud of her first-born—an unusually handsome and precocious child—and had taken pleasure in dressing it and parading it before the eyes of the other mothers in their terrace, all of whom she passionately despised. But Louie nearly died of neglect, and the two years that followed her birth were black indeed

for Sandy. His wife, he knew, had begun to hate him; in business his energies failed him, and his employers cooled towards him as he grew visibly less pushing and inventive. The little household got deeper and deeper into debt, and towards the end of the time Louise would sometimes spend the whole day away from home without a word of explanation. So great was his nervous terror—strong, broad fellow that he was—of that pent-up fury in her, which a touch might have unloosed, that he never questioned her. At last the inevitable end came. He got home one summer evening to find the house empty and ransacked, the children—little things of five and two—sitting crying in the desolate kitchen, and a crowd of loud-voiced, indignant neighbours round the door. To look for her would have been absurd. Louise was much too clever to disappear and leave traces behind. Besides, he had no wish to find her. The hereditary self in him accepted his disaster as representing the natural retribution which the canny Divine vengeance keeps in store for those who take to themselves wives of the daughters of Heth. And there was the sense, too, of emerging from something unclean, of recovering his manhood.

He took his two children and went to lodgings in a decent street near the Gray's Inn Road. There for a year things went fairly well with him. His boy and girl, whom he paid a neighbour to look after during the day, made something to come home to. As he helped the boy, who was already at school, with his lesson for the next day, or fed Louie, perched on his knee, with the bits from his plate demanded by her covetous eyes and open mouth, he got back, little by little, his self-respect. He returned, too, in the evenings to some of his old pursuits, joined a Radical club near, and some science lectures. He was aged and much more silent

than of yore, but not unhappy; his employers, too, feeling that their man had somehow recovered himself, and hearing something of his history, were sorry for him, and showed it.

Then one autumn evening a constable knocked at his door, and, coming in upon the astonished group of father and children, produced from his pocket a soaked and tattered letter, and showing Sandy the address, asked if it was for him. Sandy, on seeing it, stood up, put down Lonie, who, half undressed, had been having a ride on his knee, and asked his visitor to come out on to the landing. There he read the letter under the gas-lamp, and put it deliberately into his pocket.

‘Where is she?’ he asked.

‘In Lambeth mortuary,’ said the man briefly—‘picked up two hours ago. Nothing else found on her but this.’

Half an hour afterwards Sandy stood by a slab in the mortuary, and, drawing back a sheet which covered the burden on it, stood face to face with his dead wife. The black brows were drawn, the small hands clenched. What struck Sandy with peculiar horror was that one delicate wrist was broken, having probably struck something in falling. She—who in life had rebelled so hotly against the least shadow of physical pain! Thanks to the bandage which had been passed round it, the face was not much altered. She could not have been long in the water. Probably about the time when he was walking home from work, she—— He felt himself suffocating—the bare whitewashed walls grew dim and wavering.

The letter found upon her was the strangest appeal to his pity. Her seducer had apparently left her; she was in dire straits, and there was, it seemed, no one but Sandy in all London on whose compassion she could throw herself. She asked him, callously, for

money to take her back to some Nice relations. They need only know what she chose to tell them, as she calmly pointed out, and, once in Nice, she could make a living. She would like to see her children, she said, before she left, but she supposed he would have to settle that. How had she got his address? From his place of business probably, in some roundabout way.

Then what had happened? Had she been seized with a sudden persuasion that he would not answer, that it was all useless trouble; and in one of those accesses of blind rage by which her clear, sharp brain-life was at all times apt to be disturbed, had she rushed out to end it all at once and for ever? It made him forgive her that she *could* have destroyed herself—could have faced that awful plunge—that icy water—that death-struggle for breath. He gauged the misery she must have gone through by what he knew of her sensuous love for comfort, for *bien-être*. He saw her again as she had been that night at the theatre when they first met,—the little crisp black curls on the temples, the dazzling eyes, the artificial pearls round the neck, the slight traces of powder and rouge on brow and cheek, which made her all the more attractive and tempting to his man's eye—the pretty foot, which he first noticed as she stepped from the threshold of the theatre into the street. Nature had made all that, to bring her work to this grim bed at last!

He himself lived eighteen months afterwards. His acquaintances never dreamt of connecting his death with his wife's, and the connection, if it existed, would have been difficult to trace. Still, if little David could have put his experiences at this time into words, they might have thrown some light on an event which was certainly a surprise to the small world which took an interest in Sandy Grieve.

There was a certain sound which remained all

through his life firmly fixed in David's memory, and which he never thought of without a sense of desolation, a shiver of sick dismay, such as belonged to no other association whatever. It was the sound of a long sigh, brought up, as it seemed, from the very depths of being, and often, often repeated. The thought of it brought with it a vision of a small bare room at night, with two iron bedsteads, one for Louie, one for himself and his father; a bit of smouldering fire in a tiny grate, and beside it a man's figure bowed over the warmth, thrown out dark against the distempered wall, and sitting on there hour after hour; of a child, wakened intermittently by the light, and tormented by the recurrent sound, till it had once more burrowed into the bed-clothes deep enough to shut out everything but sleep. All these memories belonged to the time immediately following on Louise's suicide. Probably, during the interval between his wife's death and his own, Sandy suffered severely from the effects of strong nervous shock, coupled with a certain growth of religious melancholy, the conditions for which are rarely wanting in the true Calvinist blood. Owing to the privations and exposure of his early manhood, too, it is possible that he was never in reality the strong man he looked. At any rate, his fight for his life when it came was a singularly weak one. The second winter after Louise's death was bitterly cold; he was overworked, and often without sleep. One bleak east-wind day struck home. He took to his bed with a chill, which turned to peritonitis; the system showed no power of resistance, and he died.

On the day but one before he died, when the mortal pain was gone, but death was absolutely certain, he sent post-haste for his brother Reuben. Reuben he believed was married to a decent woman, and to Reuben he meant to commend his children.

Reuben arrived, looking more bewildered and stupid than ever, pure countryman that he was, in this London which he had never seen. Sandy looked at him with a deep inward dissatisfaction. But what could he do? His marriage had cut him off from his old friends, and since its wreck he had had no energy wherewith to make new ones.

‘I’ve never seen your wife, Reuben,’ he said, when they had talked a while.

Reuben was silent a minute, apparently collecting his thoughts.

‘Naw,’ he said at last; ‘naw. She sent yo her luv, and she hopes iv it’s the Lord’s will to tak yo, that it ull foind yo prepared.’

He said it like a lesson. A sort of nervous tremor and shrinking overspread Sandy’s face. He had suffered so much through religion during the last few months, that in this final moment of humanity the soul had taken refuge in numbness—apathy. Let God decide. He could think it out no more; and in this utter feebleness his terrors of hell—the ineradicable deposit of childhood and inheritance—had passed away. He gathered his forces for the few human and practical things which remained to him to do.

‘Did she get on comfortable with father?’ he asked, fixing Reuben with his eyes, which had the penetration of death.

Reuben looked discomposed, and cleared his throat once or twice.

‘Wal, it warn’t what yo may call just coomfortable atween ’em. Naw, I’ll not say it wor.’

‘What was wrong?’ demanded Sandy.

Reuben fidgeted.

‘Wal,’ he said at last, throwing up his head in desperation, ‘I spose a woman likes her house to hersel when she’s fust married. He wor childish like, an

mighty troublesome times. An she's allus stirrin', an routin', is Hannah. Udder foak must look aloive too.'

The conflict in Reuben's mind between his innate truthfulness and his desire to excuse his wife was curious to see. Sandy had a vision of his father sitting in his dotage by his own hearth, and ministered to by a daughter-in-law who grudged him his years and his infirmities, as he had grudged his wife all the troublesome incidents of her long decay. But it only affected him now as it bore upon what was still living in him, the one feeling which still survived amid the wreck made by circumstance and disease.

'Will she be kind to *them*?' he said sharply, with a motion of the head towards the children, first towards David, who sat drooping on his father's bed, where for some ten or twelve hours now he had remained glued, refusing to touch either breakfast or dinner, and then towards Louie, who was on the floor by the fire, with her rag dolls, which she was dressing up with smiles and chatter in a strange variety of finery. 'If not, she shan't have 'em. There's time yet.'

But the grey hue was already on his cheek, his feet were already cold. The nurse in the far corner of the room, looking up as he spoke, gave him mentally 'an hour or two.'

Reuben flushed and sat bolt upright, his gnarled and wrinkled hands trembling on his knees.

'She *shall* be kind to 'em,' he said with energy. 'Gie em to us, Sandy. You wouldna send your childer to strangers?'

The clannish instinct in Sandy responded. Besides, in spite of his last assertion, he knew very well there was nothing else to be done.

'There's money,' he said slowly. 'She'll not need to stint them of anything. This is a poor place,' for

at the word 'money' he noticed that Reuben's eyes travelled with an awakening shrewdness over the barely furnished room; 'but it was the debts first, and then I had to put by for the children. None of the shop-folk or the fellows at the club ever came here. We lived as we liked. There's an insurance, and there's some savings, and there's some commission money owing from the firm, and there's a bit investment Mr. Gurney (naming the head partner) helped me into last year. There's altogether about six hundred pound. You'll get the interest of it for the children; it'll go into Gurneys', and they'll give five per cent. for it. Mr. Gurney's been very kind. He came here yesterday, and he's got it all. You go to him.'

He stopped for weakness. Reuben's eyes were round. Six hundred pounds! Who'd have thought it of Sandy?—after that bad lot of a wife, and he not thirty!

'And what d' yo want Davy to be, Sandy?'

'You must settle,' said the father, with a long sigh. 'Depends on him—what he turns to. If he wants to farm, he can learn with you, and put in his money when he sees an opening. For the bit farms in our part there'd be enough. But I'm feeart' (the old Derbyshire word slipped out unawares) 'he'll not stay in the country. He's too sharp, and you mustn't force him. If you see he's not the farming sort, when he's thirteen or fourteen or so, take Mr. Gurney's advice, and bind him to a trade. Mr. Gurney 'll pay the premiums for him and he can have the balance of the money—for I've left him to manage it all, for himself and Louie too—when he's fit to set up for himself.—You and Hannah 'll deal honest wi 'em?'

The question was unexpected, and as he put it with



a startling energy the dying man raised himself on his elbow, and looked sharply at his brother.

‘D’ yo think I’d cheat yo, or your childer, Sandy?’ cried Reuben, flushing and pricked to the heart.

Sandy sank back again, his sudden qualm appeased. ‘No,’ he said, his thoughts returning painfully to his son. ‘I’m feear’t he’ll not stay wi you. He’s cleverer than I ever was, and I was the cleverest of us all.’

The words had in them a whole epic of human fate. Under the prick of them Reuben found a tongue, not now for his wife, but for himself.

‘It’s not cliverness as ull help yo now, Sandy, wi your Mäaker! and yo feeace t’ feeace wi ‘un!’ he cried. ‘It’s nowt but satisfashun by t’ blood o’ Jesus!’

Sandy made no answer, unless, indeed, the poor heart within made its last cry of agony to heaven at the words. The sinews of the spiritual as well as the physical man were all spent and useless.

‘Davy,’ he called presently. The child, who had been sitting motionless during this talk watching his father, slid along the bed with alacrity, and tucking his little legs and feet well away from Sandy’s long frame, put his head down on the pillow. His father turned his eyes to him, and with a solemn, lingering gaze took in the childish face, the thick, tumbled hair, the expression, so piteous, yet so intelligent. Then he put up his own large hand, and took both the boy’s into its cold and feeble grasp. His eyelids fell, and the breathing changed. The nurse hurriedly rose, lifted up Louie from her toys, and put her on the bed beside him. The child, disturbed in her play and frightened by she knew not what, set up a sudden cry. A tremor seemed to pass through the shut lids at the sound, a slight compression of pain appeared in the grey lips. It was Sandy Grieve’s last sign of life.

Reuben Grieve remembered well the letter he had written to his wife, with infinite difficulty, from beside his brother's dead body. He told her that he was bringing the children back with him. The poor bairns had got nobody in the world to look to but their uncle and aunt. And they would not cost Hannah a penny. For Mr. Gurney would pay thirty pounds a year for their keep and bringing up.

With what care and labour his clumsy fingers had penned the last sentence so that Hannah might read it plain!

Afterwards he brought the children home. As he drove his light cart up the rough and lonely road to Needham Farm, Louie cried with the cold and the dark, and Davy, with his hands tucked between his knees, grew ever more and more silent, his restless little head turning perpetually from side to side, as though he were trying to discover something of the strange, new world to which he had been brought, through the gloom of the February evening.

Then at the sound of wheels outside in the lane, the back door of the farm was opened, and a dark figure stood on the threshold.

'Yo're late,' Reuben heard. It was Hannah's piercing voice that spoke. 'Bring 'em into t' back kitchen, an let 'em take their shoes off afore they coom ony further.'

By which Reuben knew that it had been scrubbing-day, and that her flagstones were more in Hannah's mind than the guests he had brought her. He obeyed, and then the barefooted trio entered the front kitchen together. Hannah came forward and looked at the children—at David white and blinking—at the four-year-old Louie, bundled up in an old shawl, which dragged on the ground behind her, and staring wildly

round her at the old low-roofed kitchen with the terror of the trapped bird.

‘Hannah, they’re varra cold,’ said Reuben—‘ha yo got summat hot?’

‘Theer’ll be supper bime-by,’ Hannah replied with decision. ‘I’ve naw time scrubbin-days to be foolin about wi things out o’ hours. I’ve nobbut just got straight an cleaned mysel. They can sit down an warm theirsels. I conno say they feature ony of *yor* belongins, Reuben.’ And she went to put Louie on the settle by the fire. But as the tall woman in black approached her, the child hit out madly with her small fists and burst into a loud howl of crying.

‘Get away, nasty woman! *Nasty* woman—ugly woman! Take me away—I want my daddy,—I want my daddy.’

And she threw herself kicking on the floor, while, to Hannah’s exasperation, a piece of erumbling bun she had been holding tight in her sticky little hand escaped and littered all the new-washed stones.

‘Tak yor niece oop, Reuben, an mak her behave’—the mistress of the house commanded angrily. ‘She’ll want a stick takken to her, soon, *I* can see.’

Reuben obeyed so far as he could, but Louie’s shrieks only ceased when, by the combined efforts of husband and wife, she had been put to bed, so exhausted with rage, excitement, and the journey, that sleep mercifully took possession of her just after she had performed the crowning feat of knocking the tea and bread and butter Reuben brought her out of her unele’s hand and all over the room.

Meanwhile, David sat perfectly still in a chair against the wall, beside the old clock, and stared about him; at the hams and bunches of dried herbs hanging from the ceiling; at the ehiffonnier, with its red baize doors under a brass trellis-work; at the high wooden

settle, the framed funeral cards, and the two or three coloured prints, now brown with age, which Reuben had hung up twenty years before, to celebrate his marriage. Hannah was propitiated by the boy's silence, and as she got supper ready she once or twice noticed his fine black eyes and his curly hair.

'Yo can coom an get yor supper,' she said to him, more graciously than she had spoken yet. 'It's a mussy yo doan't goo shrikin like your sister.'

'Thank you, ma'am,' said the little fellow, with a townsman's politeness, hardly understanding, however, a word of her north-country dialect—'I'm not hungry.—You've got a picture of General Washington there, ma'am;' and, raising a small hand trembling with nervousness and fatigue, he pointed to one of the prints opposite.

'Wal, I niver,' said Hannah, with a stare of astonishment. 'Yo're a quare lot—the two o' yer.'

One thing more Reuben remembered with some vividness in connection with the children's arrival. When they were both at last asleep—Louie in an unused room at the back, on an old wooden bedstead, which stood solitary in a wilderness of bare boards; David in a sort of cupboard off the landing, which got most of its light and air from a wooden trellis-work, overlooking the staircase—Hannah said abruptly to her husband, as they two were going to bed, 'When ull Mr. Gurney pay that money?'

'Twice a year—so his clerk towd me—Christmas an Midsummer. Praps we shan't want to use it aw, Hannah; praps we might save soom on it for t' childer. Their keep, iv yo feed em on paaritch, is nobbut a fleabite, and they'n got a good stock o' cloos, Sandy's nurse towd me.'

He looked anxiously at Hannah. In his inmost

heart there was a passionate wish to do his duty to Sandy's orphans, fighting with a dread of his wife, which was the fruit of long habit and constitutional weakness.

Hannah faced round upon him. It was Reuben's misfortune that dignity was at all times impossible to him. Now, as he sat in his shirt-sleeves and stocking-feet, flushed with the exertion of pulling off his heavy boots, the light of the tallow candle falling on his weak eyes with their red rims, on his large open mouth with the conspicuous gap in its front teeth, and his stubbly hair, he was more than usually grotesque. 'As slamp an wobbly as an owd corn-boggart,' so his neighbours described him when they wished to be disrespectful, and the simile fitted very closely with the dishevelled, disjointed appearance which was at all times characteristic of him, Sundays or weekdays. No one studying the pair, especially at such a moment as this—the *malaise* of the husband—the wife towering above him, her grey hair hanging loose round her black brows and sallow face instinct with a rugged and indomitable energy—could have doubted in whose hands lay the government of Needham Farm.

'I'll thank yo not to talk nonsense, Reuben Grieve,' said his wife sharply. 'D'yo think they're *my* flesh an blood, thoose childer? An who'll ha to do for em but me, I should loike to know? Who'll ha to put up wi their messin an their dirt but *me*? Twenty year ha yo an I been married. Reuben, an niver till this neet did I ha to goo down on my knees an sweep oop after scrubbin-day! Iv I'm to be moidered wi em, I'll be paid for 't. Soa I let yo know—it's little enough.'

And Hannah took her payment. As he sat in the sun, looking back on the last seven years, with a slow

and dreaming mind, Reuben recognised, using his own phrases for the matter, that the children's thirty pounds had been the pivot of Hannah's existence. He was but a small sheep farmer, with very scanty capital. By dint of hard work and painful thrift, the childless pair had earned a sufficient living in the past—nay, even put by a bit, if the truth of Hannah's savings-bank deposits were known. But every fluctuation in their small profits tried them sorely—tried Hannah especially, whose temper was of the brooding and grasping order. The *certainty* of Mr. Gurney's cheques made them very soon the most cheerful facts in the farm life. On two days in the year—the 20th of June and the 20th of December—Reuben might be sure of finding his wife in a good temper, and he had long shrewdly suspected, without inquiring, that Hannah's savings-bank book, since the children came, had been very pleasant reading to her.

Reuben fidgeted uncomfortably as he thought of those savings. Certainly the children had not cost what was paid for them. He began to be oddly exercised this Sunday morning on the subject of the porridge Louie hated so much. Was it his fault or Hannah's if the frugal living which had been the rule for all the remoter farms of the Peak—nay, for the whole north country—in his father's time, and had been made doubly binding, as it were, on the dwellers in Needham Farm by James Grieve's Scotch blood and habits, had survived under their roof, while all about them a more luxurious standard of food and comfort was beginning to obtain among their neighbours? Where could you find a finer set of men than the Berwickshire hinds, of whom his father came, and who were reared on 'parritch' from year's end to year's end?

And yet, all the same, Reuben's memory was full

this morning of disturbing pictures of a little London child, full of town daintiness and accustomed to the spoiling of an indulgent father, crying herself into fits over the new unpalatable food, refusing it day after day, till the sharp, wilful face had grown pale and pinched with famine, and caring no more apparently for her aunt's beatings than she did for the clumsy advances by which her uncle would sometimes try to propitiate her. There had been a great deal of beating—whenever Reuben thought of it he had a superstitious way of putting Sandy out of his mind as much as possible. Many times he had gone far away from the house to avoid the sound of the blows and shrieks he was powerless to stop.

Well, but what harm had come of it all? Louie was a strong lass now, if she were a bit thin and overgrown. David was as fine a boy as anyone need wish to see.

*David?*

Reuben got up from his seat at the farm door, took his pipe out of his pocket, and went to hang over the garden-gate, that he might unravel some very worrying thoughts at a greater distance from Hannah.

The day before he had been overtaken coming out of Clough End by Mr. Ancrum, the lame minister. He and Grieve liked one another. If there had been intrigues raised against the minister within the 'Christian Brethren' congregation, Reuben Grieve had taken no part in them.

After some general conversation, Mr. Ancrum suddenly said, 'Will you let me have a word with you, Mr. Grieve, about your nephew David—if you'll not think me intruding?'

'Say on, sir—say on,' said Reuben hastily, but with an inward shrinking.

'Well, Mr. Grieve, you've got a remarkable boy there

—a curious and remarkable boy. What are you going to do with him?’

‘Do wi him?—me, sir? Wal, I doan’t know as I’ve iver thowt mich about it,’ said Reuben, but with an agitation of manner that struck his interrogator. ‘He be varra useful to me on t’ farm, Mr. Ancrum. Soom toimes i’ t’ year theer’s a lot doin, yo know, sir, even on a bit place like ours, and he ha gitten a good schoolin, he ha.’

The apologetic incoherence of the little speech was curious. Mr. Ancrum did not exactly know how to take his man.

‘I dare say he’s useful. But he’s not going to be the ordinary labourer, Mr. Grieve—he’s made of quite different stuff, and, if I may say so, it will pay you very well to recognise it in good time. That boy will read books now which hardly any grown man of his class—about here, at any rate—would be able to read. Aye, and talk about them, too, in a way to astonish you!’

‘Yes, I know at he’s uncommon eliver wi his books, is Davy,’ Reuben admitted.

‘Oh! it’s not only that. But he’s got an unusual brain and a wonderful memory. And it would be a thousand pities if he were to make nothing of them. You say he’s useful, but—excuse me, Mr. Grieve—he seems to me to spend three parts of his time in loafing and desultory reading. He wants more teaching—he wants steady training. Why don’t you send him to Manchester,’ said the minister boldly, ‘and apprentice him? It costs money, no doubt.’

And he looked interrogatively at Reuben. Reuben, however, said nothing. They were toiling up the steep road from Clough End to the high farms under the Scout, a road which tried the minister’s infirm limb severely; otherwise he would have taken more



notice of his companion's awkward flush and evident discomposure.

'But it would pay you in the long run,' he said, when they stopped to take breath; 'it would be a capital investment if the boy lives, I promise you that, Mr. Grieve. And he could carry on his education there, too, a bit—what with evening classes and lectures, and the different libraries he could get the use of. It's wonderful how all the facilities for working-class education have grown in Manchester during the last few years.'

'Aye, sir—I spose they have—I spose they have,' said Reuben, uncomfortably, and then seemed incapable of carrying on the conversation any further. Mr. Ancrum talked, but nothing more was to be got out of the farmer. At last the minister turned back, saying, as he shook hands, 'Well, let me know if I can be of any use. I have a good many friends in Manchester. I tell you that's a boy to be proud of, Mr. Grieve, a boy of promise, if ever there was one. But he wants taking the right way. He's got plenty of mixed stuff in him, bad and good. I should feel it anxious work, the next few years, if he were my boy.'

Now it was really this talk which was fermenting in Reuben, and which, together with the 'rumpus' between Hannah and Louie, had led to his singularly disturbed state of conscience this Sunday morning. As he stood, miserably pulling at his pipe, the whole prospect of sloping field, and steep distant moor, gradually vanished from his eyes, and, instead, he saw the same London room which David's memory held so tenaciously—he saw Sandy raising himself from his death-bed with that look of sudden distrust—'Now, you'll deal honest wi 'em, Reuben?'

Reuben groaned in spirit. 'A boy to be proud of' indeed. It seemed to him, now that he was perforce

made to think about it, that he had never been easy in his mind since Sandy's orphans came to the house. On the one hand, his wife had had her way—how was he to prevent it? On the other, his religious sense had kept pricking and tormenting—like the gadfly that it was.

Who, in the name of fortune, was to ask Hannah for money to send the boy to Manchester and apprentice him? And who was going to write to Mr. Gurney about it without her leave? Once upset the system of things on which those two half-yearly cheques depended, how many more of them would be forthcoming? And how was Hannah going to put up with the loss of them? It made Reuben shiver to think of it.

Shouts from the lane behind. Reuben suddenly raised himself and made for the gate at the corner of the farmyard. He came out upon the children, who had been to Sunday school at Clough End since dinner, and were now in consequence in a state of restless animal spirits. Louie was swinging violently on the gate which barred the path on to the moor. David was shying stones at a rook's nest opposite, the elatter of the outraged colony to which it belonged sounding as music in his ears.

They stared when they saw Reuben cross the road, sit down on a stone beside David, and take out his pipe. David ceased throwing, and Louie, crossing her feet and steadying herself as she sat on the topmost bar of the gate by a grip on either side, leant hard on her hands and watched her uncle in silence. When caught unawares by their elders, these two had always something of the air of captives defending themselves in an alien country.

'Wal, Davy, did tha have Mr. Ancrum in school?' began Reuben, affecting a brisk manner, oddly unlike him.

‘Naw. It wor Brother Winterbotham from Halifax, or soom sich name.’

‘Wor he edifyin, Davy?’

‘He wor—he wor—a leather-yed,’ said David, with sudden energy, and, taking up a stone again, he flung it at a tree trunk opposite, with a certain vindictiveness as though Brother Winterbotham was sitting there.

‘Now, yo’re not speaking as yo owt, Davy,’ said Reuben reprovingly, as he puffed away at his pipe and felt the pleasantness of the spring sunshine which streamed down into the lane through the still bare but budding branches of the sycamores.

‘He wor a leather-yed,’ David repeated with emphasis. ‘He said it wor Alexander fought t’ battle o’ Marathon.’

Reuben was silent for a while. When tests of this kind were going, he could but lie low. However, David’s answer, after a bit, suggested an opening to him.

‘Yo’ve a rare deal o’ book-larnin for a farmin lad, Davy. If yo wor at a trade now, or a mill-hand, or summat o’ that soart, yo’d ha noan so mich time for readin as yo ha now.’

The boy looked at him askance, with his keen black eyes. His unele puzzled him.

‘Wal, I’m not a mill-hand, onyways,’ he said, shortly, ‘an I doan’t mean to be.’

‘Noa, yo’re too lazy,’ said Louie shrilly, from the top of the gate. ‘Theer’s heaps o’ boys no bigger nor yo, arns their ten shillins a week.’

‘They’re welcome,’ said David, laconically, throwing another stone at the water to keep his hand in. For some years now the boy had cherished a hatred of the mill-life on which Clough End and the other small towns and villages in the neighbourhood existed. The

thought of the long monotonous hours at the mules or the looms was odious to the lad whose joys lay in free moorland wanderings with the sheep, in endless reading, in talks with 'Lias Dawson.

'Wal, now, I'm real glad to heer yo say sich things, Davy, lad,' said Reuben, with a curious flutter of manner. 'I'm real glad. So yo take to the farmin, Davy? Wal, it's nateral. All yor forbears—all on em leastways, nobbut yor feyther—got their livin off t' land. It cooms nateral to a Grieve.'

The boy made no answer—did not commit himself in any way. He went on absently throwing stones.

'Why doan't he larn a trade?' demanded Louie. 'Theer's Harry Wigson, he's gone to Manchester to be prenticed. He doan't goo loafin round aw day.'

Her sharp wits disconcerted Reuben. He looked anxiously at David. The boy coloured furiously, and cast an angry glance at his sister.

'Theer's money wanted for prenticin,' he said shortly.

Reuben felt a stab. Neither of the children knew that they possessed a penny. A blunt word of Hannah's first of all, about 'not gien 'em ony high noshuns o' theirsels,' aided on Reuben's side by the natural secretiveness of the peasant in money affairs, had effectually concealed all knowledge of their own share in the family finances from the orphans.

He reached out a soil-stained hand, shaking already with incipient age, and laid it on David's sleeve.

'Art tha hankerin after a trade, lad?' he said hastily, nay, harshly.

David looked at his uncle astonished. A hundred thoughts flew through the boy's mind. Then he raised his head and caught sight of the great peak of Kinder Low in the distance, beyond the green swells of meadow-land,—the heathery slopes running up into its

rocky breast,—the blaek patch on the brown, to the left, which marked the site of the Smithy.

‘No,’ he said decidedly. ‘No; I can’t say as I am. I like t’ farmin well enough.’

And then, boy-like, hating to be talked to about himself, he shook himself free of his uncle and walked away. Reuben fell to his pipe again with a beaming countenance.

‘Louie, my gell,’ he said.

‘Yes,’ said the child, not moving.

‘Coom yo heer, Louie.’

She unwillingly got down and came up to him.

Reuben put down his pipe, and fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. Out of it, with difficulty, he produced a sixpence.

‘Art tha partial to goodies, Louie?’ he said, dropping his voice almost to a whisper, and holding up the coin before her.

Louie nodded, her eyes glistening at the magnitude of the coin. Uncle Reuben might be counted on for a certain number of pennies during the year, but silver was unheard of.

‘Tak it then, child, an welcome. If yo have a sweet tooth—an it’s t’ way wi moast gells—I conno see as it can be onything else but Providence as gave it yo. So get yorsel soom bull’s-eyes, Louie, an—an’—he looked a little conscious as he slipped the coin into her eager hand—‘doan’t let on ti your aunt! She’d think mebbe I wor spoilin your teeth, or summat,—an, Louie’—

Was Uncle Reuben gone mad? For the first time in her life, as it seemed to Louie, he was looking at what she had on, nay, was even taking up her dress between his finger and thumb.

‘Is thissen your Sunday frock, chilt?’

‘Yes,’ said the girl, flushing scarlet, ‘bean’t it a dishelout?’

And she stood looking down at it with passionate scorn. It was a worn and patched garment of brown alpaca, made out of an ancient gown of Hannah's.

'Wal, I'm naw judge i' these matters,' said Reuben, dubiously, drawing out his spectacles. 'It's got naw holes 'at I can see, but it's not varra smart, perhaps. Satan's varra active wi gells on this pint o' dress—yo mun tak noatice o' that, Louie—but—listen heer'—

And he drew her nearer to him by her skirt, looking cautiously up and down the lane and across to the farm.

'If I get a good price for t' wool this year—an theer's a new merchant coomin round, yan moor o' t' buyin soart nor owd Croker, soa they say, I'st save yo five shillin for a frock, chilt. Yo can goo an buy it, an I'st mak it straight wi yor aunt. But I mun get a good price, yo know, or your aunt ull be fearfu' bad to manage.'

And he gazed up at her as though appealing to her common sense in the matter, and to her understanding of both his and her situation. Louie's cheeks were red, her eyes did not meet his. They looked away, down towards Clough End.

'Theer's a blue cotton at Hinton's,' she said, hurriedly—'a light-blue cotton. They want sixpence farthin,—but Annie Wigson says yo could bate 'em a bit. But what's t' use?' she added, with a sudden savage darkening of her bright look—'she'd tak it away.'

The tone gave Reuben a shock. But he did not rebuke it. For the first time he and Louie were conspirators in the same plot.

'No, no, I'd see to 'at. But how ud yo get it made?' He was beginning to feel a childish interest in his scheme.

'Me an Annie Wigson ud mak it oop fast enough.

There are things I can do for her; she'd not want no payin, an she's fearfu' good at dressmakin. She wor prenticed two years afore she took ill.'

'Gie me a kiss then, my gell; doan't yo gie naw trouble, an we'st see. But I mun get a good price, yo know.'

And rising, Reuben bent towards his niece. She rose on tiptoe, and just touched his rough cheek. There was no natural childish effusiveness in the action. For the seven years since she left her father, Louie had quite unlearnt kissing.

Reuben proceeded up the lane to the gate leading to the moor. He was in the highest spirits. What a merey he had not bothered Hannah with Mr. Anerum's remarks! Why, the boy wouldn't go to a trade, not if he were sent!

At the gate he ran against David, who came hastily out of the farmyard to intercept him.

'Uncle Reuben, what do they coe that bit watter up theer?' and he pointed up the lane towards the main ridge of the Peak. 'Yo know—that bit pool on t' way to th' Downfall?'

The farmer stopped bewildered.

'That bit watter? What they coe that bit watter? Why, they coe it t' Witch's Pool, or used to i' my yoong days. An for varra good reason too. They drowned an owd witch theer i' my grandfeyther's time—I've heerd my grandmither tell th' tale on't scores o' times. An theer's aw mak o' tales about it, or used to be. I hannot yeerd mony words about it o' late years. Who's been talkin to yo, Davy?'

Louie came running up and listened.

'I doan't know,' said the boy,—'what soart o' tales?'

'Why, they'd use to say th' witch walked, on soom neets i' th' year—Easter Eve, most pertickerlerly—

an foak wor feart to goo onywhere near it on those neets. But doan't yo goo listenin to tales, Davy,' said Reuben, with a paternal effusion most rare with him, and born of his recent proceedings; 'yo'll only freeten yorsel o' neets for nothin.'

'What are witches?' demanded Louie, scornfully. 'I doan't bleeve in 'em.'

Reuben frowned a little.

'Theer wor witches yance, my gell, becos it's in th' Bible, an whatever's in th' Bible's *true*,' and the farmer brought his hand down on the top bar of the gate. 'I'm no gien ony judgment about 'em nowadays. Theer wor aw mak o' queer things said about Jenny Crum an Needham Farm i' th' owd days. I've heerd my grandmither say it worn't worth a Christian man's while to live in Needham Farm when Jenny Crum wor about. She meddled wi everythin—wi his lambs, an his coos, an his childer. I niver seed nothin mysel, so I doan't say nowt—not o' mi awn knowledge. But I doan't soomhow bleeve as it's th' Awmighty's will to freeten a Christian coountry wi witches, *i' th' present dispensation*. An murderin's a gräat sin, wheder it's witches or oother foak.'

'In t' books they doan't coe it t' Witch's Pool at aw,' said Louie, obstinately. 'They coe it t' *Mermaid's Pool*.

'An anoother book coes it a "Hammer-dry-ad,"' said David, mockingly, 'soa theer yo are.'

'Aye, soom faddlin kind of a name they gie it—I know—those Manchester chaps, as cooms trespassin ower t' Scout wheer they aren't wanted. To hear ony yan o' *them* talk, yo'd think theer wor only three fellows like 'im cam ower i' three ships, and two were drowned. T'aint ov ony account what they an their books coe it.'

And Reuben, as he leant against the gate, blew his



smoke contemptuously in the air. It was not often that Reuben Grieve allowed himself, or was allowed by his world, to use airs of superiority towards any other human being whatever. But in the case of the Manchester clerks and warehousemen, who came tramping over the grouse moors which Reuben rented for his sheep, and were always being turned back by keepers or himself—and in their case only—did he exercise, once in a while, the commonest privilege of humanity.

‘Did yo iver know onybody ’at went up on Easter Eve?’ asked David.

Both children hung on the answer.

Reuben scratched his head. The tales of Jenny Crum, once well known to him, had sunk deep into the waves of memory of late years, and his slow mind had some difficulty in recovering them. But at last he said with the sudden brightening of recollection:

‘Aye—of *coorse!*—I knew theer wor soom one. Yo know ’im, Davy, owd ’Lias o’ Frimley Moor? He wor allus a foo’hardy sort o’ creetur. But if he wor short o’ wits when he gan up, he wor mich shorter when he cam down. That wor a rum skit!—now I think on ’t. Sich a seet he wor! He came by here six o’clock i’ th’ mornin. I found him hangin ower t’ yard gate theer, as white an slamp as a puddin cloth oop on eend; an I browt him in, an was for gien him soom tay. An yor aunt, she gien him a warld o’ good advice about his gooins on. But bless yo, he didn’t tak in a word o’ ’t. An for th’ tay, he’d naw sooner swallowed it than he runs out, as quick as leetnin, an browt it aw up. He wor fairly clemmed wi’ t’ cold,—’at he wor. I put in th’ horse, an I took him down to t’ Frimley carrier, an we packed him i’ soom rugs an straw, an soa he got home. But they put him out o’ t’ school, an he wor mouths in his bed. An they do tell me, as nobory

can mak owt o' 'Lias Dawson these mony years, i' th' matter o' brains. Eh, but yo shudno meddle wi Satan.'

'What d'yo think he saw?' asked David, eagerly, his black eyes all aglow.

'He saw t' woman wi' t' fish's tail—at's what he saw,' said Louie, shrilly.

Reuben took no notice. He was sunk in silent reverie poking at his pipe. In spite of his confidence in the Almighty's increased goodwill towards the present dispensation, he was not prepared to say for certain what 'Lias Dawson did or didn't see.

'Nobory should goo an meddle wi Satan,' he repeated slowly after an interval, and then opening the yard gate he went off on his usual Sunday walk over the moors to have a look at his more distant sheep.

Davy stood intently looking after him; so did Louie. She had clasped her hands behind her head, her eyes were wide, her look and attitude all eagerness. She was putting two and two together—her uncle's promise and the mermaid story as the Manchester man had delivered it. You had but to see her and wish, and, according to the Manchester man and his book, you got your wish. The child's hatred of sermons and ministers had not touched her capacity for belief of this sort in the least. She believed feverishly, and was enraged with David for setting up a rival creed, and with her uncle for endorsing it.

David turned and walked towards the farmyard. Louie followed him, and tapped him peremptorily on the arm. 'I'm goin up theer Easter Eve—Saturday week'—and she pointed over her shoulder to the Scout.

'Gells conno be out neets,' said David firmly; 'if I goo I can tell yo.'

‘Yo’ll not goo without me—I’d tell Aunt Hannah!’

‘Yo’ve naw moor sense nor rotten sticks!’ said David, angrily. ‘Yo’ll get your death, an Aunt Hannah ’ll be stick stock mad wi boath on us. If I goo she’ll niver find out.’

Louie hesitated a moment. To provoke Aunt Hannah too much might, indeed, endanger the blue frock. But daring and curiosity triumphed.

‘I doan’t care!’ she said, tossing her head; ‘I’m gooin.’

David slammed the yard gate, and, hiding himself in a corner of the cowhouse, fell into moody meditations. It took all the tragic and mysterious edge off an adventure he had set his heart on that Louie should insist on going too. But there was no help for it. Next day they planned it together.

## CHAPTER V

‘REUBEN, ha yo seen t’ childer?’ inquired Aunt Hannah, poking her head round the door, so as to be heard by her husband, who was sitting outside cobbling at a bit of broken harness.

‘Noa; niver seed un since dinner.’

‘They went down to Clough End, two o’clock about, for t’ bread, an I’ve yerd nothin ov em since. Coom in to your tay, Reuben! I’ll keep nothin waitin for them! They may goo empty if they como keep time!’

Reuben went in. An hour later the husband and wife came out together, and stood looking down the steep road leading to the town.

‘Just east your eye on aw them stockins waitin to be mended,’ said Hannah, angrily, turning back to the

kitchen, and pointing to a chair piled with various garments. 'That's why she doon it, I spose. I'll be even wi her! It's a poor soart of a supper she'll get this neet, or he noather. An her stomach aw she cares for!'

Reuben wandered down into the road, strolled up and down for nearly an hour, while the sun set and the light waned, went as far as the corner by Wigson's farm, asked a passer-by, saw and heard nothing, and came back, shaking his head in answer to his wife's shrill interrogations.

'Wal, if I doan't gie Louie a good smackin,' ejaculated Hannah, exasperated; and she was just going back into the house when an exclamation from Reuben stopped her; instead, she ran out to him, holding on her cap against the east wind.

'Look theer,' he said, pointing; 'what iver is them two up to?'

For suddenly he had noticed outside the gate leading into the field a basket lying on the ground against the wall. The two peered at it with amazement, for it was their own basket, and in it reposed the loaves David had been told to bring back from Clough End, while on the top lay a couple of cotton reels and a card of mending which Louie had been instructed to buy for her aunt.

After a moment Reuben looked up, his face working.

'I'm thinkin, Hannah, they'n roon away!'

It seemed to him as he spoke that such a possibility had been always in his mind. And during the past week there had been much bad blood between aunt and niece. Twice had the child gone to bed supperless, and yesterday, for some impertinence, Hannah had given her a blow, the marks of which on her cheek Reuben had watched guiltily all day. At night he had dreamed of Sandy. Since Mr. Ancerum had

set him thinking, and so stirred his conscience in various indirect and unforeseen ways, Sandy had been a terror to him; the dead man had gained a mysterious hold on the living.

‘Roon away!’ repeated Hannah scornfully; ‘whar ud they roon to? They’re just at soom o’ their divilments, ’at’s what they are. An if yo doan’t tak a stick to boath on them when they coom back, *I will*, soa theer, Reuben Grieve. Yo niver had no sperrit wi’em—niver—and that’s yan reason why they’ve grown up soa ramjan full o’ wickedness.’

It relieved her to abuse her husband. Reuben said nothing, but hung over the wall, straining his eyes into the gathering darkness. The wooded sides of the great moor which enclosed the valley to the north were fading into dimness, and to the east, above the ridge of Kinder Low a young moon was rising. The black steep wall of the Scout was swiftly taking to itself that majesty which all mountains win from the approach of night. Involuntarily, Reuben held his breath, listening, hungering for the sound of children’s voices on the still air. Nothing—but a few intermittent bird notes and the eternal hurry of water from the moorland to the plain.

There was a step on the road, and a man passed whistling.

‘Jim Wigson!’ shouted Hannah, ‘is that yo, Jim?’

The man opened the yard gate, and came through to them. Jim was the eldest son of the neighbouring farmer, whose girls were Louie’s only companions. He was a full-blooded swaggering youth, with whom David was generally on bad terms. David despised him for an oaf who could neither read nor write, and hated him for a bully.

He grinned when Hannah asked him questions about the truants.

‘Why, they’re gone to Edale, th’ yoong rascots, I’ll uphowsd yo! There’s a parcel o’ gipsies there tellin fortunes, an’ lots o’ foak ha gone ower there to-day. You may mak your mind up they’ve gone to Edale. That Louie’s a limb, she is. She’s got spunk enough to waak to Lunnon if she’d a mind. Oh, they’ll be back here soon enough, trust ’em.’

‘I shut *my* door at nine o’clock,’ said Hannah, grimly. ‘Them as cooms after that, may sleep as they can.’

‘Well, that’ll be sharp wark for th’ eyes if they’re gone to Edale,’ said Jim, with a laugh. ‘It’s a good step fro here to Edale.’

‘Aye, and soom o’ ’t bad ground,’ said Reuben uneasily—‘varra bad ground.’

‘Aye, it’s not good walkin, neets. If they conno see their way when they get top o’ t’ Downfall, they’ll stay theer till it gets mornin, if they’ve ony sort o’ gumption. But, bless yo, it bean’t gooin to be a dark neet,’—and he pointed to the moon. ‘They’ll be here afore yo goo to bed. An if yo want onybody to help yo gie Davy a bastin, just coe me, Mr. Grieve. Good neet to yo.’

Reuben fidgeted restlessly all the evening. Towards nine he went out on the pretext of seeing to a cow that had lately calved and was in a weakly state. He gave the animal her food and elean litter, doing everything more clumsily than usual. Then he went into the stable and groped about for a lantern that stood in the corner.

He found it, slipped through the farmyard into the lane, and then lit it out of sight of the house.

‘It’s bad ground top o’ t’ Downfall,’ he said to himself, apologetically, as he guiltily opened the gate on to the moor—‘varra bad ground.’

Hannah shut her door that night neither at nine nor

at ten. For by the latter hour the master of the house was still absent, and nowhere to be found, in spite of repeated calls from the door and up the lane. Hannah guessed where he had gone without much difficulty; but her guess only raised her wrath to a white heat. Troublesome brats Sandy's children had always been—Louie more especially—but they had never perpetrated any such overt act of rebellion as this before, and the dour, tyrannical woman was filled with a kind of silent frenzy as she thought of her husband going out to welcome the wanderers.

'It's a quare kind o' fatted calf they'll get when I lay hands on 'em,' she thought to herself as she stood at the front door, in the cold darkness, listening.

Meanwhile David and Louie, high up on the side of Kinder Scout, were speculating with a fearful joy as to what might be happening at the farm. The manner of their escape had cost them much thought. Should they slip out of the front door instead of going to bed? But the woodwork of the farm was old and creaking, and the bolts and bars heavy. They were generally secured before supper by Hannah herself, and, though they might be surreptitiously oiled, the children despaired—considering how close the kitchen was to the front door—of getting out without rousing Hannah's sharp ears. Other projects, in which windows and ropes played a part, were discussed. David held strongly that he alone could have managed any one of them, but he declined flatly to attempt them with a 'gell.' In the same way he alone could have made his way up the Scout and over the river in the dark. But who'd try it with a 'gell'?

The boy's natural conviction of the uselessness of 'gells' was never more disagreeably expressed than on this occasion. But he could not shake Louie off. She pinched him when he enraged her beyond

bounds, but she never wavered in her determination to go too.

Finally they decided to brave Aunt Hannah and take the consequences. They meant to be out all night in hiding, and in the morning they would come back and take their beatings. David comfortably reflected that Uncle Reuben couldn't do him much harm, and, though Louie could hardly flatter herself so far, her tone, also, in the matter was philosophical.

'Theer's soom bits o' owd books i' th' top-attie,' she said to David; 'I'll leave 'em in t' stable, an when we coom home, I'll tie 'em on my back—under my dress—an she may leather away till Christmas.'

So on their return from Clough End with the bread—about five o'clock—they slipped into the field, crouching under the wall, so as to escape Hannah's observation, deposited their basket by the gate, took up a bundle and tin box which David had hidden that morning under the hedge, and, creeping back again into the road, passed noiselessly through the gate on to the moor, just as Aunt Hannah was lifting the kettle off the fire for tea.

Then came a wild and leaping flight over the hill, down to the main Kinder stream, across it, and up the face of the Scout—up, and up, with smothered laughter, and tumbles and scratches at every step, and a glee of revolt and adventure swelling every vein.

It was then a somewhat stormy afternoon, with alternate gusts of wind and gleams of sun playing on the black boulders, the red-brown slopes of the mountain. The air was really cold and cutting, promising a frosty night. But the children took no notice of it. Up, and on, through the elastic carpet of heather and bilberry, and across bogs which showed like veins of vivid green on the dark surface of the moor; under circling peewits, who fled before them, crying with



plaintive shrillness to each other, as though in protest; and past grouse-nests, whence the startled mothers soared precipitately with angry cluckings, each leaving behind her a loose gathering of eggs lying wide and open on the heather, those newly laid gleaming a brighter red beside their fellows. The tin box and its contents rattled under David's arm as he leapt and straddled across the bogs, choosing always the widest jump and the stiffest bit of climb, out of sheer wantonness of life and energy. Louie's thin figure, in its skimp cotton dress and red crossover, her long legs in their blue worsted stockings, seemed to fly over the moor, winged, as it were, by an ecstasy of freedom. If one could but be in two places at once—on the Scout—and peeping from some safe corner at Aunt Hannah's wrath!

Presently they came to the shoulder whereon—gleaming under the level light—lay the Mermaid's Pool. David had sufficiently verified the fact that the tarn did indeed bear this name in the modern guide-book parlance of the district. Young men and women, out on a holiday from the big towns near, and carrying little red or green 'guides,' spoke of the 'Mermaid's Pool' with the accent of romantic interest. But the boy had also discovered that no native-born farmer or shepherd about had ever heard of the name, or would have a word to say to it. And for the first time he had stumbled full into the deep deposit of witch-lore and belief still surviving in the Kinder Scout district, as in all the remoter moorland of the North. Especially had he won the confidence of a certain 'owd Matt,' a shepherd from a farm high on Mardale Moor; and the tales 'owd Matt' had told him—of mysterious hares coursed at night by angry farmers enraged by the 'bedivilment' of their stock, shot at with silver slugs, and identified next morning

with some dreaded hag or other lying groaning and wounded in her bed—of calves' hearts burnt at midnight with awful ceremonies, while the baffled witch outside flung herself in rage and agony against the close-barred doors and windows—of spells and wise men—these things had sent chills of pleasing horror through the boy's frame. They were altogether new to him, in this vivid personal guise at least, and mixed up with all the familiar names and places of the district; for his childish life had been singularly solitary, giving to books the part which half a century ago would have been taken by tradition; and, moreover, the witch-belief in general had now little foothold among the younger generation of the Scout, and was only spoken of with reserve and discretion among the older men.

But the stories once heard had struck deep into the lad's quick and pondering mind. Jenny Crum seemed to have been the latest of all the great witches of Kinder Scout. The memory of her as a real and awful personage was still fresh in the mind of many a grey-haired farmer; the history of her death was well known; and most of the local inhabitants, even the boys and girls, turned out, when you came to inquire, to be familiar with the later legends of the Pool, and, as David presently discovered, with one or more tales—for the stories were discrepant—of 'Lias Dawson's meeting with the witch, now fifteen years ago.

'*What* had 'Lias seen? What would they see?' His flesh crept deliciously.

'Wal, owd Mermaid!' shouted Louie, defiantly, as soon as she had got her breath again. 'Are yo coomin out to-night? Yo'll ha coompany if you do.'

David smiled contemptuously and did not condescend to argue.

'Are yo eomin on?' he said, shouldering his box and bundle again. 'They'st be up after us if we doan't look out.'

And on they went, climbing a steep boulder-strewn slope above the pool till they came to the 'edge' itself, a tossed and broken battlement of stone, running along the top of the Scout. Here the great black slabs of grit were lying fantastically piled upon each other at every angle and in every possible combination. The path which leads from the Hayfield side across the desolate tableland of the Scout to the Snake Inn on the eastern side of the ridge, ran among them, and many a wayfarer, benighted or mist-bound on the moor, had taken refuge before now in their caverns and recesses, waiting for the light, and dreading to find himself on the cliffs of the Downfall.

But David pushed on past many hiding-places well known to him, till the two reached the point where the mountain face sweeps backward in the curve of which the Downfall makes the centre. At the outward edge of the curve a great buttress of ragged and jutting rocks descends perpendicularly towards the valley, like a ruined staircase with displaced and gigantic steps.

Down this David began to make his way, and Louie jumped, and slid, and swung after him, as lithe and sure-footed as a cat. Presently David stopped. 'This ull do,' he said, surveying the place with a critical eye.

They had just slid down a sloping chimney of rock, and were now standing on a flat block, over which hung another like a penthouse roof. On the side of the Downfall there was a projecting stone, on which David stepped out to look about him.

Holding on to a rock above for precaution's sake, he reconnoitred their position. To his left was the

black and semicircular cliff, down the centre of which the Downfall stream, now tamed and thinned by the dry spring winds, was trickling. The course of the stream was marked by a vivid orange colour, produced, apparently, in the grit by the action of water; and about halfway down the fall a mass of rock had recently slipped, leaving a bright scar, through which one saw, as it were, the inner mass of the Peak, the rectangular blocks, now thick, now thin, as of some Cyclopean masonry, wherewith the earth-forces had built it up in days before a single alp had yet risen on the face of Europe. Below the boy's feet a precipice, which his projecting stone overhung, fell to the bed of the stream. On this side at least they were abundantly protected.

On the moorside the steep broken ground of the hill came up to the rocky line they had been descending, and offered no difficulty to any sure-footed person. But no path ran anywhere near them, and from the path up above they were screened by the grit 'edge' already spoken of. Moreover, their penthouse, or half-gable, had towards the Downfall a tolerably wide opening; but towards the moor and the north there was but a narrow hole, which David soon saw could be stopped by a stone. When he crept back into their hiding-place, it pleased him extremely.

'They'll niver find us, if they look till next week!' he exclaimed exultantly, and, slipping off the heavy bundle strapped on his back, he undid its contents. Two old woollen rugs appeared—one a blanket, the other a horse-rug—and wrapped up in the middle of them a jagged piece of tarpaulin, a hammer, some wooden pegs, and two or three pieces of tallow dip. Louie, sitting cross-legged in the other corner, with her chin in her hands, looked on with her usual detached and critical air. David had not allowed her

much of a voice in the preparations, and she felt an instinctive aversion towards other people's ingenuities. All she had contributed was something to while away the time, in the shape of a bag of bull's-eyes, bought with some of the sixpence Uncle Reuben had given her.

Having laid out his stores, David went to work. Getting out on the projecting stone again, he laid the bit of tarpaulin along the sloping edge of the rock which roofed them, pegged it down into crevices at either end, and laid a stone to hold it in the middle. Then he slipped back again, and, behold, there was a curtain between them and the Downfall, which, as the dusk was fast advancing, made the little den inside almost completely dark.

'What's t' good o' that?' inquired Louie, scornfully, more than half inclined to put out a mischievous hand and pull it down again.

'Doan't worrit, and yo'll see,' returned David, and Louie's curiosity got the better of her malice.

Stooping down beside her, he looked through the hole which opened to the moor. His eye travelled down the hillside to the path far below, just visible in the twilight to a practised eye, to the river, to the pasture-fields on the hill beyond, and to the smoke, rising above the tops of some unseen trees, which marked the site of the farmhouse. No one in sight. The boy crawled out, and searched the moor till he found a large flattish stone, which he brought and placed against the opening, ready to be drawn quite across it from inside.

Then he slipped back again, and in the glimmer of light which remained groped for his tin box. Louie stooped over and eagerly watched him open it. Out came a bottle of milk, some large slices of bread, some oatcake, and some cheese. In the corner, recklessly

near the cheese, lurked a grease-bespattered lantern and a box of matches. David had borrowed the lantern that afternoon from a Clough End friend under the most solemn vows of secrecy, and he drew it out now with a deliberate and special relish. When he had driven a peg into a cranny of the rock, trimmed half a dip carefully, lighted it, put it into the lantern, and hung the lantern on the peg, he fell back on his heels to study the effect, with a beaming countenance, filled all through with the essentially human joy of contrivance.

‘Now, then, d’yo see what that tarpaulin’s for?’ he inquired triumphantly of Louie.

But Louie’s mouth was conveniently occupied with a bull’s-eye, and she only sucked it the more vigorously in answer.

‘Why, yo little silly, if it worn’t for that we couldno ha no leet. They’d see us from t’ fields even, as soon as it’s real dark.’

‘Doan’t bleeve it,’ said Louie, laconically, in a voice much muffled by bull’s-eyes.

‘Wal, yo needn’t; I’m gooin to have my tea.’

And David, diving into the tin, brought out a hunch of bread and a knob of cheese. The voracity with which he fell on them, soon, with him also, stopped up the channels of speech. Louie, alarmed perhaps by the rapidity with which the mouthfuls disappeared, slid up on her heels and claimed her share. Never was there a more savoury meal than that! Their little den with its curtain felt warm for the moment after the keen air of the moor; the lantern light seemed to shut them in from the world, gave them the sense of settlers carving a home out of the desert, and milk which had been filched from Aunt Hannah lay like nectar in the mouth.

After their meal both children crept out on to the

moor to see what might be going on in the world outside. Darkness was fast advancing. A rising wind swept through the dead bracken, whirled round the great grit boulders, and sent a shiver through Louie's thin body.

'It's cowl,' she said pettishly; 'I'm goin back.'

'Did yo spose it wor goin to be warm, yo little silly? That's why I browt t' rugs, of course. Gells never think o' nothin. It's parishin cowl here, neets—fit to tie yo up in knots wi th' rheumatics, like Jim Spedding, if yo doan't mind yorsel. It wor only lay-ing out a neet on Frimley Moor—poachin, I guess—'at twisted Jim that way.'

Louie's countenance fell. Jim Spedding was a little crooked greengrocer in Clough End, of whom she had a horror. The biting hostile wind, which obliged her to hold her hat on against it with both hands, the black moor at their feet, the grey sweep of sky, the pale cloudy moon, the darkness which was fast enveloping them—blotting out the distant waves of hill, and fusing the great blocks of grit above them into one threatening mass—all these became suddenly hateful to her. She went back into their den, wrapped herself up in one of the tattered rugs, and crept sulkily into a corner. The lantern gleamed on the child's huddled form, the frowning brow, the great vixenish eyes. She had half a mind to run home, in spite of Aunt Hannah. Hours to wait! and she loathed waiting.

But gradually, as the rug warmed her, the passion for adventure and mystery—the vision of the mermaid—the hope of the blue cotton—reasserted themselves, and the little sharp face relaxed. She began to amuse herself with hunting the spiders and beetles which ran across the rocky roof above her head, or crept in and out of the crevices of stone, wondering, no doubt, at this unbidden and tormenting daylight. She

caught one or two small blackbeetles in a dirty rag of a handkerchief—for she would not touch them if she could help it—and then it delighted her to push aside the curtain, stretch her hand out into the void darkness, and let them fall into the gulf below. Even if they could fly, she reflected, it must ‘gie em a good start.’

Meanwhile, David had charged up the hill, filled with a sudden curiosity to see what the top of the Scout might look like by night. He made his way through the battlement of grit, found the little path behind, gleaming white in the moonlight, because of the quartz sheddings which wind and weather are for ever teasing out of the grit, and which drift into the open spaces; and at last, guided by the sound and the gleam of water, he made out the top of the Downfall, climbed a high peak bank, and the illimitable plateau of the Scout lay wide and vast before him.

Here, on the mountain-top, there seemed to be more daylight left than on its rocky sides, and the moon among the parting clouds shone intermittently over the primeval waste. The top of the Peak is, so to speak, a vast black glacier, whereof the crevasses are great fissures, ebon-black in colour, sometimes ten feet deep, and with ten feet more of black water at the bottom. For miles on either side the ground is seamed and torn with these crevasses, now shallower, now deeper, succeeding each other at intervals of a yard or two, and it is they which make the crossing of the Peak in the dark or in mist a matter of danger sometimes even for the native. David, high on his bank, from which the black overhanging eaves curled inwards beneath his feet to a sullen depth of water, could see against the moonlit sky the posts which marked the track from the Downfall to the Snake Inn on the Glossop Road. Miss that track—a



matter of some fifteen minutes' walk for the sturdy farmer who knows it well—and you find yourself lost in a region which has no features and no landmarks, where the earth lays snares for you and the mists betray you, and where even in bright sunshine there reigns an eternal and indescribable melancholy. The strangeness and wildness of the scene entered the boy's consciousness, and brought with them a kind of exaltation. He stood gazing; that inner life of his, of which Louie, his constant companion, knew as good as nothing, asserting itself.

For the real companions of his heart were not Louie or the boys with whom he had joked and sparred at school; they were ideas, images, sounds, imaginations, caught from books or from the talk of old 'Lias and Mr. Anerum. He had but to stand still a moment, as it were, to listen, and the voices and sights of another world came out before him like players on to a stage. Spaces of shining water, crossed by ships with decks manned by heroes for whom the blue distance was for ever revealing new lands to conquer, new adventures to affront; the plumed Indian in his forest divining the track of his enemy from a displaced leaf or twig; the Zealots of Jehovah urging a last frenzied defence of Jehovah's Sanctuary against the Roman host; and now, last of all, the gloom and flames, the infernal palaces, the towering fiends, the grandiose and lumbering war of 'Paradise Lost': these things, together with the names and suggestions of 'Lias's talk—that whole erew of shining, fighting, haranguing men and women whom the old dreamer was for ever bringing into weird action on the moorside—lived in the boy's mind, and in any pause of silence, as we have said, emerged and took possession.

It was only that morning, in an old meal-chest which had belonged to his grandfather, James Grieve,

he had discovered the old calf-bound copy of 'Paradise Lost,' which was now in one of his pockets, balanced by 'Anson's Voyages' in the other. All the morning he had been lying hidden in a corner of the sheepfold devouring it, the rolling verse imprinting itself on the boy's plastic memory by a sort of enchantment—

You dreary plain, forlorn and wild,  
The seat of desolation, void of light,  
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
Casts pale and dreadful.

He chanted the words aloud, flinging them out in an ecstasy of pleasure. Before him, as it seemed, there stretched that very plain 'forlorn and wild,' with its black fissures and its impenetrable horizons; the fitful moonlight stood for the glimmering of the Tartarean flames; the remembered words and the actual sights played into and fused with each other, till in the cold and darkness the boy thrilled all through with that mingling of joy and terror which is only possible to the creature of fine gifts and high imagination.

Jenny Crum, too! A few more hours and he might see her face to face—as 'Lias had seen her. He quaked a little at the thought, but he would not have flinched for the world. *He* was not going to lose his wits, as 'Lias did; and as for Louie, if she were frightened it would do her good to be afraid of something.

Hark! He turned, stooped, put his hand to his ear.

The sound he heard had startled him, turned him pale. But he soon recovered himself. It was the sound of heavy boots on stones, and it was brought to him by the wind, as it seemed, from far below. Some one was coming after them—perhaps more than one. He thought he heard a voice.

He leapt fissure after fissure like a young roe, fled to the top of the Downfall and looked over. Did the light show through the tarpaulin? Alack!—there must be a rent somewhere—for he saw a dim glow-worm light beyond the cliff, on the dark rib of the mountain. It was invisible from below, but any roving eye from the top would be caught by it in an instant. In a second he had raced along the edge, dived in and out of the blocks, guiding his way by a sort of bat's instinct, till he reached the rocky stairway, which he descended at imminent risk of his neck.

‘Put your hand ower t’ leet, Louie, till I move t’ stone!’

The light disappeared, David crept in, and the two children crouched together in a glow of excitement.

‘Is ’t Uncle Reuben?’ whispered Louie, pressing her face against the side of the rocks, and trying to look through the chink between it and the covering stone.

‘Aye—wi a lantern. But there’s talkin—theer’s someone else. Jim Wigson, mebbe.’

‘If it’s Jim Wigson,’ said Louie, between her small, shut teeth, ‘I’ll bite him!’

‘Cos yo’re a gell. Gells and cats bite—they can’t do nowt else!’

Whereupon Louie pinched him, and David, giving an involuntary kick as he felt the nip, went into first a fit of smothered laughter, and then seized her arm in a tight grip.

‘Keep quiet, conno yo? Now they’re coomin, an I bleeve they’re coomin this way!’

But, after another minute’s waiting, he was quite unable to obey his own injunction, and he crept out on the stone overlooking the precipice to look.

‘Coom back! They’ll see yo!’ cried Louie, in a shrill whisper; and she caught him by the ankle.

David gave a kick. 'Let goo; if yo do 'at I shall fall and be kilt!'

She held her breath. Presently, with an exclamation, he knelt down and looked over the edge of the great sloping block which served them for roof.

'Wal, I niver! Theer's nobory but Uncle Reuben, an he's talkin to hissels. Wal, this is a rum skit!'

And he stayed outside watching, in spite of Louie's angry commands to him to come back into the den. David had no fears of being discovered by Uncle Reuben. If it had been Jim Wigson it would have been different.

Presently, on the path some sixty feet above them, but hidden from them by the mass of tumbled rocks through which they had descended, they heard someone puffing and blowing, a stick striking and slipping on the stones, and weird rays of light stole down the mountain-side, and in and out of the vast blocks with which it was overstrewn.

'He's stopt up theer,' said David, creeping in under the gable, 'an I mun hear what he's saying. I'm gooin up nearer. If yo coom we'll be caught.'

'Yo stooped!' cried Louie. But he had crawled up the narrow chimney they had come down by in a moment, and she was left alone. Her spirit failed her a little. She daren't climb after him in the dark.

David clambered in and out, the fierce wind that beat the side of the mountain masking whatever sounds he may have made, till he found himself directly under the place where Reuben Grieve sat, slowly recovering his breath.

'O Lord! O Lord! They're aw reet, Sandy—they're aw reet!'

The boy crouched down sharply under an overhanging stone, arrested by the name—*Sandy*—his father's name.

Once or twice since he came to Kinder he had heard it on Uncle Reuben's lips, once or twice from neighbours who had known James Grieve's sons in their youth. But Sandy had left the farm early and was little remembered, and the true story of Sandy's life was unknown in the valley, though there were many rumours. What the close and timid Reuben heard from Mr. Gurney, the head of Sandy's firm, after Sandy's death, he told to no one but Hannah. The children knew generally, from what Hannah often let fall when she was in a temper, that their mother was a disgrace to them, but they knew no more, and, with the natural instinct of forlorn creatures on the defensive, studiously avoided the subject within the walls of Needham Farm. They might question old 'Lias; they would suffer many things rather than question their uncle and aunt.

But David especially had had many secret thoughts he could not put away, of late, about his parents. And to hear his father's name dropped like this into the night moved the lad strangely. He lay close, listening with all his ears, expecting passionately, he knew not what.

But nothing came—or the wind carried it away. When he was rested, Reuben got up and began to move about with the lantern, apparently throwing its light from side to side.

'David! Louie!'

The hoarse, weak voice, strained to its utmost pitch, died away on the night wind, and a weird echo came back from the cliffs of the Downfall.

There was no menace in the cry—rather a piteous entreaty. The truant below had a strange momentary impulse to answer—to disclose himself. But it was soon past, and instead, he crept well out of reach of the rays which flashe dover the precipitous ground

about him. As he did so he noticed the Mermaid's Pool, gleaming in a pale ray of moonlight, some two hundred feet below. A sudden alarm seized him, lest Reuben should be caught by it, put two and two together and understand.

But Reuben was absorbed in a discomfort, half moral, half superstitious, and nothing else reached the slow brain—which was besides preoccupied by Jim Wigson's suggestion. After a bit, he picked up his stick and went on again. David, eagerly watching, tracked him along the path which follows the ridge, and saw the light pause once more close to the Downfall.

So far as the boy could see, his uncle made a long stay at a point beyond the stream, the bed of which was just discernible, as a sort of paler streak on the darkness.

'Why, that's about whar th' Edale path cooms in,' thought David, wondering. 'What ud he think we'd be doin theer?'

Faint sounds came to him in a lull of the wind, as though Reuben were shouting again—shouting many times. Then the light went wavering on, defining in its course the curved ridge of the further moor, till at last it made a long circuit downwards, disappearing for a minute somewhere in the dark bosom of Kinder Low, about midway between earth and sky. David guessed that Uncle Reuben must be searching the Smithy. Then it descended rapidly, till finally it vanished behind the hill far below, which was just distinguishable in the cloudy moonshine. Uncle Reuben had gone home.

David drew a long breath. But that patient quest in the dark—the tone of the farmer's call—that mysterious word *Sandy*, had touched the boy, made him restless. His mood grew a little flat, even a little

remorseful. The joy of their great adventure ebbed a little.

However, he climbed down again to Louie, and found a dark elfish figure standing outside their den, and dancing with excitement.

‘Wouldn’t yo like to ketch us—wouldn’t yo?—wouldn’t yo?’ screeched the child, beside herself. She too had been watching, had seen the light vanish.

‘Yo’ll have t’ parish up after yo if yo doan’t howd your tongue,’ said David roughly.

And creeping into their den he relit the lantern. Then he pulled out a watch, borrowed from the same friend who had provided the lantern. Past nine. Two hours and more before they need think of starting downwards for the Pool.

Louie condescended to come in again, and the stone was drawn close. But how fierce the wind had grown, and how nipping was the air! David shivered, and looked about for the rugs. He wrapt Louie in the horse-rug, which was heaviest, and tucked the blanket round himself.

‘Howd that tight round yo,’ he commanded, struck with an uneasy sense of responsibility, as he happened to notice how starved she looked, ‘and goo to sleep if yo want to. I’ll wake yo—I’m gooin to read.’

Louie rolled the rug round her chrysalis-like, and then, disdaining the rest of David’s advice, sat bolt upright against the rock, her wide-open eyes staring defiantly at all within their ken.

The minutes went by. David sat close up against the lantern, bitterly cold, but reading voraciously. At last, however, a sharper gust than usual made him look up and turn restive. Louie still sat in the opposite corner as stiffly as before, but over the great staring eyes the lids had just fallen, sorely against their owner’s will; the head was dropping against the rock:

the child was fast asleep. It occurred to David she looked odd; the face seemed so grey and white. He instinctively took his own blanket and put it over her. The silence and helplessness of her sleep seemed to appeal to him, to change his mood towards her, for the action was brotherly and tender. Then he pushed the stone aside and crept out on to the moor.

There he stood for a while, with his hands in his pockets, marking time to warm himself. How the wind bit to be sure!—and it would be colder still by dawn.

The pool showed dimly beneath him, and the gruesome hour was stealing on them fast. His heart beat quick. The weirdness and loneliness of the night came home to him more than they had done yet. The old woman dragged to her death, the hooting crowd, the inexorable parson, the struggle in the water, the last gurgling cry—the vision rose before him on the dark with an ever ghastlier plainness than a while ago on the mountain-top. *How* had 'Lias seen her that the sight had changed him so? Did she come to him with her drowned face and floating grey hair—grip him with her cold hands? David, beginning to thrill in good earnest, obstinately filled in the picture with all the horrible detail he could think of, so as to harden himself. Only now he wished with all his heart that Louie were safe at home.

An idea occurred to him. He smiled at it, turned it over, gradually resolved upon it. She would lead him a life afterward, but what matter?—let her!

From the far depths of the unseen valley a sound struck upwards, piercing through the noises of river and wind. It was the clock of Clough End church, tolling eleven.

Well, one could not stand perishing there another hour. He stooped down and crawled in beside Louie.



She was sleeping heavily, the added warmth of David's blanket conducing thereto. He hung over her, watching her breathing with a merry look, which gradually became a broad grin. It was a real shame—she would be just mad when she woke up. But mermaids were all stuff, and Jenny Crum would 'skeer' her to death. Just in proportion as the adventure became more awesome and more real did the boy's better self awake. He grew soft for his sister, while, as he proudly imagined, iron for himself.

He crept in under the blanket carefully so as not to disturb her. He was too tired and excited to read. He would think the hour out. So he lay staring at the opposite wall of rock, at its crevices, and creeping ants, at the odd lights and shadows thrown by the lantern, straining his eyes every now and then, that he might be the more sure how wide awake they were.

Louie stretched herself. What was the matter? Where was she? What was that smell? She leant forward on her elbow. The lantern was just going out, and smelt intolerably. A cold grey light was in the little den. What? Where?

A loud wail broke the morning silence, and David sleeping profoundly, his open mouth just showing above the horse-rug, was roused by a shower of blows from Louie's fists. He stirred uneasily, tried to escape them by plunging deeper into the folds, but they pursued him vindictively.

'Give ower!' he said at last, striking back at random, and then sitting up he rubbed his eyes. There was Louie sitting opposite to him, crying great tears of rage and pain, now rocking her ankle as if it hurt her, and now dealing cuffs at him.

He hastily pulled out his watch. Half-past four o'clock!

'Yo great gonner, yo!' sobbed Louie, her eyes blazing at him through her tears. 'Yo good-for-nowt, yo muffin-yed, yo donkey!' And so on through all the words of reviling known to the Derbyshire child. David looked extremely sheepish under them.

Then suddenly he put his head down on his knees and shook with laughter. The absurdity of it all—of their preparations, of his own terrors, of the disturbance they had made, all to end in this flat and futile over-sleeping, seized upon him so that he could not control himself. He laughed till he cried, while Louie hit and abused him and cried too. But her crying had a different note, and at last he looked up at her, sobered.

'Howd your tongue!—an doan't keep bully-raggin like 'at! What's t' matter wi' yo?'

For answer, she rolled over on the rock and lay on her face, howling with pain. David sprang up and bent over her.

'What *iver's* t' matter wi' yo, Louie?'

But she kept him off like a wildeat, and he could make nothing of her till her passion had spent itself and she was quiet again, from sheer exhaustion.

Then David, who had been standing near, shivering, with his hands in his pockets, tried again.

'Now, Louie, do coom home,' he said appealingly. 'I can find yo a place in t' stable ull be warmer nor this. You be parished if yo stay here.' For, ignorant as he was, her looks began to frighten him.

Louie would have liked never to speak to him again. The thought of the blue cotton and of her own lost chance seemed to be burning a hole in her. But the stress of his miserable look drew her eyes open whether she would or no, and when she saw him her self-pity overcame her.

'I conno walk,' she said, with a sudden loud sob. 'It's my leg.'

‘What’s wrong wi ’t?’ said David, inspecting it anxiously. ‘It’s got th’ cowl in ’t, that’s what it is; it’s th’ rheumatics, I speck. Tak howd on me, I’ll help yo down.’

And with much coaxing on his part and many cries and outbursts on hers he got her up at last, and out of the den. He had tied his tin box across his back, and Louie, with the rugs wrapped about her, clung, limping, and with teeth chattering, on to his arm. The child was in the first throes of a sharp attack of rheumatism, and half her joints were painful.

That was a humiliating descent! A cold grey morning was breaking over the moor; the chimneys of the distant cotton-towns rose out of mists, under a sky streaked with windy cloud. The Mermaid’s Pool, as they passed it, looked chill and mocking; and the world altogether felt so raw and lonely that David welcomed the first sheep they came across with a leap of the heart, and positively hungered for a first sight of the farm. How he got Louie—in whose cheeks the fever-spots were rising—over the river he never quite remembered. But at last he had dragged her up the hill, through the fields close to the house, where the lambs were huddling in the nipping dawn beside their mothers, and into the farmyard.

The house rose before them grey and frowning. The lower windows were shuttered; in the upper ones the blinds were pulled closely down; not a sign of life anywhere. Yes; the dogs had heard them! Such a barking as began! Jock, in his kennel by the front door, nearly burst his chain in his joyful efforts to get at them; while Tib, jumping the half-door of the out-house in the back yard, where he had been curled up in a heap of bracken, leapt about them and barked like mad.

Louie sank down crying and deathly pale on a stone by the stable door.

‘They’ll hear that fast enoof,’ said David, looking anxiously up at the shut windows.

But the dogs went on barking, and nothing happened. Ten minutes of chilly waiting passed away.

‘Tak him away, *do!*’ she cried, as ‘Tib jumped up at her. ‘No, I woan’t!—I woan’t!’

The last words rose to a shriek, as David tried to persuade her to go into the stable, and let him make her a bed in the straw. He stood looking at her in despair. They had always supposed they would be locked out; but surely the sleepers inside must hear the dogs. He turned and stared at the house, hungering for some sign of life in it. Uncle Reuben would hear them—Uncle Reuben would let them in!

But the blinds of the top room never budged. Louie, with her head against the stable-door, and her eyes shut, went on convulsively sobbing, while ‘Tibby sniffed about her for sympathy. And the bitter wind coming from the Scout whistled through the yard and seemed to cut the shivering child like a knife.

‘I’ll mak a clunter agen th’ window wi some gravel,’ said David at last, in desperation. And he picked up a handful and threw it, first cautiously, then recklessly. Yes!—at last a hand moved the blind—a hand the children knew well, and a face appeared to one side of it. Hannah Grieve had never looked so forbidding as at that moment. The boy caught one glance of a countenance pale with wrath and sleeplessness; of eyes that seemed to blaze at them through the window; then the blind fell. He waited breathlessly for minute after minute. Not a sound.

Furiously he stooped for more gravel, and flung it again and again. For an age, as it seemed to him, no more notice was taken. At last, there was an agitation in the blind, as though more than one person was behind it. It was Hannah who lifted it again; but

David thought he caught a motion of her arm as though she were holding some one else back. The lad pointed excitedly to Louie.

‘She’s took bad!’ he shouted. ‘Uncle Reuben!—Uncle Reuben!—coom down an see for yorsel. If yo let her in, yo can keep me out as long as yo like!’

Hannah looked at him, and at the figure huddled against the stable-door—looked deliberately, and then, as deliberately, pulled the blind down lower than before, and not a sign of Reuben anywhere.

A crimson flame sprang to David’s cheek. He rushed at the door, and while with one hand he banged away at the old knocker, he thumped with the other, kicking lustily the while at the panels, till Louie, almost forgetting her pains in the fierce excitement of the moment, thought he would kick them in. In the intervals of his blows, David could hear voices inside in angry debate.

‘Uncle Reuben!’ he shouted, stopping the noise for a moment, ‘Uncle Reuben, Louie’s turned sick! She’s clemmed wi t’ cold. If yo doan’t open th’ door, I’ll go across to Wigson’s, and tell ’em as Louie’s parishin, an yo’re bein th’ death on her.’

The bolt shot back, and there stood Reuben, his red hair sticking up wildly from his head, his frame shaking with unusual excitement.

‘What are yo makin that roompus for, Davy?’ began Reuben, with would-be severity. ‘Ha done wi yo, or I’ll have to tak a stiek to yo.’

But the boy stood akimbo on the steps, and the old farmer shrank before him, as David’s black eye travelled past him to a gaunt figure on the stairs.

‘Yo’ll tak noa stiek to me, Unele Reuben. I’ll not put up wi it, an yo know it. I’m goin to bring Louie in. We’ve bin on t’ moor by t’ Pool lookin for th’

owd witch, an we both on us fell asleep, an Louie's took the rheumatics.—Soa theer.—Stan out o' t' way.'

And running back to Louie, who cried out as he lifted her up, he half carried, half dragged her in.

'Why, she's like death,' cried Reuben. 'Hannah! summat hot—at woonst.'

But Hannah did not move. She stood at the foot of the stairs, barring the way, the chill morning light falling on her threatening attitude, her grey dishevelled hair and all the squalid disarray of her dress.

'Them as doos like beggar's brats,' she said grimly, 'may fare like 'em. I'll do nowt for 'em.'

The lad came up to her, his look all daring and resolution—his sister on his arm. But as he met the woman's expression, his lips trembled, he suddenly broke down.

'Now, look here,' he cried, with a sob in his throat. 'I know we're beggar's brats. I know yo hate th' seet on us. But I wor t' worst. I'm t' biggest. Tak Louie in, and bully-rag me as mich as yo like. Louie—*Louie!*' and he hung over her in a frenzy, 'wake up, Louie!'

But the child was insensible. Fatigue, the excitement of the struggle, the anguish of movement had done their work—she lay like a log upon his arm.

'She's fainted,' said Hannah, recognising the fact with a sort of fierce reluctance. 'Tak her up, an doan't stan blatherin theer.'

And she moved out of the way.

The boy gathered up the thin figure, and, stumbling over the tattered rugs, carried her up by a superhuman effort.

Reuben leant against the passage wall, staring at his wife.

'Yo're a hard woman, Hannah—a hard woman,' he

said to her under his breath, in a low, shaken voice. 'An yo coed em beggar's brats—oh Lord—Lord!'

'Howd your tongue, an blow up t' fire,' was all the reply she vouchsafed him, and Reuben obeyed.

Meanwhile upstairs Louie had been laid on her bed. Consciousness had come back, and she was moaning.

David stood beside her in utter despair. He thought she was going to die, and he had done it. At last he sank down beside her, and flinging an arm round her, he laid his hot cheek to her icy one.

'Louie, doan't—doan't—I'll tak yo away from here, Louie, when I can. I'll tak care on yo, Louie. Doan't, Louie,—doan't!'

His whole being seemed rent asunder by sympathy and remorse. Uncle Reuben, coming up with some hot gruel, found him sitting on the bed beside his sister, on whom he had heaped all the clothing he could find, the tears running down his cheeks.

## CHAPTER VI

FROM that night forward, David looked upon the farm and all his life there with other eyes.

Up till now, in spite of the perennial pressure of Hannah's tyrannies, which, however, weighed much less upon him than upon Louie, he had been—as he had let Reuben see—happy enough. The open-air life, the animals, his books, out of all of them he managed to extract a very fair daily sum of enjoyment. And he had been content enough with his daily tasks—herding the sheep, doing the rough work of the stable and cow-house, running Aunt Hannah's errands with the donkey cart to Clough End, helping in the hay-making and the sheep-shearing, or the driving of

stock to and from the various markets Reuben frequented. All these things he had done with a curious placidity, a detachment and yet readiness of mind, as one who lends himself, without reluctance, to a life not his own. It was this temper mainly, helped, no doubt, by his unusual tastes and his share of foreign blood and looks, which had set him apart from the other lads of his own class in the neighbourhood. He had few friends of his own age, yet he was not unpopular, except, perhaps, with an overbearing animal like Jim Wigson, who instinctively looked upon other people's brains as an offence to his own muscular pretensions.

But his Easter Eve struggle with Hannah closed, as it were, a childhood, which, though hard and loveless, had been full of compensations and ignorant of its own worst wants. It woke in him the bitterness of the orphan dependant, who feels himself a burden and loathes his dependence. That utter lack of the commonest natural affection, in which he and Louie had been brought up—for Reuben's timorous advances had done but little to redress the balance—had not troubled him much, till suddenly it was writ so monstrous large in Hannah's refusal to take pity on the fainting and agonised Louie. Thenceforward every morsel of food he took at her hands seemed to go against him. They were paupers, and Aunt Hannah hated them. The fact had been always there, but it had never meant anything substantial to him till now. Now, at last, that complete dearth of love, in which he had lived since his father died, began to react in revolt and discontent.

The crisis may have been long preparing, those words of his uncle as to his future, as well as the incident of their locking out, may have had something to say to it. Anyway, a new reflective temper set in.



The young immature creature became self-conscious, began to feel the ferments of growth. The ambition and the restlessness his father had foreseen, with dying eyes, began to stir.

Reuben's qualms returned upon him. On the 15th of May, he and David went to Woodhead, some sixteen or seventeen miles off, to receive the young stock from the Yorkshire breeders, which were to be grazed on the farm during the summer. In general, David had taken the liveliest interest in the animals, in the number and quality of them, in the tariff to be paid for them, and the long road there and back had been cheered for the farmer by the lad's chatter, and by the athletic antics he was always playing with any handy gate or tree which crossed their path.

'Them heifers ull want a deal o' grass puttin into 'em afoor they'll be wuth onybody's buyin, Davy,' said Reuben, inspecting his mixed herd with a critical eye from a roadside bank, as they climbed the first hill on their return journey.

'Aye, they're a poor lot,' returned David, shortly, and walked on as far in front of his uncle as might be, with his head in the air and his moody look fixed on the distance.

'T' Wigsons ull be late getting whoam,' began Reuben again, with an uneasy look at the boy. 'Owd Wigson wor that full up wi yell when I last seed him they'll ha a job to get him started straight this neet.'

To this remark David had nothing at all to say, though in general he had a keen neighbourly relish for the misdeeds of the Wigsons. Reuben did not know what to make of him. However, a mile further on he made another attempt:

'Lord, how those Yorkshire breeders did talk! Yo'd ha thowt they'd throw their jaws off the hinges.

An a lot o' gimerack notions as iver wor—wi their new foods, an their pills an strengthening mixtures—messin wi cows as though they wor humans. Why conno they leave God Awmighty alone? He can bring a calvin cow through beawt ony o' their med-dlin, I'll uphowd yo!'

But still not a word from the lad in front. Reuben might as well have talked to the wall beside him. He had grown used to the boy's companionship, and the obstinate silence which David still preserved from hour to hour as they drove their stock homewards made a sensible impression on him.

Inside the house there was a constant, though in general a silent, struggle going on between the boy and Hannah on the subject of Louie. Louie, after the escapade of Easter Eve, was visited with a sharp attack of inflammatory rheumatism, only just stopping short of rheumatic fever. Hannah got a doctor, and tended her sufficiently while the worst lasted, partly because she was, after all, no monster, but only a commonly sordid and hard-natured woman, and partly because for a day or two Louie's state set her pondering, perforce, what might be the effect on Mr. Gurney's remittances if the child incontinently died. This thought undoubtedly quickened whatever natural instincts might be left in Hannah Grieve; and the child had her doctor, and the doctor's orders were more or less followed.

But when she came downstairs again—a lanky, ghostly creature, much grown, her fierce, black eyes more noticeable than ever in her pinched face—Hannah's appetite for 'snipin'—to use the expressive Derbyshire word—returned upon her. The child was almost bullied into her bed again—or would have been if David had not found ways of preventing it. He realised for the first time that, as the young and active

male of the household, he was extremely necessary to Hannah's convenience, and now whenever Hannah ill-treated Louie her convenience suffered. David disappeared. Her errands were undone, the wood uncut, and coals and water had to be carried as they best could. As to reprisals, with a strong boy of fourteen, grown very nearly to a man's height, Hannah found herself a good deal at a loss. 'Bully-raggin' he took no more account of than of a shower of rain; blows she instinctively felt it would have been dangerous to attempt; and as to deprivation of food, the lad seemed to thrive on hunger, and never whistled so loudly as when, according to Hannah's calculations, he must have been as 'keen-bitten as a hawk.' For the first time in her life Hannah was to some extent tamed. When there was business about she generally felt it expedient to let Louie alone.

But this sturdy protection was more really a matter of roused pride and irritation on David's part than of brotherly love. It was the tragedy of Louie Grieve's fate—whether as child or woman—that she was not made to be loved. Whether *she* could love, her story will show; but to love her when you were close to her was always hard. How different the days would have been for the moody lad, who had at last learnt to champion her, if their common isolation and dependence had but brought out in her towards him anything clinging—anything confidential, any true spirit of comradeship! On the contrary, while she was still ill in bed, and almost absolutely dependent on what he might choose to do for her, she gibed and flouted him past bearing, mainly, no doubt, for the sake of breaking the tedium of her confinement a little. And when she was about again, and he was defending her weakness from Aunt Hannah, it seemed to him that she viewed his proceedings rather with a malicious

than a grateful eye. It amused and excited her to see him stand up to Hannah, but he got little reward from her for his pains.

She was, as it were, always watching him with a sort of secret discontent. He did not suit her—was not congenial to her. Especially was she exasperated now more than ever by his bookish tastes. Possibly she was doubly jealous of his books; at any rate, unless he had been constantly on his guard, she would have hidden them, or done them a mischief whenever she could, in her teasing, magpie way.

One morning, in the grey summer dawn, Louie had just wakened, and was staring sleepily at the door, when, all of a sudden, it opened—very quietly, as though pushed by some one anxious not to make a noise—and Reuben's head looked round it. Louie, amazed, woke up in earnest, and Reuben came stealthily in. He had his hat and stick under his arm, and one hand held his boots, while he stepped noiselessly in his stocking feet across the room to where Louie lay—'Louie, are yo awake?'

The child stared up at him, seeing mostly his stubble of red hair, which came like a grotesque halo between her and the wall. Then she nodded.

'Doan't let yor aunt hear nothin, Louie. She thinks I'm gone out to th' calves. But, Louie, that merchant I tow'd yo on came yesterday, an he wor a hard un, he wor—as tough as nails, a sight worse nor owd Croker to deal wi, ony day in th' week. I could mak nowt on him—an he gan me sich a poor price, I darn't tak a penny on 't from your aunt—noa, I darn't, Louie,—not if it wor iver so. She'll be reet down mad when she knaws—an I'm real sorry about that bit dress o' yourn, Louie.'

He stood looking down at her, his spectacles falling

forward on his nose, the corners of his mouth drooping—a big ungainly culprit.

For a second or two the child was quite still, nothing but the black eyes and tossed masses of hair showing above the sheet. Then the eyes blinked suddenly, and flinging out her hand at him with a passionate gesture, as though to push him away, she turned on her face and drew the bedclothes over her head.

‘Louie!’ he said—‘Louie!’

But she made no sign, and, at last, with a grotesquely concerned face, he went out of the room and downstairs, hanging his head.

Out of doors, he found David already at work in the cowhouse, but as surly and uncommunicative as before when he was spoken to. That the lad had turned ‘agen his wark,’ and was on his way to hate the farm and all it contained, was plain even to Reuben. Why was he so glum and silent—why didn’t he speak up? Perhaps he would, Reuben’s conscience replied, if it were conveyed to him that he possessed a substantial portion of six hundred pounds!

The boy knew that his uncle watched him—anxiously, as one watches something explosive and incalculable—and felt a sort of contempt for himself that nothing practical came of his own revolt and discontent. But he was torn with indecision. How to leave Louie—what to do with himself without a farthing in the world—whom to go to for advice? He thought often of Mr. Ancrum, but a fierce distaste for chapels and ministers had been growing on him, and he had gradually seen less and less of the man who had been the kind comrade and teacher of his early childhood. His only real companions during this year of moody adolescence were his books. From the for-

gotten deposit in the old meal-ark upstairs, which had yielded 'Paradise Lost,' he drew other treasures by degrees. He found there, in all, some tattered leaves—three or four books altogether—of Pope's 'Iliad,' about half of Foxe's 'Martyrs'—the rest having been used apparently by the casual nurses, who came to tend Reuben's poor mother in her last days, to light the fire—a complete copy of Locke 'On the Human Understanding,' and various volumes of old Calvinist sermons, which he read, partly because his reading appetite was insatiable, partly from a half-contemptuous desire to find out what it might be that Uncle Reuben was always troubling his head about.

As to 'Lias Dawson, David saw nothing of him for many long weeks after the scene which had led to the adventure of the pool. He heard only that 'Lias was 'bad,' and mostly in his bed, and feeling a little guilty, he hardly knew why, the lad kept away from his old friend.

Summer and the early autumn passed away. October brought a spell of wintry weather; and one day, as he was bringing the sheep home, he met old Margaret, 'Lias's wife. She stopped and accosted him.

'Why doan't yo coom and see 'Lias sometimes, Davy, my lad? Yo might leeten him up a bit, an' he wants it, t' Lord knows. He's been fearfu' bad in his sperrits this summer.'

The lad stammered out some sheepish excuses, and soon made his way over to Frimley Moor. But the visits were not so much pleasure as usual. 'Lias was very feeble, and David had a constant temptation to struggle with. He understood that to excite 'Lias, to throw him again into the frenzy which had begotten the vision of the pool, would be a cruel act. But all the same he found it more and more difficult to restrain himself, to keep back the questions which burnt on his tongue.

As for 'Lias, his half-shut eye would brighten whenever David showed himself at the door, and he would point to a wooden stool on the other side of the fire.

'Sit tha down, lad. Margret, gie him soom tay,' or 'Margret, yo'll just find him a bit oateake.'

And then the two would fall upon their books together, and the conversation would glide imperceptibly into one of those scenes of half-dramatic impersonation, for which David's relish was still unimpaired.

But the old man was growing much weaker; his inventions had less felicity, less range than of old; and the watchful Margaret, at her loom in the corner, kept an eye on any signs of an undue excitement, and turned out David or any other visitor, neek and crop, without scruple, as soon as it seemed to her that her crippled seer was doing himself a mischief. Poor soul! she had lived in this tumult of 'Lias's fancies year after year, till the solid world often turned about her. And she, all the while, so simple, so sane—the ordinary good woman, with the ordinary woman's hunger for the common blessings of life—a little love, a little chat, a little prosaic well-being! She had had two sons—they were gone. She had been the proud wife 'o' t' cliverest mon atwixt Sheffield an Manchester,' as Frimley and the adjacent villages had once expressed it, when every mother that respected herself sent her children to 'Lias Dawson's school. And the mysterious chances of a summer night had sent home upon her hands a poor incapable, ruined in mind and body, who was to live henceforward upon her charity, wandering amid the chaotic wreck and débris of his former self.

Well, she took up her burden!

The stragglng village on Frimley Moor was mainly inhabited by a colony of silk hand-loom weavers—the

descendants of French prisoners in the great war, and employed for the most part by a firm at Leek. Very dainty work was done at Frimley, and very beautiful stuffs made. The craft went from father to son. All Margaret's belongings had been weavers; but 'Lias, in the pride of his schoolmaster's position, would never allow his wife to use the trade of her youth. When he became dependent on her, Margaret bought a disused loom from a cousin, had it mended and repaired, and set to work. Her fingers had not forgotten their old cunning; and when she was paid for her first 'cut,' she hurried home to 'Lias with a reviving joy in her crushed heart. Thenceforward, she lived at her loom; she became a skilled and favoured worker, and the work grew dear to her—first, because 'Lias lived on it, and, next, because the bright roses and ribbon-patterns she wove into her costly stuffs were a perpetual cheer to her. The moors might frown outside, the snow might drift against the cottage walls: Margaret had always something gay under her fingers, and threw her shuttle with the more zest the darker and colder grew the Derbyshire world without.

Naturally the result of this long concentration of effort had been to make the poor soul, for whom each day was lived and fought, the apple of Margaret's eye. So long as that bent, white form sat beside her fire, Margaret was happy. Her heart sank with every fresh sign of age and weakness, revived with every brighter hour. He still lorded it over her often, as he had done in the days of their prosperity, and whenever this old mood came back upon him, Margaret could have cried for pleasure.

The natural correlative of such devotion was a drying up of interest in all the world beside. Margaret had the selfishness of the angelic woman—everything was judged as it affected her idol. So at first she



took no individual interest in David—he cheered up 'Lias—she had no other thought about him.

On a certain November day David was sitting opposite to 'Lias. The fire burnt between them, and on the fire was a griddle, whereon Margaret had just deposited some oateakes for tea. The old man was sitting drooped in his chair, his chin on his breast, his black eyes staring beyond David at the wall. David was seized with curiosity—what was he thinking about?—what did he see? There was a mystery, a weirdness about the figure, about that hungry gaze, which tormented him. His temptation returned upon him irresistibly.

''Lias,' he said, bending forward, his dark cheek flushing with excitement, 'Louie and I went up, Easter Eve, to t' Pool, but we went to sleep an saw nowt. What was't yo saw, 'Lias? Did yo see her for sure?'

The old man raised his head frowning, and looked at the boy. But the frown was merely nervous, he had heard nothing. On the other hand, Margaret, whom David had supposed to be in the back kitchen, but who was in reality a few steps behind him, mending something which had gone wrong in her loom, ran forward suddenly to the fire, and bending over her griddle somehow promptly threw down the tongs, making a clatter and commotion, in the midst of which the cakes caught, and old 'Lias moved from the fender, saying fretfully,

'Yo're that orkard wi things, Margret, yo're like a dog dancin.'

But in the bustle Margaret had managed to say to David, 'Howd your tongue, noddle-yed, will yo?'

And so unexpected was the lightning from her usually mild blue eyes that David sat dumbfounded, and presently sulkily got up to go. Margaret followed him out and down the bit of garden.

And at the gate, when they were well out of hearing of 'Lias, she fell on the boy with a torrent of words, gripping him the while with her long thin hand, so that only violence could have released him. Her eyes flamed at him under the brown woollen shawl she wore pinned under her chin; the little emaciated creature became a fury. What did he come there for, 'moiderin 'Lias wi his divilments?' If he ever said a word of such things again, she'd lock the door on him, and he might go to Jenny Crum for his tea. Not a bite or a sup should he ever have in her house again.

'I meant no harm,' said the boy doggedly. 'It wor he towd me about t' witch—it wor he as put it into our yeds—Louie an me.'

Margaret exclaimed. So it was he that got 'Lias talking about the Pool in the spring! Some one had been 'cankin wi him about things they didn't owt'—that she knew—'and she might ha thowt it wor' Davy. For that one day's 'worrutin ov him' she had had him on her hands for weeks—off his sleep, and off his feed, and like a blighted thing. 'Aye it's aw play to yo,' she said, trembling all through in her passion, as she held the boy—'it's aw play to yo and your minx of a sister. An if it means deein to the old man hissel, *yo* don't care! "Margaret," says the doctor to me last week, "if you can keep his mind quiet he may hang on a bit. But you munna let him excite hissel about owt—he mun tak things varra easy. He's like a wilted leaf—nobbut t' least thing will bring it down. He's worn varra thin like, heart an lungs, and aw t' rest of him." An d' yo think I'st sit still an see yo *murder* him—the poor lamb—afore my eyes—me as ha got nowt else but him i' t' wide world? No—yo yoong varlet—goo an ast soom one else about Jenny Crum if yo're just set on meddlin wi divil's wark—but yo'll no trouble my 'Lias.'

She took her hands off him, and the boy was going away in a half-sullen silence, when she caught him again.

‘Who towd yo about ’Lias an t’ Pool, nobbut ’Lias hissel?’

‘Uncle Reuben towd me summat.’

‘Aye Reuben Grieve—he put him in t’ carrier’s cart, an behaved moor like a Christian nor his wife—I allus mind that o’ Reuben Grieve, when foak coe him a foo. Wal, I’st tell yo, Davy, an if iver yo want to say a word about Jenny Crum in our house afterwards, yo mun ha a gritstone whar your heart owt to be—that’s aw.’

And she leant over the wall of the little garden, twisting her apron in her old, tremulous hands, and choking down the tears which had begun to rise. Then, looking straight before her, and in a low, plaintive voice, which seemed to float on hidden depths of grief, she told her story.

It appeared that ’Lias had been ‘queer’ a good while before the adventure of the Pool. But, according to his wife, ‘he wor that cliver on his good days, foak could mak shift wi him on his bad days;’ the school still prospered, and money was still plentiful. Then, all of a sudden, the moorland villages round were overtaken by an epidemic of spirit-rapping and table-turning. ‘It wor sperrits here, sperrits there, sperrits everywhere—t’ warld wor gradely swarmin wi em,’ said Margaret bitterly. It was all started, apparently, by a worthless ‘felly’ from Castleton, who had a great reputation as a medium, and would come over on summer evenings to conduct séances at Frimley and the places near. ’Lias, already in an excitable, overworked state, was bitten by the new mania, and could think of nothing else.

One night he and the Castleton medium fell talk-

ing about Jenny Crum, the witch of Kinder Scout, and her Easter Eve performances. The medium bet 'Lias a handsome sum that he would not dare face her. 'Lias, piqued and wrathful, and 'wi moor yell on board nor he could reetly stan,' took the bet. Margaret heard nothing of it. He announced on Easter Eve that he was going to a brother in Edale for the Sunday, and gave her the slip. She saw no more of him till the carrier brought home to her, on the Sunday morning, a starved and pallid object—'gone clean silly, an huted thegither like an owd man o' seventy—he bein fifty-six by his reet years.' With woe and terror she helped him to his bed, and in that bed he stayed for more than a year, while everything went from them—school and savings, and all the joys of life.

'An yo'll be wantin to know, like t' rest o' 'em, what he saw!' cried Margaret angrily, facing round upon the boy, whose face was, indeed, one question. "'Margaret, did he tell tha what t' witch said to un?"—every blatherin idiot i' th' parish asked me that, wi his mouth open, till I cud ha stopped my ears an run wheniver I seed a livin creetur. What do I keer?—what does it matter to me what he saw? I doan't bleeve he saw owt, if yo ast *me*. He wor skeert wi his own thinkins, an th' coud gripped him i' th' in'ards, an twisted him as yo may twist a withe of hay—Aye! it wor a *cruel* neet. When I opened t' door i' t' early mornin, t' garden wor aw black—th' ice on t' reservoir wor inches thick. Mony a year afterwards t' foak round here ud talk o' that for an April frost. An my poor 'Lias—lost on that fearfu Scout—sleepin out wi'out a rag to cover him, an skeert soomhow—t' Lord or t' Devil knows how! And then foak ud have me mak a good tale out o' it—soomthin to gie 'em a ticklin down their back-bane—soomthin to pass an evenin—*Lord!*'

The wife's voice paused abruptly on this word of imprecation, or appeal, as though her own passion choked her. David stood beside her awkwardly, his eyes fixed on the gravel, wherewith one foot was playing. There was no more sullenness in his expression.

Margaret's hand still played restlessly with the handkerchief. Her eyes were far away, her mind absorbed by the story of her own fate. Round the moorside, on which the cottage was built, there bent a circling edge of wood, now aflame with all the colour of late autumn. Against its deep reds and browns, Margaret's small profile was thrown out—the profile already of the old woman, with the meeting nose and chin, the hollow cheek, the maze of wrinkles round the eyes. Into that face, worn by the labour and the grief of the poor—into that bending figure, with the peasant shawl folded round the head and shoulders—there had passed all the tragic dignity which belongs to the simple and heartfelt things of human life, to the pain of helpless affection, to the yearning of irremediable loss.

The boy beside her was too young to feel this. But he felt more, perhaps, than any other lad of the moorside could have felt. There was, at all times, a natural responsiveness in him of a strange kind, vibrating rather to pain than joy. He stood by her, embarrassed, yet drawn to her—waiting, too, as it seemed to him, for something more that must be coming.

‘An then,’ said Margaret at last, turning to him, and speaking more quietly, but still in a kind of tense way, ‘then, when ’Lias wor took bad, yo know, Davy, I had my boys. Did yo ever hear tell o’ what came to ’em, Davy?’

The boy shook his head.

‘Ah!’ she said, catching her breath painfully, ‘they’re moast forgotten, is my boys. ’Lias had been

seven weeks i' his bed, an I wor noan so mich east down—i' those days I had a sperrit more'n most. I thowt th' boys ud keer for us—we'd gien em a good bringin up, an they wor boath on 'em larnin trades i' Manchester. Yan evenin—it wor that hot we had aw t' doors an windows open—theer came a man runnin up fro t' railway. An my boys were kilt, Davy—boath on 'em—i' Duley Moor Tunnel. They wor coomin to spend Sunday wi us, an it wor an excursion train—I niver knew t' reets on 't!

She paused and gently wiped away her tears. Her passion had all ebbed.

'An I thowt if I eud ha got 'em home an buried 'em, Davy, I could ha borne it better. But they wor aw crushed, an cut about, an riddlet to bits—they wudna let me ha em. And so we kep it fro 'Lias. Soomtimes I think he knows t' boys are dead—an then soomtimes he frets 'at they doan't coom an see him. Fourteen year ago! An I goo on tellin him they'll coom soon. An last week, when I towd him it, I thowt to mysel it wor just th' naked truth!'

David leant over the gate, pulling at some withered hollyhocks beside. But when, after a minute of choking silence, Margaret caught his look, she saw, though he tried to hide it, that his black eyes were swimming. Her full heart melted altogether.

'Oh, Davy, I meant naw offence!' she said, catchin him by the arm again. 'Yo're a good lad, an yo're allus a welcome seet to that poor creetur. But yo'll not say owt to trouble him again, laddie—will yo? If he'd yeerd yo just now—but, by t'Lord's blessin, he did na—he'd ha worked himsel up fearfu'! I'd ha had naw sleep wi him for neets—like it wor i' th' spring. Yo munna—yo munna! He's all I ha—his livin's my livin, Davy—an when he's took away—why, I'll mak shift soomhow to dee too!'

She let him go, and, with a long sigh, she lifted her trembling hands to her head, put her frilled cap straight and her shawl. She was just moving away, when something of a different sort struck her sensitive soul, and she turned again. She lived for 'Lias, but she lived for her religion too, and it seemed to her she had been sinning in her piteous talk.

'Dinna think, Davy,' she said hurriedly, 'as I'm complainin o' th' Lord's judgments. They're aw mercies, if we did but know. An He tempers th' wind—He sends us help when we're droppin for sorrow. It worn't for nothin He made us all o' a piece. Their's good foak i' th' warld—aye, theer is! An what's moor, theer's soom o' th' best mak o' foak gooin about dressed i' th' worst mak o' clothes. Yo'll find it out when yo want 'em.'

And with a clearing face, as of one who takes up a burden again and adjusts it anew more easily, she walked back to the house.

David went down the lane homewards, whistling hard. But once, as he climbed a stile and sat dangling his legs a moment on the top, he felt his eyes wet again. He dashed his hand impatiently across them. At this stage of youth he was constantly falling out with and resenting his own faculty of pity, of emotion. The attitude of mind had in it a sort of secret half-conscious terror of what feeling might do with him did he but give it head. He did not want to feel—feeling only hurt and stabbed—he wanted to enjoy, to take in, to discover—to fling the wild energies of mind and body into some action worthy of them. And because he had no knowledge to show him how, and a wavering will, he suffered and deteriorated.

The Dawsons, indeed, became his close friends. In Margaret there had sprung up a motherly affection for the handsome lonely lad; and he was grateful. He

took her 'cuts' down to the Clough End office for her; when the snow was deep on the Scout, and Reuben and David and the dogs were out after their sheep night and day, the boy still found time to shovel the snow from Margaret's roof and cut a passage for her to the road. The hours he spent this winter by her kitchen fire, chatting with 'Lias, or eating havercakes, or helping Margaret with some household work, supplied him for the first time with something of what his youth was, in truth, thirsting for—the common kindness of natural affection.

But certainly, to most observers, he seemed to deteriorate. Mr. Ancrum could make nothing of him. David held the minister at arm's-length, and meanwhile rumours reached him that 'Reuben Grieve's nevvv' was beginning to be much seen in the public-houses; he had ceased entirely to go to chapel or Sunday school; and the local gossips, starting perhaps from a natural prejudice against the sons of unknown and probably disreputable mothers, prophesied freely that the tall, queer-looking lad would go to the bad.

All this troubled Mr. Ancrum sincerely. Even in the midst of some rising troubles of his own he found the energy to buttonhole Reuben again, and torment him afresh on the subject of a trade for the lad.

Reuben, flushed and tremulous, went straight from the minister to his wife—with the impetus of Mr. Ancrum's shove, as it were, fresh upon him. Sitting opposite to her in the back kitchen, while she peeled her potatoes with a fierce competence and energy which made his heart sick within him, Reuben told her, with incoherent repetitions of every phrase, that in his opinion the time had come when Mr. Gurney should be written to, and some of Sandy's savings applied to the starting of Sandy's son in the world.

There was an ominous silence. Hannah's knife



flashed, and the potato-peelings fell with a rapidity which fairly paralysed Reuben. In his nervousness, he let fall the name of Mr. Ancrum. Then Hannah broke out. '*Some foo*,' she knew, had been meddling, and she might have guessed that fool was Mr. Ancrum. Instead of defending her own position, she fell upon Reuben and his supporter with a rhetoric whereof the moral flavour was positively astounding. Standing with the potato-bowl on one hip, and a hand holding the knife on the other, she delivered her views as to David's laziness, temper, and general good-for-nothingness. If Reuben chose to incur the risks of throwing such a young lout into town-wickedness, with no one to look after him, let him; she'd be glad enough to be shut on him. But, as to writing to Mr. Gurney and that sort of talk, she wasn't going to bandy words—not she; but nobody had ever meddled with Hannah Grieve's affairs yet and found they had done well for themselves.

'An I wouldna advise yo, Reuben Grieve, to begin now—no, I wouldna. I gie yo fair noatice. Soa theer's not enough for t' lad to do, Mr. Ancrum, he thinks? Perhaps he'll tak th' place an try? I'd not gie him as mich wage as ud fill his stomach i' th' week—noa, I'd not, not if yo wor to ask *me*—a bletherin windy chap as iver I saw. I'd as soon hear a bird-clapper preach as him—theer'd be more sense an less noise! An they're findin it out down theer—we'st see th' back on him soon.'

And to Reuben, looking across the little scullery at his wife, at the harsh face shaken with the rage which these new and intolerable attempts of her husband to dislodge the yoke of years excited in her, it was as though like Christian and Hopeful he were trying to get back into the Way, and found that the floods had risen over it.

When he was out of her sight, he fell into a boundless perplexity. Perhaps she was right, after all. Mr. Ancrum was a meddler and he an ass. When next he saw David, he spoke to the boy harshly, and demanded to know where he went loafing every afternoon. Then, as the days went on, he discovered that Hannah meant to visit his insubordination upon him in various unpleasant ways. There were certain little creature comforts, making but small show on the surface of a life of general abstinence and frugality, but which, in the course of years, had grown very important to Reuben, and which Hannah had never denied him. They were now withdrawn. In her present state of temper with her better half, Hannah could not be 'fashed' with providing them. And no one could force her to brew him his toddy at night, or put his slippers to warm, or keep his meals hot and tasty for him, if some emergency among the animals made him late for his usual hours—certainly not the weak and stammering Reuben. He was at her mercy, and he chafed indescribably under her unaccustomed neglect.

As for Mr. Ancrum, his own affairs, poor soul, soon became so absorbing that he had no thoughts left for David. There were dissensions growing between him and the 'Christian Brethren.' He spoke often at the Sunday meetings—too often, by a great deal, for the other shining lights of the congregation. But his much speaking seemed to come rather of restlessness than of a full 'experience,' so torn, subtle, and difficult were the things he said. Grave doubts of his doctrine were rising among some of the 'Brethren;' a mean intrigue against him was just starting among others, and he himself was tempest-tossed, not knowing from week to week whether to go or stay.

Meanwhile, as the winter went on, he soon perceived that Reuben Grieve's formidable wife was added to the

ranks of his enemies. She came to chapel, because for a Christian Brother or Sister to go anywhere else would have been a confession of weakness in the face of other critical and observant communities—such, for instance, as the Calvinistic Methodists, or the Particular Baptists—not to be thought of for a moment. But when he passed her, he got no greeting from her; she drew her skirts aside, and her stony eye looked beyond him, as though there were nothing on the road. And the sharp-tongued things she said of him came round to him one by one. Reuben, too, avoided the minister, who, a year or two before, had brought fountains of refreshing to his soul, and in the business of the chapel, of which he was still an elder, showed himself more inarticulate and confused than ever. While David, who had won a corner in Mr. Anerum's heart since the days of their first acquaintance at Sunday-school—David fled him altogether, and would have none of his counsel or his friendship. The alienation of the Grieves made another and a bitter drop in the minister's rising cup of failure.

So the little web of motives and cross-motives, for the most part of the commonest earthiest hue, yet shot every here and there by a thread or two of heavenlier stuff, went spinning itself the winter through round the unknowing children. The reports which had reached Mr. Anerum were true enough. David was, in his measure, endeavouring to 'see life.' On a good many winter evenings the lad, now nearly fifteen, and shooting up fast to man's stature, might have been seen among the toppers at the 'Crooked Cow,' nay, even lending an excited ear to the Secularist speakers, who did their best to keep things lively at a certain low public kept by one Jerry Timmins, a Radical wag, who had often measured himself both in

the meeting-houses and in the streets against the local preachers, and, according to his own following, with no small success. There was a covered skittle-ground attached to this house in which, to the horrid scandal of church and chapel, Sunday dances were sometimes held. A certain fastidious pride, and no doubt a certain conscience towards Reuben, kept David from experimenting in these performances, which were made as demonstratively offensive to the pious as they well could be without attracting the attentions of the police.

But at the disputations between Timmins and a succession of religious enthusiasts, ministers and others, which took place on the same spot during the winter and spring, David was frequently present.

Neither here, however, nor at the 'Crooked Cow' did the company feel the moody growing youth to be one of themselves. He would sit with his pint before him, silent, his great black eyes roving round the persons present. His tongue was sharp on occasion, and his fists ready, so that after various attempts to make a butt of him he was generally let alone. He got what he wanted—he learnt to know what smoking and drinking might be like, and the jokes of the taproom. And all by the help of a few shillings dealt out to him this winter for the first time by Reuben, who gave them to him with a queer deprecating look and an injunction to keep the matter secret from Hannah. As to the use the lad made of them, Reuben was as ignorant as he was of all other practical affairs outside his own few acres.

## CHAPTER VII

SPRING came round again and the warm days of June. At Easter time David had made no further attempts to meet with Jenny Crum on her midnight wanderings. The whole tendency of his winter's mental growth, as well perhaps of the matters brutally raised and crudely sifted in Jerry Timmins's parlour, had been towards a harder and more sceptical habit of mind. For the moment the supernatural had no thrill in it for an intelligence full of contradictions. So the poor witch, if indeed she 'walked,' revisited her place of pain unobserved of mortal eye.

About the middle of June David and his uncle went, as usual, to Kettlewell and Masholme, in Yorkshire, for the purpose of bringing home from thence some of that hardier breed of sheep which was required for the moorland, a Scotch breed brought down yearly to the Yorkshire markets by the Lowland farmers beyond the border. This expedition was an annual matter, and most of the farmers in the Kinder Valley and thereabouts joined in it. They went together by train to Masholme, made their purchases, and then drove their sheep over the moors home, filling the wide ferny stretches and the rough upland road with a patriarchal wealth of flocks, and putting up at night at the village inns, while their charges strayed at will over the hills. These yearly journeys had always been in former years a joy to David. The wild freedom of the walk, the change of scene which every mile and every village brought with it, the resistance of the moorland wind, the spring of the moorland turf, every little incident of the road, whether of hardship or of

rough excess, added fuel to the flame of youth, and went to build up the growing creature.

This year, however, that troubling of the waters which was going on in the boy was especially active during the Masholme expedition. He kept to himself and his animals, and showed such a gruff unneighbourly aspect to the rest of the world that the other drivers first teased and then persecuted him. He fought one or two pitched battles on the way home, showed himself a more respectable antagonist, on the whole, than his assailants had bargained for, and was thenceforward contemptuously sent to Coventry. 'Yoong man,' said an old farmer to him once reprovingly, after one of these 'rumpuses,' '*yor* temper woan't mouldy wi' keepin.' Reuben coming by at the moment threw an unhappy glance at the lad, whose bruised face and torn clothes showed he had been fighting. To the uncle's mind there was a wanton, nay, a ruffianly look about him, which was wholly new. Instead of rebuking the culprit, Reuben slouched away and put as much road as possible between himself and Davy.

One evening, after a long day on the moors, the party came, late in the afternoon, to the Yorkshire village of Haworth. To David it was a village like any other. He was already mortally tired of the whole business—of the endless hills, the company, the bleak grey weather. While the rest of the party were mopping brows and draining ale-pots in the farmers' public, he was employing himself in aimlessly kicking a stone about one of the streets, when he was accosted by a woman of the shopkeeping class, a decent elderly woman, who had come out for a mouthful of air, with a child dragging after her.

'Yoong mester, yo've coom fro a distance, hannot yo?'

The woman's tone struck the boy pleasantly as

though it had been a phrase of cheerful music. There was a motherliness in it—a something, for which, perhaps all unknown to himself, his secret heart was thirsting.

‘Fro’ Masholme,’ he said, looking at her full, so that she could see all the dark, richly coloured face she had had a curiosity to see; then he added abruptly, ‘We’re bound Kinder way wi t’ sheep—reet t’other side o’ t’ Scout.’

The woman nodded. ‘Aye, I know a good mony o’ your Kinder foak. They’ve coom by here a mony year passt. But I doan’t know as I’ve seen yo afoor. Yo’re nobbut a yoong ’un. Eh, but we get sich a sight of strangers here now, the yan fairly drives the tother out of a body’s mind.’

‘Doos foak coom for t’ summer?’ asked David, lifting his eyebrows a little, and looking round on the bleak and stragglng village.

‘Noa, they coom to see the church. Lor’ bless ye!’ said the good woman, following his eyes towards the edifice and breaking into a laugh, ‘’taint becos the church is onything much to look at. ’Taint nowt out o’ t’ common that I knows on. Noa—but they coom along o’ t’ monument, an’ Miss Brontë—Mrs. Nicholls, as should be, poor thing—rayder.’

There was no light of understanding in David’s face, but his penetrating eyes, the size and beauty of which she could not help observing, seemed to invite her to go on.

‘You niver heerd on our Miss Brontë?’ said the woman, mildly. ‘Well, I spose not. She was just a bit quiet body. Nobboddy hereabouts saw mich in her. But she wrote bukes—tales, yo know—tales about t’ foak roun here; an they do say, them as has read ’em, ’at they’re terr’ble good. Mr. Watson, at t’ Post Office, he’s read ’em, and he’s allus promised to lend

'em me. But soomhow I doan't get th' time. An in ginerol I've naw moor use for a book nor a coo has for clogs. But she's terr'ble famous, is Miss Brontë, now—an her sisters too, pore young women. Yo should see t' visitors' book in th' church. Aw t' grand foak as iver wor. They cooms fro Lunnon a purpose, soom on 'em, an they just takes a look roun t' place, an writes their names, an goos away. Would yo like to see th' church?' said the good-natured creature—looking at the tall lad beside her with an admiring scrutiny such as every woman knows she may apply to any male. 'I'm goin that way, an it's my brother 'at has th' keys.'

David accompanied her with an alacrity which would have astonished his usual travelling companions, and they mounted the stragglin village street together towards the church. As they neared it the woman stopped and, shading her eyes against the sunlight, pointed up to it and the parsonage.

'Noa, it's not a beauty, isn't our church. They do say our parson ud like to have it pulled clean down an a new one built. Onyways, they're goin to clear th' Brontës' pew away, an sich a rumpus as soom o' t' Bradford papers have bin makin, and a gradely few o' t' people here too! I doan't know t' reets on 't missel, but I'st be sorry when yo conno see ony moor where Miss Charlotte an Miss Emily used to sit o' Sundays—An theer's th' owd house. Yo used to be 'lowed to see Miss Charlotte's room, where she did her writin, but they tell me yo can't be let in now. Seems strange, doan't it, 'at onybody should be real fond o' that place? When yo go by it i' winter, soomtimes, it lukes that lonesome, with t' churchyard coomin up close roun it, it's enoof to gie a body th' shivers. But I do bleeve, Miss Charlotte she could ha kissed ivery stone in 't; an they do say, when she came back fro furrin parts,



she'd sit an cry for joy, she wor that partial to Haworth. It's a place yo do get to favour soomhow,' said the good woman, apologetically, as though feeling that no stranger could justly be expected to sympathise with the excesses of local patriotism.

'Did th' oother sisters write books?' demanded David, his eyes wandering over the bare stone house towards which the passionate heart of Charlotte Brontë had yearned so often from the land of exile.

'Bless yo, yes. An theer's mony foak 'at think Miss Emily wor a deol eliverer even nor Miss Charlotte. Not but what yo get a bad noshun o' Yorkshire folk fro Miss Emily's bukes—soa I'm tow'd. Bit there's rough doins on t' moors soomtimes, I'll up-howd yo! An Miss Emily had eyes like gimlets—they seed reet through a body. Deary me,' she cried, the fountain of gossip opening more and more, 'to think I should ha known 'em in pinafores, Mr. Patrick an aw!'

And under the stress of what was really a wonder at the small beginnings of fame—a wonder which much repetition of her story had only developed in her—she poured out upon her companion the history of the Brontës; of that awful winter in which three of that weird band—Emily, Patrick, Anne—fell away from Charlotte's side, met the death which belonged to each, and left Charlotte alone to reap the harvest of their common life through a few burning years; of the publication of the books; how the men of the Mechanics' Institute (the roof of which she pointed out to him) went crazy over 'Shirley;' how everybody about 'thowt Miss Brontë had bin puttin ov 'em into prent,' and didn't know whether to be pleased or piqued; how, as the noise made by 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley' grew, a wave of excitement passed through the whole countryside, and people came from Halifax, and Brad-

ford, and Huddersfield—‘aye, an Lunnon soomtoimes’—to Haworth church on a Sunday, to see the quiet body at her prayers who had made all the stir; how Mr. Nicholls, the curate, bided his time and pressed his wooing; how he won her as Rachel was won; and how love did but open the gate of death, and the fiery little creature—exhausted by such an energy of living as had possessed her from her cradle—sank and died on the threshold of her new life. All this Charlotte Brontë’s townswoman told simply and garrulously, but she told it well because she had felt and seen.

‘She wor so sma’ and nesh; nowt but a midge. Theer was no lasst in her. Aye, when I heerd the bell tolling for Miss Charlotte that Saturday mornin,’ said the speaker, shaking her head as she moved away towards the church, ‘I cud ha sat down and cried my eyes out. But if she’d ha seen me she’d ha nobbut said, “Martha, get your house straight, an doan’t fret for me!” She had sich a sperrit, had Miss Charlotte. Well, now, after aw, I needn’t go for t’ keys, for th’ church door’s open. It’s Bradford early closin day, yo see, an I dessay soom Bradford foak’s goin over.’

So she marched him in, and there indeed was a crowd in the little ugly church, congregated especially at the east end, where the Brontës’ pew still stood awaiting demolition at the hands of a reforming vicar. As David and his guide came up they found a young weaver in a black coat, with a sallow oblong face, black hair, high collars, and a general look of Lord Byron, haranguing those about him on the iniquity of removing the pews, in a passionate undertone, which occasionally rose high above the key prescribed by decorum. It was a half-baked eloquence, sadly liable to bathos, divided, indeed, between sentences ringing with the great words ‘genius’ and ‘fame,’ and others devoted to an indignant contemplation of the hassocks

in the old pews, 'the touching and well-worn implements of prayer,' to quote his handsome description of them, which a meddlesome parson was about to 'hurl away,' out of mere hatred for intellect and contempt of the popular voice.

But, half-baked or no, David rose to it greedily. After a few moments' listening, he pressed up closer to the speaker, his broad shoulders already making themselves felt in a crowd, his eyes beginning to glow with the dissenter's hatred of parsons. In the full tide of discourse, however, the orator was arrested by an indignant sexton, who, coming quickly up the church, laid hold upon him.

'No speechmakin in the church, if you *please*, sir. Move on if yo're goin to th' vestry, sir, for I'll have to shut up directly.'

The young man stared haughtily at his assailant, and the men and boys near closed up, expecting a row. But the voice of authority within its own gates is strong, and the champion of outraged genius collapsed. The whole flock broke up and meekly followed the sexton, who strode on before them to the vestry.

'William's a rare way wi un,' said his companion to David, following her brother's triumph with looks of admiration. 'I thowt that un wud ha bin harder to shift.'

David, however, turned upon her with a frown. 'Tis a black shame,' he said; 'why conno they let t' owd pew bide?'

'Ah, weel,' said the woman with a sigh, 'as I said afore, I'st be reet sorry when Miss Charlotte's seat's gone. But yo conno ha brawlin i' church. William's reet enough there.'

And beginning to be alarmed lest she should be raising up fresh trouble for William in the person of this strange, foreign-looking lad, with his eyes like

'live birds,' she hurried him on to the vestry, where the visitors' books were being displayed. Here the Byronic young man was attempting to pick a fresh quarrel with the sexton, by way of recovering himself with his party. But he took little by it; the sexton was a tough customer. When the local press was shaken in his face, the vicar's hireling, a canny, weather-beaten Yorkshireman, merely replied with a twist of the mouth,

'Aye, aye, th' newspapers talk—there'd be soombody goin' hoongry if they didn't;' or—'Them 'at has to eat th' egg knaws best whether it is addled or no—to my thinkin,' and so on through a string of similar aphorisms which finally demolished his antagonist.

David meanwhile was burning to be in the fray. He thought of some fine Miltonic sayings to hurl at the sexton, but for the life of him he could not get them out. In the presence of that indifferent, sharp-faced crowd of townspeople his throat grew hot and dry whenever he thought of speaking.

While the Bradford party struggled out of the church, David, having somehow got parted from the woman who had brought him in, lingered behind, before that plain tablet on the wall, whereat the crowd which had just gone out had been worshipping.

EMILY, aged 29.

ANNE, aged 27.

CHARLOTTE, in the 39th year of her age.

The church had grown suddenly quite still. The sexton was outside, engaged in turning back a group of Americans, on the plea that visiting hours were over for the day. Through the wide open door, the fading yellow light streamed in, and with it a cool

wind which chased little eddies of dust about the pavement. In the dusk the three names—black on the white—stood out with a stern and yet piteous distinctness. The boy stood there feeling the silence—the tomb near by—the wonder and pathos of fame, and all that thrill of undefined emotion to which youth yields itself so hungrily.

The sexton startled him by tapping him on the shoulder. ‘Time to go home, yoong man. My sister she told me to say good neet to yer, and she wishes yo good luck wi your journey. Where are yo puttin up?’

‘At the “Brown Bess,”’ murmured the boy ungraciously, and hurried out. But the good man, unconscious of repulse and kindly disposed towards his sister’s waif, stuck to him, and, as they walked down the churchyard together, the difference between the manners of official and those of private life proved to be so melting to the temper that even David’s began to yield. And a little incident of the walk mollified him completely. As they turned a corner they came upon a bit of waste land, and there in the centre of an admiring company was the sexton’s enemy, mounted on a bit of wall, and dealing out their deserts in fine style to those meddling parsons and their underlings who despised genius and took no heed of the relics of the mighty dead.

The sexton stopped to listen when they were nearly out of range, and was fairly carried away by the ‘go’ of the orator.

‘Doan’t he do it nateral!’ he said with enthusiasm to David, after a passage specially and unflatteringly devoted to himself. ‘Lor’ bless yo, it don’t hurt me. But I do loike a bit o’ good speakin, ’at I do. If fine worrds wor penny loaves, that yoong gen’leman ud get a livin aisy! An as for th’ owd pew, I cud go skrikin

about th' streets mysel, if it ud do a ha'porth o' good.'

David's brow cleared, and, by the time they had gone a hundred yards further, instead of fighting the good man, he asked a favour of him.

'D' yo think as theer's onybody in Haworth as would lend me a seet o' yan o' Miss Brontë's tales for an hour?' he said, reddening furiously, as they stopped at the sexton's gate.

'Why to be sure, mon,' said the sexton cheerily, pleased with the little opening for intelligent patronage. 'Coom your ways in, and we'll see if we can't oblige yo. I've got a tidy lot o' books in my parlour, an I can give yo "Shirley," I know.'

David went into the stone-built cottage with his guide, and was shown in the little musty front room a bookcase full of books which made his eyes gleam with desire. The half-curbed joy and eagerness he showed so touched the sexton that, after inquiring as to the lad's belongings, and remembering that in his time he had enjoyed many a pipe and 'glass o' yell' with 'owd Reuben Grieve' at the 'Brown Bess,' the worthy man actually lent him indefinitely three precious volumes—'Shirley,' 'Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography,' and 'Nicholas Nickleby.'

David ran off hugging them, and thenceforward he bore patiently enough with the days of driving and tramping which remained, for the sake of the long evenings when in some lonely corner of moor and wood he lay full length on the grass revelling in one or other of his new possessions. He had a voracious way of tearing out the heart of a book first of all, and then beginning it again with a different and a tamer curiosity, lingering, tasting, and digesting. By the time he and Reuben reached home he had rushed through all three books, and his mind was full of them.

‘Shirley’ and ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ were the first novels of modern life he had ever laid hands on, and before he had finished them he felt them in his veins like new wine. The real world had been to him for months something sickeningly narrow and empty, from which at times he had escaped with passion into a distant dream-life of poetry and history. Now the walls of this real world were suddenly pushed back as it were on all sides, and there was an inrush of crowd, excitement, and delight. Human beings like those he heard of or talked with every day—factory hands and mill-owners, parsons, squires, lads and lasses—the Yorkes, and Robert Moore, Squeers, Smike, Kate Nickleby and Newman Noggs, came by, looked him in the eyes, made him take sides, compare himself with them, join in their fights and hatreds, pity and exult with them. Here was something more disturbing, personal, and stimulating, than that mere imaginative relief he had been getting out of ‘Paradise Lost,’ or the scenes of the ‘Jewish Wars’!

By a natural transition the mental tumult thus roused led to a more intense self-consciousness than any he had yet known. In measuring himself with the world of ‘Shirley’ or of Dickens, he began to realise the problem of his own life with a singular keenness and clearness. Then—last of all—the record of Franklin’s life,—of the steady rise of the ill-treated printer’s devil to knowledge and power—filled him with an urging and concentrating ambition, and set his thoughts, endowed with a new heat and nimbleness, to the practical unravelling of a practical case.

They reached home again early on a May day. As he and Reuben, driving their new sheep, mounted the last edge of the moor which separated them from home, the Kinder Valley lay before them, sparkling

in a double radiance of morning and of spring. David lingered a minute or two behind his uncle. What a glory of light and freshness in the air—what soaring larks—what dipping swallows! And the scents from the dew-steeped heather—and the murmur of the blue and glancing stream!

The boy's heart went out to the valley—and in the same instant he put it from him. An indescribable energy and exultation took possession of him. The tide of will for which he had been waiting all these months had risen; and for the first time he felt swelling within him the power to break with habit, to cut his way.

But what first step to take? Whom to consult? Suddenly he remembered Mr. Ancrum, first with shame, then with hope. Had he thrown away his friend? Rumour said that things were getting worse and worse at chapel, and that Mr. Ancrum was going to Manchester at once.

He ran down the slopes of heather towards home as though he would catch and question Mr. Ancrum there and then. And Louie? Patience! He would settle everything. Meanwhile, he was regretfully persuaded that if you had asked Miss Brontë what could be done with a creature like Louie she would have had a notion or two.

## CHAPTER VIII

‘REACH me that book, Louie,’ said David peremptorily; ‘it ull be worse for yo if yo don’t.’

The brother and sister were in the Smithy. Louie was squatting on the ground with her hands behind her, her lips sharply shut as though nothing should drag a word out of them, and her eyes blazing defiance



at David, who had her by the shoulder, and looked to the full as fierce as she looked provoking.

'Find it!' was all she said. He had been absent for a few minutes after a sheep that had got into difficulties in the Red Brook, and when he returned, his volume of Rollin's 'Ancient History'—'Lias's latest loan—which he had imprudently forgotten to take with him, had disappeared.

David gave her an angry shake, on which she toppled over among the fallen stones with an exasperating limpness, and lay there laughing.

'Oh, very well,' said David, suddenly recovering himself; 'yo keep yor secret. I'st keep mine, that's aw.'

Louie lay quiet a minute or two, laughing artificially at intervals, while David searched the corners of the Smithy, turning every now and then to give a stealthy look at his sister.

The bait took. Louie stopped laughing, sat up, put herself straight, and looked about her.

'Yo hain't got a secret,' she said coolly; 'I'm not to be took in wi snuff that way.'

'Very well,' said David indifferently, 'then I haven't.'

And sitting down near the pan, he took out one of the little boats from the hole near, and began to trim its keel here and there with his knife. The occupation seemed to be absorbing.

Louie sat for a while, sucking at a lump of sugar she had swept that morning into the *omnium gatherum* of her pocket. At last she took up a little stone and threw it across at David.

'What's your silly old secret about then?'

'Where's my book, then?' replied David, holding up the boat and looking with one eye shut along the keel.

'Iv I gie it yer, an yor secret ain't wo'th it, I'll

put soom o' that watter down yor neckhole,' said Louie, nodding towards the place.

'If you don't happen find yorsel in th' pan fust,' remarked David unmoved.

Louie sucked at her sugar a little longer, with her hands round her knees. She had thrown off her hat, and the May sun struck full on her hair, on the glossy brilliance of it, and the natural curls round the temples which disguised a high and narrow brow. She no longer wore her hair loose. In passionate emulation of Annie Wigson, she had it plaited behind, and had begged an end of blue ribbon of Mrs. Wigson to tie it with, so that the beautiful arch of the head showed more plainly than before, while the black eyes and brows seemed to have gained in splendour and effectiveness, from their simpler and severer setting. One could see, too, the length of the small neck and of the thin falling shoulders. It was a face now which made many a stranger in the Clough End streets stop and look backward after meeting it. Not so much because of its beauty, for it was still too thin and starved-looking for beauty, as because of a singular daring and brilliance, a sense of wild and yet conscious power it left behind it. The child had grown a great piece in the last year, so that her knees were hardly decently covered by the last year's cotton frock she wore, and her brown sticks of arms were far beyond her sleeves. David had looked at her once or twice lately with a new kind of scrutiny. He decided that she was a 'rum-looking' creature, not the least like anybody else's sister, and on the whole his raw impression was that she was plain.

'How'll I know yo'll not cheat?' she said at last, getting up and surveying him with her arms akimbo.

'Can't tell, I'm sure,' was all David vouchsafed. 'Yo mun find out.'

Louie studied him threateningly.

‘Weel, I’d be even wi yo soonhow,’ was her final conclusion; and disappearing through the ruined doorway, she ran down the slope to where one of the great mill-stones lay hidden in the heather, and diving into its central hole, produced the book, keenly watched the while by David, who took mental note of the hiding-place.

‘Naw then,’ she said, walking up to him with her hands behind her and the book in them, ‘tell me your secret.’

David first forcibly abstracted the book and made believe to box her ears, then went back to his seat and his boat.

‘Go on, can’t yo!’ exclaimed Louie, after a minute, stamping at him.

David laid down his boat deliberately.

‘Well, yo won’t like it,’ he said; ‘I know that. But—I’m off to Manchester, that’s aw—as soon as I can goo; as soon as iver I can hear of onything. An I’m gooin if I don’t hear of onything. I’m gooin onyways; I’m tired o’ this. So now yo know.’

Louie stared at him.

‘Yo ain’t!’ she said, passionately, as though she were choking.

David instinctively put up his hands to keep her off. He thought she would have fallen upon him there and then and beaten him for his ‘secret.’

But, instead, she flung away out of the Smithy, and David was left alone and in amazement. Then he got up and went to look, stirred with the sudden fear that she might have run off to the farm with the news of what he had been saying, which would have precipitated matters unpleasantly.

No one was to be seen from outside, either on the moor path or in the fields beyond, and she could not

possibly have got out of sight so soon. So he searched among the heather and the bilberry hummocks, till he caught sight of a bit of print cotton in a hollow just below the quaint stone shooting-hut, built some sixty years ago on the side of the Scout for the convenience of sportsmen. David stalked the cotton, and found her lying prone and with her hat, as usual, firmly held down over her ears. At sight of her something told him very plainly he had been a brute to tell her his news so. There was a strong moral shock which for the moment transformed him.

He went and lifted her up in spite of her struggles. Her face was crimson with tears, but she hit out at him wildly to prevent his seeing them. 'Now, Louie, look here,' he said, holding her hands, 'I didna mean to tell yo short and sharp like that, but yo do put a body's back up so, there's no bearin it. Don't take on, Louie. I'll coom back when I've found soomthin, an take you away, too, niver fear. Theer's lots o' things gells can do in Manchester—tailorin, or machinin, or dressmakin, or soomthin like that. But yo must get a bit older, an I must find a place for us to live in, so theer's naw use fratchin, like a spiteful hen. Yo must bide and I must bide. But I'll coom back for yo, I swear I will, and we'll get shut on Aunt Hannah, and live in a little place by ourselves, as merry as larks.'

He looked at her appealingly. Her head was turned sullenly away from him, her thin chest still heaved with sobs. But when he stopped speaking she jerked round upon him.

'Leave me behint, an I'll murder her!'

The child's look was demoniacal. 'No, yo won't,' said David, laughing. 'I' th' fust place, Aunt Hannah could settle a midge like yo wi yan finger. I' th' second, hangin isn't a coomfortable way o' deein. Yo wait till I coom for yo, an when we'st ha got reet

away, an' can just laugh in her face if she riles us,—*that 'll spite her mien moor nor murderin.'*

The black eyes gleamed uncannily for a moment and the sobbing ceased. But the gleam passed away, and the child sat staring at the moorland distance, seeing nothing. There was such an unconscious animal pain in the attitude, the pain of the creature that feels itself alone and deserted, that David watched her in a puzzled silence. Louie was always mysterious, whether in her rages or her griefs, but he had never seen her sob quite like this before. He felt a sort of strangeness in her fixed gaze, and with a certain timidity he put out his arm and laid it round her shoulder. Still she did not move. Then he slid up closer in the heather, and kissed her. His heart, which had seemed all frostbound for months, melted, and that hunger for love—home-love, mother-love—which was, perhaps, at the very bottom of his moody complex youth, found a voice.

'Louie, couldn't yo be nice to me soomtimes—couldn't yo just take an interest, like, yo know—as if yo cared a bit—couldn't yo? Other gells do. I'm a brute to yo, I know, often, but yo keep aggin an teasin, an theer's niver a bit o' peace. Look here, Loo, yo give up, an I'st give up. Theer's nobbut us two—nawbody else cares a ha'porth about the yan or the tother—coom along! yo give up, an I'st give up.'

He looked at her anxiously. There was a new manliness in his tone, answering to his growing manliness of stature. Two slow tears rolled down her cheeks, but she said nothing. She couldn't for the life of her. She blinked, furiously fighting with her tears, and at last she put up an impatient hand which left a long brown streak across her miserable little face.

'Yo havn't got no trade,' she said. 'Yo'll be clemmed.'

David withdrew his arm, and gulped down his rebuff. 'No, I sha'n't,' he said. 'Now you just listen here.' And he described how, the day before, he had been to see Mr. Ancrum, to consult him about leaving Kinder, and what had come of it.

He had been just in time. Mr. Ancrum, worn, ill, and harassed to death, had been cheered a little during his last days at Clough End by the appearance of David, very red and monosyllabic, on his doorstep. The lad's return, as he soon perceived, was due simply to the stress of his own affairs, and not to any knowledge of or sympathy with the minister's miseries. But, none the less, there was a certain balm in it for Mr. Ancrum, and they had sat long discussing matters. Yes, the minister was going—would look out at Manchester for an opening for David, in the bookselling trade by preference, and would write at once. But Davy must not leave a quarrel behind him. He must, if possible, get his uncle's consent, which Mr. Ancrum thought would be given.

'I'm willing to lend you a hand, Davy,' he had said, 'for you're on the way to no trade but loafing as you are now; but square it with Grieve. You can, if you don't shirk the trouble of it.'

Whereupon Davy had made a wry face and said nothing. But to Louie he expressed himself plainly enough.

'I'll not say owt to oather on 'em,' he said, pointing to the chimneys of the farm, 'till the day I bid 'em good-bye. Uncle Reuben, mebbe, ud be for givin me somethin to start wi, an Aunt Hannah ud be for cloutin him over the head for thinkin of it. No, I'll not be beholden to yan o' them. I've got a shillin or two for my fare, and I'll keep mysel.'

'What wages ull yo get?' inquired Louie sharply.

'Nothing very fat, that's sure,' laughed David. 'If

Mr. Ancrum can do as he says, an find me a place in a book-shop, they'll, mebbe, gie me six shillin to begin wi.'

'An what ull yo do wi 'at?'

'Live on't,' replied David briefly.

'Yo conno, I tell yo! Yo'll ha food an firin, cloos, an lodgin to pay out o't. Yo conno do 't—soa theer.'

Louie looked him up and down defiantly. David was oddly struck with the practical knowledge her remark showed. How did such a wild imp know anything about the cost of lodging and firing?

'I tell yo I'll live on't,' he replied with energy; 'I'll get a room for half a crown—two shillin, p'r'aps—an I'll live on sixpence a day, see if I don't.'

'See if yo do!' retorted Louie, 'clemm on it more like.'

'That's all *yo* know about it, miss,' said David, in a tone, however, of high good humour; and, stretching one of his hands down a little further into his trousers pocket, he drew out a paper-covered book, so that just the top of it appeared. 'Yo're allus naggin about books. Well; I tell yo, I've got an idea out o' thissen ull be worth shillins a week to me. It's about Benjamin Franklin. Never yo mind who Benjamin Franklin wor; but he wor a varra cute soart of a felly; an when he wor yoong, an had nobbut a few shillins a week, he made shift to save soom o' them shillins, becos he found he could do without eatin *flesh meat*, an that wi bread an meal an green stuff, a mon could do very well, an save soom brass every week. When I go to Manchester,' continued David emphatically, 'I shall niver touch meat. I shall buy a bag o' oatmeal like Grandfeyther Grieve lived on, boil it for mysel, wi a sup o' milk, perhaps, an soom salt or treacle to gi it a taste. An I'll buy apples an pears an oranges cheap soomwhere, an store 'em. Yo mun ha a deal o'

fruit when yo doan't ha meat. Fourpence!' cried Davy, his enthusiasm rising, 'I'll live on *thruppence* a day, as sure as yo're sittin theer! Seven thruppences is one an nine; lodgin, two shillin—three an nine. Two an three left over, for cloos, firin, an pocket money. Why, I'll be rich before yo can look roun! An then, o' coorse, they'll not keep me long on six shillins a week. In the book-trade I'll soon be wuth ten, an moor!'

And, springing up, he began to dance a sort of cut and shuffle before her out of sheer spirits. Louie surveyed him with a flushed and sparkling face. The nimbleness of David's wits had never come home to her till now.

'What ull I earn when I coom?' she demanded abruptly.

David stopped his cut and shuffle, and took critical stock of his sister for a moment.

'Now, look here, Louie, yo're goin to stop where yo are, a good bit yet,' he replied decidedly. 'Yo'll have to wait two year or so—moor 'n one, onyways,' he went on hastily, warned by her start and fierce expression. 'Yo know, they can ha th' law on yo,' and he jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards the farm. 'Boys is all reet, but gells can't do nothink till they're sixteen. They mun stay wi th' foak as browt 'em up, and if they run away afore their sixteenth birthday—they gets put in prison.'

David poured out his legal fictions hastily, three parts convinced of them at any rate, and watched eagerly for their effect on Louie.

She tossed her head scornfully. 'Doan't b'lieve it. Yo're jest tellin lees to get shut o' me. Nex summer if yo doan't send for me, I'll run away, whatever yo may say. So yo know.'

'You're a tormentin thing!' exclaimed David, ex-



asperated, and began savagely to kick stones down the hill. Then, recovering himself, he came and sat down beside her again.

‘I doan’t want to get shut on yo, Louie. But yo won’t understand nothin.’

He stopped, and began to bite at a stalk of heather, by way of helping himself. His mind was full of vague and yet urgent thoughts as to what became of girls in large towns with no one to look after them, things he had heard said at the public-house, things he had read. He had never dreamt of leaving Louie to Aunt Hannah’s tender mercies. Of course he must take her away when he could. She was his charge, his belonging. But all the same she was a ‘limb’; in his opinion she always would be a ‘limb.’ How could he be sure of her getting work, and who on earth was to look after her when he was away?

Suddenly Louie broke in on his perplexities.

‘I’ll go tailorin,’ she cried triumphantly. ‘Now I know—it wor t’ Wigson’s cousin Em’ly went to Manchester; an she earned nine shillin a week—nine shillin I tell yo, an found her own thread. Yo’ll be takin ten shillin, yo say, nex year? an I’ll be takin nine. That’s nineteen shillin fur th’ two on us. *Isn’t* it nineteen shillin?’ she said peremptorily, seizing his arm with her long fingers.

‘Well, I dessay it is,’ said David, reluctantly. ‘An precious tired yo’ll be o’ settin stichin mornin, noon, an neet. Like to see yo do ’t.’

‘I’d do it fur nine shillin,’ she said doggedly, and sat looking straight before her, with wide glittering eyes. She understood from David’s talk that, what with meal, apples, and greenstuff, your ‘eatin’ need cost you nothing. There would be shillings and shillings to buy things with. The child who never had a copper but what Uncle Reuben gave her, who passed

her whole existence in greedily coveting the unattainable and in chafing under the rule of an iron and miserly thrift, felt suddenly intoxicated by this golden prospect of illimitable 'buying.' And what could possibly prevent its coming true? Any fool—such as 'Wigson's Em'ly'—could earn nine shillings a week at tailoring; and to make money at your stomach's expense seemed suddenly to put you in possession of a bank on which the largest drawings were possible. It all looked so ingenious, so feasible, so wholly within the grip of that indomitable will the child felt tense within her.

So the two sat gazing out over the moorland. It was the first summer day, fresh and timid yet, as though the world and the sun were still ill-acquainted. Down below, over the sparkling brook, an old thorn was quivering in the warm breeze, its bright thin green shining against the brown heather. The larches alone had as yet any richness of leaf, but the sycamore-buds glittered in the sun, and the hedges in the lower valley made wavy green lines delightful to the eye. A warm soft air laden with moist scents of earth and plant bathed the whole mountain-side, and played with Louie's hair. Nature wooed them with her best, and neither had a thought or a look for her.

Suddenly Louie sprang up.

'Theer's Aunt Hannah shoutin. I mun goo an get t' coos.'

David ran down the hill with her.

'What'll yo do if I tell?' she inquired maliciously at the bottom.

'If yo do I shall cut at yancee, an yo'll ha all the longer time to be by yoursen.'

A darkness fell over the girl's hard shining gaze. She turned away abruptly, then, when she had gone a few steps, turned and came back to where David stood

whistling and calling for the dogs. She caught him suddenly from behind round the neck. Naturally he thought she was up to some mischief, and struggled away from her with an angry exclamation. But she held him tight and thrust something hard and sweet against his lips. Involuntarily his mouth opened and admitted an enticing cake of butter-scotch. She rammed it in with her wiry little hand so that he almost choked, and then with a shrill laugh she turned and fled, leaping down the heather between the boulders, across the brook, over the wall, and out of sight.

David was left behind, sucking. The sweetness he was conscious of was not all in the mouth. Never that he could remember had Louie shown him any such mark of favour.

Next day David was sent down with the donkey-cart to Clough End to bring up some weekly stores for the family, Hannah specially charging him to call at the post-office and inquire for letters. He started about nine o'clock, and the twelve o'clock dinner passed by without his reappearance.

When she had finished her supply of meat and suet-pudding, after a meal during which no one of the three persons at table had uttered a word, Louie abruptly pushed her plate back again towards Hannah.

'David!' was all she said.

'Mind your manners, miss,' said Hannah, angrily. 'Them as cooms late gets nowt.' And, getting up, she cleared the table and put the food away with even greater rapidity than usual. The kitchen was no sooner quite clear than the donkey-cart was heard outside, and David appeared, crimsoned with heat, and panting from the long tug uphill, through which he had just dragged the donkey.

He carried a letter, which he put down on the table. Then he looked round the kitchen.

‘Aunt’s put t’ dinner away,’ said Louie, shortly, ‘’cos yo came late.’

David’s expression changed. ‘Then nex time she wants owt, she can fetch it fro Clough End hersel,’ he said violently, and went out.

Hannah came forward and laid eager hands on the letter, which was from London, addressed in a clerk’s hand.

‘Louie!’ she called imperatively, ‘tak un out soom bread-an-drippin.’

Louie put some on a plate, and went out with it to the cowhouse, where David sat on a stool, occupying himself in cutting the pages of a number of the *Vegetarian News*, lent him in Clough End, with trembling hands, while a fierce red spot burnt in either cheek.

‘Tak it away!’ he said, almost knocking the plate out of Louie’s hands; ‘it chokes me to eat a crumb o’ hers.’

As Louie was bearing the plate back through the yard, Uncle Reuben came by. ‘What’s—what’s ’at?’ he said, peering shortsightedly at what she held. Every month of late Reuben’s back had seemed to grow rounder, his sight less, and his wits of less practical use.

‘Summat for David,’ said Louie, shortly, ‘’cos Aunt Hannah woan’t gie him no dinner. But he woan’t ha it.’

Reuben’s sudden look of trouble was unmistakable.

‘Whar is he?’

‘I’ th’ coo-house.’

Reuben went his way, and found the dinnerless boy deep, or apparently deep, in recipes for vegetable soups.

‘What made yo late, Davy?’ he asked him, as he stood over him.

David had more than half a mind not to answer, but at last he jerked out fiercely, 'Waitin for th' second post, fust; then t' donkey fell down half a mile out o' t' town, an th' things were spilt. There was nobody about, an' I had a job to get 'un up at a.'

Reuben nervously thrust his hands far into his coat-pockets.

'Coom wi me, Davy, an I'st mak yur aunt gie yer yur dinner.'

'I wouldn't eat a morsel if she went down on her bended knees to me,' the lad broke out, and, springing up, he strode sombrely through the yard and into the fields.

Reuben went slowly back into the house. Hannah was in the parlour—so he saw through the half-opened door. He went into the room, which smelt musty and close from disuse. Hannah was standing over the open drawer of an old-fashioned corner cupboard, carefully scanning a letter and enclosure before she locked them up.

'Is 't Mr. Gurney's money?' Reuben said to her, in a queer voice.

She was startled, not having heard him come in, but she put what she held into the drawer all the more deliberately, and turned the key.

'Ay, 't is.'

Reuben sat himself down on one of the hard chairs beside the table in the middle of the room. The light streaming through the shutters Hannah had just opened streamed in on his grizzling head and face working with emotion.

'It's stolen money,' he said hoarsely. 'Yo're stealin it fro Davy.'

Hannah smiled grimly, and withdrew the key.

'I'm paying missel an yo, Reuben Grieve, for t' keep o' two wuthless brats as cost moor nor they pays,' she

said, with an accent which somehow sent a shiver through Reuben. 'I don't keep udder foaks' childer fur nothin.'

'Yo've had moor nor they cost for seven year,' said Reuben, with the same thick tense utterance. 'Yo should let Davy ha it, an gie him a trade.'

Hannah walked up to the door and shut it.

'I should, should I? An who'll pay for Louie—for your luvly limb of a niece? It 'ud tak about that,' and she pointed grimly to the drawer, 'to coover what she wastes an spiles i' t' yeer.'

'Yo get her work, Hannah. Her bit an sup cost yo most nothin. I cud wark a bit moor—soa cud yo. Yo're hurtin me i' mi conscience, Hannah—yo're coomin atwixt me an th' Lord!'

He brought a shaking hand down on the damask table-cloth among the wool mats and the chapel hymn-books which adorned it. His long, loose frame had drawn itself up with a certain dignity.

'Ha done wi your cantin!' said Hannah under her breath, laying her two hands on the table, and stooping down so as to face him with more effect. The phrase startled Reuben with a kind of horror. Whatever words might have passed between them, never yet that he could remember had his wife allowed herself a sneer at his religion. It seemed to him suddenly as though he and she were going fast downhill—slipping to perdition, because of Sandy's six hundred pounds.

But she cowed him—she always did. She stayed a moment in the same bent and threatening position, coercing him with angry eyes. Then she straightened herself, and moved away.

'Let t' lad tak hisself off if he wants to,' she said, an iron resolution in her voice. 'I told yo so afore—I woan't cry for 'im. But as long as Louie's here, an

I ha to keep her, I'll want that money, an every penny on't. If it bean't paid, she may go too !'

'Yo'd not turn her out, Hannah?' cried Reuben, instinctively putting out an arm to feel that the door was closed.

'*She'd* not want for a livin,' replied Hannah, with a bitter sneer; 'she's her mither's child.'

Reuben rose slowly, shaking all over. He opened the door with difficulty, groped his way out of the front passage, then went heavily through the yard and into the fields. There he wandered by himself for a couple of hours, altogether forgetting some newly dropped lambs to which he had been anxiously attending. For months past, ever since his conscience had been roused on the subject of his brother's children, the dull, incapable man had been slowly reconceiving the woman with whom he had lived some five-and-twenty years, and of late the process had been attended with a kind of agony. The Hannah Martin he had married had been a hard body indeed, but respectable, upright, with the same moral instincts as himself. She had kept the farm together—he knew that; he could not have lived without her, and in all practical respects she had been a good and industrious wife. He had coveted her industry and her strong will; and, having got the use of them, he had learnt to put up with her contempt for him, and to fit his softer nature to hers. Yet it seemed to him that there had always been certain conditions implied in this subjection of his, and that she was breaking them. He could not have been fetching and carrying all these years for a woman who could go on wilfully appropriating money that did not belong to her,—who could even speak with callous indifference of the prospect of turning out her niece to a life of sin.

He thought of Sandy's money with loathing. It

was like the cursed stuff that Achan had brought into the camp—an evil leaven fermenting in their common life, and raising monstrous growths.

Reuben Grieve did not demand much of himself; a richer and more spiritual nature would have thought his ideals lamentably poor. But, such as they were, the past year had proved that he could not fall below them without a dumb anguish, without a sense of shutting himself out from grace. He felt himself—by his fear of his wife—made a partner in Hannah's covetousness, in Hannah's cruelty towards Sandy's children. Already, it seemed to him, the face of Christ was darkened, the fountain of grace dried up. All those appalling texts of judgment and reprobation he had listened to so often in chapel, protected against them by that warm inward certainty of 'election,' seemed to be now pressing against a bared and jeopardised soul.

But if he wrote to Mr. Gurney, Hannah would never forgive him till her dying day; and the thought of making her his enemy for good put him in a cold sweat.

After much pacing of the upper meadows he came heavily down at last to see to his lambs. Davy was just jumping the wall on to his uncle's land, having apparently come down the Frimley path. When he saw his uncle he thrust his hands into his pockets, began to whistle, and came on with a devil-may-care swing of the figure. They met in a gateway between two fields.

'Whar yo been, Davy?' asked Reuben, looking at him askance, and holding the gate so as to keep him.

'To Dawson's,' said the boy, sharply.

Reuben's face brightened. Then the lad's empty stomach must have been filled; for he knew that



'Dawsons' were kind to him. He ventured to look at him more directly, and, as he did so, something in the attitude of the proud handsome stripling reminded him of Sandy—Sandy, in the days of his youth, coming down to show his prosperous self at the farm. He put his large soil-stained hand on David's shoulder.

'Goo your ways in, Davy. I'll see yo ha your reets.'

David opened his eyes at him, astounded. There is nothing more startling in human relations than the strong emotion of weak people.

Reuben would have liked to say something else, but his lips opened and shut in vain. The boy, too, was hopelessly embarrassed. At last, Reuben let the gate fall and walked off, with downcast head, to where, in the sheep-pen, he had a few hours before bound an orphan lamb to a refractory foster-mother. The foster-mother's resistance had broken down, she was lying patiently and gently while the thin long-legged creature sucked; when it was frightened away by Reuben's approach she trotted bleating after it. In his disturbed state of feeling the parallel, or rather the contrast, between the dumb animal and the woman struck home.

## CHAPTER IX

BUT the crisis which had looked so near delayed!

Poor Reuben! The morning after his sudden show of spirit to David he felt himself, to his own miserable surprise, no more courageous than he had been before it. Yet the impression made had gone too deep to end in nothingness. He contracted a habit of getting by himself in the fields and puzzling his brain with figures—an occupation so unfamiliar and exhausting

that it wore him a good deal; and Hannah, when he came in at night, would wonder, with a start, whether he were beginning 'to break up.' But it possessed him more and more. Hannah would not give up the money, but David must have his rights. How could it be done? For the first time Reuben fell to calculation over his money matters, which he did not ask Hannah to revise. But meanwhile he lived in a state of perpetual inward excitement which did not escape his wife. She could get no clue to it, however, and became all the more forbidding in the household the more she was invaded by this wholly novel sense of difficulty in managing her husband.

Yet she was not without a sense that if she could but contrive to alter her ways with the children it would be well for her. Mr. Gurney's cheque was safely put away in the Clough End bank, and clearly her best policy would have been to make things tolerable for the two persons on whose proceedings—if they did but know it!—the arrival of future cheques in some measure depended. But Hannah had not the cleverness which makes the successful hypocrite. And for some time past there had been a strange unmanageable change in her feelings towards Sandy's orphans. Since Reuben had made her conscious that she was robbing them, she had gone nearer to an active hatred than ever before. And, indeed, hatred in such a case is the most natural outcome; for it is little else than the soul's perverse attempt to justify to itself its own evil desire.

David, however, when once his rage over Hannah's latest offence had cooled, behaved to his aunt much as he had done before it. He was made placable by his secret hopes, and touched by Reuben's advances—though of these last he took no practical account whatever; and he must wait for his letter. So he

went back ungraciously to his daily tasks. Meanwhile he and Louie, on the strength of the great *coup* in prospect, were better friends than they had ever been, and his consideration for her went up as he noticed that, when she pleased, the reckless creature could keep a secret 'as close as wax.'

The weeks, however, passed away, and still no letter came for David. The shepherds' meetings—first at Clough End for the Cheshire side of the Scout, and then at the 'Snake Inn' for the Sheffield side—when the strayed sheep of the year were restored to their owners, came and went in due course; sheep-washing and sheep-shearing were over; the summer was half-way through; and still no word from Mr. Anerum.

David, full of annoyance and disappointment, was seething with fresh plans—he and Louie spent hours discussing them at the Smithy—when suddenly an experience overtook him, which for the moment effaced all his nascent ambitions, and entirely did away with Louie's new respect for him.

It was on this wise.

Mr. Anerum had left Clough End towards the end of June. The congregation to which he ministered, and to which Reuben Grieve belonged, represented one of those curious and independent developments of the religious spirit which are to be found scattered through the teeming towns and districts of northern England. They had no connection with any recognised religious community, but the members of it had belonged to many—to the Church, the Baptists, the Independents, the Methodists. They were mostly mill-hands or small tradesmen, penetrated on the one side with the fervour, the yearnings, the strong formless poetry of English evangelical faith, and repelled on the other by various features in the different sects from which they came—by the hierarchial strictness of the Wesleyan

organisation, or the looseness of the Congregationalists, or the coldness of the Church. They had come together to seek the Lord in some way more intimate, more moving, more effectual than any they had yet found; and in this pathetic search for the 'rainbow gold' of faith they were perpetually brought up against the old stumbling-blocks of the unregenerate man,—the smallest egotisms, and the meanest vanities. Mr. Ancrum, for instance, had come to the Clough End 'Brethren' full of an indescribable missionary zeal. He had laboured for them night and day, taxing his sickly frame far beyond its powers. But the most sordid conspiracy imaginable, led by two or three of the prominent members who thought he did not allow them enough share in the evening meetings, had finally overthrown him, and he had gone back to Manchester a bitterer and a sadder man.

After he left there was an interregnum, during which one or two of the elder 'Brethren' taught Sunday school and led the Sunday services. But at last, in August, it became known in Clough End that a new minister for the 'Christian Brethren' had come down, and public curiosity in the Dissenting circles was keen about him. After a few weeks there began to be a buzz in the little town on the subject of Mr. Dyson. The 'Christian Brethren' meeting-room, a long low upper chamber formerly occupied by half a dozen hand-looms, was crowded on Sundays, morning and evening, not only by the Brethren, but by migrants from other denominations, and the Sunday school, which was held in a little rickety garret off the main room, also received a large increase of members. It was rumoured that Mr. Dyson was specially successful with boys, and that there was an 'awakening' among some of the lowest and roughest of the Clough End lads.

‘He ha sich a way wi un,’ said a much-stirred mother to Reuben Grieve, meeting him one day in the street, ‘he do seem to melt your varra marrow.’

Reuben went to hear the new man, was much moved, and came home talking about him with a stammering unctious, and many furtive looks at David. He had tried to remonstrate several times on the lad’s desertion of chapel and Sunday school, but to no purpose. There was something in David’s half contemptuous, half obstinate silence on these occasions which for a man like Reuben made argument impossible. To his morbid inner sense the boy seemed to have entered irrecoverably on the broad path which leadeth to destruction. Perhaps in another year he would be drinking and thieving. With a curious fatalism Reuben felt that for the present, and till he had made some tangible amends to Sandy and the Unseen Powers for Hannah’s sin, he himself could do nothing. His hands were unclean. But some tremulous passing hopes he allowed himself to build on this new prophet.

Meanwhile, David heard the town-talk, and took small account of it. He supposed he should see the new comer at Jerry’s in time. Then if folk spoke true there would be a shindy worth joining in. Meanwhile, the pressure of his own affairs made the excitement of the neighbourhood seem to him one more of those storms in the Dissenting tea-cup, of which, boy as he was, he had known a good many already.

One September evening he was walking down to Clough End, bound to the reading-room. He had quite ceased to attend the ‘Crooked Cow.’ His pennies were precious to him now, and he saved them jealously, wondering scornfully sometimes how he could ever have demeaned himself so far as to find excitement in the liquor or the company of the ‘Cow.’ Halfway down to the town, as he was passing the

foundry, whence he had drawn the pan which had for so long made the Smithy enchanted ground to him, the big slouching apprentice who had been his quondam friend and ally there, came out of the foundry yard just in front of him. David quickened up a little.

‘Tom, whar are yo goin?’

The other looked round at him uneasily.

‘Niver yo mind.’

The youth’s uncouth clothes were carefully brushed, and his fat face, which wore an incongruous expression of anxiety and dejection, shone with washing. David studied him a moment in silence, then he said abruptly—

‘Yo’re goin prayer-meetin, that’s what yo are.’

‘An if I am, it’s noa consarn o’ yourn. Yo’re yan o’ th’ unregenerate; an I’ll ask yo, Davy, if happen yo’re goin town way, not to talk ony o’ your carnal talk to me. I’se got hindrances enough, t’ Lord knows.’

And the lad went his way, morosely hanging his head, and stepping more rapidly as though to get rid of his companion.

‘Well, I niver!’ exclaimed David, in his astonishment. ‘What’s wrong wi yo, Tom? Yo’ve got no more spunk nor a moultin hen. What’s gotten hold o’ yo?’

Tom hesitated a moment. ‘*Th’ Lord!*’ he burst out at last, looking at Davy with that sudden unconscious dignity which strong feeling can bestow for the moment on the meanest of mortals. ‘He’s a harryin’ me! I havn’t slep this three neets for shoutin an cryin! It’s th’ conviction o’ *sin*, Davy. Th’ devil seems a howdin me, an I conno pull away, not what-iver. T’ new minister says, “Dunnot yo pull. Let Jesus do ’t all. He’s strang, He is. Yo’re nobbut a

worm." But I've naw *assurance*, Davy, theer's whar it is—I've naw assurance!' he repeated, forgetting in his pain the unregenerate mind of his companion.

David walked on beside him wondering. When he had last seen Tom he was lounging in a half-drunken condition outside the door of the 'Crooked Cow,' cracking tipsy jokes with the passers-by.

'Where is the prayer-meetin?' he inquired presently.

'In owd Simes's shed—an it's late too—I mun hurry.'

'Why, theer'll be plenty o' room in old Simes's shed. It's a fearfu big place.'

'An lasst time theer was na stannin ground for a corn-boggart; an I wudna miss ony o' Mr. Dyson's prayin, not for nothin. Good neet to yo, Davy.'

And Tom broke into a run; David, however, kept up with him.

'P'raps I'll coom too,' he said, with a kind of bravado, when they had passed the bridge and the Kinder printing works, and Clough End was in sight.

Tom said nothing till they had breasted a hill, at the top of which he paused panting, and confronted David.

'Noo yo'll not mak a rumpus, Davy,' he said mistrustfully.

'An if I do, can't a hunderd or two o' yo kick me out?' asked David, mockingly. 'I'll mak no rumpus. P'raps your Mr. Dyson 'll convert me.'

And he walked on laughing.

Tom looked darkly at him; then, as he recovered his wind, his countenance suddenly cleared. Satan laid a new snare for him—poor Tom!—and into his tortured heart there fell a poisonous drop of spiritual pride. Public reprobation applied to a certain order of offences makes a very marketable kind of fame, as the

author of *Manfred* knew very well. David in his small obscure way was supplying another illustration of the principle. For the past year he had been something of a personage in Clough End—having always his wits, his book-learning, his looks, and his singular parentage to start from. Tom—the shambling butt of his comrades—began to like the notion of going into prayer-meeting with David Grieve in tow; and even that bitter and very real cloud of spiritual misery lifted a little.

So they marched in together, Tom in front, with his head much higher than before; and till the minister began there were many curious glances thrown at David. It was a prayer-meeting for boys only, and the place was crammed with them, of all ages up to eighteen.

It was a carpenter's workshop. Tools and timber had been as far as possible pushed to the side, and at the end a rough platform of loose planks had been laid across some logs so as to raise the preacher a little.

Soon there was a stir, and Mr. Dyson appeared. He was tall and loosely built, with the stoop from the neck and the sallow skin which the position of the cotton-spinner at work and the close fluffy atmosphere in which he lives tend to develop. Up to six months ago, he had been a mill-hand and a Wesleyan class-leader. Now, in consequence partly of some inward crisis, partly of revolt against an 'unspiritual' superintendent, he had thrown up mill and Methodism together, and come to live on the doles of the Christian Brethren at Clough End. He had been preaching on the moors already during the day, and was tired out; but the pallor of the harsh face only made the bright, commanding eye more noticeable. It ran over the room, took note first of the numbers, then of



individuals, marked who had been there before, who was a new-comer. The audience fell into order and quiet before it as though a general had taken command.

He put his hands on his hips and began to speak without any preface, somewhat to the boys' surprise, who had expected a prayer. The voice, as generally happens with a successful revivalist preacher, was of fine quality, and rich in good South Lancashire intonations, and his manner was simplicity itself.

'Suppose we put off our prayer a little bit,' he said, in a colloquial tone, his fixed look studying the crowded benches all the while. 'Perhaps we'll have more to pray about by-and-by. . . . Well, now, I haven't been long in Clough End, to be sure, but I think I've been long enough to get some notion of how you boys here live—whether you work on the land, or whether you work in the mills or in shops—I've been watching you a bit, perhaps you didn't think it; and what I'm going to do to-night is to take your lives to pieces—take them to pieces, an look close into them, as you've seen them do at the mill, perhaps, with a machine that wants cleaning. I want to find out what's wrong wi them, what they're good for, whose work they do—*God's or the devil's*. . . . First let me take the mill-hands. Perhaps I know most about their life, for I went to work in a cotton-mill when I was eight years old, and I only left it six months ago. I have seen men and women saved in that mill, so that their whole life afterwards was a kind of ecstasy: I have seen others lost there, so that they became true children of the devil, and made those about them as vile and wretched as themselves. I have seen men grow rich there, and I have seen men die there; so if there is anything I know in this world it is how factory workers spend their time—at least, I think I

know. But judge for yourselves—shout to me if I'm wrong. Isn't it somehow like this ?'

And he fell into a description of the mill-hand's working day. It was done with knowledge, sometimes with humour, and through it all ran a curious under-current of half-ironical passion. The audience enjoyed it, took the points, broke in now and then with comments as the speaker touched on such burning matters as the tyranny of overlookers, the temper of masters, the rubs between the different classes of 'hands,' the behaviour of 'minders' to the 'piecers' employed by them, and so on. The sermon at one time was more like a dialogue between preacher and congregation. David found himself joining in it involuntarily once or twice, so stimulating was the whole atmosphere, and Mr. Dyson's eye was caught perforce by the tall dark fellow with the defiant carriage of the head who sat next to Tom Mullins, and whom he did not remember to have seen before.

But suddenly the preacher stopped, and the room fell dead silent, startled by the darkening of his look. 'Ay,' he said, with stern sharpness. 'Ay, that's how you live—them's the things you spend your time and your minds on. You laugh, and I laugh—not a bad sort of life, you think—a good deal of pleasure, after all, to be got out of it. If a man must work he might do worse. *O you poor souls!*'

The speaker stopped, as though mastering himself. His face worked with emotion; his last words had been almost a cry of pain. After the easy give and take of the opening, this change was electrical. David felt his hand tremble on his knee.

'Answer me this!' cried the preacher, his nervous cotton-spinner's hand outstretched. 'Is there any soul here among you factory lads who, when he wakes in the morning, *ever thinks of saying a prayer?* Not one

of you, I'll be bound! What with shovelling on one's clothes, and gulping down one's breakfast, and walking half a mile to the mill, who's got time to think about prayers? God must wait. He's always there above, you think, sitting in glory. He can listen any time. Well, as you stand at your work—all those hours!—is there ever a moment *then* for putting up a word in Jesus' ear—Jesus, Who died for sinners? Why, no, how should there be indeed? If you don't keep a sharp eye on your work the overlooker 'ull know the reason why in double-quick time! . . . But there comes a break, perhaps, for one reason or another. Does the Lord get it? What a thing to ask, to be sure! Why, there are other spinners close by, waiting for rovings, or leaving off for "baggin," and a bit of talk and a bad word or two are a deal more fun, and come easier than praying. Half-past five o'clock at last—knocking-off time. Then you begin to think of amusing yourselves. There's loafing about the streets, which never comes amiss, and there's smoking and the public for you bigger ones, and there's betting on Manchester races, and there's a bout of swearing every now and then to keep up your spirits, and there are other thoughts, and perhaps actions, for some of you, of which the less said in any decent Christian gathering the better! And so bedtime comes round again; still not a moment to think of God in—of the Judgment which has come a day closer—of your sins which have grown a day heavier—of your soul which has sunk a day further from heaven, a day nearer to hell? Not one. You are dead tired, and mill-work begins so early. Tumble in—God can wait. He has waited fourteen, or eighteen, or twenty years already!

'But you're not all factory hands here. I see a good many lads I know come from the country—from the farms up Kinder or Edale way. Well, I don't

know so much about your ways as I do about mills; but I know some, and I can guess some. *You* are not shut up all day with the roar of the machines in your ears, and the cotton-fluff choking your lungs. You have to live harder, perhaps. You've less chances of getting on in the world; but I declare to you, if you're bad and godless—as some of you are—I think there's a precious sight less excuse for you than there is for the mill-hands!'

And with a startling vehemence, greater by far than he had shown in the case of the mill-workers, he threw himself on the vices and the callousness of the field-labourers. For were they not, day by day, and hour by hour, face to face with the Almighty in His marvellous world—with the rising of His sun, with the flash of His lightning, with His clouds which dropped fatness, and with the heavens which declare His glory? Nothing between them and the Most High, if they would open their dull eyes and see! And more than that. Not a bit of their life, but had been dear to the Lord Jesus—but He had spoken of it, taught from it, made it sacred. The shepherd herding the sheep—how could he, of all men, forget and blaspheme the Good Shepherd? The sower scattering the seed—how could he, of all men, forget and blaspheme the Heavenly Sower? Oh, the crookedness of sin! Oh, the hardness of men's hearts!

The secret of the denunciations which followed lay hidden deep in the speaker's personal history. They were the utterances of a man who had stood for years at the 'mules,' catching, when he could, through the coarse panes of factory glass, the dim blue outlines of distant moors. *Here* were noise, crowd, coarse jesting, mean tyrannies, uncongenial company—everything which a nervous, excitable nature, tuned to poetry in the English way through religion, most loathed; *there*

was beauty, peace, leisure for thought, for holiness, for emotion.

Meanwhile the mind of David Grieve rose once or twice in angry protest. It was not fair—it was unjust—and why did Mr. Dyson always seem to be looking at him?—flinging at him all these scathing words about farming people's sins and follies? He was shaken and excited. Oratory, of any sort, never failed to stir him extraordinarily. Once even he would have jumped up to speak, but Tom Mullin's watchful hand closed on his arm. Davy shook it off angrily, but was perforce reminded of his promise. And Mr. Dyson was swift in all things. The pitiless sentences dropped; the speaker, exhausted, wiped his brow and pondered a moment; and the lads from the farms about, most of whom David knew by sight, were left staring at the floor, some inclined to laugh by reaction, others crimson and miserable.

Well; so God was everywhere forgotten—in the fields and in the mill. The greedy, vicious hours went by, and God still waited—waited. Would He wait for ever?

*'Nay!'*

The intense, low-spoken word sent a shiver through the room. The revivalist passion had been mounting rapidly amongst the listeners, and the revivalist sense divined what was coming. To his dying day David, at least, never forgot the picture of a sinner's death agony, a sinner's doom, which followed. As to the first, it was very quiet and colloquial. The preacher dwelt on the tortured body, the choking breath, the failing sight, the talk of relations and friends round the bed.

“Ay, poor fellow, he'll not lasst mich longer; t' doctor's gien him up—and a good thing too, for his sufferins are terr'ble to see.”

‘And your poor dying ears will catch what they say. Then will your fear come upon you as a storm, and your calamity as a whirlwind. Such a fear!

‘Once, my lads—long ago—I saw a poor girl caught by her hair in one of the roving machines in the mill I used to work at. Three minutes afterwards they tore away her body from the iron teeth which had destroyed her. But I, a lad of twelve, had seen her face just as the thing caught her, and if I live to be a hundred I shall never forget that face—that horrible, horrible fear convulsing it.

‘But that fear, my boys, was as *nothing* to the sinner’s fear at death! Only a few more hours—a few more minutes, perhaps—and then *judgment!* All the pleasant loafing and lounging, all the eating and drinking, the betting and swearing, the warm sun, the kind light, the indulgent parents and friends left behind; nothing for ever and ever but the torments which belong to sin, and which even the living God can no more spare you and me if we die in sin than the mill-engine, once set going, can spare the poor creature that meddles with it.

‘Well; but perhaps in that awful last hour you try to pray—to call on the Saviour. But, alas! alas! prayer and faith have to be learnt, like cotton-spinning. Let no man count on learning that lesson for the asking. While your body has been enjoying itself in sin, your soul has been dying—dying; and when at the last you bid it rise and go to the Father, you will find it just as helpless as your poor paralysed limbs. It cannot rise, it has no strength; it cannot go, for it knows not the way. No hope; no hope. Down it sinks, and the black waters of hell close upon it for ever!’

Then followed a sort of vision of the lost—delivered in short abrupt sentences—the form of the speaker

drawn rigidly up meanwhile to its full height, the long arm outstretched. The utterance had very little of the lurid materialism, the grotesque horror of the ordinary ranter's hell. But it stole upon the imagination little by little, and possessed it at last with an all-pervading terror. Into it, to begin with, had gone the whole life-blood and passion of an agonised soul. The man speaking had himself graven the terrors of it on his inmost nature through many a week of demoniacal possession. But since that original experience of fire which gave it birth, there had come to its elaboration a strange artistic instinct. Day after day the preacher had repeated it to hushed congregations, and with every repetition, almost, there had come a greater sharpening of the light and shade, a keener sense of what would tell and move. He had given it on the moors that afternoon, but he gave it better to-night, for on the wild walk across the plateau of the Peak some fresh illustrations, drawn from its black and fissured solitude, had suggested themselves, and he worked them out as he went, with a kind of joy, watching their effect. Yet the man was, in his way, a saint, and altogether sincere—so subtle a thing is the life of the spirit.

In the middle, Tom Mullins, David's apprentice-friend, suddenly broke out into loud groans, rocking himself to and fro on the form. A little later, a small fair-haired boy of twelve sprang up from the form where he had been sitting trembling, and rushed into the space between the benches and the preacher, quite unconscious of what he was doing.

'Sir!' he said; 'oh, sir!—please—I didn't want to say them bad words this mornin'; I didn't, sir; it wor t' big uns made me; they said they'd duck me—an it do hurt that bad. Oh, sir, please!'

And the little fellow stood wringing his hands, the tears coursing down his cheeks.

The minister stopped, frowning, and looked at him. Then a smile broke on the set face, he stepped up to the lad, threw his arm round him, and drew him up to his side fronting the room.

‘My boy,’ he said, looking down at him tenderly, ‘you and I, thank God, are still in the land of the *living*; there is still time to-night—this very minute—to be saved! Ay, saved, for ever and ever, by the blood of the Lamb. Look away from yourselves—away from sin—away from hell—to the blessed Lord, that suffered and died and rose again; just for what? For this only—that He might, with His own pierced hands, draw every soul here to-night, and every soul in the wide world that will but hear His voice, out of the clutches of the devil, and out of the pains of hell, and gather it close and safe into His everlasting arms!’

There was a great sob from the whole room. Rough lads from the upland farms, shop-boys, mill-hands, strained forward, listening, thirsting, responding to every word.

*Redemption—Salvation*—the deliverance of the soul from itself—thither all religion comes at last, whether for the ranter or the philosopher. To the enriching of that conception, to the gradual hewing it out in historical shape, have gone the noblest poetry, the purest passion, the intensest spiritual vision of the highest races, since the human mind began to work. And the historical shape may crumble; but the need will last and the travail will go on; for man’s quest of redemption is but the eternal yielding of the clay in the hands of the potter, the eternal answer of the creature to the urging indwelling Creator.



## CHAPTER X

HALF an hour later, after the stormy praying and singing which had succeeded Mr. Dyson's address, David found himself tramping up the rough and lonely road leading to the high Kinder valley. The lights of Clough End had disappeared; against the night sky the dark woody side of Mardale Moor was still visible; beneath it sang the river; a few stars were to be seen; and every now and then the windows of a farm shone out to guide the wayfarer. But David stumbled on, noticing nothing. At the foot of the steep hill leading to the farm he stopped a moment, and leant over the gate. The little lad's cry was in his ears.

Presently he leapt the gate impatiently, and ran up whistling. Supper was over, but Hannah ungraciously brought him out some cold bacon and bread. Louie hung about him while he ate, studying him with quick furtive eyes.

'Whar yo bin?' she said abruptly, when Hannah had gone to the back kitchen for a moment. Reuben was dozing by the fire over the local paper.

'Nowhere as concerns you,' said David, shortly. He finished his supper and went and sat on the steps. The dogs came and put their noses on his knees. He pulled absently at their coats, looking straight before him at the dark point of Kinder Low.

'Whar yo bin?' said Louie's voice again in his ear. She had squatted down on the step behind him.

'Be off wi yer,' said David, angrily, getting up in order to escape her.

But she pursued him across the farmyard.

'Have yo got a letter?'

‘No, I havn’t.’

‘Did yo ask at t’ post-office?’

‘No, I didn’t.’

‘An why didn’t yo?’

‘Because I didn’t want—soa there—get away.’

And he stalked off. Louie, left behind, chewed the cud of reflection in the darkness.

Presently, to his great disgust, as he was sitting under a wall of one of the pasture-fields, hidden, as he conceived, from all the world by the night, he heard the rustle of a dress, the click of a stone, and there was Louie dangling her legs above him, having attacked him in the rear.

‘Uncle Reuben’s talkin ’is stuff about Mr. Dyson. I seed ’im gooin passt Wigsons’ this afternoon. He’s nowt—he’s common, he is.’

The thin scornful voice out of the dark grated on him intolerably. He bent forward and shut his ears tight with both his hands. To judge from the muffled sounds he heard, Louie went on talking for a while; but at last there had been silence for so long, that he took his hands away, thinking she must have gone.

‘Yo’ve been at t’ prayer-meetin, I tell yo, an yo’re a great stupid muffin-yed, soa theer.’

And a peremptory little kick on his shoulder from a substantial shoe gave the words point.

He sprang up in a rage, ran down the hill, jumped over a wall or two, and got rid of her. But he seemed to hear her elfish laugh for some time after. As for himself, he could not analyse what had come over him. But not even the attraction of an unopened parcel of books he had carried home that afternoon from Clough End—a loan from a young stationer he had lately made acquaintance with—could draw him back to the farm. He sat on and on in the dark. And when at last, roused by the distant sounds of

shutting up the house, he slunk in and up to bed, he tossed about for a long time, and woke up often in the night. The tyrannous power of another man's faith was upon him. He could not get Mr. Dyson out of his head. How on earth could anybody be so *certain*? It was monstrous that any one should be. It was eating stuff.

Still, next day, hearing by chance that the new comer was going to preach at a hamlet the other side of Clough End, he went, found a large mixed meeting mostly of mill-hands, and the tide of Revivalism rolling high. This time Mr. Dyson picked him out at once—the face and head indeed were easily remembered. After the sermon, when the congregation were filing out, leaving behind those more particularly distressed in mind to be dealt with more intimately in a small prayer-meeting by Mr. Dyson and a prayer-leader, the minister suddenly stepped aside from a group of people he was talking with, and touched David on the arm as he was making for the door.

‘Won’t you stay?’ he said peremptorily. ‘Don’t trifle with the Lord.’

And his feverish divining eyes seemed to look the boy through and through. David flushed, and pushed past him with some inarticulate answer. When he found himself in the open air he was half angry, half shaken with emotion. And afterwards a curious instinct, the sullen instinct of the wild creature shrinking from a possible captor, made him keep himself as much as possible out of Mr. Dyson’s way. At the prayer-meetings and addresses, which followed each other during the next fortnight in quick succession, David was almost always present; but he stood at the back, and as soon as the general function was over he fled. The preacher’s strong will was piqued. He began to covet the boy’s submission disproportionately,

and laid schemes for meeting with him. But David evaded them all.

Other persons, however, succeeded better. Whenever the revivalist fever attacks a community, it excites in a certain number of individuals, especially women, an indescribable zeal for proselytising. The signs of 'conviction' in any hitherto unregenerate soul are marked at once, and the 'saved' make a prey of it, showing a marvellous cunning and persistence in its pursuit.

One day a woman, the wife of a Clough End shoemaker, slightly known to David, met him on the moors.

'Will yo coom to-night?' she said, nodding to him. 'Theer'll be prayin' at our house—about half a dozen.'

Then, as the boy stopped, amazed and hesitating, she fixed him with her shining ecstatic eyes.

'Awake, thou that sleepest,' she said under her breath, 'and Christ shall give thee light.'

She had been carrying a bundle to a distant farm. A child was in her arms, and she looked dragged and worn. But all the way down the moor as she came towards him David had heard her singing hymns.

He hung his head and passed on. But in the evening he went, found three or four other boys his own age or older, the woman, and her husband. The woman sang some of the most passionate Methodist hymns; the husband, a young shoemaker, already half dead of asthma and bronchitis, told his 'experiences' in a voice broken by incessant coughing; one of the boys, a rough specimen, known to David as a van-boy from some calico-printing works in the neighbourhood, prayed aloud, breaking down into sobs in the middle; and David, at first obstinately silent, found himself joining before the end in the groans and 'Amens,' by force of a contagious excitement he half despised but could not withstand.

The little prayer-meeting, however, broke up somewhat in confusion. There was not much real difference of opinion at this time in Clough End, which was, on the whole, a strongly religious town. Even the Churchmanship of it was decidedly evangelical, ready at any moment to make common cause with Dissent against Ritualism, if such a calamity should ever threaten the little community, and very ready to join, more or less furtively, in the excitements of Dissenting revivals. Jerry Timmins and his set represented the only serious blot on what the pious Clough Endian might reasonably regard as a fair picture. But this set contained some sharp fellows—provided outlet for a considerable amount of energy of a raw and roving sort, and, no doubt, did more to maintain the mental equilibrium of the small factory-town than any enthusiast on the other side would for a moment have allowed. The excitement which followed in the train of a man like Mr. Dyson roused, of course, an answering hubbub among the Timminsites. The whole of Jerry's circle was stirred up, in fact, like a hive of wasps; their ribaldry grew with what it fed on; and every day some new and exquisite method of harrying the devout occurred to the more ingenious among them.

David had hitherto escaped notice. But on this evening, while he and his half-dozen companions were still on their knees, they were first disturbed by loud drummings on the shoemaker's door, which opened directly into the little room where they were congregated; and then, when they emerged into the street, they found a mock prayer-meeting going on outside, with all the usual 'manifestations' of revivalist fervour—sighs, groans, shouts, and the rest of it—in full flow. At the sight of David Grieve there were first stares and then shrieks of laughter.

‘I say, Davy,’ cried a drunken young weaver, sidling up to him on his knees and embracing him from behind, ‘my heart’s real touched. Gie me your coat, Davy; it’s better nor mine, Davy; and I’m your Christian brother, Davy.’

The emotion of this appeal drew uproarious merriment from the knot of Secularists. David, in a frenzy, kicked out, so that his assailant dropped him with a howl. The weaver’s friends closed upon the ‘Ranters,’ who had to fight their way through. It was not till they had gained the outskirts of the town that the shower of stones ceased, and that they could pause to take stock of their losses. Then it appeared that, though all were bruised, torn, and furious, some were inclined to take a mystical joy in persecution, and to find compensation in certain plain and definite predictions as to the eternal fate in store for ‘Jerry Timmins’s divils.’ David, on the other hand, was much more inclined to vent his wrath on his own side than on the Timminsites.

‘Why can’t yo keep what yo’re doin to yoursels?’ he called out fiercely to the knot of panting boys, as he faced round upon them at the gate leading to the Kinder road. ‘Yo’re a parcel o’ fools—always chatterin an clatterin.’

The others defended themselves warmly. ‘Them Timmins lot’ were always spying about. ‘They daren’t attack the large meetings, but they had a diabolical way of scenting out the small ones. The meetings at the shoemaker’s had been undisturbed for some few nights, then a Timminsite passing by had heard hymns, probably listened at the keyhole, and of course informed the main body of the enemy.

‘They’re like them nasty earwigs,’ said one boy in disgust, ‘they’ll wriggle in onywheres.’

‘Howd yor noise!’ said David, peremptorily. ‘If

yo wanted to keep out o' their way, yo could do 't fasst enough.'

'How?' they inquired, with equal curtness.

'Yo needn't meet in th' town at aw. Theer's plenty o' places up on t' moor,' and he waved his hand towards the hills behind him, lying clear in the autumn moonlight. 'Theer's th' owd Smithy—who'd find yo there?'

The mention of the Smithy was received as an inspiration. There is a great deal of pure romantic temper roused by these revivalist outbreaks in provincial England. The idea of the moors and the old ruin as setting for a secret prayer-meeting struck the group of excited lads as singularly attractive. They parted cheerfully upon it, in spite of their bruises.

David, however, walked home fuming. The self-abandonment of the revival had been all along well-nigh intolerable to him—and now, that he should have allowed the Timminsites to know anything about his prayers! He very nearly broke off from it altogether in his proud disgust.

However he did ultimately nothing of the sort. As soon as he grew cool again, he was as much tormented as before by what was at bottom more an intellectual curiosity than a moral anguish. There was *some* moral awakening in it; he had some real qualms about sin, some real aspirations after holiness, and, so far, the self-consciousness which had first stirred at Hawthorn was deepened and fertilised. But the thirst for emotion and sensation was the main force at work. He could not make out what these religious people meant by their 'experiences,' and for the first time he wanted to make out. So when it was proposed to him to meet at the Smithy on a certain Saturday evening, he agreed.

Meanwhile, Louie was sitting up in bed every night, with her hands round her sharp knees, and her black brows knit over David's follies. It seemed to her he no longer cared 'a haporth' about getting a letter from Mr. Ancrum, about going to Manchester, about all those entrancing anti-meat schemes which were to lead so easily to a paradise of free 'buying' for both of them. Whenever she tried to call him back to these things he shook her off impatiently, and their new-born congeniality to each other had been all swamped in this craze for 'shoutin hollerin' people she despised with all her heart. When she flew out at him, he just avoided her. Indeed, he avoided her now at all times, whether she flew out or not. There was an invincible heathenism about Louie, which made her the natural enemy of any 'awakened' person.

The relation of the elders in the farm to the new development in David was a curious one. Hannah viewed it with a secret satisfaction. Christians have less time than other people—such, at least, had been her experience with Reuben—to spend in thirsting for the goods of this world. The more David went to prayer-meetings, the less likely was he to make inadmissible demands on what belonged to him. As for poor Reuben, he seemed to have got his wish; while he and Hannah had been doing their best to drive Sandy's son to perdition through a downward course of 'loafing,' God had sent Mr. Dyson to put Davy back on the right road. But he was ill at ease; he watched the excitement, which all the lad's prickly reticence could not hide from those about him, with strange and variable feelings. As a Christian, he should have rejoiced; instead, the uncle and nephew shunned each other more than ever, and shunned especially all talk of the revival. Perhaps the whole situation—the influence of the new man, of the local



talk, of the quickened spiritual life around him, did but aggravate the inner strain in Reuben. Perhaps his wife's satisfaction, which his sharpened conscience perceived and understood, troubled him intolerably. At any rate, his silence and disquiet grew, and his only pleasure lay, more than ever, in those solitary cogitations we have already spoken of.

The 15th of October approached—as it happened, the Friday before the Smithy prayer-meeting. On that day of the year, according to ancient and invariable custom, the Yorkshire stock—steers, heifers, young horses—which are transferred to the Derbyshire farms on the 15th of May, are driven back to their Yorkshire owners, with all the fatness of Derbyshire pastures showing on their sleek sides. Breeders and farmers meet again at Woodhead, just within the Yorkshire border. The animals are handed over to their owners, paid for at so much a head, and any preventible damage or loss occurring among them is reckoned against the farmer returning them, according to certain local rules.

As the middle of the month came nearer, Reuben began to talk despondently to Hannah of his probable gains from his Yorkshire 'boarders.' It had been a cold wet summer; he was 'feart' the owners would think he might have taken more care of some of the animals, especially of the young horses, and he mentioned certain ailments springing from damp and exposure for which he might be held responsible. Hannah grew irritated and anxious. The receipts from this source were the largest they could reckon upon in the year. But the fields on which the Yorkshire animals pastured were at some distance from the house; this department of the farm business was always left wholly to Reuben; and, with much grumbling and scolding, she took his word for it as to

the probable lowness of the sum he should bring back.

David, meanwhile, was sometimes a good deal puzzled by Reuben's behaviour. It seemed to him that his uncle told some queer tales at home about their summer stock. And when Reuben announced his intention of going by himself to Woodhead, and leaving David at home, the boy was still more astonished.

However, he was glad enough to be spared the tramp with a set of people whose ways and talk were more and more uncongenial to him; and after his uncle's departure he lay for hours hidden from Louie among the heather, sometimes arguing out imaginary arguments with Mr. Dyson, sometimes going through passing thrills of emotion and fear. What was meant, he wanted to know, by '*the sense of pardon*'? Person after person at the prayer-meetings he had been frequenting had spoken of attaining it with ecstasy, or of being still shut out from it with anguish. But how, after all, did it differ from pardoning yourself? You had only, it seemed to him, to think very hard that you were pardoned, and the feeling came. How could anybody tell it was more than that? David racked his brain endlessly over the same subject. Who could be sure that '*experience*' was not all moonshine? But he was as yet much too touched and shaken by what he had been going through to draw any trenchant conclusions. He asked the question, however, and therein lay the great difference between him and the true stuff of Methodism.

Meanwhile, in his excitement, he, for the first time, ceased to go to the Dawsons' as usual. To begin with, they dropped out of a mind which was preoccupied with one of the first strong emotions of adolescence. Then, some one told him casually that 'Lias was more ailing than usual, and that Margaret was in much

trouble. He was pricked with remorse, but just because Margaret would be sure to question him, a raw shyness came in and held him back from the effort of going.

On the Saturday evening David, having ingeniously given Louie the slip, sped across the fields to the Smithy. It was past five o'clock, and the light was fading. But the waning gold of the sunset as he jumped the wall on to the moor made the whole autumnal earth about him, and the whole side of the Scout, one splendour. Such browns and pinks among the withering ling; such gleaming greens among the bilberry leaf; such reds among the turning ferns; such fiery touches on the mountain ashes overhanging the Red Brook! The western light struck in great shafts into the bosom of the Scout; and over its grand encompassing mass hung some hovering clouds just kindling into rosy flame. As the boy walked along he saw and thrilled to the beauty which lay spread about him. His mood was simple, and sweeter than usual. He felt a passionate need of expression, of emotion. There was a true disquiet, a genuine disgust with self at the bottom of him, and God seemed more than imaginatively near. Perhaps, on this day of his youth, of all days, he was closest to the Kingdom of Heaven.

At the Smithy he found about a dozen persons, mostly youths, just come out from the two or three mills which give employment to Clough End, and one rather older than the rest, a favourite prayer-leader in Sunday meetings. At first, everything felt strange; the boys eyed one another; even David as he stepped in among them had a momentary reaction, and was more conscious of the presence of a red-haired fellow there with whom he had fought a mighty fight on the Huddersfield expedition, than of any spiritual needs.

However, the prayer-leader knew his work. He was slow and pompous; his tone with the Almighty might easily have roused a hostile sense of humour; but Dissent in its ætively and emotional forms kills the sense of humour; and, besides, there was a real, un-gainly power in the man. Every phrase of his opening prayer was hackneyed; every gesture uncouth. But his heart was in it, and religious conviction is the most infectious thing in the world. He warmed, and his congregation warmed with him. The wild scene, too, did its part—the world of darkening moors spread out before them; the mountain wall behind them; the October wind sighing round the ruined walls; the lonely unaccustomed sounds of birds and water. When he ceased, boy after boy broke out into more or less incoherent praying. Soon in the dusk they could no longer see each other's faces; and then it was still easier to break through reserve.

At last David found himself speaking. What he said was at first almost inaudible, for he was kneeling between the wall and the pan which had been his childish joy, with his face and arms crushed against the stones. But when he began the boys about pricked up their ears, and David was conscious suddenly of a deepened silence. There were warm tears on his hidden cheeks; but it pleased him keenly they should listen so, and he prayed more audibly and freely. Then, when his voice dropped at last, the prayer-leader gave out the familiar hymn, 'Come, O thou Traveller unknown:—

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with Thee;  
With Thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.

Wilt thou not yet to me reveal  
 Thy new unutterable name ?  
 Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell—  
 To know it now resolved I am.  
 Wrestling, I will not let thee go,  
 Till I thy name, thy nature know.

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'Tis Love! 'tis Love—thou lovest me!  
 I hear thy whisper in my heart ;  
 The morning breaks, the shadows flee,  
 Pure universal Love thou art ;  
 To me, to all, thy mercies move,  
 Thy nature and thy name is Love.

Again and again the lines rose on the autumn air ; each time the hymn came to an end it was started afresh, the sound of it spreading far and wide into the purple breast of Kinder Scout. At last the painful sobbing of poor Tom Mullins almost drowned the singing. The prayer-leader, himself much moved, bent over and seized him by the arm.

'Look to Jesus, Tom. Lay hold on the Saviour. Don't think of your sins ; they're done away i' th' blood o' the Lamb. Howd Him fast. Say, "I believe," and the Lord ull deliver yo.'

With a cry, the great hulking lad sprang to his feet, and clasped his arms above his head—

'I do believe—I will believe. Help me, Lord Jesus. Oh, I'm saved ! I'm saved !' And he remained standing in an ecstasy, looking to the sky above the Scout, where the red sunset glow still lingered.

'Hallelujah ! hallelujah ! Thanks be to God !' cried the prayer-leader, and the Smithy resounded in the growing darkness with similar shouts. David was almost choking with excitement. He would have given worlds to spring to Tom Mullins's side and proclaim the same faith. But the inmost heart of him,

his real self, seemed to him at this testing moment something dead and cold. No heavenly voice spoke to *him*, David Grieve. A genuine pang of religious despair seized him. He looked out over the moor through a gap in the stones. There was a dim path below; the fancy struck him that Christ, the 'Traveller unknown,' was passing along it. He had already stretched out His hand of blessing to Tom Mullins.

'To me! to me, too!' David cried under his breath, carried away by the haunting imagination, and straining his eyes into the dusk. Had the night opened to his sight there and then in a vision of glory, he would have been no whit surprised.

Hark!—what was that sound?

A weird scream rose on the wind. The startled congregation in the Smithy scrambled to their feet. Another scream, nearer apparently than the first, and then a loud wailing, broken every few seconds by a strange slight laugh, of which the distance seemed quite indefinite. Was it close by, or beyond the Red Brook?

The prayer-leader turned white, the boys stood huddled round him in every attitude of terror. Again the scream, and the little ghostly laugh! Looking at each other wildly, the whole congregation broke from the Smithy down the hill. But the leader stopped himself.

'It's mebbe soom one in trouble,' he said manfully, every limb trembling. 'We mun go and see, my lads.' And he rushed off in the direction whence the first sound had seemed to come—towards the Red Brook—half a dozen of the bolder spirits following. The rest stood cowering on the slope under the Smithy. David meanwhile had climbed the ruined wall, and stood with head strained forward, his eyes sweeping the moor. But every outline was sinking fast into the

gulf of the night; only a few indistinct masses—a cluster of gorse-bushes, a clump of mountain ash—still showed here and there.

The leader made for one of these darker patches on the mountain-side, led on always by the recurrent screams. He reached it; it was a patch of juniper overhanging the Red Brook—when suddenly from behind it there shot up a white thing, taller than the tallest man, with nodding head and outspread arms, and such laughter—so faint, so shrill, so evil, breaking midway into a hoarse angry yell.

'*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*' cried the whole band with one voice, and, wheeling round, they ran down the Scout, joined by the contingent from the Smithy, some of them falling headlong among the heather in their agony of flight, others ruthlessly knocking over those in front of them who seemed to be in their way. In a few seconds, as it seemed, the whole Scout was left to itself and the night. Footsteps, voices, all were gone—save for one long peal of most human, but still elfish, mirth, which came from the Red Brook.

## CHAPTER XI

A DARK figure sprang down from the wall of the Smithy, leapt along the heather, and plunged into the bushes along the brook. A cry in another key was heard.

David emerged, dragging something behind him.

'Yo limb, yo! How dare yo, yo little beast? Yo impident little toad!' And in a perfect frenzy of rage he shook what he held. But Louie—for naturally it was Louie—wrenched herself away, and stood confronting him, panting, but exultant.

‘I freetened ’em! just didn’t I? Cantin humbugs! “*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*”’ And, mimicking the voice of the leader, she broke again into an hysterical shout of laughter.

David, beside himself, hit out and struck her. It was a heavy blow which knocked her down, and for a moment seemed to stun her. Then she recovered her senses, and flew at him in a mad passion, weeping wildly with the smart and excitement.

He held her off, ashamed of himself, till she flung away, shrieking out—

‘Go and say its prayers, do—good little boy—poor little babby. Ugh, yo coward! hittin gells, that’s all yo’re good for.’

And she ran off so fast that all sight of her was lost in a few seconds. Only two or three loud sobs seemed to come back from the dark hollow below. As for the boy he stopped a second to disentangle his feet from the mop and the tattered sheet wherewith Louie had worked her transformation scene. Then he dashed up the hill again, past the Smithy, and into a track leading out on the high road between Castleton and Clough End. He did not care where he went. Five minutes ago he had been almost in heaven; now he was in hell. He hated Louie, he hated the boys who had cut and run, he loathed himself. No!—religion was not for such as he. No more eanting—no more praying—away with it! He seemed to shake all the emotion of the last few weeks from him with scorn and haste, as he ran on, his strong young limbs battling with the wind.

Presently he emerged on the high road. To the left, a hundred yards away, were the lights of a way-side inn; a farm waggon and a pair of horses standing with drooped and patient heads were drawn up on the cobbles in front of it. David felt in his pockets.



There was eighteenpence in them, the remains of half-a-crown a strange gentleman had given him in Clough End the week before for stopping a runaway horse. In he stalked.

‘Two penn’orth of gin—hot!’ he commanded.

The girl serving the bar brought it and stared at him curiously. The glaring paraffin lamp above his head threw the frowning brows and wild eyes, the crimson cheeks, heaving chest, and tumbled hair, into strong light and shade. ‘That’s a quare un!’ she thought, but she found him handsome all the same, and, retreating behind the beer-taps, she eyed him surreptitiously. She was a raw country lass, not yet stript of all her natural shyness, or she would have begun to ‘chaff’ him.

‘Another!’ said David, pushing forward his glass. This time he looked at her. His reckless gaze travelled over her coarse and comely face, her full figure, her bare arms. He drank the glass she gave him, and yet another. She began to feel half afraid of him, and moved away. The hot stimulant ran through his veins. Suddenly he felt his head whirling from the effects of it, but that horrible clutch of despair was no longer on him. He raised himself defiantly and turned to go, staggering along the floor. He was near the entrance when an inner door opened, and the carter, who had been gossiping in a room behind with the landlord, emerged. He started with astonishment when he saw David.

‘Hullo, Davy, what are yo after?’

David turned, nearly losing his balance as he did so, and clutching at the bar for support. He found himself confronted with Jim Wigson—his old enemy—who had been to Castleton with a load of hay and some calves, and was on his way back to Kinder again. When he saw who it was clinging to the bar counter,

Jim first stared and then burst into a hoarse roar of laughter.

'Coom here! coom here!' he shouted to the party in the back parlour. 'Here's a rum start! I do declare this beats cock-fighting!—this do. Damn my eyes iv it doosn't! Look at that yoong limb. Why they towd me down at Clough End this mornin he'd been took "serious"—took wi a prayin turn—they did. Look at un! It ull tak 'im till to-morrow mornin to know his yed from his heels. He! he! he! Yo're a deep un, Davy—yo are. But yo'll get a bastin when Hannah sees you—prayin or no prayin.'

And Jim went off into another guffaw, pointing his whip the while at Davy. Some persons from the parlour crowded in, enjoying the fun. David did not see them. He reached out his hand for the glass he had just emptied, and steadying himself by a mighty effort, flung it swift and straight in Jim Wigson's face. There was a crash of fragments, a line of blood appeared on the young carter's chin, and a chorus of wrath and alarm rose from the group behind him. With a furious oath Jim placed a hand on the bar, vaulted it, and fell upon the lad. David defended himself blindly, but he was dazed with drink, and his blows and kicks rained aimlessly on Wigson's iron frame. In a second or two Jim had tripped him up, and stood over him, his face ablaze with vengeance and conquest.

'Yo yoong varmint—yo cantin yoong hypocrite! I'll teach yo to show imperence to your betters. Yo bin allus badly i' want o' soombody to tak yo down a peg or two. Now I'll show yo. I'll not fight yo, but I'll flog yo—*flog yo*—d' yo hear?'

And raising his carter's whip he brought it down on the boy's back and legs. David tried desperately to rise—in vain—Jim had him by the collar; and four or

five times more the heavy whip came down, avenging with each lash many a slumbering grudge in the victor's soul.

Then Jim felt his arm firmly caught. 'Now, Mister Wigson,' cried the landlord—a little man, but a wiry—'yo'll not get me into trooble. Let th' yoong ripstitch go. Yo've gien him a taste he'll not forget in a week o' Sundays. Let him go.'

Jim, with more oaths, struggled to get free, but the landlord had quelled many rows in his time, and his wrists were worthy of his calling. Meanwhile his wife helped up the boy. David was no sooner on his feet than he made another mad rush for Wigson, and it needed the combined efforts of landlord, landlady, and servant-girl to part the two again. Then the landlord, seizing David from behind by 'the scuft of the neck,' ran him out to the door in a twinkling.

'Go 'long wi yo! An if yo coom raisin th' divil here again, see iv I don't gie yo a souse on th' yed mysel.' And he shoved his charge out adroitly and locked the door.

David staggered across the road as though still under the impetus given by the landlord's shove.

The servant-girl took advantage of the loud cross-fire of talk which immediately rose at the bar round Jim Wigson to run to a corner window and lift the blind. The boy was sitting on a heap of stones for mending the road, looking at the inn. Other passers-by had come in, attracted by the row, and the girl slipped out unperceived, opened the side door, and ran across the road. It had begun to rain, and the drops splashed in her face.

David was sitting leaning forward, his eyes fixed on the lighted windows of the house opposite. The rays which came from them showed her that his nose and forehead were bleeding, and that the blood was drip-

ping unheeded on the boy's clothes. He was utterly powerless, and trembling all over, but his look 'gave her a turn.'

'Now, luke here,' she said, bending down to him. 'Yo jes go whoam. Wigson, he'll be out direekly, an he'll do yo a hurt iv he finds yo. Coom, I'll put yo i' the way for Kinder.'

And before he could gather his will to resist, she had dragged him up with her strong countrywoman's arms and was leading him along the road to the entrance of the lane he had come by.

'Lor, yo *are* bleedin,' she said compassionately; 'he shud ha thowt as how yo wor nobbut a lad—an it wor he begun aggin fust. He's a big bully is Wigson.' And impulsively raising her apron she applied it to the blood, David quite passive all the while. The great clumsy lass nearly kissed him for pity.

'Now then,' she said at last, turning him into the lane, 'yo know your way, an I mun goo, or they'll be raisin the parish arter me. Gude neet to yo, an keep out o' Wigson's seet. Rest yursel a bit theer—agen th' wall.'

And leaving him leaning against the wall, she reluctantly departed, stopping to look back at him two or three times in spite of the rain, till the angle of the wall hid him from view.

The rain poured down and the wind whistled through the rough lane. David presently slipped down upon a rock jutting from the wall, and a fevered, intermittent sleep seized him—the result of the spirits he had been drinking. His will could oppose no resistance; he slept on hour after hour, sheltered a little by an angle of the wall, but still soaked by rain and buffeted by the wind.

When he awoke he staggered suddenly to his feet. The smart of his back and legs recalled him, after a

few moments of bewilderment, to a mental torture he had scarcely yet had time to feel. He—David Grieve—had been beaten—thrashed like a dog—by Jim Wigson!. The remembered fact brought with it a degradation of mind and body—a complete unstringing of the moral fibres, which made even revenge seem an impossible output of energy. A nature of this sort, with such capacities and ambitions, carries about with it a sense of supremacy, a natural, indispensable self-conceit which acts as the sheath to the bud, and is the condition of healthy development. Break it down and you bruise and jeopardise the flower of life.

Jim Wigson!—the coarse, ignorant lout with whom he had been, more or less, at feud since his first day in Kinder, whom he had despised with all the strength of his young vanity. By to-morrow all Kinder would know, and all Kinder would laugh. 'What! yo whopped Reuben Grieve's nevvie, Jim? Wal, an a good thing, too! A lick now an again ud do *him* noa harm—a cantankerous yoong rascot—pert and proud, like t' passon's pig, I say.' David could hear the talk to be as though it were actually beside him. It burnt into his ear.

He groped his way through the lane and on to the moor—trembling with physical exhaustion, the morbid frenzy within him choking his breath, the storm beating in his face. What was that black mass to his right?—the Smithy? A hard sob rose in his throat. Oh, he had been so near to an ideal world of sweetness, purity, holiness! Was it a year ago?

With great difficulty he found the crossing-place in the brook, and then the gap in the wall which led him into the farm fields. When he was still a couple of fields off the house he heard the dogs beginning. But he heard them as though in a dream.

At last he stood at the door and fumbled for the handle. Locked! Why, what time could it be? He tried to remember what time he had left home, but failed. At last he knocked, and just as he did so he perceived through a chink of the kitchen shutter a light on the scrubbed deal table inside, and Hannah's figure beside it. At the sound of the knocker Hannah rose, put away her work with deliberation, snuffed the candle, and then moved with it to the door of the kitchen. The boy watched her with a quickly beating heart and whirling brain. She opened the door.

'Whar yo bin?' she demanded sternly. 'I'd like to know what business yo have to coom in this time o' neet, an your uncle fro whoam. Yo've bin in mischief, I'll be bound. Theer's Louie coom back wi a black eye, an jes because she woan't say nowt about it, I know as it's yo are at t' bottom o' 't. I'm reg'lar sick o' sich doins in a decent house. Whar yo bin, I say?'

And this time she held the candle up so as to see him. She had been sitting fuming by herself, and was in one of her blackest tempers. David's misdemeanour was like food to a hungry instinct.

'I went to prayer-meetin,' the lad said thickly. It seemed to him as though the words came all in the wrong order.

Hannah bent forward and gave a sudden cry.

'Why, yo bin fightin! Yo're all ower blood! Yo bin fightin, and I'll bet a thousand pund yo draw'd in Louie too. And *sperrits!* Why, yo *smell* o' sperrits! Yo're jes *reckin* wi 'em! Wal, upon my word!'—and Hannah drew herself back, flinging every slow word in his face like a blow. 'Yo feature your mither, yo do, boath on you, pretty close. I allus said it ud coom out i' yo too. Prayer-meetin! Yo yoong hypocrite! Gang your ways! Yo may sleep

i' th' stable; it's good enough liggin for yo this neet.'

And before he had taken in her words she had slammed the door in his face, and locked it. He made a feeble rush for it in vain. Hannah marched back into the kitchen, listening instinctively first to him left outside, and then for any sound there might be from upstairs. In a minute or two she heard uneven steps going away; but there was no movement in the room overhead. Louie was sleeping heavily. As for Hannah, she sat down again with a fierce decision of gesture, which seemed to vibrate through the kitchen and all it held. Who could find fault with her? It would be a lesson to him. It was not a cold night, and there was straw in the stable—a deal better lying than such a boy deserved. As she thought of his 'religious' turn she shrugged her shoulders with a bitter scorn.

The night wore on in the high Kinder valley. The stormy wind and rain beat in great waves of sound and flood against the breast of the mountain; the Kinder stream and the Red Brook danced under the heavy drops. The grouse lay close and silent in the sheltering heather; even the owls in the lower woods made no sound. Still, the night was not perfectly dark, for towards midnight a watery moon rose, and showed itself at intervals between the pelting showers.

In the Dawsons' little cottage on Frimley Moor there were still lights showing when that pale moon appeared. Margaret was watching late. She and another woman sat by the fire talking under their breaths. A kettle was beside her with a long spout, which sent the steam far into the room, keeping the air of it moist and warm for the poor bronchitic old

man who lay close-curtained from the draughts on the wooden bed in the corner.

The kettle sang, the fire crackled, and the wind shook the windows and doors. But suddenly, through the other sounds, Margaret was aware of an intermittent knocking—a low, hesitating sound, as of some one outside afraid, and yet eager, to make himself heard.

She started up, and her companion—a homely neighbour, one of those persons whose goodness had, perhaps, helped to shape poor Margaret's philosophy of life—looked round with a seared expression.

'Whoiver can it be, this time o' neet?' said Margaret—and she looked at the old clock—'why, it's close on middle-neet!'

She hesitated a moment, then she went to the door, and bent her mouth to the chink—

'Who are yo? What d' yo want?' she asked, in a distinct but low voice, so as not to disturb 'Lias.

No answer for a minute. Then her ear caught some words from outside. With an exclamation she unlocked the door and threw it open.

'Davy! Davy!' she cried, almost forgetting her patient.

The boy clung to the lintel without a word.

'Coom your ways in!' she said peremptorily, catching him by the sleeve. 'We conno ha no draughts on th' owd man.'

And she drew him into the light, and shut the door. Then as the shaded candle and firelight fell on the tall lad, wavering now to this side, now to that, as though unable to support himself, his clothes dripping on the flags, his face deadly white, save for the smears of blood upon it, the two women fell back in terror.

'Will yo gie me shelter?' said the boy, hoarsely; 'I bin lying hours i' th' wet. Aunt Hannah turned me out.'



Margaret came close to him and looked him all over.

‘What for did she turn yo out, Davy?’

‘I wor late. I’d been fightin Jim Wigson, an she smelt me o’ drink.’

And suddenly the lad sank down on a stool near, and laid his head in his hands, as though he could hold it up no longer.

Margaret’s blanched old face melted all in a minute.

‘Howd ’un up quick!’ she said to her companion, still in a whisper. ‘He hanna got a dry thread on—an luke at that cut on his yed—why, he’ll be laid up for weeks, maybe, for this. Get his cloos off, an we’ll put him on my bed then.’

And between them they dragged him up, and Margaret began to strip off his jacket. As they held him—David surrendering himself passively—the curtain of the bed was drawn back, and ’Lias, raising himself on an elbow, looked out into the room. As he caught sight of the group of the boy and the two women, arrested in their task by the movement of the curtain, the old man’s face expressed, first a weak and agitated bewilderment, and then in an instant it cleared.

His dream wove the sight into itself, and ’Lias knew all about it. His thin long features, with the white hair hanging about them, took an indulgent amused look.

‘*Bony*—eh. Bony. is that *yo*, man? Eh. but yo’re cold an pinched, loike! A gude glass o’ English grog ud not come amiss to yo. An your coat, an your boots—what is ’t drippin? *Snaw*? Yo make a man’s backbane freeze t’ see yo. An there’s hot wark behind yo, too. Moscow might ha warmed yo. I’m thinkin, an —’

But the weak husky voice gave way, and ’Lias fell back, still holding the curtain, though, in his emaci-

ated hand, and straining his dim eyes on David. Margaret, with tears, ran to him, tried to quiet him and to shut out the light from him again. But he pushed her irritably aside.

‘No, Margaret,—doan’t intrude. What d’ yo know about it? Yo know nowt, Margaret. When did yo iver heer o’ the Moscow campaign? Let me be, woan’t yo?’

But perceiving that he would not be quieted, she turned him on his pillows, so that he could see the boy at his ease.

‘He’s bin out i’ th’ wet, ’Lias dear, has Davy,’ she said; ‘and it’s nobbut a clashy night. We mun gie him summat hot, and a place to sleep in.’

But the old man did not listen to her. He lay looking at David, his pale blue eyes weirdly visible in his haggard face, muttering to himself. He was still tramping in the snow with the French army.

Then, suddenly, for the first time, he seemed troubled. He stared up at the pale miserable boy who stood looking at him with trembling lips. His own face began to work painfully, his dream struggled with recognition.

Margaret drew David quickly away. She hurried him into the further corner of the cottage, where he was out of sight of the bed. There she quickly stripped him of his wet garments, as any mother might have done, found an old flannel shirt of ’Lias’s for him, and, wrapping him close in a blanket, she made him lie down on her own bed, he being now much too weak to realise what was done with him. Then she got an empty bottle, filled it from the kettle, and put it to his feet; and finally she brought a bowlful of warm water and a bit of towel, and, sitting down by him, she washed the blood and dirt away from his face and hand, and smoothed down the tangled black

hair. She, too, noticed the smell of spirits, and shook her head over it; but her motherliness grew with every act of service, and when she had made him warm and comfortable, and he was dropping into the dead sleep of exhaustion, she drew her old hand tenderly across his brow.

‘He do feature yan o’ my own lads so as he lies theer,’ she said tremulously to her friend at the fire, as though explaining herself. ‘When they’d coom home late fro wark, I’d use to hull ’em up so mony a time. Ay, I’d been woonderin what had coom to th’ boy. I thowt he’d been goin wrang soomhow, or he’d ha coom aw these weeks to see ’Lias an me. It’s a poor sort o’ family he’s got. That Hannah Grieve’s a hard un, I’ll uphowd yo. Theer’s a deal o’ her fault in ’t, yo may mak sure.’

Then she went to give ’Lias some brandy—he lived on little else now. He dropped asleep again, and, coming back to the hearth, she consented to lie down before it while her friend watched. Her failing frame was worn out with nursing and want of rest, and she was soon asleep.

When Davy awoke the room was full of a chill daylight. As he moved he felt himself stiff all over. The sensation brought back memory, and the boy’s whole being seemed to shrink together. He burrowed first under his coverings out of the light, then suddenly he sat up in bed, in the shadow of the little staircase—or rather ladder—which led to the upper story, and looked about him.

The good woman who had shared Margaret’s watch was gone back to her own home and children. Margaret had made up the fire, tidied the room, and, at ’Lias’s request, drawn up the blinds. She had just given him some beef-tea and brandy, sponged his face, and lifted him on his pillows. There seemed to be a

revival of life in the old man, death was for the moment driven back; and Margaret hung over him in an ecstasy, the two crooning together. David could see her thin bent figure—the sharpened delicacy of the emaciated face set in the rusty black net cap which was tied under the chin, and fell in soft frills on the still brown and silky hair. He saw her weaver's hand folded round 'Lias's, and he could hear 'Lias speaking in a weak thread of a voice, but still sanely and rationally. It gave him a start to catch some of the words—he had been so long accustomed to the visionary 'Lias.

‘Have yo rested, Margaret?’

‘Ay, dear love, three hours an' moor. Betsy James wor here; she saw yo wanted for nowt. She's a gude creetur, ain't she, 'Lias?’

‘Ay, but noan so good as my Margaret,’ said the old man, looking at her wistfully. ‘But yo'll wear yorsel down, Margaret; yo've had no rest for neets. Yo're allus toilin' and moilin', an' I'm no worth it, Margaret.’

The tears gushed to the wife's eyes. It was only with the nearness of death that 'Lias seemed to have found out his debt to her. To both. her lifelong service had been the natural offering of the lower to the higher; she had not been used to gratitude, and she could not bear it.

‘Dear heart! dear love!’ David heard her say; and then there came to his half-reluctant ear caresses such as a mother gives her child. He laid his head on his knees, trying to shut them out. He wished with a passionate and bitter regret that he had not been so many weeks without coming near these two people; and now 'Lias was going fast, and after to-day he would see them both no more—for ever?

Margaret heard him moving, and nodded back to him over her shoulder.

'Yo've slept well, Davy,—better nor I thowt yo would. Your cloos are by yo—atwixt yo an t' stairs.'

And there he found them, dry and brushed. He dressed hastily and came forward to the fire. 'Lias recognised him feebly, Margaret watching anxiously to see whether his fancies would take him again. In this tension of death and parting his visions had become almost more than she could bear. But 'Lias lay quiet.

'Davy wor caught i' th' rain, and I gave him a bed,' she explained again, and the old man nodded without a word.

Then as she prepared him a bowl of oatmeal she stood by the fire giving the boy motherly advice. He must go back home, of course, and never mind Hannah; there would come a time when he would get his chance like other people; and he mustn't drink, for, 'i' th' first place, drink wor a sad waste o' good wits,' and David's were 'better 'n most;' and in the second, 'it wor a sin agen the Lord.'

David sat with his head drooped in his hand apparently listening. In reality, her gentle babble passed over him almost unheeded. He was aching in mind and body; his strong youth, indeed, had but just saved him from complete physical collapse; for he had lain an indefinite time on the soaking moor, till misery and despair had driven him to Margaret's door. But his moral equilibrium was beginning to return, in virtue of a certain resolution, the one thing which now stood between him and the black gulf of the night. He ate his porridge and then he got up.

'I mun goo, Margaret.'

He would fain have thanked her, but the words choked in his throat.

'Ay, soa yo mun, Davy,' said the little body briskly. 'If their's an onpleasant thing to do it's best doon

quickly—yo mun go back and do your duty. Coom and see us when yo're passin again. An say good-bye to 'Lias. He's that wick this mornin—ain't yo, 'Lias?'

And with a tender cheerfulness she ran across to 'Lias and told him Davy was going.

'Good-bye, Davy, my lad, good-bye,' murmured the old man, as he felt the boy's strong fingers touching his. 'Have yo been readin owt, Davy, since we saw yo? It's a long time, Davy.'

'No, nowt of ony account,' said David, looking away.

'Ay, but yo mun keep it up. Coom when yo like; I've not mony books, but yo know yo can have 'em aw. I want noan o' them now, do I, Marg'ret? But I want for nowt—nowt. Dyin 's long, but it's varra—varra peaceful. Margaret!'

And withdrawing his hand from Davy, 'Lias laid it in his wife's with a long, long sigh. David left them so. He stole out unperceived by either of them.

When he got outside he stood for a moment under the sheltering sycamores and laid his cheek against the door. The action contained all he could not say.

Then he sped along towards the farm. The sun was rising through the autumn mists, striking on the gold of the chestnuts, the red of the cherry trees. There were spaces of intense blue among the rolling clouds, and between the storm past and the storm to come the whole moorland world was lavishly, garishly bright.

He paused at the top of the pasture-fields to look at the farm. Smoke was already rising from the chimney. Then Aunt Hannah was up, and he must mind himself. He crept on under walls, till he got to the back of the farmyard. Then he slipped in, ran into the stable, and got an old coat of his left there the day before. There was a copy of a Methodist paper lying

near it. He took it up and tore it across with passion. But his rage was not so much with the paper. It was his own worthless, unstable, miserable self he would have rent if he could. The wreck of ideal hopes, the defacement of that fair image of itself which every healthy youth bears about with it, could not have been more pitifully expressed.

Then he looked round to see if there was anything else that he could honestly take. Yes—an ash stick he had cut himself a week or two ago. Nothing else—and there was Tibby moving and beginning to bark in the cowhouse.

He ran across the road, and from a safe shelter in the fields on the farther side he again looked back to the farm. There was Louie's room, the blind still down. He thought of his blow of the night before—of his promises to her. Aye, she would fret over his going—he knew that—in her own wild way. She would think he had been a beast to her. So he had—so he had! There surged up in his mind inarticulate phrases of remorse, of self-excuse, as though he were talking to her.

Some day he would come back and claim her. But when! His buoyant self-dependence was all gone. It had nothing to do with his present departure. That came simply from the fact that it was *impossible* for him to go on living in Kinder any longer—he did not stop to analyse the whys and wherefores.

But suddenly a nervous horror of seeing anyone he knew, now that the morning was advancing, startled him from his hiding-place. He ran up towards the Scout again, so as to make a long circuit round the Wigsons' farm. As he distinguished the walls of it a shiver of passion ran through the young body. Then he struck off straight across the moors towards Glossop.

One moment he stood on the top of Mardale Moor.

On one side of him was the Kinder valley, Needham Farm still showing among its trees; the white cataract of the Downfall cleaving the dark wall of the Scout, and calling to the runaway in that voice of storm he knew so well; the Mermaid's Pool gleaming like an eye in the moorland. On the other side were hollow after hollow, town beyond town, each with its cap of morning smoke. There was New Mills, there was Stockport, there in the far distance was Manchester.

The boy stood a moment poised between the two worlds, his ash-stick in his hand, the old coat wound round his arm. Then at a bound he cleared a low stone wall beside him and ran down the Glossop road.

Twelve hours later Reuben Grieve climbed the long hill to the farm. His wrinkled face was happier than it had been for months, and his thoughts were so pleasantly occupied that he entirely failed to perceive, for instance, the behaviour of an acquaintance, who stopped and started as he met him at the entrance of the Kinder lane, made as though he would have spoken, and, thinking better of it, walked on. Reuben—the mendacious Reuben—had done very well with his summer stock—very well indeed. And part of his earnings was now safely housed in the hands of an old chapel friend, to whom he had confided them under pledge of secrecy. But he took a curious, excited pleasure in the thought of the 'poor mouth' he was going to make to Hannah. He was growing reckless in his passion for restitution—always provided, however, that he was not called upon to brave his wife openly. A few more such irregular savings, and, if an opening turned up for David, he could pay the money and pack off the lad before Hannah could look round. He could never do it under her opposition, but he



thought he could do it and take the consequences—he *thought* he could.

He opened his own gate. There on the house door-step stood Hannah, whiter and grimmer than ever.

‘Reuben Grieve,’ she said quickly, ‘your nevv’y’s run away. An if yo doan’t coom and keep your good-for-nothin niece in her place, and make udder foak keep a civil tongue i’ their head to your wife, I’ll leave your house this neet, as sure as I wor born a Martin!’

Reuben stumbled into the house. There was a wild rush downstairs, and Louie fell upon him, David’s blow showing ghastly plain in her white quivering face.

‘Whar’s Davy?’ she said. ‘Yo’ve got him!—he’s hid soonwhere—yo know whar he is! I’ll not stay here if yo conno find him! It wor *her* fault’—and she threw out a shaking hand towards her aunt—‘she druv him out last neet—an Dawsons took him in—an iverybody’s cryin shame on her! An if yo doan’t mak her find him—she knows where he is—I’ll not stay in this hole!—I’ll kill her!—I’ll burn th’ house!—I’ll——’

The child stopped—panting, choked—beside herself.

Hannah made a threatening step, but at her gesture Reuben sprang up, and seizing her by both wrists he looked at her from a height, as a judge looks. Never had those dull eyes met her so before.

‘Woman!’ he cried fiercely. ‘Woman! what ha yo doon wi Sandy’s son?’



BOOK II

YOUTH



## CHAPTER I

A TALL youth carrying a parcel of books under his arm was hurrying along Market Place, Manchester. Beside him were covered flower stalls bordering the pavement, in front of him the domed mass of the Manchester Exchange, and on all sides he had to push his way through a crowd of talking, chaffering, hurrying humanity. Presently he stopped at the door of a restaurant bearing the idyllic and altogether remarkable name—there it was in gilt letters over the door—of the ‘Fruit and Flowers Parlour.’ On the side post of the door a bill of fare was posted, which the young man looked up and down with careful eyes. It contained a strange medley of items in all tongues—

Marrow pie  
*Haricots à la Lune de Miel*  
*Vol-au-Vent à la bonne Santé*  
Tomato fritters  
Cheese ‘Ticements  
*Salad saladorum*

And at the bottom of the *menu* was printed in bold red characters, ‘No meat, no disease. *Ergo*, no meat, no sin. Fellow-citizens, leave your carnal foods, and try a more excellent way. I.E. Push the door and walk in. The Fruit and Flowers Parlour invites everybody and overcharges nobody.’

The youth did not trouble, however, to read the

notice. He knew it and the 'Parlour' behind it by heart. But he moved away, pondering the *menu* with a smile.

In his amused abstraction—at the root of which lay the appetite of eighteen—he suddenly ran into a passer-by, who stumbled against a shop window with an exclamation of pain. The youth's attention was attracted and he stopped awkwardly.

'People of your height, young man, should look before them,' said the victim, rubbing what seemed to be a deformed leg, while his lips paled a little.

'Mr. Ancrum,' cried the other, amazed.

'Davy!'

The two looked at each other. Then Mr. Ancrum gripped the lad's arm.

'Help me along, Davy. It's only a bruise. It'll go off. Where are you going?'

'Up Piccadilly way with a parcel,' said Davy, looking askance at his companion's nether man. 'Did I knock your bad leg, sir?'

'Oh no, nothing—never mind. Well now, Davy, this is queer—decidedly queer. Four years!—and we run against each other in Market Street at last. Tell me the truth, Davy—have you long ago given me up as a man who could make promises to a lad in difficulties and forget 'em as soon as he was out of sight? Say it out, my boy.'

David flushed and looked down at his companion with some embarrassment. Their old relation of minister and pupil had left a deep mark behind it. Moreover, in the presence of that face of Mr. Ancrum's, a long, thin, slightly twisted face, with the stamp somehow of a tragic sincerity on the eyes and mouth, it was difficult to think as slightingly of his old friend as he had done for a good while past, apparently with excellent reason.

‘I supposed there was something the matter,’ he blurted out at last.

‘Well, never mind, Davy,’ said the other, smiling sadly. ‘We can’t talk here in this din. But now I’ve got you, I keep you. Where are you?’

‘I’m in Half Street, sir—Purcell’s, the bookseller.’

‘Don’t know him. I never go into a shop. I have no money. Are you apprentice there?’

‘Well, there was no binding. I’m assistant. I do a lot of business one way and another, buying and selling both.’

‘How long have you been in Manchester?’

‘Four years, sir.’

The minister looked amazed.

‘And I have been here, off and on, for the last three. How have we missed each other all that time? I made inquiries at Clough End, when—ah, well, no matter; but it was too late. You had decamped, no one could tell me anything.’

David walked on beside his companion, silent and awkward. The explanation seemed a lame one. Mr. Ancrum had left Clough End in May, promising to look out for a place for the lad at once, and to let him know. Six whole months elapsed between that promise and David’s own departure. Yes, it was lame; but it was so long ago, and so many things had happened since, that it did not signify. Only he did not somehow feel much effusion in meeting his old friend and playfellow again.

‘Getting on, Davy?’ said Ancrum presently, looking the lad up and down.

David made a movement of the shoulders which the minister noticed. It was both more free and more graceful than ordinary English gesture. It reawakened in Ancrum at once that impression of something alien and unusual which both David and his sister

had often produced in him while they were still children.

'I don't know,' said the boy slowly; and then, after a hesitation or two, fell silent.

'Well, look here,' said Ancrum, stopping short; 'this won't do for talk, as I said before; but I must know all about you, and I must tell you what I can about myself. I lodge in Mortimer Road, you know, up Fallowfield way. You can get there by tram in twenty minutes; when will you come and see me? To-night?'

The lad thought a moment.

'Would Wednesday night do, sir? I—I believe I'm going to the music to-night.'

'What, to the "Elijah," in the Free Trade Hall? Appoint me a place to meet—we'll go together—and you shall come home to supper with me afterwards.'

David flushed and looked straight before him.

'I promised to take two young ladies,' he said, after a moment, abruptly.

'Oh!' said Mr. Ancrum, laughing. 'I apologise. Well, Wednesday night, then,—Don't you forget, Davy—half-past seven? Done. 14, Mortimer Road. Good-bye.'

And the minister turned and retraced his steps towards Market Place. He walked slowly, like one much preoccupied, and might have run into fresh risks but for the instinctive perception of most passers-by that he was not a person to be hustled. Suddenly he laughed out—thinking of David and his 'young ladies,' and comparing the lad's admission with his former attitude towards 'gells.' Well, time had but wrought its natural work. What a brilliant noticeable creature altogether—how unlike the ordinary run of north-country lads! But that he had been from the beginning—the strain of some nimbler blood had always shown itself.



Meanwhile, David made his way up Piccadilly—did some humourist divert himself, in days gone by, with dropping a shower of London names on Manchester streets?—and deposited his parcel. Then the great clock of the Exchange struck twelve, and the Cathedral followed close upon it, the sounds swaying and vibrating above the crowds hurrying through Market Street. It was a damp October day. Above, the sky was hidden by a dark canopy of cloud and smoke; the Cathedral on its hill rose iron-black above the black streets and river; black mud encrusted all the streets, and bespattered those that walked in them. Nothing more dreary than the smoke-grimed buildings on either hand, than the hideous railway station across the bridge, or the mud-sprinkled hoardings covered with flaring advertisements, which led up to the bridge, could be well imagined. Manchester was at its darkest and grimmest.

But as David Grieve walked back along Market Street his heart danced within him. Neither mud nor darkness, neither the squalor of the streets, nor the penetrating damp of the air, affected him at all. The crowd, the rush of life about him, the gas in the shops, the wares on which it shone, the endless faces passing him, the sense of hurry, of business, of quick living—he saw and felt nothing else; and to these his youth was all atune.

Arrived in Market Place again he made his way with alacrity to the 'Parlour.' For it was dinner time; he had a free half-hour, and nine times out of ten he spent it at the 'Parlour.'

He walked in, put his hat on its accustomed peg, took his seat at a table near the door, and looked round for some one. The low widespreading room was well filled, mostly with clerks and shopmen; the gas was lit because of the darkness outside, and

showed off the gay panels on the walls filled with fruit and flower subjects, for which Adrian O'Connor Lomax, commonly called 'Daddy,' the owner of the restaurant, had given a commission to some students at the Mechanics' Institute, and whereof he was inordinately proud. At the end of the room near the counter was a table occupied by about half a dozen young men, all laughing and talking noisily, and beside them—shouting, gesticulating, making dashes, now for one, now for another—was a figure, which David at once set himself to watch, his chin balanced on his hand, his eyes dancing. It was the thin tall figure of an oldish man in a long frock-coat, which opened in front over a gaily flowered silk waistcoat. On the bald crown of his head he wore a black skull-cap, below which certain grotesque and scanty tails of fair hair, carefully brushed, fell to his shoulders. His face was long and sharply pointed, and the surface of it bronzed and wrinkled by long exposure, out of all likeness to human skin. The eyes were weirdly prominent and blue; the gestures had the deliberate extravagance of an actor; and the whole man recalled a wizard of pantomime.

David had hardly time to amuse himself with the 'chaffing' of Daddy, which was going on, and which went on habitually at the Parlour from morning till night, when Daddy perceived a new-comer.

He turned round sharp upon his heels, surveyed the room with the frown of a general.

'Ah!' he said with a theatrical air, as he made out the lad at the further table. 'Gentlemen, I let you off for the present,' and waving his hand to them with an indulgent self-importance, which provoked a roar of laughter, he turned and walked down the restaurant, with a quick swaying gait, to where David sat.

David made room for him in a smiling silence.

Lomax sat down, and the two looked at each other.

‘Davy,’ said Daddy severely, ‘why weren’t you here yesterday?’

‘When did you begin opening on Sundays, Daddy?’ said the youth, attacking a portion of marrow pie, which had just been laid before him, his gay curious eyes still wandering over Daddy’s costume, which was to-day completed by a large dahlia in the buttonhole, as grotesque as the rest.

‘Ah bedad, but I’m losing my memory entirely;—and you know it, you varmint. Well then, it was Saturday you weren’t here.’

‘You’re about right there. I was let off early, and got a walk out Ramsbottom way with a fellow. I hadn’t stretched my legs for two months, and—I’ll confess to you, Daddy—that when we got down from the moor, I was—overtaken—as the pious people say—by a mutton chop.’

The lad looked up at him laughing. Daddy surveyed him with chagrin.

‘I knew you were a worthless lukewarm sort of a creature. Flesh-eating ’s as bad as drink for them that have got it in ’em. It’ll come out. Well, go your ways! *You’ll* never be Prime Minister.’

‘Don’t distress yourself, Daddy. As long as marrow pies are good, I shall eat ’em—you may count on that. What’s that cheese affair down there?’ and he pointed towards the last item but one in the bill of fare. Instead of answering, the old man turned on his seat, and called to one of the waitresses near. In a second David had a ‘Cheese ’Ticement’ before him, at which he peered curiously. Daddy watched him, not without some signs of nervousness.

‘Daddy,’ said David calmly looking up, ‘when I last saw this article it was called “Welsh rabbit.”’

‘Davy, you’ve no soul for fine distinctions,’ said the other hastily. ‘Change the subject. How have my *dear* brother-in-law and you been hitting it off lately?’

David went on with his ‘Ticement,’ the corners of his mouth twitching, for a minute or so, then he raised his head and slowly shook it, looking Daddy in the face.

‘We shall bear up when we say good-bye, Daddy, and I don’t think that crisis is far off. It would have come long ago, only I do happen to know a provoking deal more about books than any assistant he ever had before. Last week I picked him up a copy of “Bells and Pomegranates” for one and nine, and he sold it next day for two pound sixteen. There’s business for you, Daddy. That put off our breach at least a fortnight, but unless I discover a first folio of Shakespeare for sixpence between now and then, I don’t see what’s to postpone the agony after that—and if I did I should probably speculate in it myself. No, Daddy, it’s coming to the point, as the tiger said when he reached the last joint of the cow’s tail. And it’s your fault.’

‘My fault, Davy,’ said Lomax, half tremulous, half delighted, drawing a chair close up to the table that he might lose nothing of the youth’s confidences. ‘What d’ye mean by that, ye spalpeen?’

‘Well, wasn’t it you took me to the Hall of Science, Daddy, and couldn’t keep a quiet tongue in your head about it afterwards? Wasn’t it you lent me the “Secularist,” which got me into the worst rumpus of the season? Oh, Daddy, you’re a bad un!’

And the handsome lad leant back in his chair, stretching his long legs and studying Daddy with twinkling eyes. As for Lomax, he received the onslaught with a curious mixture of expressions, in

which a certain malicious pleasure, crossed by an uneasy sense of responsibility, was the most prominent. He sat drumming on the table, his straggling beard falling forward on to his chest, his mouth pursing itself up. At last he threw back his head with energy.

‘I’ll not excuse myself, Davy; you’re well out of it. You’ll be a great man yet—always provided you can manage yourself in the matter of flesh meat. It was to come one way or the other—you couldn’t put up much longer with such a puke-stocking as my precious brother-in-law. (That’s one of the great points of Shakespeare, Davy, my lad—perhaps you haven’t noticed it—you get such a ruck of bad names out of him for the asking! Puke-stocking is good—real good. If it wasn’t made for a sanctimonious hypocrite of a Baptist like Purcell it ought to have been.) And “Spanish-pouch” too! Oh, I love “Spanish-pouch”! When I’ve called a man “Spanish-pouch,” I’m the better for it, Davy—the bile’s relieved.’

‘Thank you, Daddy; I’ll remember the receipt. I say, were you ever in Purcell’s shop?’

‘Purcell’s shop? Why, of course I was, you varmint! Wasn’t it there I met my Isabella, his sister? Ah, the poor thing! He led her a life; and when I was his assistant I took sides with her—that was the beginning of it all. At first we hadn’t got on so badly—I had a pious fit on myself in those days—but one day at tea, I had been making free—taking Isabella’s part. There had been a neighbour there, and the laugh had been against him. Well, after tea we marched back to the shop, and says he to me, as black as thunder, “I’m quite willing, Lomax, to be your Christian brother in here: when we’re in society I’d have you remember it’s different. You should know your place.” “Oh, should I?” says I. (Isabella

had been squeezing my hand under the table and I didn't care what I said.) "Well, you'd better find some one as will, and be d——d to your Christian brotherhood." And I took my cap up and marched out, leaving him struck a pillar of salt with surprise, and that mad!—for we were in the middle of issuing the New Year's catalogue, and he'd left most of it to me. And three weeks after——'

Daddy rose quivering with excitement, put his thumbs into his waistcoat pocket, and bent over the back of his chair towards David. As he stood there, on tip-toe, the flaps of the long coat falling back from him like wings, his skull-cap slightly awry, two red spots on either wrinkled cheek, and every feature of the sharp brown face alive with the joy of his long-past vengeance, he was like some strange perching bird.

'—Three weeks after, Davy, I married my Isabella under his puritanical nose, at the chapel across the way; and the bit of spite in it—bedad!—it was like mustard to beef. (Pish! what am I about!) And I set up shop almost next door to the chapel, and took the trade out of his mouth, and enjoyed myself finely for six months. At the end of that time he gave out that the neighbourhood was too "low" for him, and he moved up town. And though I've been half over the world since, I've never ceased to keep an eye on him. I've had a finger in more pies of his than he thinks for!'

And Daddy drew himself up, pressing his hands against his sides, his long frame swelling out, as it seemed, with sudden passion. David watched him with a look half sympathetic, half satirical.

'I don't see that he did you much harm, Daddy.'

'Harm!' said the little man, irascibly. 'Harm! I must say you're uncommon slow at gripping a situ-

ation, Davy. I'd my wife's score to settle, too, I tell you, as well as my own. He'd sat on his poor easy-going sister till she hadn't a feature left. I knew he had. He's made up of all the mean vices—and at the same time, if you were to hear him at a prayer meeting, you'd think that since Enoch went up to heaven the wrong way, the world didn't happen to have been blessed with another saint to match Tom Purcell.' And, stirred by his own eloquence, Daddy looked down frowning on the youth before him.

'What made you give up the book-trade, Daddy?' asked David, with a smile.

It was like the pricking of a bladder. Daddy collapsed in a moment. Sitting down again, he began to arrange his coat elaborately over his knees, as though to gain time.

'David, you're an inquisitive varmint,' he said at last, looking up askance at his companion. 'Some one's been telling you tales, by the look of you. Look here—if Tom Purcell's a blathering hypocrite, that is not the same thing precisely as saying that Adrian O'Connor Lomax is a perfect specimen of the domestic virtues. Never you mind, my boy, what made me give up book-selling. I've chucked so many things overboard since, that it's hardly worth inquiring. Try any trade you like and Daddy 'll be able to give you some advice in it—that's the only thing that concerns you. Well now, tell me—' and he turned round and put his elbows on the table, leaning over to David—'When are you coming away, and what are your prospects?'

'I told you about a fortnight would see it out, Daddy. And there's a little shop in ——— But it's no good, Daddy. You can't keep secrets.'

The old man turned purple, drew himself up, and looked fiercely at David from behind his spectacles.

But in a second his mood changed and he stretched his hand slowly out across the table.

‘On the honour of a Lomax,’ he said solemnly.

There was a real dignity about the absurd action which melted David. He shook the hand and repented him. Leaning over he whispered some information in Daddy’s ear. Daddy beamed. And in the midst of the superfluity of nods and winks that followed David called for his bill.

The action recalled Daddy to his own affairs, and he looked on complacently while David paid.

‘Pon my word, Davy, I can hardly yet believe in my own genius. Where else, my boy, in this cotton-spinning hole, would you find a dinner like that for sixpence? Am I a benefactor to the species, sir, or am I not?’

‘Looks like it, Daddy, by the help of Miss Dora.’

‘Aye, aye,’ said the old man testily,—‘I’ll not deny that Dora’s useful to the business. But the *inspiration*. Davy, ’s all mine. You want genius, my boy, to make a tomfool of yourself like this,’ and he looked himself proudly up and down. ‘Twenty customers a week come here for nothing in the world but to see what new rigs Daddy may be up to. The invention—the happy ideas, man, I throw into one day of this place would stock twenty ordinary businesses.’

‘All the same, Daddy, I’ve tasted Welsh rabbit before,’ said David drily, putting on his hat.

‘I scorn your remark, sir. It argues a poorly furnished mind. Show me anything new in this used-up world, eh? but for the name and the dishing up—Well, good-bye, Davy, and good luck to you!’

David made his way across Hanging Ditch to a little row of houses bearing the baldly appropriate



name of Half Street. It ran along the eastern side of the Cathedral close. First came the houses, small, irregular, with old beams and projections here and there, then a paved footway, then the railings round the Close. In full view of the windows of the street rose the sixteenth-century church which plays as best it can the part of Cathedral to Manchester. Round it stretched a black and desolate space paved with tombstones. Not a blade of grass broke the melancholy of those begrimed and time-worn slabs. The rain lay among them in pools, squalid buildings overlooked them, and the church, with its manifest inadequacy to a fine site and a great city, did but little towards overcoming the mean and harsh impression made—on such a day especially—by its surroundings.

David opened the door of a shop about halfway up the row. A bell rang sharply, and as he shut the outer door behind him, another at the back of the shop opened hastily, and a young girl came in.

‘Mr. Grieve, father’s gone out to Eceles to see some books a gentleman wants him to buy. If Mr. Stephens comes, you’re to tell him father’s found him two or three more out of the list he sent. You know where all his books are put together, if he wants to see them, father says.’

‘Yes, thank you, Miss Purcell, I do. No other message?’

‘No.’ The speaker lingered. ‘What time do we start for the music to-night? But you’ll be down to tea?’

‘Certainly, if you and Miss Dora don’t want it to yourselves.’ The speaker smiled. He was leaning on the counter, while the girl stood behind it.

‘Oh dear, no!’ said Miss Purcell with a half-pettish gesture. ‘I don’t know what to talk to Dora about

now. She thinks of nothing but St. Damian's and her work. It's worse than father. And, of course, I know she hasn't much opinion of *me*. Indeed, she's always telling me so—well, not exactly—but she lets me guess fast enough.'

The speaker puts up two small hands to straighten some of the elaborate curls and twists with which her pretty head was crowned. There was a little consciousness in the action. The thought of her cousin had evidently brought with it the thought of some of those things of which the stern Dora disapproved.

David looked at the brown hair and the slim fingers as he was meant to look at them. Yet in his smiling good humour there was not a trace of bashfulness or diffidence. He was perfectly at his ease, with something of a proud self-reliant consciousness in every movement; nothing in his manner could have reminded a spectator of the traditional apprentice making timid love to his master's daughter.

'I've seen you stand up to her though,' he said laughing. 'It's like all pious people. Doesn't it strike you as odd that they should never be content with being pious for themselves?'

He looked at her with bright sarcastic eyes.

'Oh, I know what you mean!' she said with an instant change of tone; 'I didn't mean anything of the sort. I think it's shocking of you to go to that place on Sundays—so there, Mr. Grieve.'

She threw herself back defiantly against the books which walled the shop, her arms folded before her. The attitude showed the long throat, the rounded bust, and the slender waist compressed with some evident rigour into a close-fitting brown dress. That Miss Purcell thought a great deal of the fashion of her hair, the style of her bodices, and the size of her waist was clear; that she was conscious of thinking about them

to good purpose was also plain. But on the whole the impression of artificiality, of something over-studied and over-done which the first sight of her generally awakened, was soon, as a rule, lost in another more attractive—in one of light, tripping youth, perfectly satisfied with itself and with the world.

‘I don’t think you know much about the place,’ he said quietly, still smiling.

She flushed, her foolish little sense of natural superiority to ‘the assistant’ outraged again, as it had been outraged already a hundred times since she and David Grieve had met.

‘I know quite as much as anybody need know—any respectable person—’ she maintained angrily. ‘It’s a low, disgraceful place—and they talk wicked nonsense. Everyone says so. It doesn’t matter a bit where Uncle Lomax goes—he’s mad—but it is a shame he should lead other people astray.’

She was much pleased with her own harangue, and stood there frowning on him, her sharp little chin in the air, one foot beating the ground.

‘Well, yes, really,’ said David in a reflective tone; ‘one would think Miss Dora had her hands full at home, without——’

He looked up, significantly, smiling. Lucy Purcell was enraged with him—with his hypocritical sympathy as to her uncle’s misdoings—his avoidance of his own crime.

‘It’s not uncle at all, it’s you!’ she cried, with more logic than appeared. ‘I tell you, Mr. Grieve, father won’t stand it.’

The young man drew himself up from the counter.

‘No,’ he said with great equanimity, ‘I suppose not.’

And taking up a parcel of books from the counter he turned away. Lucy, flurried and pouting, called after him.

‘Mr. Grieve!’

‘Yes.’

‘I—I didn’t mean it. I *hope* you won’t go. I know father’s hard. He’s hard enough with me.’

And she raised her hands to her flushed face. David was terribly afraid she was going to cry. Several times since the orphan girl of seventeen had arrived from school three months before to take her place in her father’s house, had she been on the point of confiding her domestic woes to David Grieve. But though under the terms of his agreement with her father, which included one meal in the back parlour, the assistant and she were often thrown together, he had till now instinctively held her aloof. His extraordinary good looks and masterful energetic ways had made an impression on her schoolgirl mind from the beginning. But for him she had no magnetism whatever. The little self-conceited creature knew it, or partially knew it, and smarted under it.

Now, he was just beginning an awkward sentence, when there was a sound at the outer door. With another look at him, half shy, half appealing, Lucy fled. Conscious of a distinct feeling of relief, David went to attend to the customer.

## CHAPTER II

THE customer was soon content and went out again into the rain. David mounted a winding iron stair which connected the downstairs shop with an upper room in which a large proportion of the books were stored. It was a long, low, rambling place made by throwing together all the little bits of rooms on the first floor of the old house. One corner of it had a

special attraction for David. It was the corner where, ranged partly on the floor, partly on the shelves which ran under the windows, lay the collection of books that Purell had been making for his customer, Mr. Stephens.

Out of that collection Purell's assistant had extracted a very varied entertainment. In the first place it had amused him to watch the laborious pains and anxiety with which his pious employer had gathered together the very sceptical works of which Mr. Stephens was in want, showing a knowledge of contents, and editions, and out-of-the-way profanities, under the stimulus of a paying customer, which drew many a sudden laugh from David when he was left to think of it in private.

In the next place the books themselves had been a perpetual feast to him for weeks, enjoyed all the more keenly because of the secrecy in which it had to be devoured. The little gathering represented with fair completeness the chief books of the French 'philosophers,' both in the original French, and in those English translations of which so plentiful a crop made its appearance during the fifty years before and after 1800. There, for instance, lay the seventy volumes of Voltaire. Close by was an imperfect copy of the Encyclopædia, which Mr. Stephens was getting cheap; on the other side a motley gathering of Diderot and Rousseau; while Holbach's 'System of Nature,' and *Helvétius* 'On the Mind,' held their rightful place among the rest.

Through these books, then, which had now been on the premises for some time—Mr. Stephens being a person of uncertain domicile, and unable as yet to find them a home—David had been freely ranging. Whenever Purell was out of the way and customers were slack, he invariably found his way to this spot in the

upper room. There, with his elbows on the top of the bookcase which ran under the window, and a book in front of him—or generally two, the original French and a translation—he had read Voltaire's tales, a great deal of the Encyclopædia, a certain amount of Diderot, for whom he cherished a passionate admiration, and a much smaller smattering of Rousseau. At the present moment he was grappling with the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' and the 'Système de la Nature,' fortified in both cases by English versions.

The gloom of the afternoon deepened, and the increasing rain had thinned the streets so much that during a couple of hours David had but three summonses from below to attend to. For the rest of the time he was buried in the second volume of the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' now skipping freely, now chewing and digesting, his eyes fixed vacantly on the darkening church outside. Above all, the article on *Contradictions* had absorbed and delighted him. There are few tones in themselves so fascinating to the nascent literary sense as this mock humility tone of Voltaire's. And in David's case all that passionate sense of a broken bubble and a scattered dream, which had haunted him so long after he left Kinder, had entered into and helped forward his infatuation with his new masters. They brought him an indescribable sense of freedom—omniscience almost.

For instance :—

'We must carefully distinguish in all writings, and especially in the sacred books, between real and apparent contradictions. Venturous critics have supposed a contradiction existed in that passage of Scripture which narrates how Moses changed all the waters of Egypt into blood, and how immediately afterwards the magicians of Pharaoh did the same thing, the book of Exodus allowing no interval at all between the miracle of Moses and the magical operation of the enchanters. Certainly it seems

at first sight impossible that these magicians should change into blood what was already blood; but this difficulty may be avoided by supposing that Moses had allowed the waters to re-assume their proper nature, in order to give time to Pharaoh to recover himself. This supposition is all the more plausible, seeing that the text, if it does not favour it expressly, is not opposed to it.

‘The same sceptics ask how when all the horses had been killed by the hail in the sixth plague Pharaoh could pursue the Jews with cavalry. But this contradiction is not even apparent, because the hail, which killed all the horses in the fields, could not fall upon those which were in the stables.’

And so on through a long series of paragraphs, leading at last to matters specially dear to the wit of Voltaire, the contradictions between St. Luke and St. Matthew—in the story of the census of Quirinus, of the Magi, of the massacre of the Innocents, and what not—and culminating in this innocent conclusion:—

‘After all it is enough that God should have deigned to reveal to us the principal mysteries of the faith, and that He should have instituted a Church in the course of time to explain them. All these contradictions, so often and so bitterly brought up against the Gospels, are amply noticed by the wisest commentators; far from harming each other, one explains another; they lend each other a mutual support, both in the concordance and in the harmony of the four Gospels.’

David threw back his head with a laugh which came from the very depths of him. Then, suddenly, he was conscious of the church standing sombrely without, spectator as it seemed of his thoughts and of his mirth. Instantly his youth met the challenge by a rise of passionate scorn! What! a hundred years since Voltaire, and mankind still went on believing in all these follies and fables, in the ten plagues, in Balaam’s ass, in the walls of Jericho, in miraculous births, and Magi, and prophetic stars!—in everything that the mockery of the eighteenth century had slain a thou-

sand times over. Ah, well!—Voltaire knew as well as anybody that superstition is perennial, insatiable—a disease and weakness of the human mind which seems to be inherent and ineradicable. And there rose in the boy's memory lines he had opened upon that morning in a small Elizabethan folio he had been cataloguing with much pains as a rarity—lines which had stuck in his mind—

Vast superstition! glorious style of weakness,  
Sprung from the deep disquiet of man's passion  
To dissolution and despair of Nature!—

He flung them out at the dark mass of building opposite, as though he were his namesake flinging at Goliath. Only a few months before that great church had changed masters—had passed from the hands of an aristocratic and inaccessible bishop of the old school into those of a man rich in all modern ideas and capacities, full of energy and enthusiasm, a scholar and administrator both. And *he* believed all those absurdities, David wanted to know? Impossible! No honest man could, thought the lad defiantly, with a rising colour of crude and vehement feeling, when his attention had been once challenged, and he had developed mind enough to know what the challenge meant.

Except, perhaps, Uncle Reuben and Dora Lomax, and people like that. He stood thinking and staring out of window, one idea leading to another. The thought of Reuben brought with it a certain softening of mood—the softening of memory and old association. Yes, he would like to see Uncle Reuben again—explain to him, perhaps, that old story—so old, so distant!—of his running away. Well, he *would* see him again, as soon as he got a place of his own, which couldn't be long now, whether Purcell gave him the sack or not.



Instinctively, he felt for that inner pocket, which held his purse and his savings-bank book. Yes, he was near freedom now, whatever happened!

Then it occurred to him that it was unlucky he should have stumbled across Mr. Ancerum just at this particular juncture. The minister, of course, had friends at Clough End still. And he, David, didn't want Louie down upon him just yet—not just yet—for a month or two.

Then the smile which had begun to play about the mouth suddenly broadened into a merry triumph. When Louie knew all about him and his contrivances these last four years, wouldn't she be mad! If she were to appear at this moment, he could tell her that she wore a pink dress at the 'wake' last week,—when she was at chapel last,—what young men were supposed to be courting her since the summer, and a number of other interesting particulars——

'Mr. Grieve! Tea!'

His face changed. Reluctantly shutting his book and putting it into its place, he took his way to the staircase.

As David opened the swing door leading to the Purcells' parlour at the back of the shop he heard Miss Purcell saying in a mournful voice, 'It's no good, Dora; not a haporth of good. Father won't let me. I might as well have gone to prison as come home.'

The assistant emerged into the bright gaslight of the little room as she spoke. There was another girl sitting beside Lucy, who got up with a shy manner and shook hands with him.

'Will you take your tea, Mr. Grieve?' said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, handing it to him, and then throwing herself vehemently back in her hostess's chair, behind the tea-tray. She let her hands hang over the

arms of it—the picture of discontent. The gaslight showed her the possessor of bright brown eyes, under fine brows slenderly but clearly marked, of a pink and white skin slightly freckled, of a small nose quite passable, but no ways remarkable, of a dainty little chin, and a thin-lipped mouth, slightly raised at one corner, and opening readily over some irregular but very white teeth. Except for the eyes and eyebrows the features could claim nothing much in the way of beauty. Yet at this moment of seventeen—thanks to her clear colours, her small thinness, and the beautiful hair so richly piled about her delicate head—Lucy Purcell was undeniably a pretty girl, and since her arrival in Manchester she had been much more blissfully certain of the fact than she had ever succeeded in being while she was still under the repressive roof of Miss Pym's boarding-school for young ladies, Pestalozzi House, Blackburn.

David sat down, perceiving that something had gone very wrong, but not caring to inquire into it. His whole interest in the Purcell household was, in fact, dying out. He would not be concerned with it much longer.

So that, instead of investigating Miss Purcell's griefs, he asked her cousin whether it had not come on to rain. The girl opposite replied in a quiet, musical voice. She was plainly dressed in a black hat and jacket; but the hat had a little bunch of cowslips to light it up, and the jacket was of an ordinary fashionable cut. There was nothing particularly noticeable about the face at first sight, except its soft fairness and the gentle steadfastness of the eyes. The movements were timid, the speech often hesitating. Yet the impression which, on a first meeting, this timidity was apt to leave on a spectator was very seldom a lasting one. David's idea of Miss Lomax, for instance,

had radically changed during the three months since he had made acquaintance with her.

Rain, it appeared, *had* begun, and there must be umbrellas and waterproofs for the evening's excursion. As the two others were settling at what time David Grieve and Lucy should call for Dora in Market Place, Lucy woke up from a dream, and broke in upon them.

'And, Dora, you know, I *could* have worn that dress with the narrow ribbons I showed you last week. It's all there—upstairs—in the cupboard—not a crease in it!'

Dora could not help laughing, and the laugh sent a charming light into her grey, veiled eyes. The tone was so inexpressibly doleful, the manner so childish. David smiled too, and his eyes and Dora's met in a sort of friendly understanding—the first time, perhaps, they had so met. Then they both turned themselves to the task of consolation. The assistant inquired what was the matter.

'I wanted her to go with me to the dance at the Mechanics' Institute next week,' said Dora. 'Mrs. Alderman Head would have taken us both. It's very nice and respectable. I didn't think uncle would mind. But Lucy's sure he will.'

'Sure! Of course, I'm sure,' said Lucy sharply. 'I've heard him talk about dancing in a way to make anybody sick. If he only knew all the dancing we had at Pestalozzi House!'

'Does he think all dancing wrong?' inquired David.

'Yes—unless it's David dancing before the Ark, or some such nonsense,' replied Lucy, with the same petulant gloom.

David laughed out. Then he fell into a brown study, one hand playing with his tea-cup, an irrepressible smile still curving about his mouth. Dora, observing

him across the table, could not but remember other assistants of Uncle Purcell whom she had seen sitting in that same place, and the airs which Miss Purcell in her rare holidays had given herself towards those earlier young men. And now, this young man, whenever Purcell himself was out of the way, was master of the place. Anyone could see that, so long as he was there, Lucy was sensitively conscious of him in all that she said or did.

She did not long endure his half-mocking silence now.

‘You see, Dora,’ she began again, with an angry glance towards him, ‘father’s worse than ever just now. He’s been so aggravated.’

‘Yes,’ said Dora timidly. She perfectly understood what was meant, but she shrank from pursuing the subject. But David looked up.

‘I should be very sorry, I’m sure, Miss Purcell, to get in your way at all, or cause you any unpleasantness, if that’s what you mean. I don’t think you’ll be annoyed with me long.’

He spoke with a boyish exaggerated dignity. It became him, however, for his fine and subtle physique somehow supported and endorsed it.

Both the girls started. Lucy looked suddenly as miserable as she had before looked angry. But in her confused state of feeling she renewed her attack.

‘I don’t understand anything about it,’ she said, with plaintive incoherence. ‘Only I can’t *think* why people should always be making disturbances. Dora! Doesn’t *everybody* you know think it wicked to go to the Hall of Science?’

She drew herself up peremptorily. David resumed the half smiling, half meditative attitude which had provoked her before. Dora looked from one to the other, a pure bright colour rising in her cheek.

‘I don’t know anything about that,’ she said in a low voice. ‘I don’t think that would matter, Lucy. But, oh, I do wish father wouldn’t go—and Mr. Grieve wouldn’t go.’

Her voice and hand shook. Lucy looked triumphantly at David. Instinctively she realised that, especially of late, David had come to feel more respectfully towards Dora than she had ever succeeded in making him feel towards herself. In the beginning of their acquaintance he had often launched into argument with Dora about religious matters, especially about the Ritualistic practices in which she delighted. The lad, overflowing with his Voltaire and d’Holbach, had not been able to forbear, and had apparently taken a mischievous pleasure in shocking a bigot—as he had originally conceived Lucy Purcell’s cousin to be. The discussion, indeed, had not gone very far. The girl’s horror and his own sense of his position and its difficulties had checked them in the germ. Moreover, as has been said, his conception of Dora had gradually changed on further acquaintance. As for her, she had now for a long time avoided arguing with him, which made her outburst on the present occasion the more noticeable.

He looked up quickly.

‘Miss Lomax, how do you suppose one makes up one’s mind—either about religion or anything else? Isn’t it by hearing both sides?’

‘Oh, no—no!’ she said, shrinking. ‘Religion isn’t like anything else. It’s by—by growing up into it—by thinking about it—and doing what the Church tells you. You come to *know* it’s true.’

That the Magi and Balaam’s ass are true! What folly! But somehow even his youthful ardour could not say it, so full of pure and tremulous pain was the gaze fixed upon him. And, indeed, he had no time for

any answer, for she had just spoken when the bell of the outer door sounded, and a step came rapidly through the shop.

‘Father!’ said Lucy, lifting the lid of the teapot in a great hurry. ‘Oh, I wonder if the tea’s good enough.’

She was stirring it anxiously with a spoon, when Purcell entered, a tall heavily built man, with black hair, a look of command, and a step which shook the little back room as he descended into it. He touched Dora’s hand with a pompous politeness, and then subsided into his chair opposite Lucy, complaining about the weather, and demanding tea, which his daughter gave him with a timid haste, looking to see whether he were satisfied as he raised the first spoonful to his lips.

‘Anything worth buying?’ said David to his employer. He was leaning back in his chair, with his arm round the back of another. Again Dora was reminded by contrast of some of the nervous lads she had seen in that room before, scarcely daring to eat their tea under Purcell’s eye, flying to cut him bread, or pass him the sugar.

‘No,’ said Purcell curtly.

‘And a great price, I suppose?’

Purcell looked up. Apparently the ease of the young man’s tone and attitude put the finishing stroke to an inward process already far advanced.

‘The price, I conceive, is *my* business,’ he said, in his most overbearing manner. ‘When you have to pay, it will be yours.’

David flushed, without, however, changing his position, and Lucy made a sudden commotion among the teacups.

‘Father,’ she said, with a hurried agitation which hardly allowed her to pick up the cup she had thrown

over, 'Dora and I want to speak to you. You mustn't talk business at tea. Oh, I *know* you won't let me go; but I *should* like it, and Dora's come to ask. I shouldn't want a new dress, and it will be *most* respectable, everyone says; and I *did* learn dancing at school, though you didn't know it. Miss Georgina said it was stuff and nonsense, and I must——'

'What *is* she talking about?' said Purcell to Dora, with an angry glance at Lucy.

'I want to take her to a dance,' said Dora quietly, 'if you would let her come. There's one at the Mechanics' Institute next week, given by the Unicorn benefit society. Mrs. Alderman Head said I might go with her, and Lucy too if you'll let her come. I've got a ticket.'

'I'm much obliged to Mrs. Alderman Head,' said Purcell sarcastically. 'Lucy knows very well what I think of an unchristian and immodest amusement. Other people must decide according to their conscience. *I* judge nobody.'

At this point David got up, and disappeared into the shop.

'Oh yes, you do judge, uncle,' cried Dora, roused at last, and colouring. 'You're always judging. You call everything unchristian you don't like, whether it's dancing, or—or—early celebration, or organ music, or altar-cloths. But you can't be always right—nobody can.'

Purcell surveyed her with a grim composure.

'If you suppose I make any pretence to be infallible, you are quite mistaken,' he said, with slow solemnity—no one in disclaiming Papistry could have been more the Pope—'I leave that to your priests at St. Damian's, Dora. But there *is* an infallible guide, both for you and for me, and that's the Holy Scriptures. If you can show me any place where the

*Bible* approves of promiscuous dancing between young Christian men and women, or of a woman exposing her person for admiration's sake, or of such vain and idle talking as is produced by these entertainments, I will let Lucy go. But you can't. "Whose adorning let it not be——"

And he quoted the Petrine admonition with a harsh triumphant emphasis on every syllable, looking hard all the time at Dora, who had risen, and stood confronting him in a tremor of impatience and disagreement.

'Father Russell—' she began quickly, then changed her form of expression—'Mr. Russell says you can't settle things by just quoting a text. The Bible has to be explained, he says.'

Purcell's eyes flamed. He launched into a sarcastic harangue, delivered in a strong thick voice, on the subject of 'Sacerdotalism,' 'priestly arrogance,' 'lying traditions,' 'making the command of God of no effect,' and so forth. While his sermon rolled along, Dora stood nervously tying her bonnet strings, or buttoning her gloves. Her heart was full of a passionate scorn. Beside the bookseller's muscular figure and pugnacious head she saw with her mind's eye the spare forms and careworn faces of the young priests at St. Damian's. Outraged by this loud-voiced assurance, she called to mind the gentleness, the suavity, the delicate consideration for women which obtained among her friends.

'There's not a pin to choose,' Purcell wound up, brutally, 'between you and that young infidel in there,' and he jerked his thumb towards the shop. 'It all comes of pride. He's bursting with his own wisdom,—you will have the "Church" and won't have the Bible. What's the Church!—a pack of sinners, and a million sinners are no better than one.'



‘Good-bye, Luey,’ said Dora, stooping to kiss her cousin, and not trusting herself to speak. ‘Call for me at the quarter.’

Luey hardly noticed her kiss, she sat with her elbows on the table, holding her little chin disconsolately, something very like tears in her eyes. In the first place, she was reflecting dolefully that it was all true—she was never to have any amusement like other girls—never to have any good of her life; she might as well be a nun at once. In the second, she was certain her father meant to send young Grieve away, and the prospect drew a still darker pall over a prospect dark enough in all conscience before.

Purcell opened the door for Dora more punctiliously than usual, and came back to the hearthrug still inflated as it were with his own eloquence. Meanwhile Lucy was washing up the tea things. The little servant had brought her a bowl of water and an apron, and Luey was going gingerly through an operation she detested. Why shouldn’t Mary Ann do it? What was the good of going to school and coming back with Claribel’s songs and Blumenthal’s *Deux Anges* lying on the top of your box,—with a social education, moreover, so advanced that the dancing-mistress had invariably made you waltz alone round the room for the edification and instruction of the assembled company,—if all you had to do at home was to dust and wash up, and die with envy of girls with reprobate fathers? As she pondered the question, Lucy began to handle the cups with a more and more unfriendly energy.

‘You’ll break some of that china, Luey!’ said Purcell, at last disturbed in his thoughts. ‘What’s the matter with you?’

‘Nothing!’ said Lucy, taking, however, a saucer from the line as she spoke so viciously that the rest

of them slipped with a clatter and only just escaped destruction.

‘Mind what you’re about,’ cried Purcell angrily, fearing for the household stuff that had been in the establishment so much longer and was so much more at home there than Lucy.

‘I know what it is,’ he said, looking at her severely, while his great black presence seemed to fill the little room. ‘You’ve lost your temper because I refused to let you go to the dance.’

Lucy was silent for a moment, trying to contain herself; then she broke out like a child, throwing down her apron, and feeling for her handkerchief.

‘It’s *too* bad—it’s *too* bad—I’d rather be Mary Ann—*she’s* got friends, and evenings out—and—and parties sometimes; and I see nobody, and go nowhere. What did you have me home for at all?’

And she sat down and dried her eyes piteously. She was in real distress, but she liked a scene, and Purcell knew her peculiarities. He surveyed her with a sort of sombre indulgence.

‘You’re a vain child of this world, Lucy. If I didn’t keep a look-out on you, you’d soon go rejoicing down the broad way. What do you mean about amusements? There’s the missionary tea to-morrow night, and the magic-lantern at the schools on Saturday.’

Lucy gave a little hysterical laugh.

‘Well,’ said Purcell loudly, ‘there’ll be plenty of young people there. What have you got to say against them?’

‘A set of *frights* and *gawks*,’ said Lucy, sitting bolt upright in a state of flat mutiny, and crushing her handkerchief on her knee between a pair of trembling hands. ‘The way they do their hair, and the way they tie their ties, and the way they put a chair for you

—it's enough to make one faint. At the Christmas treat there was one young man asked me to trim his shirt-cuffs for him with seissors he took out of his pocket. I told him *I* wasn't his nurse, and people who weren't dressed ought to stay at home. You should have seen how he and his sister glared at me afterwards. I don't care! None of the chapel people like me—I know they don't, and I don't want them to, and I wouldn't *marry* one of them.'

The gesture of Lucy's curly head was superb.

'It seems to me,' said Purell sarcastically, 'that what you mostly learnt at Blackburn was envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. As to marrying, child, the less you think of it for the present the better, till you get more sense.'

But the eyes which studied her were not unkindly. Purell liked this slim red and white creature who belonged to him, whose education had cost him hard money which it gave him pleasure to reckon up, and who promised now to provide him with a fresh field for the management and the coarse moral experiment which he loved. She would be restive at first, but he would soon break her in. The idea that under her folly and childishness she might possibly inherit some of his own tenacity never occurred to him.

'I can't imagine,' said Lucy inconsequently, with eyes once more swimming, 'why you can't let me do what Dora does! She's *much* better than I am. She's a saint, she is. She's always going to church; she's always doing things for poor people; she never thinks about herself, or whether she's pretty, or—— Why shouldn't I dance if she does?'

Purell laughed.

'Aye!' he said grimly, 'that's the Papistical way all over. So many services, so much fasting, so much money, so much knocking under to your priest, so much

“church work”—and who cares a brass farthing what you do with the rest of your time? Do as I tell you, and dance away! But I tell you, Christianity wants a *new heart!*’

And the bookseller looked at his daughter with a frowning severity. Conversation of this kind was his recreation, his accomplishment, so to speak. He had been conducting a difficult negotiation all day of the diamond-cut-diamond order, and was tired out and disgusted by the amount of knowledge of books which even a gentleman may possess. But here was compensation. A warm hearthrug, an unwilling listener, and this sense of an incomparable soundness of view,—he wanted nothing more to revive him, unless, indeed, it were a larger audience.

As for Luey, as she looked up at her father, even her childish intelligence rose to a sense of absurdity. As if Dora hadn’t a new heart; as if Dora thought it was enough to go to church and give sixpences in the offertory!

But her father overawed her. She had been left motherless at ten years old, and brought up since away from home, except for holidays. At the bottom of her, she was quite conscious that she knew nothing at all about this big contemptuous person, who ordered her about and preached to her, and never let himself be kissed and played with and coaxed as other girls’ fathers did.

So she went on with her washing up in a crushed silence, very sorry for herself in a vague passionate way, the corners of her mouth drooping. Purell too fell into a reverie, the lower jaw pushed forward, one hand playing with the watch-chain which adorned his black suit.

‘Did you give Grieve that message?’ he asked at last.

Luey, still sulky, nodded in reply.

‘What time did he come in from dinner?’

‘On the stroke of the half-hour,’ said Luey quickly. ‘I think he keeps time better than anybody you ever had, father.’

‘Insolent young whelp!’ said Purcell in a slow, deliberate voice. ‘He was at that place again yesterday.’

‘Yes, I know he was,’ said Luey, with evident agitation. ‘I told him he ought to have been ashamed.’

‘Oh, you talked to him, did you? What business had you to do that, I wonder? Well, what did he say?’

‘He said—well, I don’t know what he said. He don’t seem to think it matters to anybody where he goes on Sunday!’

‘Oh, indeed—don’t he? I’ll show him some cause to doubt the truth of that proposition,’ said Purcell ponderously; ‘or I’ll know the reason why.’

Luey looked unhappy, and said nothing for a minute or two. Then she began insistently, ‘Well, *does* it matter to you?’

This deplorable question—viewed from the standpoint of a Baptist elder—passed unnoticed, for with the last words the shop-bell rang, and Purcell went off, transformed on the instant into the sharp, attentive tradesman.

Luey sat wiping her cups mechanically for a little while. Then, when they were all done, and Mary Ann had been loftily commanded to put them away, she slipped upstairs to her own room, a little attie at the top of the house. Here she went to a deal press, which had been her mother’s, opened it, and took out a dress which hung in a compartment by itself, enveloped in a holland wrapper, lest Manchester smuts should harm it. She undid the wrapper, and laid it on the bed.

It was an embroidered white muslin, adorned with lace and full knots of narrow pink ribbon.

‘What a trouble I had to get the ribbon just that width,’ she thought to herself ruefully. ‘and everybody said it was so uncommon. I might as well give it Dora. I don’t believe I shall ever wear it. I don’t know what’ll become of me. I don’t get any chances.’

And shaking her head mournfully from side to side, she sat on beside the dress, in the light of her solitary candle, her hands clasped round her knee, the picture of girlish despair, so far as anything so daintily gowned, and shoed, and curled, could achieve it. She was thinking drearily of some people who were coming to supper, one of her father’s brother elders at the chapel, Mr. Baruch Barton, and his daughter. Mr. Barton had a speciality for the prophet Zephaniah, and had been several times shocked because Lucy could not help him out with his quotations from that source. His daughter, a little pinched asthmatic creature, in a dress whereof every gore and seam was an affront to the art of dressmaking, was certainly thirty, probably more. And between thirty and the Psalmist’s limit of existence, there is the very smallest appreciable difference, in the opinion of seventeen. What *could* she have to say to Emmy Barton? Lucy asked herself. She began yawning from sheer dullness, as she thought of her. If it were only time to go to bed!

Suddenly she heard a sound of raised voices in the upper shop on the floor below. What could it be? She started up. ‘Mr. Grieve and father quarrelling!’ She knew it must come to that!

She crept down the stairs with every precaution possible till she came to the door behind which the loud talk which had startled her was going on. Here she listened with all her ears, but at first to very little

purpose. David was speaking, but so rapidly, and apparently so near to the other end of the room, that she could hear nothing. Then her father broke in, and by dint of straining very hard, she caught most of what he said before the whole colloquy came abruptly to an end. She heard Purcell's heavy tread descending the little iron spiral staircase leading from the lower shop to the upper. She heard David moving about, as though he were gathering up books and papers, and then, with a loud childish sob which burst from her unawares, she ran upstairs again to her own room.

'Oh, he's going, he's going!' she cried under her breath, as she stood before the glass winking to keep the tears back, and biting her handkerchief hard between her little white teeth. 'Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? It'll be always the same; just when anyone *might* like me, it all stops. And he won't care one little, little bit. He'll never think of me again. Oh, I do think somebody might care about me—might be sorry for me!'

And she locked her hands tight before her, and stared at the glass, while the tears forced their way. But all the time she was noticing how prettily she stood, how slim she was. And though she smarted, she would not for the world have been without her smart, her excitement, her foolish secret, which, for sheer lack of something to do and think about, had suddenly grown to such magnitude in her eyes. It was hard to cherish a hopeless passion for a handsome youth, without a halfpenny, who despised you, but it was infinitely better than to have nothing in your mind but Emmy Barton and the prophet Zephaniah. Nay, as she washed her hands and smoothed her dress and hair with trembling fingers, she became quite friendly with her pain—in a sense, even proud of it, and jealous for it. It was a sign of mature life—of something

more than mere school-girlishness. Like the lover in the Elizabethan sonnet, 'She had been vexed, if vexed she had not been!'

### CHAPTER III

'COME in, David,' said Mr. Ancrum, opening the door of his little sitting-room in Mortimer Street. 'You're rather late, but I don't wonder. Such a wind! I could hardly stand against it myself. But, then, I'm an atomy. What, no top-coat in such weather! What do you mean by that, sir? You're wet through. There, dry yourself.'

David, with a grin at Mr. Ancrum's unnecessary concern for him, deposited himself in the carpet chair which formed the minister's only lounge, and held out his legs and arms to the blaze. He was wet indeed, and bespattered with the blackest mud in the three kingdoms. But the battle with wind and rain had so brought into play all the physical force of him, had so brightened eye and cheek, and tossed the black hair into such a fine confusion, that, as he sat there bending over the glow of the fire, the crippled man opposite, sickly with long confinement and over-thinking, could not take his eyes from him. The storm with all its freshness, youth with all its reckless joy in itself, seemed to have come in with the lad and transformed the little dingy room.

'What do you wear trash like that for in a temperature like this?' said the minister, touching his guest's thin and much-worn coat. 'Don't you know, David, that your health is money? Suppose you get lung trouble, who's to look after you?'

'It don't do me no harm, sir. I can't get into my last year's coat, and I couldn't afford a new one this winter.'



‘What wages do you earn?’ asked Ancrum. His manner was a curious mixture of melancholy gentleness and of that terse sharpness in practical things which the south country resents and the north country takes for granted.

‘Eighteen shillings a week, since last November, sir.’

‘That ought to be enough for a top-coat, you rascal, with only yourself to feed,’ said Mr. Ancrum, stretching himself in his hard armchair, so as to let his lame leg with its heavy boot rest comfortably on the fender. David had noticed at first sight of him that his old playfellow had grown to look much older than in the Clough End days. His hair was nearly white, and lay in a large smooth wave across the broad brow. And in that brow there were deep furrows, and many a new and premature line in the hollow cheeks. Something withering and blighting seemed to have passed over the whole man since those Sunday school lessons in the Christian Brethren’s upper room, which David still remembered so well. But the eyes with their irresistible intensity and force were the same. In them the minister’s youth—he was not yet thirty-five—still spoke, as from a last stronghold in a failing realm. They had a strange look too, the look as of a secret life, not for the passer-by.

David smiled at Ancrum’s last remark, and for a moment or two looked into the fire without speaking.

‘Well, if I’d bought clothes or anything else this winter, I should be in a precious worse hole than I am,’ he said reflectively.

‘Hole? What’s wrong, Davy?’

‘My master gave me the sack Monday.’

‘Humph!’ said Ancrum, surveying him. ‘Well, you don’t look much cast down about it, I must say.’

‘Well, you see, I’d laid my plans,’ said the young

man, an irrepressible gaiety and audacity in every feature. 'It isn't as though I were taken by surprise.'

'Plans for a new place, I suppose?'

'No; I have done with that. I am going to set up for myself. I know the trade, and I've got some money.'

'How old are you, Davy?'

'Just upon twenty,' said the lad, quietly.

The minister pursed up his lips and whistled a little.

'Well, that's bold,' he said. 'Somehow I like it, though by all the laws of prudence I ought to jump down your throat for announcing such a thing. But how did you get your money? and what have you been doing these four years? Come, I'm an old friend,—though I dare say you don't think me much of a fellow. Out with it! Pay me anyway for all those ships I made you long ago.'

And he held out his blanched hand, little more now than skin and bone. David put his own into it awkwardly enough. At this period of his life he was not demonstrative.

The story he had to tell was, to Ancrum's thinking, a remarkable one. He had come into Manchester on an October evening with five shillings and threepence in his pocket. From a point on the south-western border of the city he took a 'bus for Deansgate and Victoria Street. As he was sitting on the top feeding his eyes on the lights and the crowd of the streets, but wholly ignorant where to go and what first step to take, he fell into talk with a decent working-man and his wife sitting beside him. The result of the talk was that they offered him shelter at fourpence a night. He dismounted with them at Blackfriars Bridge, and they made their way across the river to a street in

Salford, where he lodged with them for a week. During that week he lived on oatmeal and an occasional baked potato, paying his hostess eighteenpence additional for the use of her fire, and the right to sit in her kitchen when he was not tramping about in search of work. By the end of the week he had found a post as errand-boy at a large cheap bookseller's and stationer's in Deansgate, at eight shillings a week, his good looks, manner, and education evidently helping him largely, as Mr. Anerum could perceive through the boy's very matter-of-fact account of himself. He then made an agreement for bed, use of fire, and kitchen, with his new friends at four shillings a week, and by the end of six months he was receiving a wage of fourteen shillings as salesman and had saved close on five pounds.

'Well, now, come, how did you manage that, Davy?' said Mr. Anerum, interrupting. 'Don't run on in that fashion. Details are the only interesting things in life, and details I'll have. You must have found it a precious tight fit to save that five pounds.'

Whereupon David, his eye kindling, ran out Benjamin Franklin and the 'Vegetarian News,' his constant friends from the first day of his acquaintance with the famous autobiography till now, in spite of such occasional lapses into carnal feeding as he had confessed to Daddy. In a few minutes Anerum found himself buried in 'details' as to 'flesh-forming' and 'bone-forming' foods, as to nitrogen and albumen, as to the saving qualities of fruit, and Heaven knows what besides. Long before the enthusiast had spent his breath or his details, the minister cried 'Enough!'

'Young materialist,' he said growling, 'what do you mean at your age by thinking so much about your body?'

'It wasn't my body, sir,' said David, simply, 'it

was just business. If I had got ill, I couldn't have worked; if I had lived like other chaps, I couldn't have saved. So I had to know something about it, and it wasn't bad fun. After a bit I got the people I lodged with to eat a lot of the things I eat—and that was cheaper for me of course. The odd thing about vegetarianism is that you come not to care a rap what you eat. Your taste goes somehow. So long as you're nourished and can do your work, that's all you want.'

The minister sat studying his visitor a minute or two in silence, though the eyes under the care-worn brow were bright and restless. Any defiance of the miserable body was in itself delightful to a man who had all but slain himself many times over in the soul's service. He, too, had been living on a crust for months, denying himself first this, then that ingredient of what should have been an invalid's diet. But it had been for cause—for the poor—for self-mortification. There was something just a little jarring to the ascetic in this contact with a self-denial of the purely rationalistic type, so easy—so cheerful—put forward without the smallest suspicion of merit, as a mere business measure.

David resumed his story. By the end of another six months it appeared that he had grown tired of his original shop, with its vast masses of school stationery and cheap new books. As might have been expected from his childish antecedents, he had been soon laid hold of by the old bookstalls, had read at them on his way from work, had spent on them all that he could persuade himself to spare from his hoard, and in a year from the time he entered Manchester, thanks to wits, reading, and chance friendships, was already a budding bibliophile. Slates and primers became suddenly odious to a person aware of the existence of

Aldines and Elzevirs, and bitten with the passion, then just let loose on the book-buying world, for first editions of the famous books of the century. Whenever that sum in the savings bank should have reached a certain height, he would become a second-hand bookseller with a stall. Till then he must save more and learn his trade. So at the end of his first year he left his employers, and by the help of excellent recommendations from them got the post of assistant in Purell's shop in Half Street, at a rise of two shillings, afterwards converted into four shillings a week.

'And I've been there three years—very near,' said David, straightening himself with a little nervous gesture peculiar to him. 'If you'd been anywhere about, sir, you'd have wondered how I could have stayed so long. But I wanted to learn the trade and I've learnt it—no thanks to old Purell.'

'What was wrong with him?'

'Mostly brains!' said the lad, with a scornful but not unattractive conceit. 'He was a hard master to live with—that don't matter. But he is a fool! I don't mean to say he don't know a lot about some things—but he thinks he knows everything—and he don't. And he'll not let anyone tell him—not he! Once, if you'll believe it, he got the Aldine Virgil of 1501, for twenty-five shillings—came from a gentleman out Eccles way—a fellow selling his father's library and didn't know bad from good,—real fine tall copy,—binding poor,—but a *stunner* take it altogether—worth twenty pounds to Quaritch or Ellis, any day. Well, all I could do, he let a man have it for five shillings profit next day, just to spite me, I believe, because I told him it was a good thing. Then he got sick about that, I believe, though he never let out, and the next time he found anything that looked good,—

giminy!—but he put it on. Now you know, sir’—Mr. Ancrum smiled at the confidential eagerness of the expert—‘you know, sir, it’s not many of those Venice or Florence Dantes that are worth anything. If you get the first edition of Landino’s “Commentary,” or the other man’s, Imola’s, isn’t it—’

The minister lifted his eyebrows—the Italian came out pat, and, so far as he knew, right—

‘Well, of course, *they’re* worth money—always fetch their price. But the later editions are no good at all—nobody but a gentleman-collector, very green, you know, sir’—the twinkle in the boy’s eye showed how much his subject was setting him at his ease—‘would be bothered with them. Well, if he didn’t get hold of an edition of 1540 or so—worth about eight shillings, and dear at that—and send it up to one of the London men as a good thing. He makes me pack it and send it and *register* it—you might have thought it was the Mazarin Bible, bar size. And then, of course, next day, down comes the book again flying, double quick. I kept out of his way, post-time! But I’d have given something to see the letter he got.’

And David, rising, put his hands in his pockets, and stood before the fire chuckling with irrepressible amusement.

‘Well, then you know there’s the first editions of Rousseau—not a bit rare, as rare goes—lucky if you get thirty shillings for the “Contrat Social,” or the “Nouvelle Héloïse,” even good copies—’

Again the host’s eyebrows lifted. The French names ran remarkably; there was not the least bogging over them. But he said nothing, and David rattled on, describing, with a gusto which never failed, one of Purcell’s book-selling enormities after another. It was evident that he despised his master with a passionate contempt. It was evident also that Purcell

had shown a mean and unreasoning jealousy of his assistant. The English tradesman inherits a domineering tradition towards his subordinates, and in Purcell's case, as we know, the instincts of an egotistical piety had reinforced those of the employer. Yet Mr. Anerum felt some sympathy with Purcell.

'Well, Davy,' he said at last, 'so you were too 'cute for your man, that's plain. But I don't suppose he put it on that ground when he gave you the sack?'

And he looked up, with a little dry smile.

'No!' cried David, abruptly. 'No! not he. If you go and ask *him* he'll tell you he sent me off because I would go to the Secularist meetings at the Hall of Science, and air myself as an atheist; that's his way of putting it. And it was doing him harm with his religious customers! As if I was going to let him dictate where I went on Sundays!'

'Of course not,' said Anerum, with a twist of his oddly shaped mouth. 'Even the very youngest of us might sometimes be the better for advice; but, hang it, let's be free—free to "make fools of ourselves," as a wise man hath it. Well, Davy, no offence,' for his guest had flushed suddenly. 'So you go to the Hall of Science? Did you hear Holyoake and Bradlaugh there the other night? You like that kind of thing?'

'I like to hear it,' said the lad, stoutly, meeting his old teacher's look, half nervously, half defiantly. 'It's a great deal more lively than what you hear at most churches, sir. And why shouldn't one hear everything?'

This was not precisely the tone which the same culprit had adopted towards Dora Lomax. The Voltairean suddenly felt himself to be making excuses—shabby excuses—in the presence of somebody connected, however distantly, with *l'infâme*. He drew himself up with an angry shake of his whole powerful frame.

‘Oh, why not?’ said Ancrum, with a shrug, ‘if life’s long enough’—and he absently lifted and let fall a book which lay on the table beside him; it was Newman’s ‘Dream of Gerontius’—‘if life’s long enough, and—happy enough! Well, so you’ve been learning French, I can hear. Teaching yourself?’

‘No; there’s an old Frenchman, old Barbier—do you know him, sir? He gives lessons at a shilling an hour. Very few people go to him now; they want younger men. And there’s lots of them about. But old Barbier knows more about books than any of them, I’ll be bound.’

‘Has he introduced you to French novels? I never read any; but they’re bad, of course—must be. In all those things I’m a Britisher and believe what the Britishers say.’

‘We’re just at the end of “Manon Lescaut,”’ said David, doggedly. ‘And partly with him, partly by myself, I’ve read a bit of Rousseau—and a good lot of Diderot,—and Voltaire.’

David threw an emphasis into the last name, which was meant to atone to himself for the cowardice of a few minutes before. The old boyish feeling towards Mr. Ancrum, which had revived in him when he entered the room, had gradually disappeared again. He bore the minister no real grudge for having forgotten him, but he wished it to be clearly understood that the last fragments of the Christian Brethren yoke had dropped from his neck.

‘Ah! don’t know anything about them,’ said Ancrum, slowly; ‘but then, as you know, I’m a very ignorant person. Well, now, was it Voltaire took you to the secularists, or the secularists to Voltaire?’

David laughed, but did not give a reply immediately.

‘Well, never mind,’ said the minister. ‘All Chris-



tians are fools, of course—that's understood.—Is that all you have been learning these four years ?'

'I work at Latin every morning,' said David, very red, and on his dignity. 'I've begun Greek, and I go to the science classes, mathematics and chemistry, at the Mechanics' Institute.'

Mr. Anerum's face softened.

'Why, I'll be bound you have to go to work pretty early, Davy ?'

'Seven o'clock, sir, I take the shutters down. But I get an hour and a half first, and three hours in the evening. This winter I've got through the "Æneid," and Horace's "Epistles" and "Ars Poetica." Do you remember, sir ?'—and the lad's voice grew sharp once more, tightening as it were under the pressure of eagerness and ambition from beneath—'do you remember that Scaliger read the "Iliad" in twenty days, and was a finished Greek scholar in two years? Why can't one do that now ?'

'Why shouldn't you?' said Mr. Anerum, looking up at him. 'Who helps you in your Greek ?'

'No one; I get translations.'

'Well, now, look here, Davy. I'm an ignorant person, as I told you, but I learnt some Latin and Greek at Manchester New College. Come to me in the evenings, and I'll help you with your Greek, unless you've got beyond me. Where are you ?'

The budding Scaliger reported himself. He had read the 'Anabasis,' some Herodotus, three plays of Euripides, and was now making some desperate efforts on Æschylus and Sophocles. Any Plato? David made a face. He had read two or three dialogues in English; didn't want to go on, didn't care about him. Ah! Anerum supposed not.

'Twelve hours' shop,' said the minister reflecting, 'more or less,—two hours' work before shop,—three

hours or so after shop; that's what you may call driving it hard. You couldn't do it, Richard Ancrum,' and he shook his head with a whimsical melancholy. 'But you were always a poor starveling. Youth that *is* youth 's tough. Don't tell me, sir,' and he looked up sharply, 'that you don't amuse yourself. I wouldn't believe it. There never was a man built like you yet that didn't amuse himself.'

David smiled, but said nothing.

'Billiards?'

'No, sir.'

'Betting?'

'No, sir. They cost money.'

'Niggardly dog! Drink?—no, I'll answer that for myself.'

The minister dropped his catechism, and sat nursing his lame leg and thinking. Suddenly he broke out with, 'How many young women are you in love with, David?'

David showed his white teeth.

'I only know two, sir. One's my master's daughter—she's rather a pretty girl, I think—'

'That'll do. You're not in love with her. Who's the other?'

'The other 's Mr. Lomax's daughter,—Lomax of the Parlour, that queer restaurant, sir, in Market Place. She—well, I don't know how to describe her. She's not good-looking—at least, I don't think so,' he added dubiously. 'She's very High Church, and fasts all Lent. I think she does Church embroidery.'

'And doesn't think any the better of you for attending the Hall of Science? Sensible girl! Still, when people mean to fall in love, they don't think twice of that sort of thing. I make a note of Lomax's daughter. Ah! enter supper. David, if you let any 'ism stand between you and that veal pie, I despair of your future.'

David, however, in the course of the meal, showed himself as superior to narrowness of view in the matter of food-stuffs as in other matters. The meal went merrily. Mr. Ancrum dropped his half-sarcastic tone, and food, warmth, and talk loosened the lad's fibres, and made him more and more human, handsome, and attractive. Soon his old friend knew all that he wanted to know,—the sum David had saved—thirty pounds in the savings-bank—the sort of stock he meant to set up, the shop he had taken—with a stall, of course—no beginner need hope to prosper without a stall. Customers must be delicately angled for at a safe distance—show yourself too much, and, like trout, they flashed away. See everything, force nothing. Let a book be turned over for nineteen days, the chances were that on the twentieth you would turn over the price. As to expecting the class of cheap customers to commit themselves by walking into a shop, it was simple madness. Of course, when you were 'established,' that was another matter.

By the help of a certain wealthy Unitarian, one Mr. Doyle, with whom he had made friends in Purcell's shop, and whom he had boldly asked for the use of his name as a reference, the lad had taken—so it appeared—a small house in Potter Street, a narrow but frequented street in the neighbourhood of Deansgate and all the great banks and insurance offices in King Street. His shop took up the ground floor. The two floors above were let, and the tenants would remain. But into the attics and the parlour kitchen behind the shop, he meant, ultimately, when he could afford it, to put himself and his sister. He could only get the house on a yearly tenancy, as it and the others near it were old, and would probably be rebuilt before long. But meanwhile the rent was all the lower because of the insecurity of tenure.

At the mention of the boy's sister, Ancrum looked up with a start.

'Ah, to be sure! What became of that poor child after you left? The Clough End friends who wrote to me of your disappearance had more pity for her, Davy, than they had for you.'

A sudden repulsion and reserve darkened the black eyes opposite.

'There was no helping it,' he said with hasty defiance. There was a moment's silence. Then a wish to explain himself rose in David.

'I couldn't have stayed, sir,' he said, with a curious half-reproachful accent. 'I told you about how it was before you left. And there were other things. I should have cut my own throat or some one else's if it had gone on. But I haven't forgotten Louie. You remember Tom Mullins at the foundry. He's written me every month. I paid him for it. I know all about Louie, and they don't know anything about me. They think I'm in America.'

His eyes lit again with the joy of contrivance.

'Is that kind, Davy?'

'Yes, sir——' and for the first time the minister heard in the boy's voice the tone of a man's judgment. 'I couldn't have Louie on me just yet. I was going to ask you, sir, not to tell the people at Clough End you've seen me. It would make it very hard. You know what Louie is—and she's all right. She's learnt a trade.'

'What trade?'

'Silk-weaving—from Margaret Dawson.'

'Poor soul—poor saint! There'd be more things than her trade to be learnt from Margaret Dawson if anyone had a mind to learn them. What of 'Lias?'

'Oh, he died, sir, a week after I left.' The lad's voice dropped. Then he added slowly, looking away,

'Tom said he was very quiet—he didn't suffer much—not at the end.'

'Aye, the clouds lift at sunset,' said Mr. Anerum in an altered tone; 'the air clears before the night!'

His head fell forward on his breast, and he sat drumming on the table. They had finished supper, the little, bustling landlady had cleared away, and Davy was thinking of going. Suddenly the minister sprang up and stood before the fire, looking down at his guest.

'Davy, do you want to know why I didn't write to you? I was ill first—very ill; then—*I was in hell!*'

David started. Into the thin, crooked face, with the seeking eyes, there had flashed an expression—sinister, indescribable, a sort of dumb rage. It changed the man altogether.

'I was in hell!' he repeated slowly. 'I know no more about it. Other people may tell you, perhaps, if you come across them—I can't. There were days at Clough End—always a certain number in the year—when this earth slipped away from me, and the fiends came about me, but this was months. They say I was overdone in the cotton famine years ago just before I came to Clough End. I got pneumonia after I left you that May—it doesn't matter. When I knew there was a sun again, I wrote to ask about you. You had left Kinder and gone—no one knew where.'

David sat nervously silent, not knowing what to say, his mind gradually filling with the sense of something tragic, irreparable. Mr. Anerum, too, stood straight before him, as though turned to stone.

At last David got up and approached him. Had Anerum been looking he must have been touched by the change in the lad's expression. The hard self-reliant force of the face had melted into feeling.

‘Are you better now, sir? I knew you must have been ill,’ he stammered.

Anerum started as though just wakened.

‘Ill? Yes, I was pretty bad,’ he said briskly, and in his most ordinary tone, though with a long breath. ‘But I’m as fit as anything now. Good night, Davy, good night. Come a walk with me some day? Sunday afternoon? Done. Here, write me your new address.’

The tall form and curly black head disappeared, the little lodging-house room, with its round rosewood table, its horsehair sofa, its chiffonnier, and its prints of ‘Sport at Balmoral’ and ‘The Mother’s Kiss,’ had resumed the dingy formality of every day.

The minister sank into his seat and held his hands out over the blaze. He was in pain. All life was to him more or less a struggle with physical ill. But it was not so primarily that he conceived it. The physical ill was nothing except as representing a philosophical necessity.

That lad, with all his raw certainties—of himself, his knowledge, his Voltaire—the poor minister felt once or twice a piteous envy of him, as he sat on through the night hours. Life was ill-apportioned. The poor, the lonely, the feeble—it is they who want certainty, want hope most. And because they are lonely and feeble, because their brain tissues are diseased, and their life from no fault of their own unnatural, nature who has made them dooms them to despair and doubt. Is there any ‘soul,’ any ‘personality’ for the man who is afflicted and weakened with intermittent melancholia? Where is his identity, where his responsibility? And if there is none for him, how does the accident of health bestow them on his neighbour?

Questions of this sort had beset Richard Ancrum for years. On the little book-table to his right lay papers of Huxley's, of Clifford's, and several worn volumes of mental pathology. The brooding intellect was for ever raising the same problem, the same spectre world of universal doubt, in which God, conscience, faith, were words without a meaning.

But side by side with the restlessness of the intellect there had always gone the imperious and prevailing claim of temperament. Beside Huxley and Clifford, lay Newman's 'Sermons' and 'Apologia,' and a little High Church manual of self-examination. And on the wall above the book-table hung a memorandum-slate on which were a number of addresses and dates—the addresses of some forty boys whom the minister taught on Sunday in one of the Unitarian Sunday schools of Manchester, and visited in the week. The care and training of street arabs had been his passion when he was still a student at Manchester New College. Then had come his moment of utterance—a thirst for preaching, for religious influence; though he could not bring himself to accept any particular shibboleth or take any kind of orders. He found something congenial for a time to a deep though struggling faith in the leadership of the Christian Brethren. Now, however, something had broken in him; he could preach no more. But he could go back to his old school; he could teach his boys on Sundays and week days; he could take them out country walks in spite of his lame limb; he could deny himself even the commonest necessities of life for their sake; he could watch over each of them with a fervour, a moral intensity which wore him out. In this, in some insignificant journalism for a religious paper, and in thinking, he spent his life.

There had been a dark page in his history. He had

hardly left Manchester New College when he married suddenly a girl of some beauty, but with an undeveloped sensuous temperament. They were to live on a crust and give themselves to the service of man. His own dream was still fresh when she deserted him in the company of one of his oldest friends. He followed them, found them both in black depths of remorse, and took her back. But the strain of living together proved too much. She implored him to let her go and earn her living apart. She had been a teacher and she proposed to return to her profession. He saw her established in Glasgow in the house of some good people who knew her history, and who got her a post in a small school. Then he returned to Manchester and threw himself with reckless ardour into the work of feeding the hungry, and nursing the dying, in the cotton famine. He emerged a broken man, physically and morally, liable thenceforward to recurrent crises of melancholia; but they were not frequent or severe enough to prevent his working. He was at the time entirely preoccupied with certain religious questions, and thankfully accepted the call to the little congregation at Clough End.

Since then he had visited his wife twice every year. He was extremely poor. His family, who had destined him for the Presbyterian ministry, were estranged from him; hardly anyone in Manchester knew him intimately; only in one house, far away in the Scotch lowlands, were there two people, who deeply loved and thoroughly understood him. There he went when his dark hours came upon him; and thence, after the terrible illness which overtook him on his leaving Clough End, he emerged again, shattered but indomitable, to take up the battle of life as he understood it.

He was not an able nor a literary man. His mind was a strange medley, and his mental sight far from



clear. Of late the study of Newman had been a revelation to him. But he did not cease for that to read the books of scientific psychology which tortured him—the books which seemed to make of mind a function of matter, and man the slave of an immoral nature. The only persistent and original gift in him—yet after all it is the gift which for ever divides the sheep from the goats—was that of a ‘hunger and thirst after righteousness.’

## CHAPTER IV

It was towards noon on a November day, and Dora Lomax sat working at her embroidery frame in the little sitting-room overlooking Market Place. The pale wintry sun touched her bent head, her deftly moving hand, and that device of the risen Christ circled in golden flame on which she was at work. The room in which she sat was old and low; the ceiling bulged here and there, the floor had unexpected slopes and declivities. The furniture was of the cheapest, the commonest odds and ends of a broker's shop, for the most part. There was the usual horsehair suite, the usual cheap sideboard, and dingy drugging of a large geometrical pattern. But amid these uninviting articles there were a few things which gave the room individuality—some old prints of places abroad, of different shapes and sizes, which partly disguised the blue and chocolate paper on the walls; some bits of foreign carving, Swiss and Italian; some eggs and shells and stuffed birds, some of these last from the Vosges, some from the Alps; a cageful of canaries, singing their best against the noise of Manchester; and, lastly, an old bookcase full of miscellaneous volumes, mostly large and worthless ‘sets’ of old maga-

zines and encyclopædias, which represented the relics of Daddy's bookselling days.

The room smelt strongly of cooking, a mingled odour of boiling greens and frying onions and stored apples which never deserted it, and produced a constant slight sense of nausea in Dora, who, like most persons of sedentary occupation, was in matters of eating and digestion somewhat sensitive and delicate. From below, too, there seemed to spread upwards a general sense of bustle and disquiet. Doors banged, knives and plates rattled perpetually, the great swing-door into the street was for ever opening and shutting, each time shaking the old, frail house with its roughly built additions through and through, and there was a distant skurry of voices that never paused. The restaurant indeed was in full work, and Daddy's voice could be heard at intervals, shouting and chattering. Dora had been at work since half-past seven, marketing, giving orders, making up accounts, writing bills of fare, and otherwise organising the work of the day. Now she had left the work for an hour or two to her father, and the stout Lancashire cook with her various handmaidens. Daddy's irritable pride liked to get her out of the way and make a lady of her as much as she would allow, and in her secret heart she often felt that her embroidery, for which she was well paid as a skilled and inventive hand, furnished a securer basis for their lives than this restaurant, which, in spite of its apparent success, was a frequent source of dread and discomfort to her. The money obligation it involved filled her sometimes with a kind of panic. She knew her father so well!

Now, as she sat absorbed in her work, sewing her heart into it, for every stitch in it delighted not only her skilled artistic sense but her religious feeling, little waves of anxious thought swept across her one

after another. She was a person of timid and brooding temperament, and her father's eccentricities and past history provided her with much just cause for worry. But to-day she was not thinking much of him.

Again and again there came between her and her silks a face, a face of careless pride and power, framed in strong waves of black hair. It had once repelled her quite as much as it attracted her. But at any rate, ever since she had first seen it, it had taken a place apart in her mind, as though in the yielding stuff of memory and feeling one impression out of the thousands of every day had, without warning, yet irrevocably, stamped itself deeper than the rest. The owner of it—David Grieve—filled her now, as always, with invincible antagonisms and dissents. But still the thought of him had in some gradual way become of late part of her habitual consciousness, associated always, and on the whole painfully associated, with the thought of Lucy Purcell.

For Lucy was such a little goose! To think of the way in which she had behaved towards young Grieve in the fortnight succeeding his notice to quit, before he finally left Purcell's service, made Dora hot all over. How could Lucy demean herself so? and show such tempers and airs towards a man who clearly did not think anything at all about her? And now she had flung herself upon Dora, imploring her cousin to help her, and threatening desperate things unless she and David were still enabled to meet. And meanwhile Purcell had flatly forbidden any communication between his household and the young reprobate he had turned out, whose threatened prosperity made at this moment the angry preoccupation of his life.

What was Dora to do? Was she to aid and abet Lucy, against her father's will, in pursuing David Grieve? And if in spite of all appearances the little

self-willed creature succeeded, and Dora were the means of her marrying David, how would Dora's conscience stand? Here was a young man who believed in nothing, and openly said so, who took part in those terrible atheistical meetings and discussions, which, as Father Russell had solemnly said, were like a plague-centre in Manchester, drawing in and corrupting soul after soul. And Dora was to help in throwing her young cousin, while she was still almost a child with no 'Church principles' to aid and protect her, into the hands of this enemy of the Lord and His Church?

Then, when it came to this point, Dora would be troubled and drawn away by memories of young Grieve's talk and ways, of his dashes into Market Place to see Daddy since he had set up for himself, of his bold plans for the future which delighted Daddy and took her breath away; of the flash of his black eyes; the triumphant energy of his youth; and those indications in him, too, which had so startled her of late since they—she and he—had dropped the futile sparrings in which their acquaintance began, of an inner softness, a sensitive magnetic something— indescribable.

Dora's needle paused in mid-air. Then her hand dropped on her lap. A slight but charming smile—born of youth, sympathy, involuntary admiration—dawned on her face. She sat so for a minute or two lost in reminiscence.

The clock outside struck twelve. Dora with a start felt along the edge of her frame under her work and brought out a book. It was a little black, worn manual of prayers for various times and occasions compiled by a High Church dignitary. For Dora it had a talismanic virtue. She turned now to one of the 'Prayers for Noonday,' made the sign of the cross, and slipped

on to her knees for an instant. Then she rose happily and went back to her work. It was such acts as this that made the thread on which her life of mystical emotion was strung.

But her father was a Secularist of a pronounced type, and her mother had been a rigid Baptist, old-fashioned and sincere, filled with a genuine horror of Papistry and all its ways.

Adrian O'Connor Lomax, to give Daddy his whole magnificent name, was the son of a reed-maker, of Irish extraction, at Hyde, and was brought up at first to follow his father's trade—that of making the wire 'reed,' or frame, into which the threads of the warp are fastened before weaving. But such patient drudgery, often continued, as it was in those days, for twelve and fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, was gall and wormwood to a temperament like Daddy's. He developed a taste for reading, fell in with Byron's poems, and caught the fever of them; then branched out into politics just at the time of the first Reform Bill, when all over Lancashire the memory of Peterloo was still burning, and when men like Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford were the political heroes of every weaver's cottage. He developed a taste for itinerant lecturing and preaching, and presently left his family and tramped to Manchester.

Here after many vicissitudes—including an enthusiastic and on the whole creditable participation, as an itinerant lecturer, in the movement for the founding of Mechanics' Institutes, then spreading all over the north—Daddy, to his ill-fortune, came across his future brother-in-law, the bookseller Purell. At the moment Daddy was in a new and unaccustomed phase of piety. After a period of revolutionary spouting, in which Byron, Tom Paine, and the various publica-

tions of Richard Carlile had formed his chief scriptures, a certain Baptist preacher laid hold of the Irishman's mercurial sense. Daddy was awakened and converted, burnt his Byron and his Tom Paine in his three-pair back with every circumstance of insult and contumely, and looked about for an employer worthy of one of the elect. Purcell at the time had a shop in one of the main streets connecting Manchester and Salford; he was already an elder at the chapel Daddy frequented; the two made acquaintance and Lomax became Purcell's assistant. At the moment the trade offered to him attracted Daddy vastly. He had considerable pretensions to literature; was a Shakespearian, a debater, and a haunter of a certain literary symposium, held for a long time at one of the old Manchester inns, and attended by most of the small wits and poets of a then small and homely town. The gathering had nothing saintly about it; free drinking went often hand in hand with free thought; Daddy's infant zeal was shocked, but Daddy's instincts were invincible, and he went.

The result of the bookselling experiment has been already told by Daddy himself. It was, of course, inevitable. Purcell was then a young man, but in his dealings with Daddy he showed precisely the same east-iron self-importance, the same slowness of brain coupled with the same assumptions of an unbounded and righteous authority, the same unregenerate greediness in small matters of gain and loss which now in his later life had made him odious to David Grieve. Moreover, Daddy, by a happy instinct, had at once made common cause with Purcell's downtrodden sister, going on even, as his passionate sense of opposition developed, to make love to the poor humble thing mainly for the sake of annoying the brother. The crisis came; the irritated tyrant brought down a heavy

hand, and Daddy and Isabella disappeared together from the establishment in Chapel Street.

By the time Daddy had set up as the husband of Purcell's sister in a little shop precisely opposite to that of his former employer, he had again thrown over all pretensions to sanctity, was, on the contrary, convinced afresh that all religion was one vast perennial imposture, dominated, we may suppose, in this as in most other matters, by the demon of hatred which now possessed him towards his brother-in-law. His wife, poor soul, was beginning to feel herself tied for good to the tail of a comet destined to some mad career or other, and quite uncontrollable by any efforts of hers. Lomax had married her for the most unpromising reasons in the world, and he soon tired of her, and of the trade, which required a sustained effort, which he was incapable of giving. As long as Purcell remained opposite, indeed, hate and rivalry kept him up to the mark. He was an attractive figure at that time, with his long fair hair and his glancing greenish eyes; and his queer discursive talk attracted many a customer, whom he would have been quite competent to keep had his character been of the same profitable stuff as his ability.

But when Purcell vanished across the river into Manchester, the zest of Daddy's bookselling enterprise departed also. He began to neglect his shop, was off here and there lecturing and debating, and when he came back again it was plain to the wife that their scanty money had been squandered on other excesses than those of talk. At last the business fell to ruins, and debts pressed. Then suddenly Daddy was persuaded by a French commercial traveler to take up his old trade of reed-making, and go and seek employment across the Channel, where reed-makers were said to be in demand.

In ecstasy at the idea of travel thus presented to him, Daddy devoured what books about France he could get hold of, and tried to teach himself French. Then one morning, without a word to his wife, he stole downstairs and out of the shop, and was far on the road to London before his flight was discovered. His poor wife shed some tears, but he had ceased to care for her she believed, largely because she had brought him no children, and his habits had begun to threaten to lead her with unpleasant rapidity to the workhouse. So she took comfort, and with the help of some friends set up a little stationery and fancy business, which just kept her alive.

Meanwhile Lomax found no work in Picardy, whither he had first gone, and ultimately wandered across France to Alsace, in search of bread, a prey to all possible hardships and privations. But nothing daunted him. The glow of adventure and romance was on every landscape. Cathedrals, forests, the wide river-plains of central France, with their lights and distances,—all things on this new earth and under these new heavens ‘haunted him like a passion.’ He travelled in perpetual delight, making love no doubt here and there to some passing Mignon, and starving with the gayest of hearts.

At Mulhausen he found work, and being ill and utterly destitute, submitted to it for a while. But as soon as he had got back his health and saved some money, he set out again, walking this time, staff in hand, over the whole Rhine country and into the Netherlands. There in the low Dutch plains he fell ill again, and the beauty of the Rhineland was no longer there to stand like a spell between him and the pains of poverty. He seemed to come to himself, after a dream in which the world and all its forms had passed him by ‘apparelled in celestial light.’ And



the process of self-finding was attended by some at least of those salutary pangs which eternally belong to it. He suddenly took a resolution, crept on board a coal smack going from a Dutch port to Grimsby, toiled across Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and appeared one evening, worn to a shadow, in his wife's little shop in Salford.

He was received as foolish women in whom there is no ineradicable taint of cruelty or hate will always receive the prodigal who returns. And when Daddy had been fed and clothed, he turned out for a time to be so amiable, so grateful a Daddy, such good company, as he sat in the chair by his wife's fire and told stories of his travels to her and anybody else who might drop in, that not only the wife but the neighbourhood was appeased. His old friends came back to him, he began to receive overtures to write in some of the humbler papers, to lecture on his adventures in the Yorkshire and Lancashire towns. Daddy expanded, harangued, grew daily in good looks and charm under his wife's eyes.

At last one day the papers came in with news of Louis Philippe's overthrow. Daddy grew restless, and began to study the foreign news with avidity. Revolution spread, and what with democracy abroad and Chartism at home, there was more stimulus in the air than such brains as Daddy's could rightly stand. One May day he walked into the street, looked hesitatingly up and down it, shading his eyes against the sun. Then with a shake of his long hair, as of one throwing off a weight, he drew his hat from under his arm, put it on, felt in his pockets, and set off at a run, head downwards, while poor Isabella Lomax was sweeping her kitchen. During the next few days he was heard of, rumour said, now here, now there, but one might as well have attempted to catch and hold the Pied Piper.

He was away for rather more than twenty months. Then one day, as before, a lean, emaciated, sun-browned figure came slowly up the Salford street, looking for a familiar door. It was Daddy. He went into the shop, which was empty, stared, with a countenance in which relief and repulsion were oddly mingled, at the boxes of stationery, at the dusty counter with its string and glass cases, when suddenly the inside door, which was standing ajar, was pushed stealthily inwards, and a child stood in the doorway. It was a tottering baby of a year old, holding in one fat hand a crust of bread which it had been sucking. When it saw the stranger it looked at him gravely for a second. Then without a trace of fear or shyness it came forward, holding up its crust appealingly, its rosy chin and lips still covered with bread-crumbs.

Daddy stared at the apparition, which seemed to him the merest witchcraft. For it was *himself*, dwarfed to babyhood and pinafores. His eyes, his prominent brow, his colour, his trick of holding the head—they were all there, absurdly there.

He gave a cry, which was answered by another cry from behind. His wife stood in the door. The stout, foolish Isabella was white to the lips. Even she felt the awe, the poetry of the moment.

‘Aye,’ she said, trembling. ‘Aye! it’s yourn. It was born seven months after yo left us.’

Daddy, without greeting his wife, threw himself down by the babe, and burst into tears. He had come back in a still darker mood than on his first return, his egotistical belief in himself more rudely shaken than ever by the attempts, the failures, the miseries of the last eighteen months. For one illuminating moment he saw that he was a poor fool, and that his youth was squandered and gone. But in its stead, there—dropped suddenly beside him by the forgiving

gods—stood this new youth sprung from his, and all his own, this child—Dora.

He took to her with a passion which the trembling Isabella thought a great deal too excessive to last. But though the natural Daddy very soon reappeared, with all the aggravating peculiarities which belonged to him, the passion did last, and the truant strayed no more. He set up a small printing business with the help of some old customers—it was always characteristic of the man that, be his failings what they might, he never lacked friends—and with lecturing and writing, and Isabella's shop, they struggled on somehow. Isabella's life was hard enough. Daddy was only good when he was happy; and at other times he dipped recklessly into vices which would have been the ruin of them all had they been persistent. But by some kind fate he always emerged, and more and more, as years went on, owing to Dora. He drank, but not hopelessly; he gambled, but not past salvation; and there was generally, as we have said, some friend at hand to pick the poor besmirched featherbrain out of the mire.

Dora grew up not unhappily. There were shifts and privations to put up with; there were stormy days when life seemed a hurricane of words and tears. But there were bright spaces in between, when Daddy had good resolutions, or a little more money than usual; and with every year the daughter instinctively knew that her spell over her father strengthened. She was on the whole a serious child, with fair pale hair, much given to straying in long loose ends about her prominent brow and round cheeks. Yet at the Baptist school, whither she was sent, she was certainly popular. She had a passion for the little ones; and her grey-blue eyes, over which in general the fringed lids drooped too much, had a charming trick of sudden

smiles, when the soft soul behind looked for an instant clearly and blithely out. At home she was a little round-shouldered drudge in her mother's service. At chapel she sat very patiently and happily under a droning minister, and when the inert and despondent Isabella would have let most of her religious duties drop, in the face of many troubles and a scoffing husband, the child of fourteen gently and persistently held her to them.

At last, however, when Dora was seventeen, Isabella died of cancer, and Daddy, who had been much shaken and terrified by her sufferings in her last illness, fell for a while into an irritable melancholy, from which not even Dora could divert him. It was then that he seemed for the first time to cross the line which had hitherto divided him from ruin. The drinking at the White Horse, where the literary circle met of which Lomax had been so long an ornament, had been of late going from bad to worse. The households of the wits concerned were up in arms; neighbourhood and police began to assert themselves. One night the trembling Dora waited hour after hour for her father. About midnight he staggered in, maddened with drink and fresh from a skirmish with the police. Finding her there waiting for him, pale and silent, he did what he had never done before under any stress of trouble—struck and swore at her. Dora sank down with a groan, and in another minute Lomax was dashing his head against the wall, vowing that he would beat his brains out. In the hours that followed, Dora's young soul was stretched as it were on a rack, from which it rose, not weakened, but with new powers and a loftier stature. All her girlish levities and illusions seemed to drop away from her. She saw her mission, and took her squalid *Œdipus* in charge.

Next morning she went to some of her father's

friends, unknown to Daddy, and came back with a light in her blanched face, bearing the offer of some work on a Radical paper at Leicester. Daddy, now broken and miserable, submitted, and off they went.

At Leicester the change of moral and physical climate produced for a while a wonderful effect. Daddy found himself marvellously at ease among the Secularist and Radical stockingers of the town, and soon became well known to them as a being half butt, half oracle. Dora set herself to learn dressmaking, and did her best to like the new place and the new people. It was at Leicester, a place seething with social experiment in its small provincial way, with secularism, Owenism, anti-vaccination, and much else, that Lomax fell a victim to one 'ism the more—to vegetarianism. It was there that, during an editorial absence, and in the first fervour of conversion, Daddy so belaboured a carnivorous world in the columns of the 'Penny Banner' for which he worked, and so grotesquely and persistently reduced all the problems of the time to terms of nitrogen and albumen, that curt dismissal came upon him, and for a time Dora saw nothing but her precarious earnings between them and starvation. It was then also that, by virtue of that queer charm he could always exercise when he pleased, he laid hold on a young Radical manufacturer and got out of him a loan of 200*l.* for the establishment of a vegetarian restaurant wherein Leicester was to be taught how to feed.

But Leicester, alas! remained unregenerate. In the midst of Daddy's preparations a commercial traveller, well known both to Manchester and Leicester, repeated to him one day a remark of Purcell's, to the effect that since Daddy's migration Manchester had been well rid of a vagabond, and he, Purcell, of a

family disgrace. Daddy, bursting with fatuous rage, and possessed besides of the wildest dreams of fortune on the strength of his 200*l.*, straightway made up his mind to return to Manchester, 'pull Purcell's nose,' and plant himself and his prosperity that was to be in the bookseller's eyes. He broke in upon Dora at her work, and poured into her astonished ears a stream of talk, marked by a mad inventiveness, partly in the matter of vegetarian receipts, still more in that of Purcell's future discomforts. When Daddy was once launched into a subject that suited him, he was inexhaustible. His phrases flowed for ever; of words he was always sure. Like a certain French talker, 'his sentences were like cats; he showered them into air and they found their feet without trouble.'

Dora sat through it, bewildered and miserable. Go back to Manchester where they had been so unhappy, where the White Horse and its crew were waiting for her father, simply to get into debt and incur final ruin for the sake of a mad fancy she humoured but could not believe in, and a still madder thirst for personal vengeance on a man who was more than a match for anything Daddy could do! She was in despair.

But Daddy was obdurate, brutal in his determination to have his way; and when she angered him with her remonstrances, he turned upon her with an irritable—

'I know what it is—damn it! It's that Puseyite gang you've taken up with—you think of nothing but them. As if you couldn't find antics and petticoats and priests in Manchester—they're everywhere—like weeds. Wherever there's a dunghill of human credulity they swarm.'

Dora looked proudly at her father, as though disdaining to reply, gentle creature that she was; then she bent again over her work, and a couple of tears fell on the seam she was sewing.

Aye, it was true enough. In leaving Leicester, after these two years, she was leaving what to her had been a spiritual birthplace,—tearing asunder a new and tender growth of the soul.

This was how it had come about.

On her first arrival in Leicester, in a *milieu*, that is to say, where at the time ‘Gavroche,’ as M. Renan calls him—the street philosopher who is no less certain and no more rational than the street preacher—reigned supreme, where her Secularist father and his associates, hot-headed and early representatives of a phase of thought which has since then found much abler, though hardly less virulent, expression in such a paper, say, as the ‘National Reformer,’ were for ever rending and trampling on all the current religious images and ideas, Dora shrank into herself more and more. She had always been a Baptist because her mother was. But in her deep reaction against her father’s associates, the chapel which she frequented did not now satisfy her. She hungered for she knew not what, certain fastidious artistic instincts awakening the while in unexpected ways.

Then one Easter Eve, as she came back from an errand into the outskirts of the town, she passed a little iron church standing in a very poor neighbourhood, where, as she knew, a ‘Puseyite’ curate in charge officiated, and where a good many disturbances which had excited the populace had taken place. She went in. The curate, a long, gaunt figure, of a familiar monkish type, was conducting ‘vespers’ for the benefit of some twenty hearers, mostly women in black. The little church was half decorated for Easter, though the altar had still its Lenten bareness. Something in the ordering of the place, in its colours, its scents, in the voice of the priest, in the short address he delivered after the service, dwelling in a tone

of intimate emotion, the tone of the pastor to the souls he guides and knows, on the preparation needful for the Easter Eucharist, struck home to Dora. Next day she was present at the Easter festival. Never had religion spoken so touchingly to her before as through these hymns, these flowers, this incense, this Eucharistic ceremonial wherein—being the midday celebration—the congregation were merely hushed spectators of the most pathetic and impressive act in the religious symbolism of mankind. In the dark corner where she had hidden herself, Dora felt the throes of some new birth within her. In six weeks from that time she had been admitted, after instruction, to the Anglican communion.

Thenceforward another existence began for this child of English Dissent, in whom, however, some old Celtic leaven seems to have always kept up a vague unrest, till the way of mystery and poetry was found.

Daddy—the infidel Daddy—stormed a good deal, and lamented himself still more, when these facts became known to him. Dora had become a superstitious, priest-ridden dolt, of no good to him or anyone else any more. What, indeed, was to become of him? Natural affection cannot stand against the priest. A daughter cannot love her father and go to confession. Down with the abomination—*écrasez l'infâme!*

Dora smiled sadly and went her way. Against her sweet silent tenacity Daddy measured himself in vain. She would be a good daughter to him, but she would be a good churchwoman first. He began to perceive in her that germ of detachment from things earthly and human which all ceremonialism produces, and in a sudden terror gave way and opposed her no more. Afterwards, in a curious way, he came even to relish the change in her. The friends it brought her, the



dainty ordering of the little flower-decked oratory she made for herself in one corner of her bare attic room, the sweet sobriety and refinement which her new loves and aspirations and self-denials brought with them into the house, touched the poetical instincts which were always dormant in the queer old fellow, and besides flattered some strong and secret ambitions which he cherished for his daughter. It appeared to him to have raised her socially, to have made a lady of her—this joining the Church. Well, the women must have some religious bag or other to run their heads into, and the Church bag perhaps was the most seemly.

On the day of their return to Manchester, Daddy, sitting with crossed arms and legs in a corner of the railway carriage, might have sat for a fairy-book illustration of Rumpelstiltzchen. His old peaked hat, which he had himself brought from the Tyrol, fell forward over his frowning brow, his cloak was caught fiercely about him, and, as the quickly-passing mill-towns began to give notice of Manchester as soon as the Derbyshire vales were left behind, his glittering eyes disclosed an inward fever—a fever of contrivance and of hate. He was determined to succeed, and equally determined to make his success Purcell's annoyance.

Dora sat opposite, with her bird-cage on her knee, looking sad and weary. She had left behind, perhaps for ever, the dear friends who had opened to her the way of holiness, and guided her first steps. Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude and emotion as she thought of them.

Two things only were pleasant to remember. One was that the Church embroidery she had begun in her young zeal at Leicester, using her odds and ends of

time, to supplement the needs of a struggling church depending entirely on voluntary contributions, was now probably to become her trade. For she had shown remarkable aptitude for it; and she carried introductions to a large church-furniture shop in Manchester which would almost certainly employ her.

The other was the fact that somewhere in Manchester she had a girl-cousin—Lucy Purcell—who must be about sixteen. Purcell had married after his migration to Half Street; his wife proved to be delicate and died in a few years; this little girl was all that was left to him. Dora had only seen her once or twice in her life. The enmity between Lomax and Purcell of course kept the families apart, and, after her mother's early death, Purcell sent his daughter to a boarding-school and so washed his hands of the trouble of her bringing up. But in spite of these barriers Dora well remembered a slim, long-armed schoolgirl, much dressed and becurled, who once in a by-street of Salford had run after her and, looking round carefully to see that no one was near, had thrust an eager face into hers and kissed her suddenly. 'Dora,—is your mother better? I wish I could come and see you. Oh, it's horrid of people to quarrel! But I mustn't stay,—some one'll see, and I should just catch it! Good-bye, Dora!' and so another kiss, very hasty and frightened, but very welcome to the cheek it touched.

As they neared Manchester, Dora, in her loneliness of soul, thought very tenderly of Lucy—wondered how she had grown up, whether she was pretty and many other things. She had certainly been a pretty child. Of course they must know each other and be friends. Dora could not let her father's feud come between her and her only relation. Purcell might keep them apart; but she would show him she meant no harm; and she would bring her father round—she would and must.

Two years had gone by. Of Daddy's two objects in leaving Leicester, one had so far succeeded better than any rational being would have foreseen.

On the first morning after their arrival he went out, giving Dora the slip lest she might cramp him inconveniently in his decision; and came back radiant, having taken a deserted seed-shop in Market Place, which had a long, irregular addition at the back, formerly a warehouse, providentially suited, so Daddy declared, to the purposes of a restaurant. The rent he had promised to give seemed to Dora a crime, considering their resources. The thought of it, the terror of the servants he was engaging, the knowledge of the ridicule and blame with which their old friends regarded her father's proceedings, these things kept the girl awake night after night.

But he would hear no remonstrances, putting all she had to say aside with an arrogant boastfulness, which never failed.

In they went. Dora set her teeth and did her best, keeping as jealous a watch on the purse-strings as she could, and furnishing their three rooms above the shop for as few shillings as might be, while Daddy was painting and decorating, composing *menus*, and ransacking recipes with the fever of an artist, now writing letters to the Manchester papers, or lecturing to audiences in the Mechanics' Institute and the different working men's clubs, and now plastering the shop-front with grotesque labels, or posing at his own doorway and buttonholing the passers-by in the Tyrolese brigand's costume which was his favourite garb.

The thing took. There is a certain mixture of prophet and mountebank which can be generally counted upon to hit the popular fancy, and Daddy attained to it. Moreover, the moment was favourable. After the terrible strain of the cotton-famine and the

horrors of the cholera, Manchester was prosperous again. Trade was brisk, and the passage of the new Reform Bill had given a fresh outlet and impulse to the artisan mind which did but answer to the social and intellectual advance made by the working classes since '32. The huge town was growing fast, was seething with life, with ambitions, with all the passions and ingenuities that belong to gain and money-making and the race for success. It was pre-eminently a city of young men of all nationalities, three-fourths constantly engaged in the *chasse* for money, according to their degrees—here for shillings, there for sovereigns, there for thousands. In such a *milieu* any man has a chance who offers to deal afresh on new terms with those daily needs which both goad and fetter the struggling multitude at every step. Vegetarianism had, in fact, been spreading in Manchester; one or two prominent workmen's papers were preaching it; and just before Daddy's advent there had been a great dinner in a public hall, where the speedy advent of a regenerate and frugivorous mankind, with length of days in its right hand, and a captivating abundance of small moneys in its waistcoat pocket, had been freely and ardently prophesied.

So Daddy for once seized the moment, and succeeded like the veriest Philistine. On the opening day the restaurant was crowded from morning till night. Dora, with her two cooks in the suffocating kitchen behind, had to send out the pair of panting, perspiring kitchen-boys again and again for fresh supplies; while Daddy, at his wits' end for waiters, after haranguing a group of customers on the philosophy of living, amid a tumult of mock cheers and laughter, would rush in exasperated to Dora, to say that *never* again would he trust her niggardly ways—she would be the ruin of him with her economies.

When at night the doors were shut at last on the noise and the crowd, and Daddy sat, with his full cash-box open on his knee, while the solitary gaslight that remained threw a fantastic and colossal shadow of him over the rough floor of the restaurant, Dora came up to him dropping with fatigue. He looked at her, his gaunt face working, and burst into tears.

‘Dora, we never had any money before, not when—when—your mother was alive.’

And she knew that by a strange reaction there had come suddenly upon him the memory of those ghastly months when she and he through the long hours of every day had been forced—baffled and helpless—to watch her mother’s torture, and when the sordid struggle for daily bread was at its worst, robbing death of all its dignity, and pity of all its power to help.

Do what she would, she could hardly get him to give up the money and go to bed. He was utterly unstrung, and his triumph for the moment lay bitter in the mouth.

It was now two years since that opening day. During that time the Parlour had become a centre after its sort—a scandal to some and a delight to others. The native youth got his porridge, and apple pie, and baked potato there; but the place was also largely haunted by the foreign clerks of Manchester. There was, for instance, a company of young Frenchmen who lunched there habitually, and in whose society the delighted Daddy caught echoes from that unprejudiced life of Paris or Lyons, which had amazed and enlightened his youth. The place assumed a stamp and character. To Daddy the development of his own popularity, which was like the emergence of a new gift, soon became a passion. He deliberately ‘ran’ his own eccentricities as part of the business. Hence

his dress, his menus, his advertisements, and all the various antics which half regaled, half scandalised the neighbourhood. Dora marvelled and winced, and by dint of an habitual tolerance retained the power of stopping some occasional enormity.

As to finances, they were not making their fortune; far from it; but to Dora's amazement, considering her own inexperience and her father's flightiness, they had paid their way and something more. She was no born woman of business, as any professional accountant examining her books might have discovered. But she had a passionate determination to defraud no one, and somehow, through much toil her conscience did the work. Meanwhile every month it astonished her freshly that they two should be succeeding! Success was so little in the tradition of their tattered and variegated lives. Could it last? At the bottom of her mind lay a constant presentiment of new change, founded no doubt on her knowledge of her father.

But outwardly there was little to justify it. The craving for drink seemed to have left him altogether—a not uncommon effect of this particular change of diet. And his hatred of Purcell, though in itself it had proved quite unmanageable by all her arts, had done nobody much harm. In a society dependent on law and police there are difficulties in the way of a man's dealing primitively with his enemy. There had been one or two awkward meetings between the two in the open street; and at the Parlour, among his special intimates, Daddy had elaborated a Purcell myth of a Pecksniffian character which his invention perpetually enriched. On the whole, however, it was in his liking for young Grieve, originally a casual customer at the restaurant, that Dora saw the chief effects of the feud. He had taken the lad up eagerly as soon as he had discovered both his connection with

Purell and his daring rebellious temper; had backed him up in all his quarrels with his master; had taken him to the Hall of Science, and introduced him to the speakers there; and had generally paraded him as a secularist convert, snatched from the very jaws of the Baptist.

And now!—now that David was in open opposition, attracting Purell's customers, taking Purell's water, Daddy was in a tumult of delight: wheeling off old books of his own, such as 'The Journal of Theology' and the 'British Controversialist,' to fill up David's stall, running down whenever business was slack to see how the lad was getting on; and meanwhile advertising him with his usual extravagance among the frequenters of the Parlour.

All through, however, or rather since Miss Purell had returned from school, Dora and her little cousin Lucy had been allowed to meet. Lomax saw his daughter depart on her visits to Half Street, in silence; Purell, when he first recognised her, hardly spoke to her. Dora believed, what was in fact the truth, that each regarded her as a means of keeping an eye on the other. She conveyed information from the hostile camp—therefore she was let alone.

## CHAPTER V

'WHY—Lucy!'

Dora was still bending over her work when a well-known tap at the door startled her meditations.

Lucy put her head in, and, finding Dora alone, came in with a look of relief. Settling herself in a chair opposite Dora, she took off her hat, smoothed the coils of hair to which it had been pinned, unbuttoned the smart little jacket of pilot cloth, and threw back the silk

handkerchief inside ; and all with a feverish haste and irritation as though everything she touched vexed her.

‘What’s the matter, Lucy?’ said Dora, after a little pause. At the moment of Lucy’s entrance she had been absorbed in a measurement.

‘Nothing!’ said Lucy quickly. ‘Dora, you’ve got your hair loose!’

Dora put up her hand patiently. She was accustomed to be put to rights. It was characteristic at once of her dreaminess and her powers of self-discipline that she was fairly orderly, though she had great difficulty in being so. Without a constant struggle, she would have had loose plaits and hanging strings about her always. Lucy’s trimness was a perpetual marvel to her. It was like the contrast between the soft indeterminate lines of her charming face and Lucy’s small, sharply cut features.

Lucy, still restless, began tormenting the feather in her hat.

‘When are you going to finish that, Dora?’ she asked, nodding towards the frame.

‘Oh it won’t be very long now,’ said Dora, putting her head on one side that she might take a general survey, at once loving and critical, of her work.

‘You oughtn’t to sit so close at it,’ said Lucy decidedly ; ‘you’ll spoil your complexion.’

‘I’ve none to spoil.’

‘Oh, yes, you have, Dora—that’s so silly of you. You aren’t sallow a bit. It’s pretty to be pale like that. Lots of people say so—not quite so pale as you are sometimes, perhaps—but I know why *that is*,’ said Lucy, with a half-malicious emphasis.

A slight pink rose in Dora’s cheeks, but she bent over her frame and said nothing.

‘Does your clergyman *tell* you to fast in Lent, Dora—who tells you?’



‘The Church!’ replied Dora, scandalised and looking up with bright eyes. ‘I wish you understood things a little more, Lucy.’

‘I can’t,’ said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, ‘and I don’t care twopence!’

She threw herself back in her rickety chair. Her arm dropped over the side, and she lay staring at the ceiling. Dora went on with her work in silence for a minute, and then looked up to see a tear dropping from Lucy’s cheek on to the horsehair covering of the chair.

‘Lucy, what *is* the matter?—I knew there was something wrong!’

Lucy sat up and groped energetically for her handkerchief.

‘You wouldn’t care,’ she said, her lips quivering—‘nobody cares!’

And, sinking down again, she hid her face and fairly burst out sobbing. Dora, in alarm, pushed aside her frame and tried to caress and console her. But Lucy held her off, and in a second or two was angrily drying her eyes.

‘Oh, you can’t do any good, Dora—not the least good. It’s father—you know well enough what it is—I shall never get on with father if I live to be a hundred!’

‘Well, you haven’t had long to try in,’ said Dora, smiling.

‘Quite long enough to know,’ replied Lucy, drearily. ‘I know I shall have a horrid life—I must. Nobody can help it. Do you know we’ve got another shopman, Dora?’

The tone of childish scorn she threw into the question was inimitable. Dora with difficulty kept from laughing.

‘Well, what’s he like?’

‘*Like?* He’s like—like nothing,’ said Lucy, whose vocabulary was not extensive. ‘He’s fat and ugly—wears spectacles. Father says he’s a treasure—to me—and then when they’re in the shop I hear him going on at him like anything for being a stupid. And I have to give the creature tea when father’s away. He’s so shy he always upsets something. Mary Ann and I have to clear up after him as though he were a school-child.—And father gets in a regular passion if I ask him about the dance—and there’s a missionary tea next week, and he’s made me take a table—and he wants me to teach in Sunday School—and the minister’s wife has been talking to him about my dress—and—and—No, I *can’t* stand it, Dora—I can’t and I won’t!’

And Lucy, gulping down fresh tears, sat intensely upright, and looked frowningly at Dora as though defying her to take the matter lightly.

Dora was perplexed. Deep in her dove-like soul lay the fiercest views about Dissent—that rent in the seamless vesture of Christ, as she had learnt to consider it. Her mother had been a Baptist till her death, she herself till she was grown up. But now she had all the zeal—nay, even the rancour—of the convert. It was one of her inmost griefs that her own change had not come earlier—before her mother’s death. Then perhaps her mother, her poor—poor—mother, might have changed with her. It went against her to urge Lucy to make herself a good Baptist.

‘It’s no wonder Uncle Tom wants you to do what he likes,’ she said slowly. ‘But if you don’t take to chapel, Lucy—if you want something different, perhaps——’

‘Oh, I don’t want any *church*, thank you,’ cried Lucy, up in arms. ‘I don’t want *anybody* ordering me about. Why can’t I go my own way a bit, and amuse myself as I please? It is *too*, too bad!’

Dora did not know what more to say. She went on with her work, thinking about it all. Suddenly Lucy astonished her by a question in another voice.

‘Have you seen Mr. Grieve’s shop, Dora?’

Dora looked up.

‘No. Father’s been there a good many times. He says it’s capital for a beginning and he’s sure to get on fast. There’s one or two very good sort of customers been coming lately. There’s the Earl of Driffield, I think it is—don’t you remember, Lucy, it was he gave that lecture with the magic lantern at the Institute you and I went to last summer. He’s a queer sort of gentleman. Well, he’s been coming several times and giving orders. And there’s some of the college gentlemen; oh, and a lot of others. They all seem to think he’s so clever, father says—’

‘I know the Earl of Driffield quite well,’ said Lucy loftily. ‘He used to be always coming to our place, and I’ve tied up his books for him sometimes. I don’t see what’s the good of being an earl—not to go about like that. And father says he’s got a grand place near Stalybridge too. Well, if *he’s* gone to Mr. Grieve, father’ll be just mad.’ Lucy pursed up her small mouth with energy. Dora evaded the subject.

‘He says when he’s quite settled,’ she resumed presently, ‘we’re to go and have supper with him for a house-warming.’

Lucy looked ready to cry again.

‘He couldn’t ask me—of course he couldn’t,’ she said, indistinctly. ‘Dora—Dora!’

‘Well? Oh, don’t mix up my silks, Lucy; I shall never get them right again.’

Lucy reluctantly put them down.

‘Do you think, Dora, Mr. Grieve cares anything at all about me?’ she said at last, hurrying out the words, and looking Dora in the face, very red and bold.

Dora laughed outright.

‘I knew you were going to ask that!’ she said. ‘Perhaps I’ve been asking myself!’

Lucy said nothing, but the tears dropped again down her cheeks and on to her small quivering hands—all the woman awake in her.

Dora pushed her frame away, and put her arm round her cousin, quite at a loss what to say for the best.

Another woman would have told Lucy plumply that she was a little fool; that in the first place young Grieve had never shown any signs of making love to her at all; and that, in the second, if he had, her father would never let her marry him without a struggle which nobody could suppose Lucy capable of waging with a man like Purcell. It was all a silly fancy, the whim of a green girl, which would make her miserable for nothing. Mrs. Alderman Head, for instance, Dora’s chaperon for the Institute dance, the sensible, sharp-tongued wife of a wholesale stationer in Market Street, would certainly have taken this view of the matter, and communicated it to Lucy with no more demur than if you had asked her, say, for her opinion on the proper season for bottling gooseberries. But Dora, whose inmost being was one tremulous surge of feeling and emotion, could not approach any matter of love and marriage without a thrill, without a sense of tragedy almost. Besides, like Lucy, she was very young still—just twenty—and youth answers to youth.

‘You know Uncle Tom wouldn’t like it a bit, Lucy,’ she began in her perplexity.

‘I don’t care!’ cried Lucy, passionately. ‘Girls can’t marry to please their fathers. I should have to wait, I suppose. I would get my own way somehow. But what’s the good of talking about it, Dora? I’m

sick of thinking about it—sick of everything. He'll marry somebody else—I know he will—and I shall break my heart, or——'

'Marry somebody else, too,' suggested Dora slyly.

Lucy drew herself angrily away, and had to be soothed into forgiving her cousin. The child had, in fact, thought and worried herself by now into such a sincere belief in her own passion, that there was nothing for it but to take it seriously. Dora yielded herself to Lucy's tears and her own tenderness. She sat pondering.

Then, suddenly, she said something very different from what Lucy expected her to say.

'Oh! if I could get him to go and talk to Father Russell! He's so wonderful with young men.'

Her hand dropped on to her knee; she looked away from Lucy out of the window, her sweet face one longing.

Lucy was startled, and somewhat annoyed. In her disgust with her father and her anxiety to attract David's notice, she had so entirely forgotten his religious delinquencies that it seemed fussy and intrusive on Dora's part to make so much of them. She instinctively resented, too, what sounded to her like a tone of proprietary interest. It was not Dora that was his friend—it was she!

'I don't see what you have to do with his opinions, Dora,' she said stiffly; 'he isn't rude to you now as he used to be. Young men are always wild a bit at first.'

And she tossed her head with all the worldly wisdom of seventeen.

Dora sighed and was silent. She fell to her work again, while Lucy wandered restlessly about the room. Presently the child stopped short.

'Oh! look here, Dora——'

'Yes.'

‘Do come round with me and look at some spring patterns I’ve got. You might just as well. I know you’ve been slaving your eyes out, and it’s a nice day.’

Dora hesitated, but finally consented. She had been at work for many hours in hot rooms, and meant to work a good many more yet before night. A break would revive her, and there was ample time before the three o’clock dinner which she and her father took together after the midday rush of the restaurant was over. So she put on her things.

On their way Dora looked into the kitchen. Everything was in full work. A stout, red-faced woman was distributing and superintending. On the long charcoal stove which Daddy under old Barbier’s advice had just put up, on the hot plates near, and the glowing range in the background, innumerable pans were simmering and steaming. Here was a table covered with stewed fruits; there another laden with round vegetable pies just out of the oven—while a heap of tomatoes on a third lent their scarlet to the busy picture. Some rays of wintry sun had slipped in through the high windows, and were contending with the steam of the pies and the smoke from the cooking. And in front of all on an upturned box sat a pair of Lancashire lasses, peeling apples at lightning speed, yet not so fast but they could laugh and chat the while, their bright eyes wandering perpetually through the open serving hatches which ran along one side of the room, to the restaurant stretching beyond, with its rows of well-filled tables and its passing waitresses in their white caps and aprons.

Dora slipped in among them in her soft deprecating way, smiling at this one and that till she came to the stout cook. There she stopped and asked something. Lucy, standing at the door, saw the huge woman draw a corner of her apron across her eyes.

‘What did you want, Dora?’ she inquired as her cousin rejoined her.

‘It’s her poor boy. He’s in the Infirmary and very bad. I’m sure they think he’s dying. I wanted to send her there this morning and do her work, but she wouldn’t go. There’s no more news—but we mustn’t be long.’

She walked on, evidently thinking with a tender absorption of the mother and son, while Lucy was conscious of her usual impatience with all this endless concern for unknown people, which stood so much in the way of Dora’s giving her full mind to her cousin’s affairs.

Yet, as she knew well, Sarah, the stout cook, had been the chief prop of the Parlour ever since it opened. No other servant had stayed long with Daddy. He was too fantastic and exacting a master. She had stayed—for Dora’s sake—and, from bearing with him, had learnt to manage him. When she came she brought with her a sickly, overgrown lad, the only son of her widowhood, to act as kitchen-boy. He did his poor best for a while, his mother in truth getting through most of his work as well as her own, while Dora, who had the weakness for doctoring inherent in all good women, stuffed him with cod-liver oil and ‘strengthening mixtures.’ Then symptoms of acute hip-disease showed themselves, and the lad was admitted to the big Infirmary in Piccadilly. There he had lain for some six or eight weeks now, toiling no more, fretting no more, living on his mother’s and Dora’s visits, and quietly loosening one life-tendril after another. During all this time Dora had thought of him, prayed for him, taught him—the wasted, piteous creature.

When they arrived at Half Street, they let themselves in by the side-door, and Lucy hurried her cousin

into the parlour that there might be no meeting with her father, with whom she was on decidedly uncomfortable terms.

The table in the parlour was strewn with patterns from several London shops. To send for them, examine them, and imagine what they would look like when made up was now Lucy's chief occupation. To which might be added a little strumming on the piano, a little visiting—not much, for she hated most of her father's friends, and was at present too closely taken up with self-pity and speculations as to what David Grieve might be doing to make new ones—and a great deal of ordering about of Mary Ann.

Dora sat down, and Lucy pounced on one pattern after another, folding them between her fingers and explaining eagerly how this or that would look if it were cut so, or trimmed so.

'Oh, Dora, look—this pink gingham with white spots! Don't you think it's a love? And, you know, pink always suits me, except when it's a blue-pink. But you don't call that a blue-pink, do you? And yet it isn't salmon, certainly—it's something between. It *ought* to suit me, but I declare——' and suddenly, to Dora's dismay, the child flung down the patterns she held with a passionate vehemence—'I declare nothing seems to suit me now! Dora!'—in a tone of despair—'*Dora!* don't you think I'm going off? My complexion's all dull, and—and—why I might be thirty!' and running over to the glass, draped in green cut-paper, which adorned the mantelpiece, Lucy stood before it examining herself in an agony. And, indeed, there was a change. A touch of some withering blight seemed to have swept across the whole dainty face, and taken the dewy freshness from the eyes. There was fever in it—the fever of fret and mutiny and of a starved self-love.



Dora looked at her cousin with less patience than usual—perhaps because of the inevitable contrast between Lucy's posings and the true heartaches of the world.

'Lucy, what nonsense! You're just a bit worried, and you make such a lot of it. Why can't you be patient?'

'Because I can't!' said Lucy, sombrely, dropping into a chair, and letting her arm fall over the back. 'It's all very well, Dora. You aren't in love with a man whom you never see, and whom your father has a spite on! And you won't do anything to help me—you won't move a finger. And, of *course*, you might!'

'What could I do, Lucy?' cried Dora, exasperated. 'I can't go and ask young Grieve to marry you. I do wish you'd try and put him out of your head, that I do. You're too young, and he's got his business to think about. And while Uncle Tom's like this, I can't be always putting myself forward to help you meet him. It would be just the way to make him think something bad—to make him suspect——'

'Well, and why shouldn't he suspect?' said Lucy, obstinately, her little mouth set and hard; 'it's all rubbish about girls leaving it all to the men. If a girl doesn't show she cares about a man, how's he to know—and when she don't meet him—and when her father keeps her shut up—*shameful!*'

She flung the word out through her small, shut teeth, the brows meeting over her flashing eyes.

'Oh! it's shameful, is it—eh, Miss Purell?' said a harsh, mimicking voice coming from the dark passage leading into the shop.

Lucy sprang up in terror. There on the steps stood her father, bigger, blacker, more formidable than he had ever been in the eyes of the two startled girls.

All unknown to them, the two doors which parted them from the shop had been slightly ajar, and Purcell, catching their voices as they came in, and already on the watch for his daughter, had maintained a treacherous quiet behind them. Now he was entirely in his element. He surveyed them both with a dark, contemptuous triumph. What fools women were to be sure!

As he descended the two steps into the parlour the floor shook under his heavy tread. Dora had instinctively thrown her arm round Lucy, who had begun to cry hysterically. She herself was very pale, but after the first start she looked her uncle in the face.

‘Is it you that’s been teaching Lucy these *beautiful* sentiments?’ said Purcell, with ironical emphasis, stopping a yard from them and pointing at Dora, ‘and do you get ’em from St. Damian’s?’

Dora threw up her head, and flushed. ‘I get nothing from St. Damian’s that I’m ashamed of,’ she said in a proud voice, ‘and I’ve done nothing with Lucy that I’m ashamed of.’

‘No, I suppose not,’ said Purcell dryly; ‘the devil don’t deal much in shame. It’s a losing article.’

Then he looked at Lucy, and his expression suddenly changed. The flame beneath leapt to sight. He caught her arm, dragged her out of Dora’s hold, and shook her as one might shake a kitten.

‘Who were you talking of just now?’ he said to her, holding her by both shoulders, his eyes blazing down upon her.

Lucy was much too frightened to speak. She stood staring back at him, her breast heaving violently.

Dora came forward in indignation.

‘You’ll get nothing out of her if you treat her like that,’ she said, with spirit, ‘nor out of me either.’

Purcell recovered himself with difficulty. He let

Lucy go, and walking up to the mantelpiece stood there, leaning his arm upon it, and looking at the girls from under his hand.

‘What do I want to get out of you?’ he said, with scorn. ‘As if I didn’t know already everything that’s in your silly minds! I guessed already, and now that you have been so obliging as to let your secrets out under my very nose—I *know!* That chit there’—he pointed to Lucy—all his gestures had a certain theatrical force and exaggeration, springing, perhaps, from his habit of lay preaching—‘imagines she’s going to marry the young infidel I gave the sack to a while ago. Now don’t she? Are you going to say no to that?’

His loud challenge pushed Dora to extremities, and it was all left to her. Lucy was sobbing on the sofa.

‘I don’t know what she imagines,’ said Dora, slowly, seeking in vain for words; the whole situation was so ridiculous. ‘Are you going to prevent her falling in love with the man she chooses?’

‘*Certainly!*’ said Purcell, with mocking emphasis. ‘Certainly—since she chooses wrong. The only concern of the godly in these matters is to see that their children are not yoked with unbelievers. Whenever I see that young reprobate in the street now, I smell *the pit*. And it’ll not be long before the Lord tumbles him into it; there’s an end comes to such devil’s fry as that. Oh, they may prosper and thrive, they may revile the children of the Lord, they may lift up the hoof against the poor Christian, but the time comes—*the time comes.*’

His solemnity, at once unctuous and full of vicious meaning, only irritated Dora. But Lucy raised herself from the sofa, and looked suddenly round at her father. Her eyes were streaming, her hair in disorder, but there was a suspicion and intelligence in her

look which seemed to give her back self-control. She watched eagerly for what her father might say or do next.

As soon as he saw her sitting up he walked over to her and took her again by the shoulder.

‘Now look here,’ he said to her, holding her tight, ‘let’s finish with this. That young man’s the Lord’s enemy—he’s my enemy—and I’ll teach him a lesson before I’ve done. But that’s neither here nor there. You understand this. If you ever walk out of this door with him, you’ll not walk back into it, with him or without him. I’d have done with you, and *my money* ’ld have done with you. But there’—and Purcell gave a little scornful laugh, and let her go with a push—‘*he* don’t care twopence about you—I’ll say that for him.’

Lucy flushed fiercely, and getting up began mechanically to smooth her hair before the glass, with wild tremulous movements, will and defiance settling on her lip, as she looked at herself and at the reflection of her father.

‘And as for you, Miss Lomax,’ said Purcell deliberately, standing opposite Dora, ‘you’ve been aiding and abetting somehow—I don’t care how. I don’t complain. There was nothing better to be expected of a girl with your parentage and bringing up, and a Puseyite into the bargain. But I warn you you’ll go meddling here once too often before you’ve done. If you’ll take my advice you’ll let other people’s business alone, and *mind your own*. Them that have got Adrian Lomax on their hands needn’t go poaching on their neighbours for something to do.’

He spoke with a slow, vindictive emphasis, and Dora shrank and quivered as though he had struck her. Then by a great effort—the effort of one who had not gone through a close and tender training of

the soul for nothing—she put from her both her anger and her fear.

‘You’re cruel to father,’ she said, her voice fluttering; ‘you might be thinking sometimes how straight he’s kept since he took the Parlour. And I don’t believe young Grieve means any harm to you or anybody—and I’m sure I don’t.’

A sob rose in her throat. Anybody less crassly armoured in self-love than Purcell must have been touched. As for him, he turned on his heel.

‘I’ll proteet myself, thank you,’ he said dryly; ‘and I’ll judge for myself. You can do as you like, and Luey too, so long as she takes the consequences. Do you understand, Luey?’

‘Yes,’ said Lucy, facing round upon him, all tremulous passion and rebellion, but she could not meet his fixed, tyrannical eye. Her own wavered and sank. Purcell enjoyed the spectacle of her for a second or two, smiled, and went.

As soon as he was gone, Lucy dragged her cousin to the stairs, and never let her go till Dora was safe in her room and the door bolted.

Dora implored to be released. How could she stay in her uncle’s house after such a scene? and she must get home quickly anyway, as Luey knew.

Luey took no notice at all of what she was saying.

‘Look here,’ she said, breaking into the middle of Dora’s appeal, and speaking in an excited whisper—‘he’s going to do him a mischief. I’m certain he is. That’s how he looks when he’s going to pay some one out. Now, what’s he going to do? I’ll know somehow—trust me!’

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, her arms behind her, supporting her, her little feet beating each other restlessly—a hot, vindictive anger speaking from every feature, every movement. The pretty chit of

seventeen seemed to have disappeared. Here was every promise of a wilful and obstinate woman, with more of her father's stuff in her than anyone could have yet surmised.

A pang rose in Dora. She rose impulsively, and throwing herself down by Lucy, drew the ruffled, palpitating creature into her arms.

'Oh, Lucy, isn't it only because you're angry and vexed, and because you want to fight Uncle Purcell? Oh, don't go on just for that! When we're—we're Christians, we mustn't want our own way—we must give it up—*we must give it up.*' Her voice sank in a burst of tears, and she drooped her head on Lucy's, kissing her cousin's brown hair.

Lucy extricated herself with a movement of impatience.

'When one *loves* anybody,' she said, sitting very upright and twisting her fingers together, 'one must stiek to him!'

Dora started at the word 'love.' It seemed to her a profanation. She dried her eyes, and got up to go without another word.

'Well, Dora,' said Lucy, frowning, 'and so you'll do nothing for me—*nothing?*'

Dora stood a moment in a troubled silence. Then she turned, and took gentle hold of her cousin.

'If I get a chance, Lucy, I'll try and find out whether he's thinking of marrying at all. And if he isn't—and I'm sure he isn't—will you give it all up, and try and live comfortable with Uncle Purcell, and think of something else?'

Her eyes had a tender, nay a passionate entreaty in them.

'No!' said Lucy with energy; 'but I'll very likely drown myself in the river some fine night.'

Dora still held her, standing above her, and looking

down at her, trying hard to read her true mind. Lucy bore it defiantly for a minute; then suddenly two large tears rose. A quiver passed over Dora's face; she kissed her cousin quickly, and went towards the door.

'And I'll find out what father's going to do, or my name isn't what it is!' said the girl behind her, in a shrill, shaking voice, as she closed the door.

Dora ran back to Market Place, filled with a presentiment that she was late, though the hand of the Cathedral clock was still far from three.

At the side door stood a woman with a shawl over her head, looking distractedly up the street.

'Oh, Miss Dora! Miss Dora! they've sent. He's gooin—goin quick. An' he keeps wearyin' for "mither an' Miss Dora."'

The powerful scarred face had the tremulous helplessness of grief. Dora took her by the arm.

'Let us run, Sarah—at once. Oh, never mind the work!'

The two women hurried through the crowded Saturday streets. But halfway up Market Street Sarah stopped short, looking round her in an agony.

'Theer's his feyther, Miss Dora. Oh, he wor a bad 'un to me, but he had allus a soft spot for t' lad. I'd be reet glad to send worrud. He wor theer in the ward, they tell't me, last week.'

Three years before she had separated from her husband, a sawyer, by mutual consent. He was younger than she, and he had been grossly unfaithful to her; she came of a good country stock and her daleswoman's self-respect could put up with him no longer. But she had once been passionately in love with him, and, as she said, he had been on the whole kind to the boy.

'Where is he?' said Dora.

‘At Mr. Whitelaw’s yard, Edgell Street, Great Ancoats.’

They had just entered the broad Infirmary Square. Dora, looking round her in perplexity, suddenly saw coming towards them the tall figure of David Grieve. The leap of the heart of which she was conscious through all her preoccupation startled her. But she went up to him without a moment’s hesitation. David, swinging along as though Manchester belonged to him, found himself arrested and, looking down, saw Dora’s pale and agitated face.

‘Mr. Grieve, will you help me?’

She drew him to the side and explained as quickly as she could. Sarah stood by, and threw in directions.

‘He’ll be to be found at Mr. Whitelaw’s yard—Edgell Street—an’ whoever goes mun just say to him, “Sarah says to tha—Wilt tha coom, or wilt tha not coom?—t’ lad’s deein.”’

She threw out the words with a sombre simplicity and force, then, her whole frame quivering with impatience, she crossed the road to the Infirmary without waiting for Dora.

‘Can you send some one?’ said Dora.

‘I will go myself at once. I’ll find the man if he’s there, and bring him. You leave it to me.’

He turned without more ado, broke into a run, and disappeared round the corner of Oldham Street.

Dora crossed to the Infirmary, her mind strangely divided for a moment between the solemn image of what was coming, and the vibrating memory of something just past.

But, once in the great ward, pity and death possessed her wholly. He knew them, the poor lad—made, as it seemed, two tremulous movements,—once, when his mother’s uncontrollable crying passed into his failing ear—once when Dora’s kiss was laid upon his hollow



temple. Then again he lay unconscious, drawing gently to the end.

Dora knelt beside him praying, his mother on the other side, and the time passed. Then there were sounds about the bed, and looking up, Dora saw two figures approaching. In front was a middle-aged man, with a stupid, drink-stained face. He came awkwardly and unsteadily up to the bedside, almost stumbling over his wife, and laying his hand on the back of a chair to support himself. He brought with him an overpowering smell of beer, and Dora thought as she looked at him that he had only a very vague idea of what was going on. His wife took no notice of him whatever.

Behind at some little distance, his hat in his hand, stood David Grieve. Why did he stay? Dora could not get him out of her mind. Even in her praying she still saw the dark, handsome head and lithe figure thrown out against the whiteness of the hospital walls.

There was a slight movement in the bed, and the nurse, standing beside the boy, looked up and made a quick sign to the mother. What she and Dora saw was only a gesture as of one settling for sleep. Without struggle and without fear, the little lad who had never lived enough to know the cost of dying, went the way of all flesh.

‘They die so easily, this sort,’ said the nurse to Dora, as she tenderly closed the patient eyes; ‘it’s like a plant that’s never rooted.’

A few minutes later Dora was blindly descending the long stairs. The mother was still beside her dead, making arrangements for the burial. The father, sobered and conscious, had already slouched away. But at the foot of the stairs Dora, looking round, saw that David was just behind her.

He came out with her.

‘He was drunk when I found him,’ he explained, ‘he had been drinking in the dinner hour. I had him by the arm all the way, and thought I had best bring him straight in. And then—I had never seen anyone die,’ he said simply, a curious light in his black eyes.

Dora, still choked with tears, could not speak. With shaking hands she searched for a bit of veil she had with her to hide her eyes and cheeks. But she could not find it.

‘Don’t go down Market Street,’ he said, after a shy look at her. ‘Come this way, there isn’t such a crowd.’

And turning down Mosley Street, all the way he guided her through some side streets where there were fewer people to stare. Such forethought, such gentleness in him were quite new to her. She gradually recovered herself, feeling all the while this young sympathetic presence at her side—dreading lest it should desert her.

He meanwhile was still under the tremor and awe of the new experience. So this was dying! He remembered ’Lias holding Margaret’s hand. ‘*Deein’s long—but it’s varra, varra peaceful.*’ Not always, surely! There must be vigorous, tenacious souls that went out with tempests and agonies; and he was conscious of a pang of fear, feeling himself so young and strong.

Presently he led her into St. Ann’s Square, and then they shook hands. He hurried off to his business, and she remained standing a moment on the pavement outside the church which makes one side of the square. An impulse seized her—she turned and went into the church instead of going home.

There, in one of the old oak pews where the little tarnished plates still set forth the names of their

eighteenth-century owners, she fell on her knees and wrestled with herself and God.

She was very simple, very ignorant, but religion, as religion can, had dignified and refined all the elements of character. She said to herself in an agony—that he *must* love her—that she had loved him in truth all along. And then a great remorse came upon her—the spiritual glory she had just passed through closed round her again. What! she could see the heaven opened—the Good Shepherd stoop to take His own—and then come away to feel nothing but this selfish, passionate craving? Oh, she was ashamed, she loathed herself!

*Lucy!*—Lucy had no claim! should have no claim! He did not care for her.

Then again the pale dead face would flash upon her with its submissive look,—so much gratitude for so little, and such a tender ease in dying! And she possessed by all these bad and jealous feelings, these angry desires, fresh from such a presence!

*'Oh! Lamb of God—Lamb of God—that takest away the sins of the world!'*

## CHAPTER VI

AND David, meanwhile, was thinking of nothing in the world but the fortunes of a little shop, about twelve feet square, and of the stall outside that shop. The situation—for a hero—is certainly one of the flattest conceivable. Nevertheless it has to be faced.

If, however, one were to say that he had marked none of Lucy Purcell's advances, that would be to deny him eyes as well as susceptibilities. He had, indeed,

said to himself in a lordly way that Lucy Purcell was a regular little flirt, and was beginning those ways early. But a certain rough young modesty, joined with a sense of humour at his own expense, prevented him from making any more of it, and he was no sooner in his own den watching for customers than Lucy vanished from his mind altogether. He thought much more of Purcell himself, with much vengeful chuckling and speculation.

As for Dora, he had certainly begun to regard her as a friend. She had sense and experience, in spite of her Ritualism, whereas Lucy in his eyes had neither. So that to run into the Parlour, after each new day was over, and discuss with Daddy and her the ups and downs, the fresh chances and prospects of his infant business, was pleasant enough. Daddy and he met on the common ground of wishing to make the world uncomfortable for Purcell; while Dora supplied the admiring uncritical wonder, in which, like a warm environment, an eager temperament expands, and feels itself under the stimulus more inventive and more capable than before.

But marrying! The lad's careless good-humoured laugh under Ancrum's probings was evidence enough of how the land lay. Probably at the bottom of him, if he had examined, there lay the instinctive assumption that Dora was one of the girls who are not likely to marry. Men want them for sisters, daughters, friends—and then go and fall in love with some minx that has a way with her.

Besides, who could be bothered with 'gells, when there was a stall to be set out and a career to be made? With that stall, indeed, David was truly in love. How he fingered and meddled with it!—setting out the cheap reprints it contained so as to show their frontispieces, and strewing among them, in an artful

disorder, a few rare local pamphlets, on which he kept a careful watch, either from the door or from inside. Behind these, again, within the glass, was a precious shelf, containing in the middle of it about a dozen volumes of a kind dear to a collector's eye—thin volumes in shabby boards, then just beginning to be sought after—the first editions of nineteenth-century poets. For months past David had been hoarding up a few in a corner of his little lodging, and on his opening day they decoyed him in at least five inquiring souls, all of whom stayed to talk a bit. There was a 'Queen Mab,' and a 'Lyrical Ballads;' an 'Endymion;' a few Landors thrown in, and a 'Bride of Abydos'—this last not of much account, for its author had the indiscretion, from the collector's point of view, to be famous from the beginning, and so to flood the world with large editions.

Round and about these dainty morsels were built in with solid rubbish, with Daddy's 'Journals of Theology,' 'British Controversialist,' and the rest. In one top corner lurked a few battered and cut-down Elzevirs, of no value save to the sentiment of the window, while a good many spaces were filled up with some new and attractive editions of standard books just out of copyright, contributed, these last, by the enterprising traveller of a popular firm, from whom David had them on commission.

Inside, the shop was of the roughest: a plank or two on a couple of trestles served for a counter, and two deal shelves, put up by David, ran along the wall behind. The counter held a few French scientific books, very fresh, and 'in the movement,' the result of certain inquiries put by old Barbier to a school friend of his, now professor at the Sorbonne—meant to catch the 'college people;' while on the other side lay some local histories of neighbouring towns and districts,

a sort of commodity always in demand in a great expanding city, where new men have risen rapidly and families are in the making. For these local books the lad had developed an astonishing *flair*. He had the geographical and also the social instincts which the pursuit of them demands.

On his first day David netted in all a profit of seventeen shillings and twopence, and at night he curled himself up on a mattress in the little back kitchen, with an old rug for covering and a bit of fire, and slept the sleep of liberty.

In a few days more several of the old-established book-buyers of the town, a more numerous body, perhaps, in Manchester than in other northern centres, had found him out; a certain portly and wealthy lady, connected with one of the old calico-printing families, a person of character, who made a hobby of Lancashire Nonconformity, had walked into the shop, and given the boyish owner of it much good advice and a few orders; the Earl of Driffield had looked in, and, caught by the lures of the stall, customers had come from the most unlikely quarters, desiring the most heterogeneous wares. The handsome, intelligent young fellow, with his out-of-the-way strains of knowledge, with his frank self-conceit and his equally frank ignorance, caught the fancy of those who stayed to talk with him. A certain number of persons had been already taken with him in Purcell's shop, and were now vastly amused by the lad's daring and the ambitious range of his first stock.

As for Lord Driffield, on the first occasion when he had dropped in he had sat for an hour at least, talking and smoking cigarettes across David's primitive counter.

This remarkable person, of whom Lucy thought so little, was well known, and had been well known, for

a good many years, to the booksellers of Manchester and Liverpool. As soon as the autumn shooting season began, Purcell, for instance, remembered Lord Driffield, and began to put certain books aside for him. He possessed one of the famous libraries of England, and he not only owned but read. Scholars all over Europe took toll both of his books and his brains. He lived to collect and to be consulted. There was almost nothing he did not know, except how to make a book for himself. He was so learned that he had, so to speak, worked through to an extreme modesty. His friends, however, found nothing in life so misleading as Lord Driffield's diffidence.

At the same time Providence had laid upon him a vast family estate, and an aristocratic wife, married in his extreme youth to please his father. Lady Driffield had the ideas of her caste, and when they came to their great house near Stalybridge, in the autumn, she insisted on a succession of proper guests, who would shoot the grouse in a proper manner, and amuse her in the evenings. For, as she had no children, life was often monotonous, and when she was bored she had a stately way of making herself disagreeable to Lord Driffield. He therefore did his best to content her. He received her guests, dined with them in the evenings, and despatched them to the moors in the morning. But between those two functions he was his own master; and on the sloppy November afternoons he might as often as not be seen trailing about Manchester or Liverpool, carrying his slouching shoulders and fair spectacled face into every bookseller's shop, good, bad, and indifferent, or giving lectures, mostly of a geographical kind, at popular institutions—an occupation in which he was not particularly effective.

David had served him, once or twice, in Half Street,

and had sent a special notice of his start and his intentions to Benet's Park, the Driffields' 'place.' Lord Driffield's first visit left him quivering with excitement, for the earl had a way of behaving as though everybody else were not only his social, but his intellectual equal—even a lad of twenty, with his business to learn. He would sit pleasantly smoking and asking questions—a benevolent, shabby person, eager to be informed. Then, when David had fallen into the trap, and was holding forth—proud, it might be, of certain bits of knowledge which no one else in Manchester possessed—Lord Driffield would throw in a gentle comment, and then another and another, till the trickle became a stream, and the young man would fall blankly listening, his mouth opening wider and wider. When it was over, and the earl, with his dragged umbrella, had disappeared, David sat, crouched on his wooden stool, consumed with hot ambition and wonder. How could a man know so much—and an earl, who didn't want it? For a few hours, at any rate, his self-conceit was dashed. He realised dimly what it might be to know as the scholar knows. And that night, when he had shut the shutters, he vowed to himself, as he gathered his books about him, that five hours was enough sleep for a strong man; that *learn* he must and should, and that some day or other he would hold his own, even with Lord Driffield.

How he loved his evenings—the paraffin lamp glaring beside him, the crackling of the coal in his own fire, the book on his knee! Ancrum had kept his promise, and was helping him with his Greek; but his teaching hardly kept pace with the boy's enthusiasm and capacity. The *voracity* with which he worked at his Thucydides and Homer left the lame minister staring and sighing. The sound of the lines, the roll



of the *oi's* and *ou's* was in David's ear all day, and to learn a dozen irregular verbs in the interval between two customers was like the gulping of a dainty.

Meanwhile, as he collected his English poets he read them. And here was a whole new world. For in his occupation with the Encyclopædists he had cared little for poetry. The reaction against his Methodist fit had lasted long, had developed a certain contempt for sentiment, a certain love for all sharp, dry, calculable things, and for the tone of *irony* in particular. But in such a nature such a phase was sure to pass, and it was passing. Burns, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson—now he was making acquaintance piecemeal with them all, as the precious volumes turned up, which he was soon able to place with a precision which tore them too soon out of his hands. The Voltairean temper in him was melting, was passing into something warmer, subtler, and more restless.

But he was not conscious of it. He was as secular, as cocksure, as irritating as ever, when Anerum probed him on the subject of the Hall of Science or the various Secularist publications which he supported.

'Do you call yourself an atheist now, David?' said Anerum one day, in that cheerful, half-ironic tone which the young bookseller resented.

'I don't call myself anything,' said David, stoutly. 'I'm all for this world; we can't know anything about another. At least, that's my opinion, sir—no offence to you.'

'Oh, dear me, no offence! There have been a *few* philosophers, you know, Davy, since Voltaire. There's a person called Kant; I don't know anything about him, but they tell me he made out a very pretty case, on the practical side anyway, for a God and immortality. And in England, too, there have been two or three persons of consequence, you remember, like

Coleridge and John Henry Newman, who have thought it worth while to believe a little. But you don't care about that?'

The lad stood silent a moment, his colour rising, his fine lip curling. Then he burst out :

'What's the good of thinking about things by the wrong end? There's such a lot to read!'

And with a great stretch of all his young frame he fell back on the catalogue he was looking through, while Anerum went on turning over a copy of 'The Reasoner,' a vigorous Secularist paper of the day, which he had found on the counter, and which had suggested his question.

*Knowledge—success:* it was for these that David burned, and he laid rapid hands upon them. He had a splendid physique, and at this moment of his youth he strained it to the utmost. He grudged the time for sleep and meals, and on Saturday afternoons, the early-closing day of Manchester, he would go out to country sales, or lay plans for seeing the few considerable libraries—Lord Driffield's among them—which the neighbouring districts possessed. On Sunday he read from morning till night, and once or twice his assistant John, hammering outside for admittance in the winter dark, wakened the master of the shop from the rickety chair where he had fallen asleep over his books in the small hours of the morning.

His assistant! It may well be asked what a youth of twenty, setting up on thirty pounds capital in a small shop, wanted with an assistant before he had any business to speak of. The story is a curious one.

Some time in the previous summer Daddy had opened a smoking and debating room at the Parlour, by way of keeping his *clientèle* together and giving a special character to the place. He had merely boarded off a bit of the original seed warehouse, put in some

rough tables and chairs, and a few newspapers. But by a conjunction of circumstances the place had taken a Secularist character, and the weekly debates which Daddy inaugurated were, for a time at least, well attended. Secularism, like all other forms of mental energy, had lately been active in Manchester; there had been public discussions between Mr. Holyoake and Mr. Bradlaugh as to whether Secularism were necessarily atheistic or no. Some of the old newspapers of the movement, dating from Chartist days, had recently taken a new lease of life; and combined with the protest against theology was a good deal of co-operative and republican enthusiasm. Lomax, who had been a Secularist and an Owenite for twenty years, and who was a republican to boot, threw himself into the *mêlée*, and the Parlour debates during the whole of the autumn and winter of '69-70 were full of life, and brought out a good many young speakers, David Grieve among them. Indeed, David was for a time the leader of the place, so ready was his gift, so confident and effective his personality.

On one occasion in October he was holding forth on 'Science—the true Providence of Life.' The place was crowded. A well-known Independent had been got hold of to answer the young Voltairean, and David was already excited, for his audience was plying him with interruptions, and taxing to the utmost a natural debating power.

In the midst of it a printer's devil from the restaurant outside, a stout, stupid-looking lad, found his way in, and stood at the door listening. The fine classical head of the speaker, the beautiful voice, the gestures so free and flowing, the fire and fervour of the whole performance—these things left him gaping.

'Who's that?' he ventured to inquire of a man near him, a calico salesman, well known in the Salford

Conservative Association, who had come to support the Independent speaker.

The man laughed.

‘That’s young Grieve, assistant to old Purcell, Half Street. He talks a d——d lot of stuff—blasphemous stuff, too; but if somebody’d take and teach him and send him into Parliament, some day he’d make em skip, I warrant yo. I never heard onybody frame better for public speaking, and I’ve heard a lot.’

The printer’s devil stayed and stared through the debate. Then, afterwards, he began to haunt the paths of this young Satan, erept up to him in the news-room, skulked about him in the restaurant. At last David took notice of him, and they made friends.

‘Have you got anybody belonging to you?’ he asked him, shortly.

‘No,’ said the boy. ‘Father died last spring; mother was took with pleurisy in November——’

But the words stuck in his throat, and he coughed over them.

‘All right,’ said David; ‘come for a walk Sunday afternoon?’

So a pretty constant companionship sprang up between them. John Dalby came of a decent stock, and was still, as it were, under the painful and stupefying surprise of those bereavements which had left him an orphan. His blue eyes looked bewilderment at the world; he was bullied by the compositors he worked under. Sometimes he had violent fits of animal spirits, but in general he was dull and silent, and no one could have guessed that he often read poetry and cried himself to sleep in the garret where he lodged. Physically he was a great, overgrown creature, not, in truth, much younger than David. But while David was already the man, John was altogether in the tadpole-stage—a being of large, ungainly frame, at war with

his own hands and feet, his small eyes lost in his pink, spreading cheeks, his speech shy and scanty. Yet, such as he was, David found a use for him. Temperaments of the fermenting, expansive sort want a listener at the moment of early maturity, and almost any two-legged thing with the listener's gift will do. David worked off much steam on the Saturday or Sunday afternoons, when the two would push out into the country, walking some twenty miles or so for the sheer joy of movement. While the one talked and declaimed, ploughing his violent way through the soil of his young thought, the other, fat and silent, puffed alongside, and each in his own way was happy.

Just about the time David was dismissed by Purcell, John's apprenticeship came to an end. When he heard of the renting of the shop in Potter Street, he promptly demanded to come as assistant.

'Don't be a fool!' said David, turning upon him; 'what should I want with an assistant in that bit of a place? And I couldn't pay you, besides, man.'

'Don't mind that,' said John, stoutly. 'I'd like to learn the trade. Perhaps you'll set up a printing business by-and-by. Lots of booksellers do. Then I'll be handy.'

'And how the deuce are you going to live?' cried David, somewhat exasperated by these unpractical proposals. 'You're not exactly a grasshopper;' and his eye, half angry, half laughing, ran over John's plump person.

To which John replied, undisturbed, that he had got four pounds still of the little hoard his mother had left him, and, judging by what David had told him of his first months in Manchester, he could make that last for living a good while. When he had learnt something of the business with David, he would move on—trust him.

Whereupon David told him flatly that *he* wasn't going to help him waste his money, and sent him about his business.

On the very day, however, that David opened, he was busy in the shop, when he saw John outside at the stall, groaning under a bundle.

'It's Mr. Lomax ha sent you this,' said the lad, calmly, 'and I'm to put it up, and tell him how your stock looks.'

The bundle contained Daddy's contributions to young Grieve's window, which at the moment were very welcome; and David in his gratitude instructed the messenger to take back a cordial message. The only notice John took was to lift up two deal shelves that were leaning against the wall of the shop, and to ask where they were to go.

And, say what David would, he stuck, and would not be got rid of. With the Lancashire accent he had also the Lancashire persistence, and David after a while gave in, consented that he should stay for some weeks, at any rate, and then set to work to teach him, in a very impatient and intermittent way. For watching and bargaining at the stall, at any rate, for fetching and carrying, and for all that appertains to the carrying and packing of parcels, John presently developed a surprising energy. David's wits were thereby freed for the higher matters of his trade, while John was beast of burden. The young master could work up his catalogues, study his famous collections, make his own bibliographical notes, or run off here and there by 'bus or train in quest of books for a customer; he could swallow down his Greek verbs or puzzle out his French for Barbier in the intervals of business; the humbler matters of the shop prospered none the less.

Meanwhile both lads were vegetarians and teeto-

talers; both lived as near as might be on sixpence a day; and an increasing portion of the Manchester world—of that world, at any rate, which buys books—began, as the weeks rolled on, to take interest in the pair and their venture.

Christmas came, and David made up his accounts. He had turned over the whole of his capital in six weeks, had lived and paid his rent, and was very nearly ten pounds to the good. On the evening when he made this out he sat jubilantly over the fire, thinking of Louie. Certainly it would be soon time for him to send for Louie at this rate. Yet there were *pros* and *cons*. He would have to look after her when she did come, and there would be an end of his first freedom. And what would she find to do? Silk-weaving had been decaying year by year in Manchester, and for hand-loom weaving, at any rate, there was no opening at all.

No matter! With his prosperity there came a quickening of the sense of kinship, which would not let him rest. For the first time for many years he thought often of his father. Who and what had his mother been? Why had Uncle Reuben never spoken of his parents, save that one tormented word in the dark? Why, his father could not have been thirty when he died! Some day he would make Uncle Reuben tell all the story—he would know, too, where his father was buried.

And meanwhile, in a few more weeks, he would write to Kinder. He would be good to Louie—he decidedly meant that she should have a good time. Perhaps she had grown out of her tricks by now. Tom said she was thought to be uncommon handsome. David made a little face as he remembered that. She would be all the more difficult to manage.

Yet all the time David Grieve's prosperity was the most insecure growth imaginable.

One evening Lucy rushed in late to see Dora.

'Oh, Dora! Dora! Put down your work at once and listen to me.'

Dora looked up in amazement, to see Lucy's little face all crimson with excitement and resolution.

'Dora, I've found it all out: he's going to buy the house over Mr. Grieve's head, and turn him into the street, just as he's got nicely settled. Oh! he's done it before, I can tell you. There was a man higher up Half Street he served just the same. He's got the money, and he's got the spite. Well now, Dora, it's no good staring. Has Mr. Grieve been up here lately?'

'No; not lately,' said Dora, with an involuntary sigh. 'Father's been to see him. He says he's that busy he can't come out. But, Lucy, how do you know all this?'

Whereupon, at first, Lucy wouldn't tell; but being at bottom intensely proud of her own cleverness at last confessed. She had been for long convinced that her father meant mischief to young Grieve, and had been on the watch. A little listening at doors here, and a little prying into papers there, had presently given her the clue. In a private drawer, unlocked by chance, she had found a solicitor's letter containing the full description of No. 15 Potter Street, and of some other old houses in the same street, soon to be sold and rebuilt. The description contained notes of price and date in her father's hand. That very evening the solicitor in question had come to see her father. She had been sent upstairs, but had managed to listen all the same. The purchase—whatever it was—was to be concluded 'shortly.' There had been much legal talk, and her father had seemed in a particularly good temper when Mr. Vance went away.



‘Well now, look here,’ said Lucy, frowning and biting her lips; ‘I shall just go right on and see him. I thought I might have found him here. But there’s no time to lose.’

Dora had bent over her frame again, and her face was hidden.

‘Why, it’s quite late,’ she said, slowly; ‘the shop will be shut up long ago.’

‘I don’t care—I don’t care a bit,’ cried Lucy. ‘One can’t think about what’s proper. I’m just going straight away.’

And she got up feverishly, and put on her hat again.

‘Why can’t you tell father and send him? He’s downstairs in the reading-room,’ said Dora.

‘I’ll go myself, Dora, thank you,’ said Lucy, with an obstinate toss of her head, as she stood before the old mirror over the mantelpiece. ‘I dare say you think I’m a very bold girl. It don’t matter.’

Then for a minute she became absorbed in putting one side of her hair straight. Dora, from behind, sat looking at her, needle in hand. The gaslight fell on her pale, disturbed face, showed for an instant a sort of convulsion pass across it which Lucy did not see. Then she drew her hand along her eyes, with a low, quivering breath, and went back to her work.

As Lucy opened the door, however, a movement of anxiety, of conscience, rose in Dora.

‘Lucy, shall I go with you?’

‘Oh, no,’ said Lucy, impatiently. ‘I know what’s what, thank you, Dora. I’ll take care of myself. Perhaps I’ll come back and tell you what he says.’

And she closed the door behind her. Dora did not move from her work; but her hand trembled so that she made several false stitches and had to undo them.

Meanwhile Lucy sped along across Market Street

and through St. Ann's Square. Her blood was up, and she could have done anything, braved anybody, to defeat her father and win a smile from David Grieve. Yet, as she entered Potter Street, she began to quake a little. The street was narrow and dark. On one side the older houses had been long ago pulled down and replaced by tall warehouses, which at night were a black and towering mass, without a light anywhere. The few shops opposite closed early, for in the office quarter of Manchester there is very little doing after office hours, when the tide of life ebbs outwards.

Lucey looked for No. 15, her heart beating fast. There was a light in the first floor, but the shop-front was altogether dark. She crossed the street, and, lifting a shaking hand, rang the bell of the very narrow side door.

Instantly there were sounds inside—a step—and David stood on the threshold.

He stared in amazement at his unwonted visitor.

'Oh, Mr. Grieve—please—I've got something to tell you. Oh, no, I won't come in—we can stand here, please, out of the wind. But father's going to buy this place over your head, and I thought I'd better come and tell you. He'll be pretty mad if he thinks I've let out; but I don't care.'

She was leaning against the wall of the passage, and David could just see the defiance and agitation on her face by the light of the gas-lamp outside.

He himself gave a low whistle.

'Well, that's rather strong, isn't it, Miss Purcell?'

'It's mean—it's abominable,' she cried. 'I vowed I'd stop it. But I don't know what he'll do to me—kill me, most likely.'

'Nobody shall do anything to you,' said David, decidedly. 'You're a brick. But look here—can you tell me anything more?'

She commanded herself with great difficulty, and told all she knew. David leant against the wall beside her, twisting a meditative lip. The situation was ominous, certainly. He had always known that his tenure was precarious, but from various indications he had supposed that it would be some years yet before his side of the street was much meddled with. 'That old fox! He must go and see Mr. Anerum.'

A passion of hate and energy rose within him. Somehow or other he would pull through.

When Lucy had finished the tale of her eavesdroppings, the young fellow shook himself and stood erect.

'Well, I *am* obliged to you, Miss Purcell. And now I'll just go straight off and talk to somebody that I think'll help me. But I'll see you to Market Street first.'

'Oh!—somebody will see us!' she cried in a fever, 'and tell father.'

'Not they; I'll keep a look out.'

Then suddenly, as they walked along together, a great shyness fell upon them both. Why had she done this thing, and run the risk of her father's wrath? As David walked beside her, he felt for an instant, through all his gratitude, as though some one had thrown a lasso round him, and the cord were tightening. He could not have explained the feeling, but it made him curt and restive, absorbed, apparently, in his own thoughts. Meanwhile Lucy's heart swelled and swelled. She *did* think he would have taken her news differently—have made more of it and her. She wished she had never come—she wished she had brought Dora. The familiar consciousness of failure, of insignificance, returned, and the hot tears rose in her eyes.

At Market Street she stopped him hurriedly.

'Don't come any farther. I can get home.'

David, meanwhile, was saying to himself that he was a churlish brute; but for the life of him he could not get out any pretty speeches worthy of the occasion.

‘I’m sure I take it most kind of you, Miss Purcell. There’s nothing could have saved me if you hadn’t told. And I don’t know whether I can get out of it now. But if ever I can do anything for you, you know——’

‘Oh, never mind!—never mind!’ she said, incoherently, stabbed by his constraint. ‘Good-night.’

And she ran away into the darkness, choked by the sorest tears she had ever shed.

David, meanwhile, went on his way to Anerum, scourging himself. If ever there was an ungrateful cur, it was he! Why could he find nothing nice to say to that girl in return for all her pluck? Of course she would get into trouble. Coming to see him at that time of night, too! Why, it was splendid!

Yet, all the same, he knew perfectly well that if she had been there beside him again, he would have been just as tongue-tied as before.

## CHAPTER VII

On the following night David walked into the Parlour about eight o’clock, hung up his hat with the air of an emperor, and looked round for Daddy.

‘Look here, Daddy! I’ve got something to say to you, but not down here: you’ll be letting out my private affairs, and I can’t stand that.’

‘Well, come upstairs, then, you varmint! You’re a poor sort of fellow, always suspecting your friends. Come up—come up with you! I’ll humour you!’

And Daddy, bursting with curiosity, led the way upstairs to Dora's sitting-room. Dora was moving about amid a mass of silks, which lay carefully spread out on the table, shade melting into shade, awaiting their transference to a new silk case she had been busy upon.

As the door opened she looked up, and when she saw David her face flushed all over.

Daddy pushed the lad in.

'Dora, he's got some news. Out with it, sir!'

And he stood opposite the young fellow, on tiptoe, quivering with impatience.

David put both hands in his pockets, and looked out upon them, radiant.

'I think,' he said slowly, 'I've scotched old Purell this time. But perhaps you don't know what he's been after?'

'Lucy was in here last night,' said Dora, hesitating; 'she told me about it.'

'Lucy!' cried Daddy, exasperated. 'What have you been making secrets about? I'll have no secrets from me in this house, Dora. Why, when Lucy tells you something important, is it all hidden up from me? Nasty close ways!'

And he looked at her threateningly.

Nothing piqued the old Bohemian so much as the constant assumption of the people about him that he was a grown-up baby, of no discretion at all. That the assumption was true made no difference whatever to the irritating quality of it.

Dora dropped her head a little, but said nothing. David interposed:

'Well, now *I'll* tell you all about it.'

His tone was triumph itself, and he plunged into his story. He described what Purell had meant to do, and how nearly he had done it. In a month, if

the bookseller had had his way, his young rival would have been in the street, with all his connection to make over again. At the moment there was not another corner to be had, within David's means, anywhere near the centre of the town. It would have meant a completely fresh beginning, and temporary ruin.

But he had gone to Ancrum. And Ancrum and he had bethought them of the rich Unitarian gentleman who had been David's sponsor when he signed his agreement.

There and then, at nine o'clock at night, Ancrum had gone off to Higher Broughton, where the good man lived, and laid the case before him. Mr. Doyle had taken the night to think it over, and the following morning he had paid a visit to his lawyer.

'He and his wife thought it a burning shame, he told Mr. Ancrum; and, besides, he's been buying up house property in Manchester for some time past, only we couldn't know that—that was just luck. He looked upon it as a good chance both for him and for me. He told his lawyer it must be all settled in three hours, and he didn't mind the price. The lawyer found out that Purcell was haggling, went in to win, put the cash down, and here in my pocket I've got the fresh agreement between me and Mr. Doyle—three months' notice on either side, and no likelihood of my being turned out, if I want to stay, for the next three or four years. Hurrah!'

And the lad, quite beside himself with jubilation, raised the blue cap he held in his hand, and flung it round his head. Dora stood and looked at him, leaning lightly against the table, her arms behind her. His triumph carried her away; her lips parted in a joyous smile; her whole soft, rounded figure trembled with animation and sympathy.

As for Daddy, he could not contain himself. He

ran to the top of the stairs, and sent a kitchen-boy flying for a bottle of champagne.

‘Drink, you varmint, drink!’ he said, when the liquor came, ‘or I’ll be the death of you! Hold your tongue, Dora! Do you think a man can put up with temperance drinks when his enemy’s smitten hip and thigh? Oh, you jewel, David, but you’ll bring him low, lad—you’ll bring him low before you’ve done—promise me that. I shall see him a beggar yet, lad, shan’t I? Oh, nectar!’

And Daddy poured down his champagne, apostrophising it and David’s vengeance together.

Dora looked distressed.

‘Father—Lucy! How can you say such things?’

‘Lucy—eh?—Lucy? She won’t be a beggar. She’ll marry; she’s got a bit of good looks of her own. But, David, my lad, what was it you were saying? How was it you got wind of this precious business?’

David hesitated.

‘Well, it was Miss Purell told me,’ he said. ‘She came to see me at my place last evening.’

He drew himself together with a little nervous dignity, as though foreseeing that Daddy would make remarks.

‘Miss Purell!—what, Lucy?—*Lucy?* Upon my word, Davy! Why, her father’ll wring her neck when he finds it out. And she came to warn you?’

Daddy stood a moment taking in the situation, then, with a queer grin, he walked up to David and poked him in the ribs.

‘So there were passages—eh, young man—when you were up there?’

The young fellow straightened himself, with a look of annoyance.

‘Nothing of the sort, Daddy; there were no pas-

sages. But Miss Lucy's done me a real friendly act, and I'd do the same for her any day.'

Dora had sat down to her silks again. As David spoke she bent closely over them, as though the lamp-light puzzled her usually quick perception of shade and quality.

As for Daddy, he eyed the lad doubtfully.

'She's got a pretty waist and a brown eye, Davy, and she's seventeen.'

'She may be for me,' said David, throwing his head back and speaking with a certain emphasis and animation. 'But she's a little brick to have given me notice of this thing.'

The warmth of these last words produced more effect on Daddy than his previous denials.

'Dora,' he said, looking round—'Dora, do you believe the varmint? All the same, you know, he'll be for marrying soon. Look at him!' and he pointed a thin theatrical finger at David from across the room. 'When I was his make I was in love with half the girls in the place. Blue eyes here—brown eyes there—nothing came amiss to me.'

'Marrying!' said David, with an impatient shrug of the shoulders, but flushing all over. 'You might wait, I think, till I've got enough to keep one on, let alone two. If you talk such stuff, Daddy, I'll not tell you my secrets when there are any to tell.'

He tried to laugh it off; but Dora's grey eye, glancing timidly round at him, saw that he was in some discomfort. There was a bright colour in *her* cheek too, and her hand touched her silks uncertainly.

'Thank you for nothing, sir,' said Daddy, unabashed. 'Trust an old hound like me for scenting out what he wants. But, go along with you! I'm disappointed in you. The young men nowadays have got no *blood*! They're made of sawdust and brown paper. The



world was our orange, and we sucked it. Bedad, we did! But *you*—cold-blooded cubs—go to the devil, I tell you, and read your Byron!’

And, striking an attitude which was a boisterous reminiscence of Maeready, the old wanderer flung out the lines :

‘Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,  
Death hath but little left him to destroy.  
Ah! happy years! Once more, who would not be a boy?’

David laughed out. Daddy turned petulantly away, and looked out of window. The night was dreary, dark, and wet.

‘Dora!’

‘Yes, father.’

‘Manchester’s a damned dull hole. I’m about tired of it.’

Dora started, and her colour disappeared in an instant. She got up and went to the window.

‘Father, you know they’ll be waiting for you downstairs,’ she said, putting her hand on his shoulder. ‘They always say they can’t get on without you on debating nights.’

‘Stuff and nonsense!’ said Daddy, throwing off the hand. But he looked mollified. The new reading-room was at present his pet hobby; his interest in the restaurant proper had dropped a good deal of late, or so Dora’s anxiety persuaded her.

‘It’s quite true,’ said David. ‘Go and start ’em. Daddy, and I’ll come down soon and cut in. I feel as if I could speak the roof off to-night, and I don’t care a hang about what! But first I’ve got something to say to Miss Dora. I want to ask her a favour.’

He came forward smiling. She gave him a startled look, but her eyes—poor Dora!—could not light on him now without taking a new brightness. How well

his triumph sat on him! How crisply and handsomely his black hair curled above his open brow!

‘More secrets,’ growled Daddy.

‘Nothing of any interest, Daddy. Miss Dora can tell you all about it, if she cares. Now go along! Start ’em on the Bishop of Peterborough and the Secularists. I’ve got a lot to say about that.’

He pushed Daddy laughingly to the door, and came back again to where Dora was once more grappling with her silks. Her expression had changed again. Oh! she had so many things to open to him, if only she could find the courage.

He sat down and looked at a bit of her embroidery, which lay uncovered beside her on the frame.

‘I say, that is fine work!’ he said, wondering. ‘I hope you get well paid for it, Miss Dora. You ought. Well, now, I do want to ask your advice. This business of the house has set me thinking about a lot of things.’

He lay back in his chair, with his hands in his pockets, and threw one leg over the other. He was in such a state of nervous excitement, Dora could see, that he could hardly keep himself still.

‘Did I ever tell you about my sister? No, I know I haven’t. I’ve kept it dark. But now I’m settled I want to have her to live with me. There’s no one but us two, except the old uncle and aunt that brought us up. I must stick to her—and I mean to. But she’s not like other girls. She’s a queer one.’

He stopped, frowning a little as the recollections of Louie rushed across him, seeking for words in which to draw her. And directly he paused, Dora, who had dropped her silks again in her sudden astonishment, burst into questions. How old was his sister? Was she in Manchester? Had she a trade? Her soul was full of a warm, unexpected joy, her manner was

eager—receptive. He took up his parable and told the story of his childhood and Louie's at the farm. His black eye kindled as he looked past Dora into the past—into the bosom of the Scout. Owing partly to an imaginative gift, partly to his reading habit, when he was stimulated—when he was, as it were, talking at large, trying to present a subject as a whole, to make a picture of it—he rose into ways of speech quite different from those of his class, and different from his own dialect of every day. This latent capacity for fine expression was mostly drawn out at this time by his attempts at public speaking. But to-night, in his excitement, it showed in his talk, and Dora was bewildered. Oh, how clever he was! He talked like a book—just like a book. She pushed her chair back from the silks, and sat absorbed in the pleasure of listening, environed too by the happy thought that he was making a friend of her, giving her—plain, insignificant, humble Dora Lomax—his confidence.

As for him, the more he talked the more he enjoyed talking. Never since he came to Manchester had he fallen into such a moment of unburdenment, of intimacy, or something like it, with any human being. He had talked to Ancrum and to John. But that was quite different. No man confides in a woman as he confides in a man. The touch of difference of sex gives charm and edge, even when, as was the case here, the man has no thrill whatever in his veins, and no thought of love-making in his head.

'You must have been very fond of your sister,' Dora said at last, tremulously. 'You two all alone—and no mother.'

Somehow the soft sentiment in her words and tone struck him suddenly as incongruous. His expression changed.

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ he said, with a sort of laugh, not a very bright one. ‘Don’t you imagine I was a pattern brother; I was a brute to her lots of times. And Louie—ah, well, you’ll see for yourself what she’s like; she’s a queer customer sometimes. And now I’ll tell you what I wanted to ask you, Miss Dora. You see, if Louie comes it won’t do for her to have no employment, after she’s had a trade all day; and she won’t take to mine—she can’t abide books.’

And he explained to her his perplexities—the ebbing of the silk trade from Manchester, and so on. He might hire a loom, but Louie would get no work. All trades have their special channels, and keep to them.

So it had occurred to him, if Louie was willing, would Dora take her as an apprentice, and teach her the church work? He would be quite ready to pay for the teaching; that would be only fair.

‘Teach her my work!’ cried Dora, instinctively drawing back. ‘Oh, I don’t think I could.’

He coloured, and misunderstood her. In a great labour-hive like Lancashire, with its large and small industries, the native ear is very familiar with the jealous tone of the skilled worker, threatened with competition in a narrow trade.

‘I didn’t mean any offence,’ he said, with a little stiffness. ‘I don’t want to take the bread out of anybody’s mouth. If there isn’t work to be had, you’ve only to say so, Miss Dora.’

‘Oh, I didn’t mean that,’ she cried, wounded in her turn. ‘There’s plenty of work. At the shop last week they didn’t know what to do for hands. If she was clever at it, she’d get lots of work. But——’

She laid her hand on her frame lovingly, not knowing how to explain herself, her gentle brows knitting in the effort of thought.

Her work was so much more to her than ordinary work paid for in ordinary coin. Into these gorgeous altar-cloths, or these delicate wrappings for chalice and paten, she stitched her heart. To work at them was prayer. Jesus, and His Mother, and the Saints: it was with them she communed as her stitches flowed. She sat in a mystic, a heavenly world. And the silence and solitude of her work made one of its chief charms. And now to be asked to share it with a strange girl, who could not love it as she did, who would take it as hard business—never to be alone any more with her little black book and her prayers!

And then she looked up, and met a young man's half-offended look, and a shy, proud eye, in which the nascent friendship of five minutes before seemed to be sinking out of sight.

'Oh yes, I will,' she cried. 'Of course I will. It just sounded a bit strange to me at first. I've been so used to be alone always.'

But he demurred now—wished stiffly to take back his proposal. He did not want to put upon her, and perhaps, after all, Louie would have her own notions.

But she could not bear it, and as he retreated she pressed forward. Of course there was work. And it would be very good for her, it would stir her up to take a pupil; it was just her old-maidish ways—it had startled her a bit at first.

And then, her reserve giving way more and more as her emotion grew, she confessed herself at last completely.

'You see, it's not just *work* to me, and it's not the money, though I am glad enough for that; but it's for the church; and I'd live on a crust, and do it for nothing, if I could!'

She looked up at him—that ardent dream-life of hers leaping to the eyes, transforming the pale face.

David sat silent and embarrassed. He did not know what to say—how to deal with this turn in the conversation.

‘Oh, I know you think I’m just foolish,’ she said, sadly, taking up her needle. ‘You always did; but I’ll take your sister—indeed I will.’

‘Perhaps you’ll turn her your way of thinking,’ said David, with a little awkward laugh, looking round for his hat. ‘But Louie isn’t an easy one to drive.’

‘Oh, you can’t drive people!’ cried Dora, flushing; ‘you can’t, and you oughtn’t. But if Father Russell talked to her she might like him—and the church. Oh, Mr. Grieve, won’t you go one Sunday and hear him—won’t you—instead of——’

She did not finish her sentence, but David finished it for her: ‘Instead of going to the Hall of Science? Well, but you know, Miss Dora, I being what I am, I get more good out of a lecture at the Hall of Science than I should out of Father Russell. I should be quarrelling with him all the time, and wanting to answer him.’

‘Oh, you couldn’t,’ said Dora eagerly, ‘he’s so good, and he’s a learned man—I’m sure he is. Mr. Foss, the curate, told me they think he’ll be a bishop some day.’

‘All the better for him,’ said David, unmoved. ‘It don’t make any difference to me.’ No, Miss Dora, don’t you fret yourself about me. Books are my priests.’

He stood over her, his hands on his sides, smiling.

‘Oh, no!’ cried Dora, involuntarily. ‘You mustn’t say that. Books can’t bring us to God.’

‘No more can priests,’ he said, with a sudden flash of his dark eyes, a sudden dryness of his tone. ‘If there is a God to bring us to—prove me that first, Miss Dora. But it’s a shame to say these things to

you—that it is—and I've been worrying you a deal too much about my stupid affairs. Good night. We'll talk about Father Russell again another time.'

He ran downstairs. Dora went back to her frame, then pushed it way again, ran eagerly to the window, and pulled the blind aside. Down below in the lighted street, now emptying fast, she saw the tall figure emerge, saw it run down the street, and across St. Mary's Gate. She watched it till it disappeared; then she put her hands over her face, and leant against the window-frame weeping. Oh, what a sudden descent from a moment of pure joy! How had the jarring note come? They had been put wrong with each other; and perhaps, after all, he would be no more to her now than before. And she had seemed to make such a leap forward—to come so near to him.

'Oh! I'll just be good to his sister,' she said to herself drearily, with an ache at her heart that was agony.

Then she thought of him as he had sat there beside her; and suddenly in her pure thought there rose a vision of herself in his arms, her head against his broad shoulder, her hand stealing round his neck. She moved from the window and threw herself down in the darkest corner of the room, wrestling desperately with what seemed to her a sinful imagination. She ought not to think of him at all; she loathed herself. Father Russell would tell her she was wicked. He had no faith—he was a hardened unbeliever—and she could not make herself think of that at all—could not stop herself from wanting—*wanting* him for her own, whatever happened.

And it was so foolish too, as well as bad; for he hadn't an idea of falling in love with anybody—anyone could see that. And she who was not pretty, and not a bit clever—it was so likely he would take a

fancy to her! Why, in a few years he would be a big man, he would have made a fortune, and then he could take his pick.

‘Oh! and Lucy—Lucy would *hate* me.’

But the thought of Lucy, instead of checking her, brought with it again a wild gust of jealousy. It was fiercer than before, the craving behind it stronger. She sat up, forcing back her tears, her whole frame tense and rigid. Whatever happened he would *never* marry Lucy! And who could wish it? Lucy was just a little, vain, selfish thing, and when she found David Grieve wouldn’t have her, she would soon forget him. The surging longing within refused, proudly refused, to curb itself—for Lucy’s sake.

Then the bell of St. Ann’s slowly began to strike ten o’clock. It brought home to her by association one of the evening hymns in the little black book she was frequently accustomed to croon to herself at night as she put away her work :

O God who canst not change nor fail,  
Guiding the hours as they roll by,  
Brightening with beams the morning pale,  
And burning in the mid-day sky!

Quench thou the fires of hate and strife,  
The wasting fever of the heart;  
From perils guard our feeble life,  
And to our souls thy peace impart.

The words flowed in upon her, but they brought no comfort, only a fresh sense of struggle and effort. Her Christian peace was gone. She felt herself wicked, faithless, miserable.

Meanwhile, in the stormy night outside, David was running and leaping through the streets, flourishing his stick from side to side in cut and thrust with an



imaginary enemy whenever the main thoroughfares were left behind, and he found himself in some dark region of warehouses, where his steps echoed, and he was king alike of roadway and of pavement.

The wind, a stormy north-easter, had risen since the afternoon. David fought with it, rejoiced in it. After the little hot sitting-room, the stinging freshness, the rough challenge of the gusts, were delicious to him. He was overflowing with spirits, with health, with exultation.

As he thought of Purell he could hardly keep himself from shouting aloud. If he could only be there to see when Purell learnt how he had been foiled! And trust Daddy to spread a story which would certainly do Purell no good! No, in that direction he felt that he was probably safe from attack for a long time to come. Success beckoned to him; his enemy was under foot; his will and his gifts had the world before them.

Father Russell indeed! Let Dora Lomax set him on. His young throat filled with contemptuous laughter. As a bookseller, *he* knew what the clergy read, what they had to say for themselves. How much longer could it go on, this solemn folly of Christian superstition? 'Just give us a good Education Bill, and we shall see!'

Then, as he fell thinking of his talk with Dora and Lomax, he wished impatiently that he had been even plainer with Daddy about Lucy Purell. With regard to her he felt himself caught in a tangled mesh of obligation. He must, somehow, return her the service she had done him. And then all the world would think he was making up to her and wanted to marry her. Meanwhile—in the midst of real gratitude, a strong desire to stand between her and her father, and much eager casting about for some means of paying

her back—his inner mind was in reality pitilessly critical towards her. Her overdone primness and neatness, her fashionable frocks, of which she was so conscious, her horror of things and people that were not ‘nice,’ her contented ignorance and silly chattering ways—all these points of manner and habit were scored against her in his memory. She had become less congenial to him rather than more since he knew her first. All the same, she was a little brick, and he would have liked one minute to kiss her for her pluck, make her some lordly present, and the next—never to see her again!

In reality his mind at this moment was filling with romantic images and ideals totally remote from anything suggested by his own everyday life. A few weeks before, old Barbier, his French master, had for the first time lent him some novels of George Sand’s. David had carried them off, had been enchanted to find that he could now read them with ease and rapidity, and had plunged straightway into the new world thus opened to him with indescribable zest and passion. His Greek had been neglected, his science laid aside. Night after night he had been living with Valentine, with Consuelo, with Caroline in ‘Le Marquis de Villemer.’ His poetical reading of the winter had prepared the way for what was practically his first introduction to the modern literature of passion. The stimulating novelty and foreignness of it was stirring all his blood. George Sand’s problems, her situations, her treatment of the great questions of sex, her social and religious enthusiasms—these things were for the moment a new gospel to this provincial self-taught lad, as they had been forty years before to the youth of 1830. Under the vitalising touch of them the man was fast developing out of the boy; the currents of the nature were setting in fresh directions.

And in such a mood, and with such preoccupations, how was one to bear patiently with foolish, friendly fingers, or with uncomfortable thoughts of your own, pointing you to *Lucy Purcell*? With the great marriage-night scene from 'Valentine' thrilling in your mind, how was it possible to think of the prim self-conceit, the pettish temper and mincing airs of that little person in Half Street without irritation?

No, no! *The unknown, the unforeseen!* The young man plunged through the rising storm, and through the sleety rain, which had begun to beat upon him, with face and eyes uplifted to the night. It was as though he searched the darkness for some form which, even as he looked, began to take vague and luminous shape there.

Next morning Daddy, in his exultation, behaved himself with some grossness towards his enemy. About eleven o'clock he became restless, and began patrolling Market Place, passing every now and then up the steps into the narrow passage of Half Street, and so round by the cathedral and home. He had no definite purpose, but 'have a squint at Tom,' under the circumstances, he must, some way or other.

And, sure enough, as he was coming back through Half Street on one of his rounds, and was within a few yards of Purcell's window, the bookseller came out with his face set in Daddy's direction. Purcell, whose countenance, so far as Daddy could see at first sight, was at its blackest and sourest, and whose eyes were on the ground, did not at once perceive his adversary, and came stem on.

The moment was irresistible. Laying his thumbs in his waistcoat pocket, and standing so as to bar his brother-in-law's path, Daddy launched a few unctuous words in his smoothest voice.

‘Tom, me boy, thou hast imagined a device which thou wast not able to perform. But the Lord, Tom, hath made thee turn thy back. And they of thy own household, Tom, have lifted up the heel against thee.’

Purcell, strong, dark-browed fellow that he was, wavered and blenched for a moment under the surprise of this audacious attack. Then with an oath he put out his hand, seized Daddy’s thin shoulder, flung him violently round, and passed him.

‘Speak to me again in the street, you scoundrel, and I’ll give you in charge!’ he threw behind him, as he strode on just in time to avoid a flight of street-arabs, who had seen the scuffle from a distance and were bearing down eagerly upon him.

Daddy went home in the highest spirits, stepping jauntily along like a man who has fulfilled a mission. But when he came to boast himself to Dora, he found to his chagrin that he had only earned a scolding. Dora flushed up, her soft eyes all aflame.

‘You’ve done nothing but mischief, father,’ said Dora, bitterly. ‘How *could* you say such things? You might have left Uncle Tom to find out for himself about Lucy. He’ll be mad enough without your stirring him up. Now he’ll forbid her to come here, or see me at all. I don’t know what ’ll become of that child; and whatever possessed you to go aggravating him worse and worse I can’t think.’

Daddy blinked under this, but soon recovered himself. No one, he vowed, could be expected to put up for ever with Purcell’s mean tricks. He had held his tongue for twenty-one years, and now he had paid back one *little* text in exchange for the hundreds where-with Purcell had been wont to break his bones for him in past days. As for Dora, she hadn’t the spirit of a fly.

‘Well, I dare say I am afraid,’ said Dora, despond-

ently. 'I saw Uncle Tom yesterday, too, and he gave me a look made me feel cold down my back. I don't like anybody to hate us like that, father. Who knows——'

A tremor ran through her. She gave her father a piteous, childish look. She had the timidity, the lack of self-confidence which seems to cling through life to those who have been at a disadvantage with the world in their childhood and youth. The anger of a man like Purcell terrified her, lay like a nightmare on a sensitive and introspective nature.

'Pish!' said Daddy, contemptuously; 'I should like to know what harm he can do us, now that I've turned so d——d respectable. Though it is a bit hard on a man to have to keep so in order to spite his brother-in-law.'

Dora laughed and sighed. She came up to her father's chair, put his hair straight, re-tied his tie, and then kissed him on the cheek.

'Father, you're not getting tired of the Parlour?' she said, unsteadily. He evaded her downward look, and tried to shake her off.

'Don't I slave for you from morning till night, you thankless chit, you? And don't you begrudge me all the little amusements which turn the tradesman into the man and sweeten the pill of bondage—eh, you poor-souled thing?'

Her eyes, however, drew his after them, whether he would or no, and they surveyed each other—he uneasily hostile; she sad. She slowly shook her head, and he perfectly understood what was in her mind, though she did not speak. He *had* been extremely slack at business lately: the month's accounts made up that morning had been unusually disappointing; and twice during the last ten days Dora had sat up till midnight to let her father in, and had tried with all the energy of

a sinking heart to persuade herself that it was accident, and that he was only excited, and not drunk.

Now, as she stood looking at him, suddenly all the horror of those long-past days came back upon her, thrown up against the peace of the last few years. She locked her hands round his neck with a vehement pathetic gesture.

‘Father, be good to me! don’t let bad people take you away from me—don’t, father—you’re all I have—all I ever shall have.’

Daddy’s green eyes wavered again uncomfortably.

‘Stuff!’ he said, irritably. ‘You’ll get a husband directly, and think no more of me than other girls do when the marrying fit takes ’em. What are you grinning at now, I should like to know?’

For she was smiling—a light tremulous smile which puzzled him.

‘At you, father. You’ll have to keep me whether you like it or no. For I’m not a marrying sort.’

She looked at him with a curious defiance, her lip twitching.

‘Oh, we know all about that!’ said Daddy, impatiently, adding in a mincing voice, “‘I will not love; if I do hang me; i’ faith I will not.” No, my pretty dear, not till the “wimpled, whining, pur-blind, wayward boy” comes this road—oh, no, not till next time! Quite so.’

She let him rail, and said nothing. She sat down to her work; he faced round upon her suddenly, and said, frowning:

‘What do you mean by it, eh? You’re as good-looking as anybody!’

‘Well, I want you to think it, father,’ she said, affectionately, raising her eyes to his. A mother must have seen the shrinking sadness beneath the smile. What Daddy saw was simply a rounded girlish face,

with soft cheeks and lips which seemed to him made for kissing; nothing to set the Thames on fire, perhaps, but why should she run herself down? It annoyed him, touched his vanity.

‘Oh, I dare say!’ he said to her, roughly, with an affected brutality. ‘But you’ll be precious disappointed if some one else doesn’t think so too. Don’t tell me!’

She bent over her frame without speaking. But her heart filled with bitterness, and a kind of revolt against her life.

Meanwhile her conscience accused her about Lucy. Lucy must have got herself into trouble at home, that she was sure of. And it was unlike her to keep it to herself—not to come and complain.

Some days—a week—passed. But Dora dared not venture herself into her uncle’s house after Daddy’s escapade, and she was, besides, much pressed with her work. A whole set of altar furniture for a new church at Blackburn had to be finished by a given day.

The affairs of the Parlour troubled her, and she got up long before it was light to keep the books in order and to plan for the day. Daddy had no head for figures, and he seemed to her to be growing careless about expenses. Her timid, over-anxious mind conjured up the vision of a slowly rising tide of debt, and it haunted her all day. When she went to her frame she was already tired out, and yet there she sat over it hour after hour.

Daddy was blind. But Sarah, the stout cook, who worshipped her, knew well enough that she was growing thin and white.

‘If yo doan’t draw in yo’ll jest do yorsel a mischief,’ she said to her, angrily. ‘Yo’re nowt but a midge onyways, and a body ’ll soon be able to see through yo.’

‘I shall be all right, Sarah,’ Dora would say.

‘Aye, we’st aw on us be aw reet in our coffins,’ returned the irate Sarah. Then, melting into affection, ‘Neaw, honey, be raysonable, an’ I’st just run round t’ corner, an’ cook you up a bit o’ meat for your supper. Yo git no strength eawt i’ them messin things yo eat. Theer’s nowt but wind in em.’

But not even the heterodox diet with which, every now and then, Dora for peace’ sake allowed herself to be fed, behind Daddy’s baek, put any colour into her cheeks. She went heavily in these days, and the singularly young and childish look which she had kept till now went into gradual eclipse.

David Grieve dropped in once or twice during the week to laugh and gossip about Purcell with Daddy. Thanks to Daddy’s tongue, the bookseller’s plot against his boy rival was already known to a large circle of persons, and was likely to cost him customers.

Whenever she heard the young full voice below or on the stairs, Dora would, as it were, draw herself together—stand on her defence. Sometimes she asked him eagerly about his sister. Had he written? No; he thought he would still wait a week or two. Ah, well, he must let her know.

And, on the whole, she was glad when he went, glad to get to bed and sleep. Being no sentimental heroine, she was prosaically thankful that she kept her sleep. Otherwise she must have fallen ill, and the accounts would have gone wrong.

At last one evening came a pencil note from Lucy, in these terms:

‘You may come and see me, father says. I’ve been ill.—LUCY.’

In a panic Dora put on her things and ran. Mary Ann, the little hunted maid, let her in, looking more



hunted and scared than usual. Miss Lucy was better, she said, but she had been 'terr'ble bad.' No, she didn't know what it was took her. They'd got a nurse for her two nights, and she, Mary Ann, had been run off her legs.

'Why didn't you send for me?' cried Dora, and hurried up to the attic. Purcell did not appear.

Lucy was waiting for her, looking out eagerly from a bank of pillows.

Dora could not restrain an exclamation which was almost a cry. She could not have believed that anyone could have changed so in ten days. Evidently the acute stage—whatever had been the illness—was past. There was already a look of convalescence in the white face, with its black-rimmed eyes and peeling lips. But the loss of flesh was extraordinary for so short a time. The small face was so thinned and blanched that the tangled masses of golden-brown hair in which it was framed seemed ridiculously out of proportion to it; the hand playing with some grapes on the counterpane was of a ghostly lightness.

Dora was shocked almost beyond speaking. She stood holding Lucy's hand, and Lucy looked up at her, evidently enjoying her consternation, for a smile danced in her hollow eyes.

'Lucy, *why* didn't you send for me?'

'Because I was so feverish at first. I was all light-headed, and didn't know where I was; and then I was so weak I didn't care about anything,' said Lucy, in a small thread of a voice.

'What was it?'

'Congestion of the lungs,' said the girl, with pride. 'They just stopped it, or you'd be laying me out now, Dora. Dr. Alford told father I was dreadful run-down or I'd never have taken it. I'm to go to Hastings. Father's got a cousin there that lets lodgings.'

‘But how did you get so ill, Lucy?’

Lucy was silent a bit. Then she said:

‘Sit down close here. My voice is so bad still.’

Dora sat close to her pillow, and bent over, stroking her hands with emotion. The fright of her entrance was still upon her.

‘Well, you know,’ she said in a hoarse whisper, ‘father found out about me and Mr. Grieve—I don’t know how, but it was one morning. I was sitting in here, and he came in all white, with his eyes glaring. I thought he was going to kill me, and I was that frightened, I watched my chance, and ran out of the door and along into Mill Gate as fast as I could to get away from him; and then I thought I saw him coming after me, and I ran on across the bridge and up Chapel Street a long, long way. I was in a terrible fright, and mad with him besides. I declared to myself I’d never come back here. Well, it was pouring with rain, and I got wet through. Then I didn’t know where to go, and what do you think I did? I just got into the Broughton tram, and rode up and down all day! I had a shilling or two in my pocket, and I waited and dodged a bit at either end, so the conductor shouldn’t find out. And that was what did it—sitting in my wet things all day. I didn’t think anything about dinner, I was that mad. But when it got dark, I thought of that girl—you know her, too—Minnie Park, that lives with her brother and sells fents. up Cannon Gate. And somehow I dragged up there—I thought I’d ask her to take me in. And what happened I don’t rightly know. I suppose I was took with a faint before I could explain anything, for I was shivering and pretty bad when I got there. Anyway, she put me in a cab and brought me home; and I don’t remember anything about it, for I was queer in the head very soon after they got me to

bed. Oh, I *was* bad! It was just a squeak,'—said Lucy, her voice dropping from exhaustion; but her eyes glittered in her pinched face with a curious triumph, difficult to decipher.

Dora kissed her tenderly, and entreated her not to talk; she was sure it was bad for her. But Lucy, as usual, would not be managed. She held herself quite still, gathering breath and strength; then she began again:

'If I'd died, perhaps *he'd* have been sorry. You know who I mean. It was all along of him. And father 'll never forgive me—never. He looks quite different altogether somehow. Dora! you're not to tell him anything till I've got right away. I think—I think—I *hate* him!'

And suddenly her beautiful brown eyes opened wide and fierce.

Dora hung over her, a strange, mingled passion in her look. 'You poor little thing!' she said slowly, with a deep emphasis, answering not the unreal Lucy of those last words, but the real one, so pitifully evident beneath.

'But look here, Dora; when I'm gone away, you *may* tell him—you *must* tell him, Dora,' said the child, imperiously. 'I'd not have him see me now for anything. I made Mary Ann put all the glasses away. I don't want to remember what a fright I am. But at Hastings I'll soon get well; and—and remember, Dora, you *are* to tell him. I'd like him to know I nearly caught my death that day, and that it was all along of him!'

She laid her hands across each other on the sheet with a curious sigh of satisfaction, and was quiet for a little, while Dora held her hand. But it was not long before the stillness broke up in sudden agitation. A tremor ran through her, and she caught Dora's fin-

gers. In her weakness she could not control herself, and her inmost trouble escaped her.

‘Oh, Dora, he wasn’t kind to me, not a bit—when I went to tell him that night. Oh! I cried when I came home. I *did* think he’d have taken it different.’

‘What did he say?’ asked Dora, quietly. Her face was turned away from Lucy, but she still held her hand.

‘Oh, I don’t know!’ said Lucy, moving her head restlessly from side to side and gulping down a sob. ‘I believe he was just sorry it was *me* he’d got to thank. Oh, I don’t know!—I don’t know!—very likely he didn’t mean it.’

She waited a minute, then she began again:

‘Oh of course you think I’m silly; and that I’d have much more chance if I turned proud, and pretended I didn’t care. I know some girls *say* they’d never let a man know they cared for him first. I don’t believe in ’em! But I don’t care. I can’t help it. It’s my way. But, Dora, look here!’

The tears gathered thick in her eyes. Dora, bending anxiously over her, was startled by the change of expression in her. From what depths of new emotion had the silly Lucy caught the sweetness which trembled for a moment through every line of her little trivial face?

‘You know, Dora, it was all nonsense at the beginning. I just wanted some one to amuse myself with and pay me attentions. But it isn’t nonsense now. And I don’t want him all for myself. Friday night I thought I was going to die. I don’t care whether the doctor did or not; *I* did. And I prayed a good deal. It was queer praying, I dare say. I was very light-headed, but I thanked God I loved him, though—though—he didn’t care about me; and I thought if I did get well, and he were to take a fancy to me, I’d

show him I could be as nice as other girls. I wouldn't want everything for myself, or spend a lot of money on dress.'

She broke off for want of breath. This moral experience of hers was so new and strange to her that she could hardly find words in which to clothe it.

Dora had slipped down beside her and buried her face in the bed. When Lucy stopped, she still knelt there in a quivering silence. But Lucy could not bear her to be silent—she must have sympathy.

'Aren't you glad, Dora?' she said presently, when she had gathered strength again. 'I thought you'd be glad. You've always wanted me to turn religious. And—and—perhaps, when I get well and come back, I'll go with you to St. Damian's, Dora. I don't know what it is. I suppose it's caring about somebody—and being ill—makes one feel like this.'

And, drawing herself from Dora's hold, she turned on her side, put both her thin hands under her cheek, and lay staring at the window with a look which had a certain dreariness in it.

Dora at last raised herself. Lucy could not see her face. There was in it a sweet and solemn resolution—a new light and calm.

'Dear Lucy,' she said, tremulously, laying her cheek against her cousin's shoulder, 'God speaks to us when we are unhappy—that was what you felt. He makes everything a voice to call unto Himself.'

Lucy did not answer at once. Then suddenly she turned, and said eagerly:

'Dora, did you ever ask him—did you ever find out—whether he was thinking about getting married? You said you would.'

'He isn't, Lucy. He was vexed with father for speaking about it. I think he feels he must make his way first. His business takes him up altogether.'

Lucy gave an irritable sigh, closed her eyes, and would talk no more. Dora stayed with her, and nursed her through the evening. When at last the nurse arrived who was to take charge of her through the night, Lucy pulled Dora down to her and said, in a hoarse, excitable whisper :

‘*Mind* you tell him—that I nearly died—that father ’ll never be the same to me again—and it was all for him! You needn’t say *I* said so.’

Late that night Dora stood long at her attic-window in the roof looking out at the April night. From a great bank of clouds to the east the moon was just appearing, sending her light along the windy streamers which, issuing from the main mass, spread like wide open fingers across the inner heaven. Opposite there was an old timbered house, one of the few relics of an earlier Manchester, which still, in the very centre of the modern city, thrusts out its broad eaves and overhanging stories beyond the line of the street. Above and behind it, roof beyond roof, to the western limit of sight, rose block after block of warehouses, vast black masses, symbols of the great town, its labours and its wealth; far to the right, closing the street, the cathedral cut the moonlit sky; and close at hand was an old inn, with a wide archway, under which a huge dog lay sleeping.

Town and sky, the upper clouds and stars, the familiar streets and buildings below—to-night they were all changed for Dora, and it was another being that looked at them. In all intense cases of religious experience the soul lies open to ‘voices’—to impressions which have for it the most vivid and, so to speak, physical reality. Jeanne d’Arc’s visions were but an extreme instance of what humbler souls have known in their degree in all ages. The heavenly voices speak,

and the ear actually hears. So it was with Dora. It seemed to her that she had been walking in a feverish loneliness through the valley of the shadow of death; that one like unto the Son of Man had drawn her thence with warning and rebuke, and she was now at His feet, clothed and in her right mind. Words were in her ear, repeated again and again—peremptory words which stabbed and healed at once: *‘Daughter, thou shalt not covet. I have refused thee this gift. If it be My will to give it to another, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.’*

As she sank upon her knees, she thought of the confession she would make on Sunday—of the mysterious sanctity and sweetness of the single life—of the vocation of sacrifice laid upon her. There rose in her a kind of ecstasy of renunciation. Her love—already so hopeless, so starved!—was there simply that she might offer it up—burn it through and through with the fires of the spirit.

Lucy should never know, and David should never know. Unconsciously, sweet soul, there was a curious element of spiritual arrogance mingled with this absolute surrender of the one passionate human desire her life was ever to wrestle with. The baptized member of Christ’s body could not pursue the love of David Grieve, could not marry him as he was now, without risk and sin. But Lucy—the child of schism, to whom the mysteries of Church fellowship and sacramental grace were unknown—for her, in her present exaltation, Dora felt no further scruples. Lucy’s love was clearly ‘sent’ to her; it was right, whether it were ultimately happy or no, because of the religious effect it had already had upon her.

The human happiness Dora dared no longer grasp at for herself she yearned now to pour lavishly, quickly, into Lucy’s hands. Only so—such is our mingled life!

—could she altogether still, violently and by force, a sort of upward surge of the soul which terrified her now and then. A mystical casuistry, bred in her naturally simple nature by the subtle influences of a long-descended Christianity, combined in her with a piteous human instinct. When she rose from her knees she was certain that she would never win and marry David Grieve; she was equally certain that she would do all in her power to help little Lucy to win and marry him.

So, like them of old, she pressed the spikes into her flesh, and found a numbing consolation in the pain.

## CHAPTER VIII

SOME ten days more elapsed before Lucy was pronounced fit to travel south. During this time Dora saw her frequently, and the bond between the two girls grew much closer than before. On the one hand, Lucy yielded herself more than she had ever done yet to Dora's example and persuasion, promised to go to church and see at least what it was like when she got to Hastings, and let Dora provide her with some of her favourite High Church devotional books. On the other, it was understood between them that Dora would look after Lucy's interests, and keep her informed how the land lay while she was in the south, and Lucy, with the blindness of self-love, trusted herself to her cousin without a suspicion or a qualm.

While she was tending Lucy, Dora never saw Purcell but twice, when she passed him in the little dark entry leading to the private part of the house, and on those occasions he did not, so far as she could perceive, make any answer whatever to her salutation.



He was changed, she thought. He had always been a morose-looking man, with an iron jaw; but now there was a fixed venom and disquiet, as well as a new look of age, in the sallow face, which made it doubly unpleasing. She would have been sorry for his loneliness and his disappointment in Luey but for the remembrance of his mean plot against David Grieve, and for a certain other little fact. A middle-aged woman, in a dowdy brown-stuff dress and black mantle, had begun to haunt the house. She sat with Purcell sometimes in the parlour downstairs, and sometimes he accompanied her out of doors. Mary Ann reported that she was a widow, a Mrs. Whympier, who belonged to the same chapel that Purcell did, and who was supposed by those who knew to have been making up to him for some time.

‘And perhaps she’ll get him after all,’ said the little ugly maid, with a grin. ‘Catch me staying then, Miss Dora! It’s bad enough as it is.’

On one occasion Dora came across the widow, waiting in the little sitting-room. She was an angular person, with a greyish-brown complexion, a prominent mouth and teeth, and a generally snappish, alert look. After a few commonplaces, in which Mrs. Whympier was clearly condescending, she launched into a denunciation of Luey’s ill behaviour to her father, which at last roused Dora to defence. She waxed bold, and pointed out that Luey might have been managed if her father had been a little more patient with her, had allowed her a few ordinary amusements, and had not insisted in forcing her at once, fresh from school, into ways and practices she did not naturally like, while she had never been trained to them by force of habit.

‘Hoity toity, Miss!’ said the widow, bridling, ‘young people are very uppish nowadays. They never

seem to remember there is such a thing as the fifth commandment. In *my* young days what a father said was law, and no questions asked; and I've seen many a Lancashire man take a stick to his gell for less provocation than this gell's given her feyther! I wonder at you, Miss Lomax, that I do, for backing her up. But I'm afraid from what I hear you've been taking up with a lot of Popish ways.'

And the woman looked her up and down with an air which plainly said that she was on her own ground in that parlour, and might say exactly what she pleased there.

'If I have, I don't see that it matters to you,' said Dora quietly, and retreated.

Yes, certainly, a stepmother looked likely! Lucy in her bedroom upstairs knew nothing, and Dora decided to tell her nothing till she was stronger. But this new development made the child's future more uncertain than ever.

On the day before her departure for Hastings, Lucy came out for a short walk, by way of hardening herself for the journey. She walked round the cathedral and up Victoria Street, and then, tired out with the exertion, she made her way in to Dora, to rest. Her face was closely hidden by a thick Shetland veil, for, in addition to her general pallor and emaciation, her usually clear and brilliant skin was roughened and blotched here and there by some effect of her illness; she could not bear to look at herself in the glass, and shrank from meeting any of her old acquaintances. It was, indeed, curious to watch the effect of the temporary loss of beauty upon her; her morbid impatience under it showed at every turn. But for it, Dora was convinced that she must and would have put herself in David Grieve's way again before leaving Manchester. As it was, she was still determined not to let him see her.

She came in, much exhausted, and threw herself into Daddy's arm-chair with groans of self-pity. Did Dora think she would ever be strong again—ever be anything but an ugly fright? It was hard to have all this come upon you, just through doing a service to some one who didn't care.

'Hasn't he heard yet that I've been ill?' she inquired petulantly.

No; Dora did not think he had. Neither she nor Daddy had seen him. He must have been extra busy. But she would get Daddy to ask him up to supper directly, and tell him all about it.

'And then, perhaps,' she said, looking up with a sweet, intense look—how little Lucy was able to decipher it!—'perhaps he may write a letter.'

Lucy was cheered by this suggestion, and sat looking out of window for a while, idly watching the passers-by. But she could not let the one topic that absorbed her mind alone for long, and soon she was once more questioning Dora in close detail about David Grieve's sister and all that he had said about her. For, by way of obliging the child to realise some of the inconvenient burdens and obligations which were at that moment hanging round the young bookseller's neck, and making the very idea of matrimony ridiculous to him, Dora had repeated to her some of his confidences about himself and Louie. Lucy had not taken them very happily. Everything that turned up now seemed only to push her further out of sight and make her more insignificant. She was thirsting, with a woman's nascent passion and a schoolgirl's vanity, to be the centre and heroine of the play; and here she was reduced to the smallest and meanest of parts—a part that caught nobody's eye, do what she would.

Suddenly she broke off what she was saying, and called to Dora:

‘Do you see that pair of people, Dora? Come—come at once! What an extraordinary-looking girl!’

Dora turned unwillingly, being absorbed in a golden halo which she had set herself to finish that day; then she dropped her needle, and pushed her stool back that she might see better. From the cathedral end of Market Place an elderly grey-haired man and a young girl were advancing along the pavement towards the Parlour. As they passed, the flower-sellers at the booths were turning to look at them, some persons in front of them were turning back, and a certain number of errand-boys and other loungers were keeping pace with them, observing them. The man leant every now and then on a thick stick he carried, and looked uncertainly from house to house. He had a worn, anxious expression, and the helpless movements of short sight. Whenever he stopped the girl moved on alone, and he had to hurry after her again to catch her up. She, meanwhile, was perfectly conscious that she was being stared at, and stared in return with a haughty composure which seemed to draw the eyes of the passers-by after it like a magnet. She was very tall and slender, and her unusual height made her garish dress the more conspicuous. The small hat perched on her black hair was all bright scarlet, both the felt and the trimming; under her jacket, which was purposely thrown back, there was a scarlet bodice, and there was a broad band of scarlet round the edge of her black dress.

Lucy could not take her eyes off her.

‘Did you *ever* see anybody so handsome, Dora? But what a fast, horrid creature to dress like that! And just look at her; she won’t wait for the old man, though he’s calling to her—she goes on staring at everybody. They’ll have a crowd, presently! Why, they’re coming *here!*’

For suddenly the girl stopped outside the doorway below, and beckoned imperiously to her companion. She said a few sharp words to him, and the pair upstairs felt the swing-door of the restaurant open and shut.

Luey, forgetting her weakness, ran eagerly to the sitting-room door and listened.

There was a sound of raised voices below, and then the door at the foot of the stairs opened, and Daddy was heard shouting.

'There—go along upstairs. My daughter, she'll speak to you. And don't you come back this way—a man can't be feeding Manchester and taking strangers about, all in the same twinkling of an eye, you know, not unless he happens to have a few spare bodies handy, which ain't precisely my case. My daughter 'll tell you what you want to know, and show you out by the private door. Dora!'

Dora stood waiting rather nervously at the sitting-room door. The girl came up first, the old man behind her, bewildered and groping his way.

'We're strangers here—we want somebody to show us the way. We've been to the book-shop in Half Street, and they sent us on here. They were just brutes to us at that book-shop,' said the girl, with a vindictive emphasis and an imperious self-possession which fairly paralysed Luey and Dora. Luey's eyes, moreover, were riveted on her face, on its colour, its fineness of feature, its brilliance and piercingness of expression. And what was the extraordinary likeness in it to something familiar?

'Why!' said Dora, in a little cry, 'aren't you Mr. David Grieve's sister?'

For she had traced the likeness before Luey. 'Oh, it must be!'

'Well, I am his sister, if you want to know,' said the stranger, looking astonished in her turn. 'He

wrote to me to come up. And I lent the letter to uncle to read—that's his uncle—and he went and lost it somehow, fiddling about the fields while I was putting my things together. And then we couldn't think of the proper address there was in it—only the name of a man Purell, in Half Street, that David said he'd been with for two years. So we went there to ask; and, *my!*—weren't they rude to us! There was an ugly black man there chivied us out in no time—wouldn't tell us anything. But as I was shutting the door the shopman whispered to me, "Try the Parlour—Market Place." So we came on here, you see.'

And she stared about her, at the room, and at the girls, taking in everything with lightning rapidity—the embroidery frame, Lucy's veil and fashionably cut jacket, the shabby furniture, the queer old pictures.

'Please come in,' said Dora civilly, 'and sit down. If you're strangers here, I'll just put on my hat and take you round. Mr. Grieve's a friend of ours. He's in Potter Street. You'll find him nicely settled by now. This is my cousin, Mr. Purcell's daughter.'

And she ran upstairs, leaving Lucy to grapple with the new-comers.

The two girls sat down, and eyed each other. Reuben stood patiently waiting.

'Is the man at Half Street your father?' asked the new-comer, abruptly.

'Yes,' said Lucy, conscious of the strangest mingling of admiration and dislike, as she met the girl's wonderful eyes.

'Did he and Davy fall out?'

'They didn't get on about Sundays,' said Lucy, unwillingly, glad of the sheltering veil which enabled her to hold her own against this masterful creature.

'Is your father strict about chapel and that sort of thing?'

Lucy nodded. She felt an ungracious wish to say as little as possible.

David's sister laughed.

'Davy was that way once—just for a bit—afore he ran away. I knew he wouldn't keep it on.'

Then, with a queer look over her shoulder at her uncle, she relapsed into silence. Her attention was drawn to Dora's frame, and she moved up to it, bending over it and lifting the handkerchief that Dora had thrown across it.

'You mustn't touch it!' said Lucy, hastily, provoked, she knew not why, by every movement the girl made. 'It's very particular work.'

'I'm used to fine things,' said the other, scornfully. 'I'm a silk-weaver—that's my trade—all the best broads, drawing-room trains, that style of thing. If you didn't handle *them* carefully, you'd know it. Yes, she's doing it well,' and the speaker put her head down and examined the work critically. 'But it must go fearful slow, compared to a loom.'

'She does it splendidly,' said Lucy, annoyed; 'she's getting quite famous for it. That's going to a great church up in London, and she's got more orders than she can take.'

'Does she get good pay?' asked the girl eagerly.

'I don't know,' replied Lucy shortly.

'Because, if there's good pay,' said the other, examining the work again closely, 'I'd soon learn it—why I'd learn it in a week, you see! If I stay here I shan't get no more silk-weaving. And of course I'll stay. I'm just sick of the country. I'd have come up long ago if I'd known where to find Davy.'

'I'm ready,' said Dora in a constrained voice beside her.

Louie Grieve looked up at her.

'Oh, you needn't look so glum!—I haven't hurt it.'

I'm used to good things, stuffs at two guineas a yard, and the like of that. What money do you take a week?' and she pointed to the frame.

Something in the tone and manner made the question specially offensive. Dora pretended not to hear it.

'Shall we go now?' she said, hurriedly covering her precious work up from those sacrilegious fingers and putting it away. 'Lucy, you ought to be going home.'

'Well, I will directly,' said Lucy. 'Don't you bother about me.'

They all went downstairs. Lucy put up her veil, and pressed her face against the window, watching for them. As she saw them cross Market Street, she was seized with hungry longing. She wanted to be going with them, to talk to him herself—to let him see what she had gone through for him. It would be months and months, perhaps, before they met again. And Dora would see him—his horrid sister—everyone but she. He would forget all about her, and she would be dull and wretched at Hastings.

But as she turned away in her restless pain, she caught sight of her changed face in the cracked looking-glass over the mantelpiece. Her white lips tightened. She drew down her veil, and went home.

Meanwhile Dora led the way to Potter Street. Louie took little notice of any attempts to talk to her. She was wholly engaged in looking about her and at the shops. Especially was she attracted by the drapers' windows in St. Ann's Square, pronouncing her opinion loudly and freely as to their contents.

Dora fell meditating. Young Grieve would have his work cut out for him, she thought, if this extraordinary sister were really going to settle with him. She was very like him—strangely like him. And yet in the one face there was a quality which was com-



pletely lacking in the other, and which seemed to make all the difference. Dora tried to explain what she meant to herself, and failed.

‘Here’s Potter Street,’ she said, as they turned into it. ‘And that’s his shop—that one with the stall outside. Oh, there he is!’

David was in fact standing on his step talking to a customer who was turning over the books outside.

Louie looked at him. Then she began to run. Old Grieve too, crimson all over, and evidently much excited, hurried on. Dora fell behind, her quick sympathies rising.

‘They won’t want me interfering,’ she said, turning round. ‘I’ll just go back to my work.’

Meanwhile, in David’s little back room, which he had already swept and garnished—for after his letter of the night before, he had somehow expected Louie to rush upon him by the earliest possible train—the meeting of these long-sundered persons took place.

David saw Reuben come in with amazement.

‘Why, Uncle Reuben! Well, I’m real glad to see you. I didn’t think you’d have been able to leave the farm. Well, this is my bit of a place, you see. What do you think of it?’

And, holding his sister by the hand, the young fellow looked joyously at his uncle, pride in his new possessions and the recollection of his destitute childhood rushing upon him together as he spoke.

‘Aye, it’s a fine beginning yo’ve made. Davy,’ said the old man, cautiously looking round, first at the little room, with its neat bits of new furniture in Louie’s honour, and then through the glass door at the shop, which was now heavily lined with books. ‘Yo wor allus a eliver lad, Davy. A’ think a’ll sit down.’

And Reuben, subsiding into a chair, fell forthwith

into an abstraction, his old knotted hands trembling a little on his knees.

Meanwhile David was holding Louie at arm's-length to look at her. He had kissed her heartily when she came in first, and now he was all pleasure and excitement.

'Pon my word, Louie, you've grown as high as the roof! I say, Louie, what's become of that smart pink dress you wore at last "wake," and of that overlooker, with the moustaches, from New Mills, you walked about with all day?'

She stared at him open-mouthed.

'What do you mean by that?' she said, quickly.

David laughed out.

'And who was it gave Jim Wigson a box on the ears last fifth of November, in the lane just by the Dye-works, eh, Miss Louie?—and danced with young Redway at the Upper Mill dance, New Year's Day?—and had words with Mr. James at the office about her last "cut," a fortnight ago—eh, Louie?'

'What *ever* do you mean?' she said, half crossly, her colour rising. 'You've been spying on me.'

She hated to be mystified. It made her feel herself in some one else's power; and the wild creature in her blood grew restive.

'Why, I've known all about you these four years!' the lad began, with daneing eyes. Then suddenly his voice echanged, and dropped: 'I say, look at Uncle Reuben!'

For Reuben sat bent forward, his light blurred eyes looking out straight before him, with a singular yet blind intentness, as though, while seeing nothing round about him, they passed beyond the walls of the little room to some vision of their own.

'I don't know whatever he came for,' began Louie, as they both examined him.

‘Uncle Reuben,’ said David, going up to him and touching him on the shoulder, ‘you look tired. You’ll be wanting some dinner. I’ll just send my man, John Dalby, round the corner for something.’

And he made a step towards the door, but Reuben raised his hand.

‘Noa, noa, Davy! Shut that door, wiltha?’

David wondered, and shut it.

Then Reuben gave a long sigh, and put his hand deep into his coat pocket, with the quavering, uncertain movement characteristic of him.

‘Davy, my lad, a’ve got summat to say to tha.’

And with many hitches, while the others watched him in astonishment, he pulled out of his pocket a canvas bag and put it down on an oak stool in front of him. Then he undid the string of it with his large awkward fingers, and pushed the stool across to David.

‘Theer’s sixty pund theer, Davy—sixty pund! Yo can keawnt it—it’s aw reet. A’ve saved it for yo, this four year—four year coom lasst Michaelmas Day. Hannah nor nobory knew owt abeawt it. But it’s yourn—it’s yor share, being t’ half o’ Mr. Gurney’s money. Louie’s share—that wor different; we had a reet to that. she bein a growin girl, and doin nowt mich for her vittles. Fro the time when yo should ha had it—whether for wages or for ’prenticin—an yo *couldna* ha it, because Hannah had set hersen agen it, —a saved it for tha, owt o’ t’ summer cattle moastly, without tellin nobory, so as not to mak words.’

David, bewildered, had taken the bag into his hand. Louie’s eyes were almost out of her head with curiosity and amazement. ‘*Mr. Gurney’s money!*’ What did he mean? It was all double-Dutch to them.

David, with an effort, contrölld himself, being now a man and a householder. He stood with his back against the shop door, his gaze fixed on Reuben.

‘Now, Uncle Reuben, I don’t understand a bit of what you’ve been saying, and Louie don’t either. Who’s Mr. Gurney? and what’s his money?’

Unconsciously the young man’s voice took a sharp, magisterial note. Reuben gave another long sigh. He was now leaning on his stick, staring at the floor.

‘Noa,—a’ know yo doan’t understan; a’ve got to tell tha—at’s t’ worst part on ’t. An I’m soa bad at tellin. Do yo mind when yor feyther deed, Davy?’ he said suddenly, looking up.

David nodded,—a red flush of presentiment spread itself over his face—his whole being hung on Reuben’s words.

‘He sent for me afore he deed,’ continued Reuben, slowly; ‘an he towd me aw about his affairs. Six hunderd pund he’d got saved—*six-hunderd-pund!* Aye, it wor a lot for a yoong mon like him, and after sich a peck o’ troobles! An he towd me Mr. Gurney ud pay us th’ interest for yor bringin-up—th’ two on yo; an whan yo got big, Davy, I wor to tak keawnsel wi Mr. Gurney, an, if yo chose for t’ land, yo were to ha yor money for a farm, when yo wor big eneuf, an if yo turned agen th’ land, yo wor to be ’prenticed to soom trade, an ha yor money when yo wanted it,—Mr. Gurney bein willin. An I promised him I’d deal honest wi his childer, an—’

Reuben paused painfully. He was wrestling with his conscience, and groping for words about his wife. The brother and sister sat open-mouthed, pale with excitement, afraid of losing a single syllable.

‘An takkin it awthegither,’ he said, bringing each word out with an effort, ‘I doan’t think, by t’ Lord’s mercy, as I’ve gone soa mich astray, though I ha been mich troobled this four year wi thowts o’ Sandy—my brither Sandy—an wi not knowin wheer yo wor gone, Davy. Bit yo seem coom to an honest trade—an

Louie theer ha larnt a trade too,—an addle't a bit money,—an she's a fine-grown lass——'

He turned a slow, searching look upon her, as though he were pleading a cause before some unseen judge.

'An theer's yor money, Davy. It's aw th' same. a'm thinkin, whether yo get it fro me or fro Mr. Gurney. An here——'

He rose, and unbuttoning his inner coat, fumbled in the pocket of it till he found a letter.

'An here is a letter for Mr. Gurney. If yo gie me a pen, Davy, I'll write in to 't yor reet address, an put it in t' post as I goo to t' station. I took noatice of a box as I coom along. An then——'

He stood still a moment pondering, one outspread hand on the letter.

'An then theer's nowt moor as a can remember,—an your aunt ull be wearyin; an it's but reet she should know now, at wonst, abeawt t' money a've saved this four year, an t' letter to Mr. Gurney. Yo understan—when yor letter came this mornin'—t' mon browt it up to Louie abeawt eight o'clock—she towd me fust out i' th' yard—an I said to her. "Doan't you tell yor aunt nowt abeawt it, an we'st meet at t' station." An I made soom excuse to Hannah abeawt goin ower t' Scout after soom beëasts—an—an—Louie an me coom thegither.'

He passed his other hand painfully across his brow. The travail of expression, the moral struggle of the last twenty-four hours, seemed to have aged him before them.

David sat looking at him in a stupefied silence. A light was breaking in upon him, transfiguring, combining, interpreting a hundred scattered remembrances of his boyhood. But Louie, the instant her uncle stopped, broke into a string of questions, shrill and

breathless, her face quite white, her eyes glittering. Reuben seemed hardly to hear her, and in the middle of them David said sharply,

‘Stop that, Louie, and let me talk to Uncle Reuben!’

He drew the letter from under Reuben’s fingers, and went on, steadily looking up into his uncle’s face :

‘You’ll let me read it, uncle, and I’ll get you a pen directly to put in the address. But first will you tell us about father? You never did—you nor Aunt Hannah. And about mother, too?’

He said the last words with difficulty, having all his life been pricked by a certain instinct about his mother, which had, however, almost nothing definite to work upon. Reuben thought a minute, then sat down again patiently.

‘Aye, a’ll tell tha. Theer’s nobody else can. An tha ought to know, though it’ll mebbe be a shock to tha.’

And, with his head resting against his stick, he began to tell the story of his brother and his brother’s marriage as he remembered it.

First came the account of Sandy’s early struggles, as Sandy himself had described them on that visit which he had paid to the farm in the first days of his prosperity; then a picture of his ultimate success in business, as it had appeared to the dull elder brother dazzled by the younger’s ‘cliverness.’

‘Aye, he might ha been a great mon; he might ha coom to varra high things, might Sandy,’ said Reuben solemnly, his voice suddenly rising, ‘bit for th’ hizzy that ruined him!’

Both his hearers made an involuntary movement. But Reuben had now lost all count of them. He was intent on one thing, and capable only of one thing. They had asked him for his story, and he was telling

it, with an immense effort of mind, recovering the past as best he could, and feeling some of it over again intensely.

So when he came to the marriage, he told the story like one thinking it out to himself, with an appalling plainness of phrase. It was, of course, impossible for him to *explain* Sandy's aberration—there were no resources in him equal to the task. Louise Suveret became in his account what she had always remained in his imagination since Sandy's employers told him what was known of her story—a mere witch and devil, sent for his brother's perdition. All his resentment against his brother's fate had passed into his hatred of this creature whom he never seen. Nay, he even held up the picture of her hideous death before her children with a kind of sinister triumph. So let the ungodly and the harlot perish!

David stood opposite to the speaker all the while, motionless, save for an uneasy movement here and there when Reuben's words grew more scripturally frank than usual. Louie's face was much more positive than David's in what it said. Reuben and Reuben's vehemence annoyed and angered her. She frowned at him from under her black brows. It was evident that he, rather than his story, excited her.

'An we buried him aw reet an proper,' said Reuben at last, wiping his brow, damp with this unwonted labour of brain and tongue. 'Mr. Gurney he would ha it aw done handsome; and we put him in a corner o' Kensal Green, just as close as might be to whar they'd put her after th' crowner had sat on her. Yor feyther had left word, an Mr. Gurney would ha nowt different. But it went agen me—aye, it *did*—to leave him wi *her* after aw!'

And falling suddenly silent, Reuben sat wrapped in a sombre mist of memory.

Then Louie broke out, rolling and unrolling the ribbons of her hat in hot fingers.

‘I don’t believe half on’t—I don’t see how you could know—nor Mr. Gurney either.’

Reuben looked round bewildered. Louie got up noisily, went to the window and threw it open, as though oppressed by the narrowness of the room.

‘No, I don’t,’ she repeated, defiantly—‘I don’t believe the half on’t. But I’ll find out some day.’

She leaned her elbows on the sill, and, looking out into the squalid bit of yard, threw a bit of grit that lay on the window at a cat that sat sleepily blinking on the flags outside.

Reuben rose heavily.

‘Gie me pen and ink, Davy, an let me go.’

The young man brought it him without a word. Reuben put in the address.

‘Ha yo read it, Davy?’

David started. In his absorption he had forgotten to read it.

‘I wor forced to write it i’ the top sheepfold,’ Reuben began to explain apologetically, then stopped suddenly. Several times he had been on the point of bringing Hannah into the conversation, and had always refrained. He refrained now. David read it. It was written in Reuben’s most laborious business style, and merely requested that Mr. Gurney would now communicate with Sandy’s son direct on the subject of his father’s money. He had left Needham Farm, and was old enough to take counsel himself with Mr. Gurney in future as to what should be done with it.

Reuben looked over David’s shoulder as he read.

‘An Louie?’ he said uncertainly, at the end, jerking his thumb towards her.

‘I’m stayin here,’ said Louie peremptorily, still looking out of window.



Renben said nothing. Perhaps a shade of relief lightened his old face.

When the letter was handed back to him, he sealed it and put it into his pocket, buttoning up his coat for departure.

‘Yo wor talkin abeawt dinner, Davy—or summat,’ said the old man, courteously. ‘Thankee kindly. I want for nowt. I mun get home—I mun get home.’

Louie, standing absorbed in her own excited thoughts, could hardly be disturbed to say good-bye to him. David, still in a dream, led him through the shop, where Renben peered about him with a certain momentary curiosity.

But at the door he said good-bye in a great hurry and ran down the steps, evidently impatient to be rid of his nephew.

David turned and came slowly back through the little piled-up shop, where John, all eyes and ears, sat on a high stool in the corner, into the living room.

As he entered it Louie sprang upon him, and seizing him with both hands, danced him madly round the little space of vacant boards, till she tripped her foot over the oak stool, and sank down on a chair, laughing wildly.

‘How much of that money am I going to have?’ she demanded suddenly, her arms crossed over her breast, her eyes brilliant, her whole aspect radiant and exulting.

David was standing over the fire, looking down into it, and made no answer. He had disengaged himself from her as soon as he could.

Louie waited a while; then, with a contemptuous lip and a shrug of the shoulders, she got up.

‘What’s the good of worriting about things, I’d like to know? You won’t do ‘em no good. Why don’t you think about the money? My word, won’t Aunt

Hannah be mad! How am I to get my parcels from the station, and where am I to sleep?’

‘You can go and see the house,’ said David, shortly. ‘The lodgers upstairs are out, and there’s the key of the attic.’

He threw it to her, and she ran off. He had meant to take her in triumphal progress through the little house, and show her all the changes he had been making for her benefit and his own. But a gulf had yawned between them. He was relieved to see her go, and when he was left alone he laid his arms on the low mantelpiece and hid his face upon them. His mother’s story, his father’s fate, seemed to be burning into his heart.

Reuben hurried home through the bleak March evening. In the train he could not keep himself still, fidgeting so much that his neighbours eyed him with suspicion, and gave him a wide berth. As he started to walk up to Kinder a thin, raw sleet came on. It drove in his face, chilling him through and through, as he climbed the lonely road, where the black moorland forms lay all about him, seen dimly through the white and drifting veil of the storm. But he was conscious of nothing external. His mind was absorbed by the thought of his meeting with Hannah, and by the excited feeling that one of the crises of his timid and patient life was approaching. During the last four years they had been very poor, in spite of Mr. Gurney’s half-yearly cheque, partly because of the determination with which he had stuck to his secret saving. Hannah would think they were going now to be poorer still, but he meant to prove to her that what with Louie’s departure and the restoration of their whole income to its natural channels, there would not be so much difference. He coned his fig-

ures eagerly, rehearsing what he would say. For the rest he walked lightly and briskly. The burden of his brother's children had dropped away from him, and in those strange inner colloquies of his he could look Sandy in the face again.

Had Hannah discovered his flight, he wondered? Some one, he was afraid, might have seen him and Louie at the station and told tales. He was not sure that one of the Wigsons had not been hanging about the station yard. And that letter of David's to Louie, which in his clumsy blundering way he had dropped somewhere about the farm buildings or the house, and had not been able to find again! It gave him a cold sweat to think that in his absence Hannah might have come upon it and drawn her own conclusions. As he followed out this possibility in his mind, his step quickened till it became almost a run.

Aye, and Hannah had been ailing of late—there had been often 'summat wrang wi her.' Well, they were both getting into years. Perhaps now that Louie with her sharp tongue and aggravating ways was gone, now that there was only him to do for, Hannah would take things easier.

He opened the gate into the farmyard and walked up to the house door with a beating heart. It struck him as strange that the front blinds were not drawn, for it was nearly dark and the storm beat against the windows. There was a glimmer of fire in the room, but he could see nothing clearly. He turned the handle and went into the passage, making a clatter on purpose. But nothing stirred in the house, and he pushed open the kitchen door, which stood ajar, filled with a vague alarm.

Hannah was sitting in the rocking-chair, by the fire. Beside her was the table partly spread with tea, which, however, had been untouched. At Reuben's

entrance she turned her head and looked at him fixedly. In the dim light—a mixture of the dying fire and of the moonlight from outside—he could not see her plainly, but he felt that there was something strange, and he ran forward to her.

‘Hannah, are yo bad?—is there owt wrang wi yo?’

Then his seeking eye made out a crumpled paper in her left hand, and he knew at once that it must be Davy’s letter.

Before he could speak again she gave him a push backward with her free hand, and said with an effort:

‘Where’s t’ gell?’

‘Louie? She’s left i’ Manchester. A’ve found Davy, Hannah.’

There was a pause, after which he said, trembling:

‘Shall I get yo summat, Hannah?’

A hoarse voice came out of the dark:

‘Ha doon wi yo! Yo ha been lein to me. Yo wor seen at t’ station.’

Reuben sat down.

‘Hannah,’ he said, ‘yo mun just listen to me.’

And taking his courage in both hands, he told everything without a break: how he had been ‘feeart’ of what Sandy might say to him ‘at th’ joodgment,’ how he had saved and lied, and how now he had seen David, had written to Mr. Gurney, and stopped the cheques for good and all.

When he came to the letter to Mr. Gurney, Hannah sat suddenly upright in her chair, grasping one arm of it.

‘It shall mak noa difference to tha, a tell tha,’ he cried hastily, putting up his hand, fearing he knew not what, ‘nobbut a few shillins ony way. I’ll work for tha an mak it up.’

She made a sound which turned him cold with terror—a sound of baffled weakness, pain, vindictive

passion all in one—then she fell helplessly to one side in her chair, and her grey head dropped on her shoulder.

In another moment he was crying madly for help in the road outside. For long there was no answer—only the distant roar of the Downfall and the sweep of the wind. Then a labourer, on the path leading to the Wigsons' farm, heard and ran up.

An hour later a doctor had been got hold of, and Hannah was lying upstairs, tended by Mrs. Wigson and Reuben.

'A paralytic seizure,' said the doctor to Reuben. 'This woman says she's been failing for some time past. She's lived and worked hard, Mr. Grieve; *you* know that. And there's been some shock.'

Reuben explained incoherently. The doctor did not understand, and did not care, being a dull man and comparatively new to the place. He did what he could, said she would recover—oh, yes, she would recover; but, of course, she could never be the same woman again. Her working days were done.

A servant came over from Wigsons' to sit up with Reuben, Mrs. Wigson being too delicate to undertake it. The girl went to lie down first for an hour or two in the room across the landing, and he was left alone in the gaunt room with his wife. Poor quailing soul! As he sat there in the windy darkness, hour after hour, open-mouthed and open-eyed, he was steeped in terror—terror of the future, of its forlornness, of his own feebleness, of death. His heart clave piteously to the unconscious woman beside him, for he had nothing else. It seemed to him that the Lord had indeed dealt hardly with him, thus to strike him down on the day of his great atonement!

## CHAPTER IX

No news of the catastrophe at Needham Farm reached the brother and sister in Potter Street. The use of the pen had always been to Reuben one of the main torments and mysteries of life, and he had besides all those primitive instincts of silence and concealment which so often in the peasant nature accompany misfortune. His brain-power, moreover, was absorbed by his own calamity and by the changes in the routine of daily life which his wife's state brought upon him, so that immediately after his great effort of reparation towards them—an effort which had taxed the whole man physically and mentally—his brother's children and their affairs passed for a while strangely and completely from his troubled mind.

Meanwhile, what a transformation he had wrought in their fortunes! When the shock of his parents' story had subsided in him, and that other shock of jarring temperaments, which the first hour of Louie's companionship had brought with it, had been for the time forgotten again in the stress of plans and practical detail, David felt to the full the exhilaration of his new prospects. He had sprung at a leap, as it seemed to him, from the condition of the boy-adventurer to that of the man of affairs. And as he looked back upon their childhood and realised that all the time, instead of being destitute and dependent orphans, they and their money had really been the mainstay of Hannah and the farm, the lad seemed to cast from him the long humiliation of years, to rise in stature and dignity. That old skinflint and hypocrite, Aunt Hannah! With the usual imperfect sympathy of the young he did not much realise Reuben's struggle.

But he bore his uncle no grudge for these years' delay. The contrivances and hardships of his Manchester life had been, after all, enjoyment. Without them and the extravagant self-reliance they had developed in him his pride and ambition would have run less high. And at this moment the nerve and savour of existence came to him from pride and from ambition.

But first of all he had to get his money. As soon as Mr. Gurney's answer to Reuben's letter came, David took train for London, made his way to the great West-End shop which had employed his father, and saw the partner who had taken charge of Sandy's money for so long. Mr. Gurney, a shrewd and pompous person, was interested in seeing Grieve's son, inquired what he was about, ran over the terms of a letter to himself, which he took out of a drawer, and then, with a little flourish as to his own deserts in the matter of the guardianship of the money—a flourish neither unnatural nor unkindly—handed over to the lad both the letter and a cheque on a London bank, took his receipt, talked a little, but with a blunted memory, about the lad's father, gave him a little general business advice, asked whether his sister was still alive, and bade him good morning. Both were satisfied, and the young man left the office with the cheque lying warm in his pocket, looking slowly and curiously round the shop where his father had earned it, as he walked away.

Outside he found himself close to Trafalgar Square, and, striking down to the river, he went to sit on the Embankment and ponder the enclosures which Mr. Gurney had given him. First he took out the cheque, with infinite care, lest the breeze on the Embankment should blow it out of his hand, and spread it on his knee. 600*l.*! As he stared at each letter and flourish his eyes widened anew; and when he looked up across

the grey and misty river, the figures still danced before him, and in his exultation he could have shouted the news to the passers by. Then, when the precious paper had been safely stowed away again, he hesitatingly took out the other—his father's dying memorandum on the subject of his children, so he had understood Mr. Gurney. It was old and brown; it had been written with anguish, and it could only be deciphered with difficulty. There had been no will properly so called. Sandy had placed more confidence in 'the firm' than in the law, and had left behind him merely the general indication of his wishes in the hands of the partner who had specially befriended him. The provisions of it were as Sandy had described them to Renben on his death-bed. Especially did the father insist that there should be no artificial restriction of age. 'I wanted money most when I was nineteen, and I could have used it just as well then as I could at any later time.'

So he might have been a rich man at least a year earlier. Well, much as he had loathed Purcell, he was glad, on the whole, that things were as they were. He had been still a great fool, he reflected, a year ago.

Then, as to Louie, the letter ran: 'Let Davy have all the money, and let him manage for her. I won't divide it; he must judge. He may want it all, and it may be best for them both he should have it. He's got a good heart; I know that; he'll not rob his sister. I lay it on him, now I'm dying, to be patient with her, and look after her. She's not like other children. But it's not her fault; it was born in her. Let him see her married to a decent man, and then give her what's honestly hers. That little lad has nursed me like a woman since I've been ill. He was always a good lad to me, and I'd like him to know when he's grown up that his father loved him——'



But here the poor laboured scrawl came to an end, save for a few incoherent strokes. David thrust it back into his pocket. His cheek was red; his eyes burnt; he sat for long, with his elbows on his knees, staring at the February river. The choking, passionate impulse to comfort his father he had felt so often as a child was there again, by association, alive and piteous.

Suddenly he woke up with a start. There, to either hand, lay the bridges, with the moving figures atop and the hurrying river below. And from one of them his mother had leapt when she destroyed herself. In the trance of thought that followed, it was to him as though he felt her wild nature, her lawless blood, stirring within him, and realised, in a fierce, reluctant way, that he was hers as well as his father's. In a sense, he shared Reuben's hatred; for he, best of all, knew what she had made his father suffer. Yet the thought of her drew his restless curiosity after it. Where did she come from? Who were her kindred? From the south of France, Reuben thought. The lad's imagination travelled with difficulty and excitement to the far and alien land whence half his being had sprung. A few scraps of poetry and history recurred to him—a single tattered volume of 'Monte Cristo,' which he had lately bought with an odd lot at a sale—but nothing that suggested to his fancy anything like the peasant farm in the Mont Ventoux, within sight of Arles, where Louise Suveret's penurious childhood had been actually cradled.

Two o'clock struck from the belfry of St. Paul's, looming there to his left in the great bend of the river. At the sound he shook off all his thoughts. Let him see something of London. He had two hours and a half before his train from Euston. Westminster first—a hasty glance; then an omnibus to St. Paul's, that he might look down upon the city and its rush; then

north. He had a map with him, and his quick intelligence told him exactly how to use his time to the best advantage. Years afterwards he was accustomed to look back on this hour spent on the top of an omnibus, which was making its difficult way to the Bank through the crowded afternoon streets, as one of the strong impressions of his youth. Here was one centre of things; Westminster represented another; and both stood for knowledge, wealth, and power. The boy's hot blood rose to the challenge. His foot was on the ladder, and many men with less chances than he had risen to the top. At this moment, small Manchester tradesman that he was, he had the constant presentiment of a wide career.

That night he let himself into his own door somewhere about nine o'clock. What had Louie been doing with herself all day? She was to have her first lesson from Dora Lomax; but she must have been dull since, unless Dora had befriended her.

To his astonishment, as he shut the door he heard voices in the kitchen—Louie and *John*. John, the shy, woman-hating creature, who had received the news of Louie's expected advent in a spirit of mingled irritation and depression—who, after his first startled look at her as she passed through the shop, seemed to David to have fled the sight of her whenever it was possible!

Louie was talking so fast and laughing so much that neither of them had heard David's latchkey, and in his surprise the brother stood still a moment in the dark, looking round the kitchen-door, which stood a little open. Louie was sitting by the fire with some yards of flowered cotton stuff on her knee, at which she was sewing; John was opposite to her on the oak stool, crouched over a box of nails, from which he was

laboriously sorting out those of a certain size, apparently at her bidding, for she gave him sharp directions from time to time. But his toil was intermittent, for whenever her sallies were louder or more amusing than usual his hand paused, and he sat staring at her, his small eyes expanding, a sympathetic grin stealing over his mouth.

It seemed to David that she was describing her lover of the winter; he caught her gesture as she illustrated her performance with Jim Wigson—the boxing of the amorous lout's ears in the lane by the Dye Works. Her beautiful curly black hair was combed to-night into a sort of wild halo round her brow and cheeks, and in this arrangement counteracted the one fault of the face—a slightly excessive length from forehead to chin. But the brilliance of the eyes, the redness of the thin lips over the small and perfect teeth, the flush on the olive cheek, the slender neck, the distinction and delicacy of every sweeping line and curve—for the first time even David realised, as he stood there in the dark, that his sister was an extraordinary beauty. Strange! Her manner and voice had neither natural nor acquired refinement; and yet in the moulding of the head and face there was a dignity and perfection—a touch, as it were, of the grand style—which marked her out in a northern crowd and riveted the northern eye. Was it the trace of another national character, another civilisation, longer descended, less mixed, more deeply graven than ours?

But what was that idiot John doing here?—the young master wanted to know. He coughed loudly and hung up his hat and his stick, to let them hear that he was there. The pair in the kitchen started. Louie sprang up, flung down her work, and ran out to him.

‘Well,’ said she breathlessly, ‘have you got it?’

‘Yes.’

She gave a little shriek of excitement.

‘Show it then.’

‘There’s nothing to show but a cheque. It’s all right. Is there anything for supper?’

‘There’s some bread and cheese and cold apple-pie in there,’ said Louie, annoyed with him already; then, turning her head over her shoulder, ‘Mr. Dalby, I’ll trouble you to get them out.’

With awkward alacrity John flew to do her bidding. When the lad had ransacked the cupboard and placed all the viands it contained on the table, he looked at David. That young man, with a pucker in his brow, was standing by the fire with his hands in his pockets, making short answers to Louie’s sharp and numerous questions.

‘That’s all I can find,’ said John. ‘Shall I run for something?’

‘Thanks,’ said David, still frowning, and sat him down, ‘that ’ll do.’

Louie made a face at John behind her brother’s back. The assistant slowly flushed a deep red. In this young fellow, with his money buttoned on his breast, both he and Louie for the first time realised the master.

‘Well, good night,’ he said, hesitating, ‘I’m going.’

David jumped up and went with him into the passage.

‘Look here,’ he said abruptly, ‘you and I have got some business to talk to-morrow. I’m not going to keep you slaving here for nothing now that I can afford to pay you.’

‘Are you going to turn me off?’ said the other hastily.

David laughed. The cloud had all cleared from his brow.

‘Don’t be such a precious fool!’ he said. ‘Now be off—and seven sharp. I must go at it like ten horses to-morrow.’

John disappeared into the night, and David went back to his sister. He found her looking red and excited, and sewing energetically.

‘Look here!’ she said, lifting a threatening eye to him as he entered the room. ‘I’m not going to be treated like a baby. If you don’t tell me all about that money, I’ll write to Mr. Gurney myself. It’s part of it mine, and *I’ll know*, so there!’

‘I’ll tell you everything,’ he said quietly, putting a hand into his coat pocket before he sat down to his supper again. ‘There’s the cheque—and there’s our father’s letter,—what Mr. Gurney gave me. There was no proper will—this was instead.’

He pretended to eat, but in reality he watched her anxiously as she read it. The result was very much what he had expected. She ran breathlessly through it, then, with a look all flame and fury, she broke out—

‘Upon my word! So you’re going to take it all, and I’m to be beholden to you for every penny. I’d like to see myself!’

‘Now look here, Louie,’ he said, firmly, pushing back his chair from the table, ‘I want to explain things to you. I should like to tell you all about my business, and what I think of doing, and then you can judge for yourself. I’ll not rob you or anyone.’

Whereupon with a fierce gesture she caught up her work again, and he fell into long and earnest talk, setting his mind to the task. He explained to her that the arrival of this money—this capital—made just all the difference, that the whole of it would be infinitely more useful to him than the half, and that he proposed to employ it both for her benefit and his own. He

had already cleared out the commission agent from the first floor, and moved down the lodgers—a young foreman and his wife—from the attics to the first-floor back. That left the two attics for himself and Louie, and gave him the front first-floor room, the best room in the house, for an extension of stock.

‘Why don’t you turn those people out altogether?’ said Louie, impatiently. ‘They pay very little, and you’ll be wanting that room soon, very like.’

‘Well, I shall get it soon,’ said David bluntly; ‘but I can’t get it now. Mrs. Mason’s bad; she’s going to be confined.’

‘Well, I dare say she is!’ cried Louie. ‘That don’t matter; she isn’t confined yet.’

David looked at her in amazement. Then his face hardened.

‘I’m not going to turn her out, I tell you,’ he said, and immediately returned to his statement. Well, there were all sorts of ways in which he might employ his money. He might put up a shed in the back yard, and get a printing-press. He knew of a press and a very decent fount of type, to be had extremely cheap. John was a capital workman, and between them they might reprint some of the scarce local books and pamphlets, which were always sure of a sale. As to his stock, there were endless possibilities. He knew of a collection of rare books on early America, which belonged to a gentleman at Cheadle. He had been negotiating about them for some time. Now he would close at once; from his knowledge of the market the speculation was a certain one. He was also inclined to largely increase his stock of foreign books, especially in the technical and scientific direction. There was a considerable opening, he believed, for such books in Manchester; at any rate, he meant to try for it. And as soon as ever he could he should

learn German. There was a fellow—a German clerk—who haunted the Parlour, who would teach him in exchange for English lessons.

So, following a happy instinct, he opened to her all his mind, and talked to her as though they were partners in a firm. The event proved that he could have done nothing better. Very early in his exposition she began to put her wits to his, her irritation dropped, and he was presently astonished at the intelligence she showed. Every element almost in the problems discussed was unfamiliar to her, yet after a while a listener coming in might have thought that she too had been Purcell's apprentice, so nimbly had she gathered up the details involved, so quick she was to see David's points and catch his phrases. If there was no moral fellowship between them, judging from to-night, there bade fair to be a comradeship of intelligence.

'There now,' he said, when he had come to the end of his budget. 'you leave your half of the money to me. Mind, I agree it's your half, and I'll do the best I can with it. I'll pay you interest on it for two years, and I'll keep you. Then we'll see. And if you want to improve yourself a bit, instead of going to work at once, I'll pay for teachers. And look here, we'll keep good friends over it.'

His keen eyes softened to a charming, half-melancholy smile. Louie took no notice; she was absorbed in meditation; and at the end of it, she said with a long breath—

'Well, you may have it, and I'll keep an eye on the accounts. But you needn't think I'll sit at home "improving" myself! Not I. I'll do that church-work. That girl gave me a lesson this morning, and I'm going again to-morrow.'

David received the news with satisfaction, remark-

ing heartily that Dora Lomax was a real good sort, and if it weren't for her the Parlour and Daddy would soon be in a fix. He told the story of the Parlour, dwelling on Dora's virtues.

'But she is a crank, though!' said Louie. 'Why, if you make free with her things a bit, or if you call 'em by the wrong names, she'll fly at you! How's anybody to know what they're meant for?'

David laughed, and got up to get some books he was repairing. As he moved away he looked back a moment.

'I say, Louie,' he began, hesitating, 'that fellow John's worked for me like a dozen, and has never taken a farthing from me. Don't you go and make a fool of him.'

A flush passed over Louie's face. She lifted her hand and tucked away some curly ends of long hair that had fallen on her shoulders.

'He's like one of Aunt Hannah's suet rolies,' she said, after a minute, with a gleam of her white teeth. 'Seems as if some one had tied him in a cloth and boiled him that shape.'

Neither of them cared to go to bed. They sat up talking. David was mending, sorting, and pricing a number of old books he had bought for nothing at a country sale. He knew enough of bookbinding to do the repairing with much skill, showing the same neatness of finger in it that he had shown years ago in the carving of toy boats and water-wheels. Louie went on with her work, which proved to be a curtain for her attic. She meant to have that room nice, and she had been out buying a few things, whereby David understood—as indeed Reuben had said—that she had some savings. Moreover, with regard to certain odd jobs of carpentering, she had already pressed John



into her service, which explained his lingering after hours, and his eagerness among the nails. As to the furniture David had bought for her, on which, in the intervals of his busy days, he had spent some time and trouble, and of which he was secretly proud, humble and cheap as it was—she took it for granted. He could not remember that she had said any ‘thank you’s’ since she came.

Still, youth and comradeship were pleasant. The den in which they sat was warm with light and fire, and was their own. Louie’s exultation, too, in their change of fortune, which flashed out of her at every turn, was infectious, and presently his spirits rose with hers, and the two lost themselves in the excitement of large schemes and new horizons.

After a time he found himself comparing notes with her as to that far-off crisis of his running away.

‘I suppose you heard somehow about Jim Wigson and me?’ he asked her, his pulse quickening after all these years.

She nodded with a little grin. He had already noticed, by the way, that she, while still living among the moors, had almost shaken herself free of the Kinder dialect, whereas it had taken quite a year of Manchester life to rub off his own Doric.

‘Well, you didn’t imagine’—he went on—‘I was going to stop after that? I could put a knife between Jim’s ribs now when I think of it!’

And, pushing his book away from him, he sat recalling that long past shame, his face, glowing with vindictive memory, framed in his hands.

‘I don’t see, though, what you sneaked off for like that after all you’d promised me,’ she said with energy.

‘No, it was hard on you,’ he admitted. ‘But I couldn’t think of any other way out. I was mad with

everybody, and just wanted to cut and run. But before I hit on that notion about Tom ' (he had just been explaining to her in detail, not at all to her satisfaction, his device for getting regular news of her) 'I used to spend half my time wondering what you'd do. I thought, perhaps, you'd run away too, and that would have been a kettle of fish.'

'I did run away,' she said, her wild eyes sparkling — 'twice.'

'Jiminy!' said David with a schoolboy delight, 'let's hear!'

Whereupon she took up her tale and told him a great deal that was still quite unknown to him. She told it in her own way with characteristic blindnesses and hardnesses, but the truth of it was this. The very day after David's departure she too had run away, in spite of the fact that Hannah was keeping her in something very like imprisonment. She supposed that David had gone to Manchester, and she meant to follow him there. But she had been caught begging the other side of Glossop by a policeman, who was a native of Clough End and knew all about her.

'He made me come along back, but he must have got the mark on his wrist still where I bit him, I should think,' remarked Miss Louie, with a satisfaction untouched apparently by the lapse of time.

The next attempt had been more serious. It was some months afterwards, and by this time she was in despair about David, and had made up her passionate mind that she would never see him again. But she loathed Hannah more and more, and at last, in the middle of a snowy February, the child determined to find her way over the Peak into the wild valley of the Woodlands, and so to Ashopton and Sheffield, in which last town she meant to go to service. But in the effort to cross the plateau of the Peak she very nearly

lost her life. Long before she came in sight of the Snake Inn, on the Woodlands side, she sank exhausted in the snow, and, but for some Frimley shepherds who were out after their sheep, she would have drawn her last breath in that grim solitude. They carried her down to Frimley and dropped her at the nearest shelter, which happened to be Margaret Dawson's cottage.

Margaret was then in the first smart of her widowhood. 'Lias was just dead, and she was withering physically and mentally under the heart-hunger of her loss. The arrival of the pallid, half-conscious child—David's sister, with David's eyes—for a time distracted and appeased her. She nursed the poor waif, and sent word to Needham Farm. Reuben came for the girl, and Margaret, partly out of compassion, partly out of a sense of her own decaying strength, bribed her to go back home by the promise of teaching her the silk-weaving.

Louie learnt the trade with surprising quickness, and as she shot up in stature and her fingers gained in cunning and rapidity, Margaret became more bowed, helpless and 'fond,' until at last Louie did everything, brought home the weft and warp, set it up, worked off the 'cuts,' and took them to the warehouse in Clough End to be paid; while Margaret sat in the chimney corner, pining inwardly for 'Lias and dropping deeper day by day into the gulf of age. By this time of course various money arrangements had been made between them, superintended by Margaret's brother, a weaver in the same village who found it necessary to keep a very sharp eye on this girl-apprentice whom Margaret had picked up. Of late Louie had been paying Margaret rent for the loom, together with a certain percentage on the weekly earnings, practically for 'goodwill.' And on this small sum

the widow had managed to live and keep her home, while Louie launched gloriously into new clothes, started a savings-bank book, and snapped her fingers for good and all at Hannah, who put up with her, however, in a sour silence because of Mr. Gurney's cheques.

'And Margaret can't do *anything* for herself now?' asked David. He had followed the story with eagerness. For years the remembrance had rankled in his mind how during his last months at Kinder, when 'Lias was dying, and the old pair were more in want than ever of the small services he had been accustomed to render them, he had forgotten and neglected his friends because he had been absorbed in the excitements of 'conversion,' so that when Tom Mullins had told him in general terms that his sister Louie was supporting both Margaret and herself, the news had soothed a remorse.

'I should just think not!' said Louie in answer to his question. 'She's gone most silly, and she hasn't got the right use of her legs either.'

'Poor old thing!' said David softly, falling into a dream. He was thinking of Margaret in her active, happy days when she used to bake scones for him, or mend his clothes, or rate him for 'worrying' 'Lias. Then wakening up he drew the book he was binding towards him again. 'She must have been precious glad to have you to do for her, Louie,' he said contentedly.

'Do for her?' Louie opened her eyes. 'As if I could be worried with her! I had my work to do, thank you. There was a niece used to come in and see to her. She used to get in my way dreadful sometimes. She'd have fits of thinking she could work the loom again, and I'd have to keep her away—regular *frighten* her.'

David started.

‘Who’ll work the loom now?’ he asked; his look and tone altering to match hers.

‘I’m sure I don’t know,’ said Louie, carelessly. ‘Very like she’ll not get anyone. The work’s been slack a long while.’

David suddenly drew back from his bookbinding.

‘When did you let her know, Louie—about me?’ he asked quickly.

‘Let her know? Who was to let her know? Your letter came eight o’clock and our train started half-past ten. I’d just time to pitch my things together and that was about all.’

‘And you never sent, and you haven’t written?’

‘You leave me alone,’ said the girl, turning instantly sulky under his tone. ‘It’s nowt to you what I do.’

‘Why!’ he said, his voice shaking, ‘she’d be waiting and waiting—and she’s got nothing else to depend on.’

‘There’s her brother,’ said Louie angrily, ‘and if he won’t take her, there’s the workhouse. They’ll take her there fast enough, and she won’t know anything about it.’

‘The *workhouse!*’ cried David, springing up, incensed past bearing by her callous way. ‘Margaret that took you in out of the snow!—you said it yourself. And you—you’d not lift a finger—not you—you’d not even give her notice—“chuck her into the workhouse—that’s good enough for her!” It’s *vile*,—that’s what it is!’

He stood, choked by his own wrath, eyeing her fiercely—a young thunder god of disdain and condemnation.

Louie too got up—gathering up her work round her—and gave him back his look with interest before she flung out of the room.

‘Keep a civil tongue in your head, sir, or I’ll let you know,’ she cried. ‘I’ll not be called over the coals by you nor nobody. I’ll do what I *please*,—and if you don’t like it you can do the other thing—so there—now you know!’

And with a nod of the utmost provocation and defiance she banged the door behind her and went up to bed.

David flung down the pen with which he had been lettering his books on the table, and, drawing a chair up to the fire, he sat moodily staring into the embers. So it was all to begin again—the long wrangle and jar of their childhood. Why had he broken silence and taken this burden once more upon his shoulders? He had a moment of passionate regret. It seemed to him more than he could bear. No gratitude, no kindness; and this fierce tongue!

After a while he fetched pen and paper and began to write on his knee, while his look kindled again. He wrote to Margaret, a letter of boyish effusion and affection, his own conscience quickened to passion by Louie’s lack of conscience. He had never forgotten her, he said, and he wished he could see her again. She must write, or get some one to write for her—and tell him what she was going to do now that Louie had left her. He had been angry with Louie for coming away without sending word. But what he wanted to say was this: if Margaret could get no one to work the loom, he, David, would pay her brother four shillings a week, for six months certain, towards her expenses if he would take her in and look after her. She must ask somebody to write at once and say what was to be done. If her brother consented to take her, David would send a post-office order for the first month at once. He was doing well in his business, and there would be no doubt about the payments.

He made his proposal with a haste and impulsiveness very unlike the cool judgment he had so far shown in his business. It never occurred to him to negotiate with the brother who might be quite well able to maintain his sister without help. Besides he remembered him as a hard man of whom both Margaret and 'Lias—soft, sensitive creatures—were both more or less afraid. No, there should be no doubt about it—not a day's doubt, if he could help it! He could help, and he would; and if they asked him more he would give it. Nearly midnight! But if he ran out to the General Post Office it would be in time.

When he had posted it and was walking home, his anger was all gone. But in its stead was the smart of a baffled instinct—the hunger for sympathy, for love, for that common everyday life of the affections which had never been his, while it came so easily to other people.

In his chafing distress he felt the curb of something unknown before; or, rather, what had of late taken the pleasant guise of kinship and natural affection assumed to-night another and a sterner aspect, and in this strait of conduct, that sheer 'imperative' which we carry within us made itself for the first time heard and realised.

'I have done my duty and must abide by it. I *must* bear with her and look after her.'

Why?

'Because my father laid it on me?'—

And because there is a life within our life which urges and presses?—because we are 'not our own'? But this is an answer which implies a whole theology. And at this moment of his life David had not a particle or shred of theology about him. Except, indeed, that, like Voltaire, he was graciously inclined to think a First Cause probable.

Next day this storm blew over, as storms do. Louie came down early and made the porridge for breakfast. When David appeared she carried things off with a high hand, and behaved as if nothing had happened; but anyone accustomed to watch her would have seen a certain quick nervousness in her black, wild bird's eyes. As for David, after a period of gruffness and silence, he passed by degrees into his usual manner. Louie spent the day with Dora, and he went off to Cheadle to conclude the purchase of that collection of American books he had described to Louie. But first, on his way, he walked proudly into Heywood's bank and opened an account there, receiving the congratulations of an old and talkative cashier, who already knew the lad and was interested in his prospects, with the coolness of one who takes good fortune as his right.

In the afternoon he was busy in the shop—not too busy, however, to notice John. What ailed the lad? While he was inside, as soon as the door did but creak in the wind he sprang to open it, but for the most part he preferred to stand outside watching the stall and the street. When Louie appeared about five o'clock—for her hours with Dora were not yet regular—he forthwith became her slave. She set him to draw up the fire while she got the tea, and then, without taking any notice of David, she marched John upstairs to help her hang her curtains, lay her carpet, and nail up the coloured fashion plates and newspaper prints of royalties or beauties with which she was adorning the bare walls of the attic.

When all her additions had been made to David's original stock; when the little deal dressing-table and glass had been draped in the cheapest of muslins over the pinkest of calicoes; when the flowery curtains had been tied back with blue ribbons; when the



china vases on the mantelpiece had been filled with nodding plumes of dyed grasses, mostly of a rosy red; and a long glass in a somewhat damaged condition, but still presenting enough surface to enable Miss Louie to study herself therein from top to toe, had been propped against the wall; there was and could be nothing in the neighbourhood of Potter Street, so John reflected, as he furtively looked about him, to vie with the splendours of Miss Grieve's apartment. There was about it a sensuousness, a deliberate quest of luxury and gaiety, which a raw son of poverty could feel though he could not put it into words. No Manchester girl he had ever seen would have cared to spend her money in just this way.

'Now that 's real nice, Mr. Dalby, and I'm just obliged to you,' said Louie, with patronising emphasis, as she looked round upon his labours. 'I do like to get a man to do things for you—he's got some strength in him—not like a gell!'

And she looked down at herself and at the long, thin-fingered hand against her dress, with affected contempt. John looked at her too, but turned his head away again quickly.

'And yet you 're pretty strong too, Miss,' he ventured.

'Well, perhaps I am,' she admitted; 'and a good thing too, when you come to think of the rough time I had over there'—and she jerked her head behind her—'ever since Davy ran away from me.'

'Ran away from you, Miss?'

She nodded, pressing her lips together with the look of one who keeps a secret from the highest motives. But she brought two beautiful plaintive eyes to bear on John, and he at once felt sure that David's conduct had been totally inexcusable.

Then suddenly she broke into a laugh. She was

sitting on the edge of the bed, swinging her feet lightly backwards and forwards.

‘Look here!’ she said, dropping her voice, and looking round at the door. ‘Do you know a lot about Davy’s affairs?—you ’re a great friend of his, aren’t you?’

‘I s’pose so,’ said the lad, awkwardly.

‘Well, has he been making up to anybody that you know of?’

John’s invisible eyebrows stretched considerably. He was so astonished that he did not readily find an answer.

‘Why, of course, I mean,’ said Louie, impatiently, ‘is he *in love* with anybody?’

‘Not that I know of, Miss.’

‘Well, then, there’s somebody in love with *him*,’ said Louie, maliciously; ‘and some day, Mr. Dalby, if we get a chance, perhaps I’ll tell you all about it.’

The charming confidential smile she threw him so bewildered the lad that he hardly knew where he was.

But an exasperated shout of ‘John’ from the stairs recalled him, and he rushed downstairs to help David deal with a cargo of books just arrived.

That evening David ran up to the Parlour for half an hour, to have a talk with Daddy and find out what Dora thought of Louie. He had sent a message by Louie about Reuben’s revelations, and it occurred to him that since Daddy had not been to look him up since, that incalculable person might be offended that he had not brought his great news in person. Besides, he had a very strong curiosity to know what had happened after all to Lucy Purcell, and whether anything had been commonly observed of Purcell’s demeanour under the checkmate administered to him. For the past few days he had been wholly absorbed in his own

affairs, and during the previous week he had seen nothing of either Daddy or Dora, except that at a casual meeting in the street with Daddy that worthy had described his attack on Purell with a gusto worthy of his Irish extraction.

He found the restaurant just shutting, and Daddy apparently on the wing for the 'White Horse' parlour, to judge from the relief which showed in Dora's worn look as she saw her father lay down his hat and stick again and fall 'chaffing' with David.

For, with regard to David's change of position, the landlord of the Parlour was in a very testy frame of mind.

'Six hundred pounds!' he growled, when the young fellow sitting cross-legged by the fire had made an end of describing to them both his journey to London. 'H'm, *your* fun's over: any fool can do on six hundred pounds!'

'Thank you, Daddy,' said the lad, with a sarcastic lip. 'As for you, I wonder *you* have the face to talk! Who's coining money here, I should like to know?'

Dora looked up with a start. Her father met her look with a certain hostility and an obstinate shake of his thin shoulders.

'Davy, me boy, you're that consated by now, you'll not be for taking advice. But I'll give it you, bedad, to take or to leave! Never pitch your tent, sir, where you can't strike it when you want to! But there's where your beastly money comes in. Nobody need look to you now for any comprehension of the finer sentiments of man.'

'What do you mean, Daddy?'

'Never you mind,' said the old vagrant, staring sombrely at the floor—the spleen in person. 'Only I want my *freedom*. I tell you—and a bit of air, sometimes—and by gad I'll have 'em!'

And throwing back his grey head with a jerk he fixed an angry eye on Dora. Dora had grown paler, but she said nothing; her fingers went steadily on with her work: from early morning now till late night neither they nor she were ever at rest. After a minute's silence Lomax walked to the door, flung a good-night behind him and disappeared.

Dora hastily drew her hand across her eyes, then threaded her needle as though nothing had happened. But David was perplexed and sorry. How white and thin she looked, to be sure! That old lunatic must be worrying her somehow.

He moved his chair nearer to Dora.

'Is there anything wrong, Miss Dora?' he asked her, dropping his voice.

She looked up with a quick gratitude, his voice and expression putting a new life into her.

'Oh! I don't know,' she said, gently and sadly. 'Father's been very restless these last few weeks. I can't keep him at home. And I'm not always dull like this. I've done my best to cheer him up. And I don't think there's much amiss with the Parlour—yet—only the outgoings are so large every day. I'm always feart——'

She paused, and a visible tremor ran through her. David's quick eye understood the signs of strain and fatigue, and he felt a brotherly pity for her—a softer, more normal feeling than Louie had ever called out in him.

'I say,' he said heartily, 'if there's anything I can do, you'll let me know, won't you?'

She smiled at him, and then turned to her work again in a hurry, afraid of her own eyes and lips, and what they might be saying.

'Oh! I dare say I fret myself too much,' she said, with the tone of one determined to be cheered. And.

by way of protecting her own quivering heart, she fell upon the subject of Louie. She showed the brother some of Louie's first attempts—some of the stitches she had been learning.

'She's that quick!' she said, wondering. 'In a few days I'm going to trust her with that,' and she pointed to a fine old piece of Venetian embroidery, which had to be largely repaired before it could be made up into an altar-cloth and presented to St. Damian's by a rich and devoted member of the congregation.

'Does she get in your way?' the brother inquired.

'N-o,' she said in a low voice, paying particular attention to a complicated stitch. 'She'll get used to me and the work soon. She'll make a first-rate hand if she's patient a bit. They'll be glad to take her on at the shop.'

'But you'll not turn her out? You'll let her work here, alongside of you?' said the young man eagerly. He had just met Louie, in the dark, walking up Market Street with a seedy kind of gentleman, who he had reason to know was a bad lot. John was off his head about her, and no longer of much use to anybody, and in these few days other men, as it seemed to him, had begun to hang about. The difficulties of his guardianship were thickening upon him, and he clung to Dora's help.

'No; I'll not turn her out. She may work here if she wants to,' said Dora, with the same slowness.

And all the time she was saying to herself passionately that, if Louie Grieve had not been his sister, she should *never* have set foot in that room again! In the two days they had been together Louie had outraged almost every feeling the other possessed. And there was a burning dread in Dora's mind that even the secret of her heart of hearts had been somehow

discovered by the girl's hawk-like sense. But she had promised to help him, and she would.

'You must let me know what I owe you for teaching her and introducing her,' said David firmly. 'Yes, you must, Miss Dora. It's business, and you mustn't make any bones about it. A girl doesn't learn a trade and get an opening found her for nothing.'

'Oh no, nonsense!' she said quickly, but with decision equal to his own. 'I won't take anything. She don't want much teaching; she's so clever; she sees a thing almost before the words are out of your mouth. Look here, Mr. Grieve, I want to tell you about Lucy.'

She looked up at him, flushing. He, too, coloured.

'Well,' he said; 'that's what I wanted to ask you.'

She told him the whole story of Lucy's flight from her father, of her illness and departure, of the probable stepmother.

'Old brute!' said David between his teeth. 'I say, Miss Dora, can nothing be done to make him treat her decently?'

His countenance glowed with indignation and disgust. Dora shook her head sadly.

'I don't see what anyone can do; and the worst of it is she'll be such a long while getting over it. I've had a letter from her this morning, and she says the Hastings doctor declares she must stay there a year in the warm and not come home at all, or she'll be going off in a decline. I know Lucy gets nervous about herself, but it do seem bad.'

David sat silent, lost in a medley of feelings, most of them unpleasant. Now that Lucy Purcell was at the other end of England, both her service to him and his own curmudgeon behaviour to her loomed doubly large.

'I say, will you give me her address?' he said at

last. 'I've got a smart book I've had bound for her. I'd like to send it to her.'

Dora went to the table and wrote it for him. Then he got up to go.

'Upon my word, you do look tired,' he broke out. 'Can't you go to bed? It is hard lines.'

Which last words applied to that whole situation of hers with her father which he was beginning dimly to discern. In his boyish admiration and compassion he took both her hands in his. Dora withdrew them quickly.

'Oh, I'll pull through!' she said, simply, and he went.

When she had closed the door after him she stood looking at the clock with her hands clasped in front of her.

'How much longer will father be?' she said, sighing. 'Oh, I think I told him all Lucy wanted me to say; I think I did.'

## CHAPTER X

THREE or four months passed away. During that period David had built up a shed in his back yard and had established a printing-press there, with a respectable, though not extensive, fount of type—bought, all of it, secondhand, and a bargain. John and he spent every available moment there, and during their first experiments would often sit up half the night working off the sheets of their earliest productions, in an excitement which took no count of fatigue. They began with reprinting some scarce local tracts, with which they did well. Then David diverged into a Radical pamphlet or two on the subject of the coming Education Bill, finding authors for them among

the leading ministers of the town; and these timely wares, being freely pushed on the stall, on the whole paid their expenses, with a little profit to spare—the labour being reckoned at nothing. And now David was beginning to cherish the dream of a new history of Manchester, for which among his own collections he already possessed a great deal of fresh material. But that would take time and money. He must push his business a bit further first.

That business, however, was developing quite as rapidly as the two pairs of arms could keep pace with it. Almost everything the young fellow touched succeeded. He had instinct, knowledge, a growing tact, and an indomitable energy, and these are the qualities which make, which are in themselves, success. The purchase of the collection at Cheadle, bearing on the early history of American states and towns, not only turned out well in itself, but brought him to the notice of a big man in London, who set the clever and daring beginner on several large quests both in Lancashire and Yorkshire by which both profited considerably. In another direction he was extending his stock of foreign scientific and technical books, especially such as bore upon the industries of Northern England. Old Barbier, who took a warmer and warmer interest in his pupil's progress, kept him constantly advised as to French books through old friends of his own in Paris, who were glad to do the exile a kindness.

‘But why not run over to Paris for yourself, form some connections, and look about you?’ suggested Barbier.

Why not, indeed? The young man's blood, quick with curiosity and adventure, under all his tradesman's exterior, leapt at the thought. But prudence restrained him for the present.

As for German books, he was struggling with the



language, and feeling his way besides through innumerable catalogues. How he found time for all the miscellaneous acquisitions of these months it would be difficult to say. But whether in his free times or in trade-hours he was hardly ever without a book or a catalogue beside him, save when he was working the printing-press; and, although his youth would every now and then break out against the confinement he imposed upon it, and drive him either to long tramps over the moors on days when the spring stirred in the air, or to a spell of theatre-going, in which Louie greedily shared, yet, on the whole, his force of purpose was amazing, and the success which it brought with it could only be regarded as natural and inevitable. He was beginning to be well known to the old-established men in his own business, who could not but show at times some natural jealousy of so quick a rise. The story of his relations to Purcell spread, and the two were watched with malicious interest at many a book-sale, when the nonchalant self-reliance and prosperous look of the younger drove the elder man again and again into futile attempts to injure and circumvent him. It was noticed that never till now had Purcell lost his head with a rival.

Nevertheless, the lad had far fewer enemies than might have been expected. His manner had always been radiantly self-confident; but there was about him a conspicuous element of quick feeling, of warm humanity, which grew rather than diminished with his success. He was frank, too, and did not try to gloss over a mistake or a failure. Perhaps in his lordly way he felt he could afford himself a few now and then, he was so much cleverer than his neighbours.

Upon no one did David's development produce more effect than upon Mr. Ancrum. The lame, solitary minister, who only got through his week's self-

appointed tasks at a constant expense of bodily torment, was dazzled and bewildered by the spectacle of so much vitality spent with such ease and impunity.

‘How many years of Manchester must one give him?’ said Ancrum to himself one night, when he was making his way home from a reading of the ‘Electra’ with David. ‘That six hundred pounds has quickened the pace amazingly! Ten years, perhaps. Then London, and anything you like. Bookselling slips into publishing, and publishing takes a man into another class, and within reach of a hundred new possibilities. Some day I shall be bragging of having taught him! *Taught* him! He’ll be turning the tables on me precious soon. Caught me out twice to-night, and got through the tough bit of the chorus much better than I did. How does he do it?—and with that mountain of other things on his shoulders? There’s *one* speck in the fruit, however, as far as I can see—Miss Louie!’

From the first moment of his introduction to her, Ancrum had taken particular notice of David’s handsome sister, who, on her side, had treated her old minister and teacher with a most thoroughgoing indifference. He saw that now, after some three months of life together, the brother and sister had developed separate existences, which touched in two points only—a common liking for Dora Lomax, and a common keenness for business.

Here, in this matter of business, they were really at one. David kept nothing from her, and consulted her a good deal. She had the same shrewd head that he had, and as it was her money as well as his that was in question she was determined to know and to understand what he was after. Anybody who had come upon the pair on the nights when they made up their

accounts, their dark heads touching under the lamp, might have gone away moralising on the charms of fraternal affection.

And all the while David had once more tacitly given up the attempt either to love her or to control her. How indeed could he control her? He was barely two years older, and she had a will of iron. She made disreputable friends whom he loathed the sight of. But all he could do was to keep them out of the house. She led John by this time a dog's life. From the temptress she had become the tease and tyrant, and the clumsy fellow, consumed with feverish passion, slaved for her whenever she was near him with hardly the reward of a kind look or a civil word in a fortnight. David set his teeth and tried to recover possession of his friend. And as long as they two were at the press or in the shop together alone, John was often his old self, and would laugh out in the old way. But no sooner did Louie appear than he followed her about like an animal, and David could make no more of him. Whenever any dispute, too, arose between the brother and sister, he took her part, whatever it might be, with an acrimony which pushed David's temper hard.

Yet, on the whole, so Ancrum thought, the brother showed a wonderful patience. He was evidently haunted by a sense of responsibility towards his sister, and, at the same time, both tormented and humiliated by his incompetence to manage or influence her. It was curious, too, to watch how by antagonism and by the constant friction of their life together, certain qualities in her developed certain others in him. Her callousness, for instance, did but nurture a sensitive humanity in him. She treated the lodgers in the first pair back with persistent indifference and even brutality, seeing that Mrs. Mason was a young, help-

less creature approaching every day nearer to a confinement she regarded with terror, and that a little common kindness from the only other woman in the house could have softened her lot considerably. But David's books were stacked about in awkward and inconvenient places waiting for the Masons' departure, and Louie had no patience with them—with the wife at any rate. It once or twice occurred to David that if the husband, a good-looking fellow and a very hard-worked shopman, had had more hours at home, Louie would have tried her blandishments upon him.

He on his side was goaded by Louie's behaviour into an unusual complaisance and liberality towards his tenants. Louie once contemptuously told him he would make a capital 'general help.' He was Mrs. Mason's coal-carrier and errand-boy already.

In the same way Louie beat and ill-treated a half-starved collie—one of the short-haired black sort familiar to the shepherd of the north, and to David himself in his farm days—which would haunt the shop and kitchen. Whereupon David felt all his heart melt towards the squalid, unhandsome creature. He fed and cherished it; it slept on his bed by night and followed him by day, he all the while protecting it from Louie with a strong hand. And the more evil was the eye she cast upon the dog, who, according to her, possessed all the canine vices, the more David loved it, and the more Tim was fattened and caressed.

In another direction, too, the same antagonism appeared. The sister's license of speech and behaviour towards the men who became her acquaintances provoked in the brother what often seemed to Ancrum—who, of course, remembered Reuben, and had heard many tales of old James Grieve, the lad's grandfather—a sort of Puritan reaction, the reaction of his race and stock against 'lewdness.' Louie's complete inde-

pendence, however, and the distance she preserved between his amusements and hers, left David no other weapon than sarcasm, which he employed freely. His fine sensitive mouth took during these weeks a curve half mocking, half bitter, which changed the whole expression of the face.

He saw, indeed, with great clearness after a month or so that Louie's wildness was by no means the wildness of an ignorant innocent, likely to slip unawares into perdition, and that, while she had a passionate greed for amusement and pleasure, and a blank absence of principle, she was still perfectly alive to the risks of life, and meant somehow both to enjoy herself and to steer herself through. But this gradual perception—that, in spite of her mode of killing spare time, she was not immediately likely to take any fatal false step, as he had imagined in his first dread—did but increase his inward repulsion.

A state of feeling which was the more remarkable because he himself, in Ancrum's eyes, was at the moment in a temper of moral relaxation and bewilderment! His absorption in George Sand, and through her in all the other French Romantics whose books he could either find for himself or borrow from Barbier, was carrying a ferment of passion and imagination through all his blood. Most social arrangements, including marriage, seemed to have become open questions to him. Why, then, this tone towards Louie and her friends? Was it that, apart from the influence of heredity, the young fellow's moral perception at this time was not ethical at all, but æsthetic—a matter of taste, of the presence or absence of certain ideal and poetic elements in conduct?

At any rate his friendship for old Barbier drew closer and closer, and Ancrum, who had begun to feel a lively affection for him, could see but little of him.

As to Barbier, it was a significant chance which had thrown him across David's path. In former days this lively Frenchman had been a small Paris journalist, whom the *coup d'état* had struck down with his betters, and who had escaped to England with one suit of clothes and eight francs in his pocket. He reminded himself on landing of a cousin of his mother's settled as a clerk in Manchester, found his way northwards, and had now, for some seventeen years, been maintaining himself in the cotton capital, mainly by teaching, but partly by a number of small arts—ornamental calligraphy, *mennu*-writing, and the like—too odd and various for description. He was a fanatic, a Red, much possessed by political hatreds which gave savour to an existence otherwise dull and peaceable enough. Religious beliefs were very scarce with him, but he had a certain literary creed, the creed of 1830, when he had been a scribbler in the train of Victor Hugo, which he did his best to put into David.

He was a formidable-looking person, six feet in height, and broad in proportion, with bushy white eyebrows, and a mouth made hideous by two projecting teeth. In speech he hated England and all her ways, and was for ever yearning towards the misguided and yet unequalled country which had cast him out. In heart he was perfectly aware that England is free as not even Republican France is free; and he was also sufficiently alive to the fact that he had made himself a very tolerable niche in Manchester, and was pleasantly regarded there—at least, in certain circles—as an oracle of French opinion, a commodity which, in a great commercial centre, may at any time have a cash value. He could, in truth, have long ago revisited *la patrie* had he had a mind, for governments are seldom vindictive in the case of people who can clearly do them no harm. This, however,

was not at all his own honest view of the matter. In the mirror of the mind he saw himself perpetually draped in the pathos of exile and the dignity of persecution, and the phrases by which he was wont to impress this inward vision on the brutal English sense had become, in the course of years, an effective and touching habit with him.

David had been Barbier's pupil in the first instance at one of the classes of the Mechanics' Institute. Never in Barbier's memory had any Manchester lad so applied himself to learn French before. And when the boy's knowledge of the Encyclopædists came out, and he one day put the master right in class on some points connected with Diderot's relations to Rousseau, the ex-journalist gaped with astonishment, and then went home and read up his facts, half enraged and half enraptured. David's zeal piqued him, made him a better Frenchman and a better teacher than he had been for years. He was a vain man, and David's capacities put him on his mettle.

Very soon he and the lad had become intimate. He had described to David the first night of *Hernani*, when he had been one of the long-haired band of *rapins*, who came down in their scores to the Théâtre Français to defend their chief, Hugo, against the hisses of the Philistine. The two were making coffee in Barbier's attic, at the top of a side street off the Oxford Road, when these memories seized upon the old Romantic. He took up the empty coffee-pot, and brandished it from side to side as though it had been the sword of *Hernani*; the miserable Academy hugging its Molière and Racine fled before him; the world was once more regenerate, and Hugo its high priest. Passages from the different parts welled to his old lips; he gave the play over again—the scene between the lover and the husband, where the husband lays

down the strange and sinister penalty to which the lover submits—the exquisite love-scene in the fifth act—and the cry of agonised passion with which Doña Sol defends her love against his executioner. All these things he declaimed, stumping up and down, till the terrified landlady rose out of her bed to remonstrate, and got the door locked in her face for her pains, and till the *bourgeois* baby in the next room woke up and roared, and so put an abrupt end to the performance. Old Barbier sat down swearing, poked the fire furiously, and then, taking out a huge red handkerchief, wiped his brow with a trembling hand. His stiff white hair, parted on either temple, bristled like a high *toupie* over his round, black eyes, which glowed behind his spectacles. And meanwhile the handsome boy sat opposite, glad to laugh by way of reaction, but at bottom stirred by the same emotion, and ready to share in the same adorations.

Gradually David learnt his way about this bygone world of Barbier's recollection. A vivid picture sprang up in him of these strange leaders of a strange band, these cadaverous poets and artists of Louis Philippe's early days,—beings in love with Lord Byron and suicide, having Art for God, and Hugo for prophet, talking of were-wolves, vampires, cathedrals, sunrises, forests, passion and despair, hatted like brigands, cloaked after Vandyke, curled like Absalom, making new laws unto themselves in verse as in morals, and leaving all petty talk of duty or common sense to the Academy and the nursery.

George Sand walking the Paris quays in male dress—George Sand at Fontainebleau roaming the midnight forest with Alfred de Musset or wintering with her dying musician among the mountains of Palma; Gérard de Nerval, wanderer, poet, and suicide; Alfred de Musset flaming into verse at dead of night amid an



answering and spendthrift blaze of wax candles: Baudelaire's blasphemies and eccentricities—these characters and incidents Barbier wove into endless highly coloured tales, to which David listened with perpetual relish.

'*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* What times! What memories!' the old Frenchman would cry at last, fairly re-transported to the word of his youth, and, springing up, he would run to the little cupboard by his bed head, where he kept a score or so of little paper volumes—volumes which the tradesman David soon discovered, from a curious study of French catalogues, to have a fast-rising money value—and out would come Alfred de Musset's '*Nuit de Mai,*' or an outrageous verse from Baudelaire, or an harmonious nothing from Gautier. David gradually learnt to follow, to understand, to range all that he heard in a mental setting of his own. The France of his imagination indeed was a strange land! Everybody in it was either girding at priests like Voltaire, or dying for love like George Sand's Sténio.

But whether the picture was true to life or no, it had a very strongly marked effect on the person conceiving it. Just as the speculative complexion of his first youth had been decided by the chance which brought him into daily contact with the French eighteenth century—for no self-taught solitary boy of quick and covetous mind can read Voltaire continuously without bearing the marks of him henceforward—so in the same way, when he passed, as France had done before him, from the philosophers to the Romantics, this constant preoccupation with the French literature of passion in its romantic and idealist period left deep and lasting results.

The strongest of these results lay in the realm of moral and social sense. What struck the lad's raw

mind with more and more force as he gathered his French books about him was the profound gulf which seemed to divide the average French conception of the relation between the sexes from the average English one. In the French novels he read every young man had his mistress; every married woman her lover. Tragedy frequently arose out of these relations, but that the relations must and did obtain, as a matter of course, was assumed. For the delightful heroes and heroines of a whole range of fiction, from 'Manon Lescaut' down to Murger's 'Vie de Bohème,' marriage did not apparently exist, even as a matter of argument. And as to the duties of the married woman, when she passed on to the canvas, the code was equally simple. The husband might kill his wife's lover—that was in the game; but the young man's right to be was as good as his own. '*No human being can control love, and no one is to blame either for feeling it or for losing it. What alone degrades a woman is falsehood.*' So says the husband in George Sand's 'Jacques' when he is just about to fling himself down an Alpine precipice that his wife and Octave may have their way undisturbed. And all the time, what poetry and passion in the presentation of these things! Beside them the mere remembrance of English ignorance, prudishness, and conventionality would set the lad swelling, as he read, with a sense of superior scorn, and of wild sympathy for a world in which love and not law, truth and not legal fiction, were masters of human relations.

Some little time after Reuben's visit to him he one day told Barbier the fact of his French descent. Barbier declared that he had always known it, had always realised something in David distinct from the sluggish huckstering English temper. Why, David's mother was from the south of France; his own family came

from Carcassonne. No doubt the rich Gascon blood ran in both their veins. *Salut au compatriote!*

Thenceforward there was a greater solidarity between the two than ever. Barbier fell into an incessant gossip of Paris—the Paris of Louis Philippe—reviving memories and ways of speech which had been long dead in him, and leaving on David's mind the impression of a place where life was from morning till night amusement, exhilaration, and seduction; where, under the bright smokeless sky, and amid the stateliest streets and public buildings in Europe, men were always witty and women always attractive.

Meanwhile the course of business during the spring months and the rise of his trade in foreign books rapidly brought the scheme of a visit to France, which had been at first a mere dream and fancy, within the region of practical possibility, and even advantage, for the young bookseller. Two things he was set on. If he went he was determined to go under such conditions as would enable him to see French life—especially French artistic and student life—from the inside. And he saw with some clearness that he would have to take his sister with him.

Against the latter notion Barbier protested vehemently.

‘What do you want to tie yourself to a petticoat for? If you take the girl you will have to look after her. Paris, my boy, let me inform you, is not the best place in the world for *la jeune personne*; and the Paris *rapin* may be an amusing scoundrel, but don't trust him with young women if you can help it. Leave Mademoiselle Louie at home, and let her mind the shop. Get Mademoiselle Dora or some one to stay with her, or send her to Mademoiselle Dora.’

So said the Frenchman with sharp dictatorial emphasis. What a preposterous suggestion!

‘I can’t stop her coming,’ said David, quietly—‘if she wants to come—and she’ll be sure to want. Besides, I’ll not leave her alone at home, and she’ll not let me send her anywhere—you may be sure of that.’

The Frenchman stared and stormed. David fell silent. Louie was what she was, and it was no use discussing her. At last Barbier, being after all tolerably well acquainted with the lad’s relations to his sister, came to a sudden end of his rhetoric, and began to think out something practicable.

That evening he wrote to a nephew of his living as an artist in the Quartier Montmartre. Some months before Barbier’s vanity had been flattered by an adroit letter from this young gentleman, written, if the truth were known, at a moment when a pecuniary situation, pinched almost beyond endurance, had made it seem worth while to get his uncle’s address out of his widowed mother. Barbier, a bachelor, and a man of some small savings, perfectly understood why he had been approached, and had been none the less extraordinarily glad to hear from the youth. He was a *rapin*? well and good; all the great men had been *rapins* before him. Very likely he had the *rapin*’s characteristic vices and distractions. All the world knew what the life meant for nine men out of ten. What was the use of preaching? Youth was youth. Clearly the old man—himself irreproachable—would have been disappointed not to find his nephew a sad dog on personal acquaintance.

‘Tell me, Xavier,’ his letter ran, ‘how to put a young friend of mine in the way of seeing something of Paris and Paris life, more than your fool of a tourist generally sees. He is a bookseller, and will, of course, mind his trade; but he is a young man of taste and intelligence besides, and moreover half French. It would be a pity that he should visit Paris as any

*sacré* British Philistine does. Advise me where to place him. He would like to see something of your artist's life. But mind this, young man, he brings a sister with him as handsome as the devil, and not much easier to manage: so if you do advise—no tricks—tell me of something *convenable*.'

A few days later Barbier appeared in Potter Street just after David had put up the shutters, announcing that he had a proposal to make.

David unlocked the shop-door and let him in. Barbier looked round with some amazement on the small stuffy place, piled to bursting by now with books of every kind, which only John's herculean efforts could keep in passable order.

'Why don't you house yourself better—*hein?*' said the Frenchman. 'A business growing like this, and nothing but a den to handle it in!'

'I shall be all right when I get my other room,' said David composedly. 'Couldn't turn out the lodger before. The woman was only confined last week.'

And as he spoke the wailing of an infant and a skurrying of feet were heard upstairs.

'So it seems,' said Barbier, adjusting his spectacles in bewilderment. *Jésus!* What an affair! What did you permit it for? Why didn't you turn her out in time?'

'I would have turned myself out first,' said David. He was lounging, with his hands in his pockets, against the books; but though his attitude was nonchalant, his tone had a vibrating energy.

'Barbier!'

'Yes.'

'What do women suffer for like that?'

The young man's eyes glowed, and his lips twitched a little, as though some poignant remembrance were at his heart.

Barbier looked at him with some curiosity.

‘Ask *le bon Dieu* and Mother Eve, my friend. It lies between them,’ said the old scoffer, with a shrug.

David looked away in silence. On his quick mind, greedy of all human experience, the night of Mrs. Mason’s confinement, with its sounds of anguish penetrating through all the upper rooms of the thin, ill-built house, had left an ineffaceable impression of awe and terror. In the morning, when all was safely over, he came down to the kitchen to find the husband—a man some two or three years older than himself, and the smart foreman of an ironmongery shop in Deansgate—crouching over a bit of fire. The man was too much excited to apologise for his presence in the Grieves’ room. David shyly asked him a question about his wife.

‘Oh, it ’s all right, the doctor says. There ’s the nurse with her, and your sister ’s got the baby. She ’ll do; but, oh, my God! it ’s awful—*it ’s awful!* My poor Liz! Give me a corner here, will you! I’m all upset like.’

David had got some food out of the cupboard, made him eat it, and chatted to him till the man was more himself again. But the crying of the new-born child overhead, together with the shaken condition of this clever, self-reliant young fellow, so near his own age, seemed for the moment to introduce the lad to new and unknown regions of human feeling.

While these images were pursuing each other through David’s mind, Barbier was poking among his foreign books, which lay, backs upwards, on the floor to one side of the counter.

‘Do you sell them—*hein?*’ he said, looking up and pointing to them with his stick.

‘Yes. Especially the scientific books. These are an order. So is that batch. Napoleon III.’s “*Cæsar,*”

isn't it? And those over there are "on spec." Oh, I could do something if I knew more! There's a man over at Oldham. One of the biggest weaving-sheds—cotton velvets—that kind of thing. He's awfully rich, and he's got a French library; a big one, I believe. He came in here yesterday. I think I could make something out of him; but he wants all sorts of rum things—last-century memoirs, out-of-the-way ones—everything about Moutaigne—first editions—Lord knows what! I say, Barbier, I dare say he'd buy your books. What'll you let me have them for?'

'*Diantre!* Not for your heart's blood, my young man. It's like your impudence to ask. You could sell more if you knew more, you think? Well now listen to me.'

The Frenchman sat down, adjusted his spectacles, and, taking a letter from his pocket, read it with deliberation.

It was from the nephew, Xavier Dubois, in answer to his uncle's inquiries. Nothing, the writer declared, could have been more opportune. He himself was just off to Belgium, where a friend had procured him a piece of work on a new Government building. Why should not his uncle's friends inhabit his rooms during his absence? He must keep them on, and would find it very convenient, that being so, that some one should pay the rent. There was his studio, which was bare, no doubt, but quite habitable, and a little *cabinet de toilette* adjoining, and shut off, containing a bed and all necessaries. Why should not the sister take the bedroom, and let the brother camp somehow in the studio? He could no doubt borrow a bed from some friend before they came, and with a large screen, which was one of the 'studio properties,' a very tolerable sleeping room could be improvised, and still leave a good deal of the studio free. He understood that

his uncle's friends were not looking for luxury. But *le stricte nécessaire* he could provide.

Meanwhile the Englishman and his sister would find themselves at once in the artists' circle, and might see as much or as little as they liked of artistic life. He (Dubois) could of course give them introductions. There was a sculptor, for instance, on the ground floor, a man of phenomenal genius, *joli garçon* besides, who would certainly show himself *amiable* for anybody introduced by Dubois; and on the floor above there was a landscape painter, *ancien prix de Rome*, and his wife, who would also, no doubt, make themselves agreeable, and to whom the brother and sister might go for all necessary information—Dubois would see to that. Sixty francs a month paid the *appartement*; a trifle for service if you desired it—there was, however, no compulsion—to the *concierge* would make you comfortable; and as for your food, the Quartier Montmartre abounded in cheap restaurants, and you might live as you pleased for one franc a day or twenty. He suggested that on the whole no better opening was likely to be found by two young persons of spirit, anxious to see Paris from the inside.

'Now then,' said Barbier, taking off his spectacles with an authoritative click, as he shut up the letter, '*décide-toi*. Go!—and look about you for a fortnight. Improve your French; get to know some of the Paris bookmen; take some commissions out with you—buy there to the best advantage, and come back twenty per cent. better informed than when you set out.'

He smote his hands upon his knees with energy. He had a love of management and contrivance; and the payment of Eugène's rent for him during his absence weighed with his frugal mind.

David stood twisting his mouth in silence a moment, his head thrown back against the books.



‘Well, I don’t see why not,’ he said at last, his eyes sparkling.

‘And take notice, my friend,’ said Barbier, tapping the open letter, ‘the *ancien prix de Rome* has a wife. Where wives are young women can go. Xavier can prepare the way, and, if you play your cards well, you can get Mademoiselle Louie taken off your hands while you go about.’

David nodded. He was sitting astride on the counter, his face shining with the excitement he was now too much of a man to show with the old freedom.

Suddenly there was a sound of wild voices from the inside room.

‘Miss Grieve! Miss Grieve! don’t you take that child away. Bring it back, I say; I’ll go to your brother, I will!’

‘That’s Mrs. Mason’s nurse,’ said David, springing off the counter. ‘What’s up now?’

He threw open the door into the kitchen, just as Louie swept into the room from the other side. She had a white bundle in her arms, and her face was flushed with a sly triumph. After her ran the stout woman who was looking after Mrs. Mason, purple with indignation.

‘Now look yo here, Mr. Grieve,’ she cried at sight of David, ‘I can’t stand it, and I won’t. Am I in charge of Mrs. Mason or am I not? Here’s Miss Grieve, as soon as my back’s turned, as soon as I’ve laid that blessed baby in its cot as quiet as a lamb—and it’s been howling since three o’clock this morning, as *yo* know—in she whips, claws it out of its cradle, and is off wi’ it, Lord knows where. Thank the Lord, Mrs. Mason’s asleep! If she weren’t, she’d have a fit. She’s feart to death o’ Miss Grieve. We noather on us know what to make on her. She’s like a wild thing soom-times—not a human erectur at aw—Gie me that chilt, I tell tha!’

Louie vouchsafed no answer. She sat down composedly before the fire, and, cradling the still sleeping child on her knee, she bent over it examining its waxen hands and tiny feet with an eager curiosity. The nurse, who stood over her trembling with anger, and only deterred from snatching the child away by the fear of wakening it, might have been talking to the wall.

‘Now, look here, Louie, what d’ you do that for?’ said David, remonstrating; ‘why can’t you leave the child alone? You’ll be putting Mrs. Mason in a taking, and that ’ll do her harm.’

‘Nowt o’ t’ sort,’ said Louie composedly, ‘it ’s that woman there ’ll wake her with her screeching. She’s asleep, and the baby’s asleep, and I’m taking care of it. Why can’t Mrs. Bury go and look after Mrs. Mason? She hasn’t swept her room this two days, and it ’s a sight to see.’

Pricked in a tender point, Mrs. Bury broke out again into a stream of protest and invective, only modified by her fear of waking her patient upstairs, and interrupted by appeals to David. But whenever she came near to take the baby Louie put her hands over it, and her wide black eyes shot out intimidating flames before which the aggressor invariably fell back.

Attracted by the fight, Barbier had come up to look, and now stood by the shop-door, riveted by Louie’s strange beauty. She wore the same black and scarlet dress in which she had made her first appearance in Manchester. She now never wore it out of doors, her quick eye having at once convinced her that it was not in the fashion. But the instinct which had originally led her to contrive it was abundantly justified whenever she still condescended to put it on, so startling a relief it lent to the curves of her slim figure, developed during the last two years of growth to all

womanly roundness and softness, and to the dazzling colour of her dark head and thin face. As she sat by the fire, the white bundle on her knee, one pointed foot swinging in front of her, now hanging over the baby, and now turning her bright dangerous look and compressed lips on Mrs. Bury, she made a peculiar witch-like impression on Barbier which thrilled his old nerves agreeably. It was clear, he thought, that the girl wanted a husband and a family of her own. Otherwise why should she run off with other people's children? But he would be a bold man who ventured on her!

David, at last seeing that Louie was in the mood to tear the babe asunder rather than give it up, with difficulty induced Mrs. Bury to leave her in possession for half an hour, promising that, as soon as the mother woke, the child should be given back.

'If I've had enough of it,' Louie put in, as a saving clause, luckily just too late to be heard by the nurse, who had sulkily closed the door behind her, declaring that 'sich an owdacious chit she never saw in her born days, and niver heerd on one oather.'

David and Barbier went back into the shop to talk, leaving Louie to her nursing. As soon as she was alone she laid back the flannel which lay round the child's head, and examined every inch of its downy poll and puckered face, her warm breath making the tiny lips twitch in sleep as it travelled across them. Then she lifted the little nightgown and looked at the pink feet nestling in their flannel wrapping. A glow sprang into her cheek; her great eyes devoured the sleeping creature. Its weakness and helplessness, its plasticity to anything she might choose to do with it, seemed to intoxicate her. She looked round her furtively, then bent and laid a hot covetous kiss on the small clenched hand. The child moved; had it been

a little older it would have wakened; but Louie, hastily covering it up, began to rock it and sing to it.

The door into the shop was ajar. As David and Barbier were hanging together over a map of Paris which David had hunted out of his stores, Barbier suddenly threw up his head with a queer look.

‘What’s that she’s singing?’ he said quickly.

He got up hastily, overturning his stool as he did so, and went to the door to listen.

‘I haven’t heard that,’ he said, with some agitation, ‘since my father’s sister used to sing it me when I was a small lad, up at Augoumat in the mountains near Puy!’

Sur le pont d’Avignon  
Tout le monde y danse en rond;  
Les beaux messieurs font comme ça,  
Les beaux messieurs font comme ça.

The words were but just distinguishable as Louie sang. They were clipped and mutilated as by one who no longer understood what they meant. But the intonation was extraordinarily French, French of the South, and Barbier could hardly stand still under it.

‘Where did you learn that?’ he called to her from the door.

The girl stopped and looked at him with her bright bird-like glance. But she made no reply.

‘Did your mother teach it you?’ he asked, coming in.

‘I suppose so,’ she said indifferently.

‘Can you talk any French—do you remember it?’

‘No.’

‘But you’d soon learn. You haven’t got the English mouth, that’s plain. Do you know your brother thinks of taking you to Paris?’

She started.

‘He don’t,’ she said laconically.

‘Oh, don’t he. Just ask him then?’

Ten minutes later Louie had been put in possession of the situation. As David had fully expected, she took no notice whatever of his suggestion that after all she might not care to come. They might be rough quarters, he said, and queer people about; and it would cost a terrible deal more for two than one. Should he not ask Dora Lomax to take her in for a fortnight? John, of course, would look after the shop. He spoke under the pressure of a sudden qualm, knowing it would be no use; but his voice had almost a note of entreaty in it.

‘When do you want to be starting?’ she asked him sharply. ‘I’ll not go to Dora’s—so you needn’t talk o’ that. You can take the money out of what you’ll be owing me next month.’

Her nostrils dilated as the quick breath passed through them. Barbier was fascinated by the extraordinary animation of the face, and could not take his eyes off her.

‘Not for a fortnight,’ said David reluctantly, answering her question. ‘Barbier’s letter says about the tenth of May. There’s two country sales I must go to, and some other things to settle.’

She nodded.

‘Well, then, I can get some things ready,’ she said half to herself, staring across the baby into the fire.

When David and Barbier were gone together ‘up street,’ still talking over their plans, Louie leapt to her feet and laid the baby down—carelessly, as though she no longer cared anything at all about it—in the old-fashioned armchair wherein David spent so many midnight vigils. Then locking her hands behind her, she paced up and down the narrow room with the springing gait, the impetuous feverish grace, of some prisoned animal. Paris! Her education was small,

and her ignorance enormous. But in the columns of a 'lady's paper' she had often bought from the station bookstall at Clough End she had devoured nothing more eagerly than the Paris letter, with its luscious descriptions of 'Paris fashions,' whereby even Lancashire women, even Clough End mill-hands in their Sunday best, were darkly governed from afar. All sorts of bygone dreams recurred to her—rich and subtle combinations of silks, satins, laces, furs, imaginary glories clothing an imaginary Louie Grieve. The remembrance of them filled her with a greed past description, and she forthwith conceived Paris as a place all shops, each of them superior to the best in St. Ann's Square—where one might gloat before the windows all day.

She made a spring to the door, and ran upstairs to her own room. There she began to pull out her dresses and scatter them about the floor, looking at them with a critical discontented eye.

Time passed. She was standing absorbed before an old gown, planning out its renovation, when a howl arose from downstairs. She fled like a roe deer, and pounced upon the baby just in time to checkmate Mrs. Bury, who was at her heels.

Quite regardless of the nurse's exasperation with her, first for leaving the child alone, half uncovered, in a chilly room, and now for again withholding it, Louie put the little creature against her neck, rocking and crooning to it. The sudden warm contact stilled the baby; it rubbed its head into the soft hollow thus presented to it, and its hungry lips sought eagerly for their natural food. The touch of them sent a delicious thrill through Louie; she turned her head round and kissed the tiny, helpless cheek with a curious violence; then, tired of Mrs. Bury, and anxious to get back to her plans, she almost threw the child to her.

‘There—take it! I’ll soon get it again when I want to.’

And she was as good as her word. The period of convalescence was to poor Mrs. Mason—a sickly, plaintive creature at the best of times—one long struggle and misery. Louie represented to her a sort of bird of prey, who was for ever descending on her child and carrying it off to unknown lairs. For neither mother nor nurse had Louie the smallest consideration; she despised and tyrannised over them both. But her hungry fondness for the baby grew with gratification, and there was no mastering her in the matter. Warm weather came, and when she reached home after her work, she managed by one ruse or another to get hold of the child, and on one occasion she disappeared with it into the street for hours. David was amazed by the whim, but neither he nor anyone else could control it. At last, Mrs. Mason was more or less hysterical all day long, and hardly sane when Louie was within reach. As for the husband, who managed to be more at home during the days of his wife’s weakness than he had yet been since David’s tenancy began, he complained to David and spoke his mind to Louie once or twice, and then, suddenly, he ceased to pay any attention to his wife’s wails. With preternatural quickness the wife guessed the reason. A fresh terror seized her—terror of the girl’s hateful beauty. She dragged herself from her bed, found a room, while Louie was at her work, and carried off baby and husband, leaving no address. Luckily for her, the impression of Louie’s black eyes proved to have been a passing intoxication, and the poor mother breathed and lived again.

Meanwhile Louie’s excitement and restlessness over the Paris plan made her more than usually trying to Dora. During this fortnight she could never be counted on for work, not even when it was a question of finish-

ing an important commission. She was too full of her various preparations. Barbier offered her, for instance, a daily French lesson. She grasped in an instant the facilities which even the merest smattering of French would give her in Paris; every night she sat up over her phrase book, and every afternoon she cut her work short to go to Barbier. Her whole life seemed to be one flame of passionate expectation, though what exactly she expected it would have been hard to say.

Poor Dora! She had suffered many things in much patience all these weeks. Louie's clear, hard mind, her sensuous temperament, her apparent lack of all maidenly reserve, all girlish softness, made her incomprehensible to one for whom life was an iridescent web of ideal aims and obligations. The child of grace was dragged out of her own austere or delicate thoughts, and made to touch, taste, and handle what the 'world,' as the Christian understands it, might be like. Like every other daughter of the people, Dora was familiar enough with sin and weakness—Daddy alone had made her amply acquainted with both at one portion or another of his career. But just this particular temper of Louie's, with its apparent lack both of passion and of moral sense, was totally new to her, and produced at times a stifling impression upon her, without her being able to explain to herself with any clearness what was the matter.

Yet, in truth, it often seemed as if the lawless creature had been in some sort touched by Dora, as if daily contact with a being so gentle and so magnanimous had won even upon her. That confidence, for instance, which Louie had promised John, at Dora's expense, had never been made. When it came to the point, some touch of remorse, of shame, had sealed the girl's mocking lips.

One little fact in particular had amazed Dora.



Louie insisted, for a caprice, on going with her one night, in Easter week, to St. Damian's, and thenceforward went often. What attracted her, Dora puzzled herself to discover. When, however, Louie had been a diligent spectator, even at early services, for some weeks, Dora timidly urged that she might be confirmed, and that Father Russell would take her into his class. Louie laughed immoderately at the idea, but continued to go to St. Damian's all the same. Dora could not bear to be near her in church, but however far away she might place herself, she was more conscious than she liked to be of Louie's conspicuous figure and hat thrown out against a particular pillar which the girl affected. The sharp uplifted profile with its disdainful expression drew her eyes against their will. She was also constantly aware of the impression Louie made upon the crowd, of the way in which she was stared at and remarked upon. Whenever she passed in or out of the church, people turned, and the girl, expecting it, and totally unabashed, flashed her proud look from side to side.

But once in her place, she was not inattentive. The dark chancel with its flowers and incense, the rich dresses and slow movements of the priests, the excitement of the processional hymns—these things caught her and held her. Her look was fixed and eager all the time. As to the clergy, Dora spoke to Father Russell's sister, and some efforts were made to get hold of the new-comer. But none of them were at all successful. The girl slipped through everybody's hands. Only in the case of one of the curates, a man with a powerful, ugly head, and a penetrating personality, did she show any wavering. Dora fancied that she put herself once or twice in his way, that something about him attracted her, and that he might have influenced her. But as soon as the Paris project rose

on the horizon, Louie thought of nothing else. Father Impey and St. Damian's, like everything else, were forgotten. She never went near the church from the evening David told her his news to the day they left Manchester.

David ran in to say good-bye to Daddy and Dora on the night before they were to start. Since the Paris journey had been in the air, Daddy's friendliness for the young fellow had revived. He was not, after all, content to sit at home upon his six hundred pounds 'like a hatching hen,' and so far Daddy, whose interest in him had been for the time largely dashed by his sudden accession to fortune, was appeased.

When David appeared Lomax was standing on the rug, with a book under his arm.

'Well, good-bye to you, young man, good-bye to you. And here's a book to take with you that you may read in the train. It will stir you up a bit, give you an idea or two. Don't you come back too soon.'

'Father,' remonstrated Dora, who was standing by, 'who's to look after his business?'

'Be quiet, Dora! That book 'll show him what can be made even of a beastly bookseller.'

David took it from him, looked at the title, and laughed. He knew it well. It was the 'Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London,' the eccentric record of a seventeenth-century dealer in books, who, like Daddy, had been a character and a vagrant.

'Och! Don't I know it by heart?' said Daddy, with enthusiasm. 'Many a time it's sent me off tramping, when my poor Isabella thought she'd got me tied safe by the heels in the chimney corner. "*Though* love is strong as death, and every good man loves his wife as himself, *yet*—many's the score of times I've said it off pat to Isabella—*yet* I cannot think of being confined

in a narrower study than the whole world." There's a man for you! He gets rid of one wife and saddles himself with another—sorrow a bit will he stop at home for either of them! "Finding I am for travelling, Valeria, to show the height of her love, is as willing I should see Europe as Eliza was I should see America." Och! give me the book, you divil,' cried Daddy, growing more and more Hibernian as his passion rose, 'and, bedad, but I'll drive it into you.'

And, reaching over, Daddy seized it, and turned over the pages with a trembling hand. Dora flushed, and the tears rose into her eyes. She realised perfectly that this performance was levelled at her at least as much as at David. Daddy's mad irritability had grown of late with every week.

'Listen to this, Davy!' cried Daddy, putting up his hand for silence. "When I have crossed the Hellespont, where poor Leander was drowned, Greece, China, and the Holy Land are the other three countries I'm bound to. And perhaps when my hand is in——"

'*My hand is in!*' repeated Daddy, in an ecstasy. 'What a jewel of a man!'

'I may step thence to the Indies, for I am a true lover of travels, and, when I am once mounted, care not whether I meet the sun at his rising or going down, provided only I may but ramble . . . *He* is truly a scholar who is versed in the volume of the Universe, who doth not so much read of Nature as study Nature herself.'

'Well said—well said indeed!' cried Daddy, flinging the book down with a wild gesture which startled them both. 'Was that the man, Adrian Lomax, to spend the only hours of the only life he was ever likely to see—his first thought in the morning, and his last thought at night—in tickling the stomachs of Manchester clerks?'

His peaked chin and straggling locks fell forward on his breast. He stared sombrely at the young people before him, in an attitude which, as usual, was the attitude of an actor.

David's natural instinct was to jeer. But a glance at Dora perplexed him. There was some tragedy he did not understand under this poor comedy.

'Don't speak back,' said Dora, hurriedly, under her breath, as she passed him to get her frame. 'It only makes him worse.'

After a few minutes' broken chat, which Daddy's mood made it difficult to keep up, David took his departure. Dora followed him downstairs.

'You're going to be away a fortnight,' she said, timidly.

As she spoke, she moved her head backwards and forwards against the wall, as though it ached, and she could not find a restful spot.

'Oh, we shall be back by then, never fear!' said David, cheerfully. He was growing more and more sorry for her.

'I should like to see foreign parts,' she said wistfully. 'Is there a beautiful church, a cathedral, in Paris? Oh, there are a great many in France, I know! I've heard the people at St. Damian's speak of them. I would like to see the services. But they can't be nicer than ours.'

David smiled.

'I'm afraid I can't tell you much about them, Miss Dora; they aren't in my line. Good-bye, and keep your heart up.'

He was going, but he turned back to say quickly—

'Why don't you let him go off for a bit of a tramp? It might quiet him.'

'I would; I would,' she said eagerly; 'but I don't know what would come of it. We're dreadfully be-

hindhand this month, and if he were to go away, people would be down on us; they'd think he wanted to get out of paying.'

He stayed talking a bit, trying to advise her, and, in the first place, trying to find out how wrong things were. But she had not yet come to the point of disclosing her father's secrets. She parried his questions, showing him all the while, by look and voice, that she was grateful to him for asking—for earing.

He went at last, and she locked the door behind him. But when that was done, she stood still in the dark, wringing her hands in a silent passion of longing—longing to be with him, outside, in the night, to hear his voice, to see his handsome looks again. Oh! the fortnight would be long. So long as he was there, within a stone's throw, though he did not love her, and she was sad and anxious, yet Manchester held her treasure, and Manchester streets had glamour, had charm.

He walked to Piccadilly, and took a 'bus to Mortimer Street. He must say good-bye also to Mr. Ancrum, who had been low and ill of late.

'So you are off, David?' said Ancrum, rousing himself from what seemed a melancholy brooding over books that he was in truth not reading. As David shook hands with him, the small fusty room, the pale face and crippled form awoke in the lad a sense of indescribable dreariness. In a flash of recoil and desire his thought sprang to the journey of the next day—to the May seas—the foreign land.

'Well, good luck to you!' said the minister, altering his position so as to look at his visitor full, and doing it with a slowness which showed that all movement was an effort. 'Look after you sister, Davy.'

David had sat down at Ancrum's invitation. He said nothing in answer to this last remark, and Ancrum

could not decipher him in the darkness visible of the ill-trimmed lamp.

‘She’s been on your mind, Davy, hasn’t she?’ he said, gently, laying his blanched hand on the young man’s knee.

‘Well, perhaps she has,’ David admitted, with an odd note in his voice. ‘She’s not an easy one to manage.’

‘No. But you’ve *got* to manage her, Davy. There’s only you and she together. It’s your task. It’s set you. And you’re young, indeed, and raw, to have that beautiful self-willed creature on your hands.’

‘Beautiful? Do you think she’s that?’ David tried to laugh it off.

The minister nodded.

‘You’ll find it out in Paris even more than you have here. Paris is a bad place, they say. So’s London, for the matter of that. Davy, before you go, I’ve got one thing to say to you.’

‘Say away, sir.’

‘You know a great deal, Davy. My wits are nothing to yours. You’ll shoot ahead of all your old friends, my boy, some day. But there’s one thing you know nothing about—absolutely nothing—and you prate as if you did. Perhaps you must turn Christian before you do. I don’t know. At least, so long as you’re not a Christian you won’t know what *we* mean by it—what the Bible means by it. It’s one little word, Davy—*sin*.’

The minister spoke with a deep intensity, as though his whole being were breathed into what he said. David sat silent and embarrassed, opposition rising in him to what he thought ministerial assumption.

‘Well, I don’t know what you mean,’ he said, after a pause. ‘One needn’t be very old to find out that a

good many people and things in the world are pretty bad. Only we Secularists explain it differently from you. We put a good deal of it down to education, or health, or heredity.'

'Oh, I know—I know!' said the minister hastily, as though shrinking from the conversation he had himself evoked. 'I'm not fit to talk about it, Davy. I'm ill, I think! But there were those two things I wanted to say to you—your sister—and——'

His voice dropped. He shaded his eyes and looked away from David into the smouldering coals.

'No—no,' he resumed almost in a whisper; 'it's the *will*—it's the *will*. It's not anything he says, and Christ—*Christ*'s the only help.'

Again there was a silence. David studied his old teacher attentively, as far as the half-light availed him. The young man was simply angry with a religion which could torment a soul and body like this. Ancrum had been 'down' in this way for a long time now. Was another of his black fits approaching? If so, religion was largely responsible for them!

When at last David sighted his own door, he perceived a figure lounging on the steps.

'I say,' he said to himself with a groan, 'it's John!'

'What on earth do you want, John, at this time of night?' he demanded. But he knew perfectly.

'Look here!' said the other thickly, 'it's all straight. You're coming back in a fortnight, and you'll bring her back too!'

David laughed impatiently.

'Do you think I shall lose her in Paris or drop her in the Channel?'

'I don't know,' said Dalby, with a curiously heavy and indistinct utterance. 'She's very bad to me. She won't ever marry me; I know that. But when I

think I might never see her again I'm fit to go and hang myself.'

David began to kick the pebbles in the road.

'You know what I think about it all,' he said at last, gloomily. 'I've told you before now. She couldn't care for you if she tried. It isn't a ha'p'orth of good. I don't believe she'll ever care for anybody. Anyway, she'll marry nobody who can't give her money and fine clothes. There! You may put that in your pipe and smoke it, for it's as true as you stand there.'

John turned round restlessly, laid his hands against the wall, and his head upon them.

'Well, it don't matter,' he said slowly, after a pause. 'I'll be here early. Good night!'

David stood and looked after him in mingled disgust and pity.

'I must pack him off,' he said, 'I must.'

Then he threw back his young shoulders and drew in the warm spring air with a long breath. Away with care and trouble! Things would come right—must come right. This weather was summer, and in forty-eight hours they would be in Paris!



BOOK III  
STORM AND STRESS



## CHAPTER I

THE brother and sister left Manchester about midday, and spent the night in London at a little City hotel much frequented by Nonconformist ministers, which Ancrum had recommended.

Then next day! How little those to whom all the widest opportunities of life come for the asking, can imagine such a zest, such a freshness of pleasure! David had hesitated long before the expense of the day service *via* Calais; they could have gone by night third class for half the money; or they could have taken returns by one of the cheaper and longer routes. But the eagerness to make the most of every hour of time and daylight prevailed; they were to go by Calais and come back by Dieppe, seeing thereby as much as possible on the two journeys in addition to the fortnight in Paris. The mere novelty of going anything but third class was full of savour; Louie's self-conscious dignity as she settled herself into her corner on leaving Charing Cross caught David's eye; he saw himself reflected and laughed.

It was a glorious day, the firstling of the summer. In the blue overhead the great clouds rose intensely thunderously white, and journeyed seaward under a light westerly wind. The railway banks, the copses were all primroses; every patch of water had in it the white and azure of the sky; the lambs were lying in the still scanty shadow of the elms; every garden

showed its tulips and wallflowers, and the air, the sunlight, the vividness of each hue and line bore with them an intoxicating joy, especially for eyes still adjusted to the tones and lights of Manchester in winter.

The breeze carried them merrily over a dancing sea. And once on the French side they spent their first hour in crossing from one side of their carriage to the other, pointing and calling incessantly. For the first time since certain rare moments in their childhood they were happy together and at one. Mother earth unrolled for them a corner of her magic show, and they took it like children at the play, now shouting, now spell-bound.

David had George Sand's 'Mauprat' on his knee, but he read nothing the whole day. Never had he used his eyes so intently, so passionately. Nothing escaped them, neither the detail of that strange and beautiful fen from which Amiens rises—a country of peat and peat-cutters where the green plain is diapered with innumerable tiny lakes edged with black heaps of turf and daintily set with scattered trees—nor the delicate charm of the forest lands about Chantilly. So much thinner and gracefuller these woods were than English woods! French art and skill were here already in the wild country. Each tree stood out as though it had been personally thought for; every plantation was in regular lines; each woody walk drove straight from point to point, following out a plan orderly and intricate as a spider's web.

By this time Louie's fervour of curiosity and attention had very much abated; she grew tired and cross, and presently fell asleep. But, with every mile less between them and Paris, David's pulse beat faster, and his mind became more absorbed in the flying scene. He hung beside the window, thrilling with

enchantment and delight, drinking in the soft air, the beauty of the evening clouds, the wonderful greens and silvers and fiery browns of the poplars. His mind was full of images—the deep lily-sprinkled lake wherein Sténio, Lélia's poet lover, plunged and died; the grandiose landscape of Victor Hugo; René sitting on the cliffside, and looking farewell to the white home of his childhood; of lines from 'Childe Harold' and from Shelley. His mind was in a ferment of youth and poetry, and the France he saw was not the workaday France of peasant and high road and factory, but the creation of poetic intelligence, of ignorance and fancy.

Paris came in a flash. He had realised to the full the squalid and ever-widening zone of London, had frittered away his expectations almost, in the passing it; but here the great city had hardly announced itself before they were in the midst of it, shot out into the noise, and glare, and crowd of the Nord station.

They had no luggage to wait for, and David, trembling with excitement so that he could hardly give the necessary orders, shouldered the bags, got a cab and gave the address. Outside it was still twilight, but the lamps were lit and the Boulevard into which they presently turned seemed to brother and sister a blaze of light. The young green of the trees glittered under the gas like the trees of a pantomime; the kiosks threw their lights out upon the moving crowd; shops and cafés were all shining and alive; and on either hand rose the long line of stately houses, unbroken by any London or Manchester squalors and inequalities, towering as it seemed into the skies, and making for the great spectacle of life beneath them a setting more gay, splendid, and complete than any Englishman in his own borders can ever see.

Louie had turned white with pleasure and excite-

ment. All her dreams of gaiety and magnificence, of which the elements had been gathered from the illustrated papers and the Manchester theatres, were more than realised by these Paris gas-lights, these vast houses, these laughing and strolling crowds.

‘Look at those people having their coffee out of doors,’ she cried to David, ‘and that white and gold place behind. Goodness! what they must spend in gas! And just look at those two girls—look, quick—there, with the young man in the black moustache—they *are* loud, but aren’t their dresses just sweet?’

She craned her neck out of window, exclaiming—now at this, now at that—till suddenly they passed out of the Boulevard into the comparative darkness of side ways. Here the height of the houses produced a somewhat different impression; Louie looked out none the less keenly, but her chatter ceased.

At last the cab drew up with a clatter at the side of a particularly dark and narrow street, ascending somewhat sharply to the north-west from the point where they stopped.

‘Now for the *concierge*,’ said David, looking round him, after he had paid the man.

And coming Barbier’s directions in his mind, he turned into the gateway, and made boldly for a curtained door behind which shone a light.

The woman, who came out in answer to his knock, looked him all over from head to foot, while he explained himself in his best French.

‘*Tiens*,’ she said, indifferently, to a man behind her, ‘it’s the people for No. 26—*des Anglais*—*M. Paul te l’a dit*. Hand me the key.’

The *bonhomme* addressed—a little, stooping, wizened creature, with china-blue eyes, showing widely in his withered face under the light of the paraffin lamp his wife was holding—reached a key from a board on the wall and gave it to her.

The woman again surveyed them both, the young man and the girl, and seemed to debate with herself whether she should take the trouble to be civil. Finally she said in an ungracious voice—

‘It’s the fourth floor to the right. I must take you up, I suppose.’

David thanked her, and she preceded them with the light through a door opposite and up some stone stairs.

When they had mounted two flights, she turned abruptly on the landing—

‘You take the *appartement* from M. Dubois?’

‘Yes,’ said David, enchanted to find that, thanks to old Barbier’s constant lessons, he could both understand and reply with tolerable ease; ‘for a fortnight.’

‘Take care; the landlord will be descending on you; M. Dubois never pays; he may be turned out any day, and his things sold. Where is Mademoiselle going to sleep?’

‘But in M. Dubois’ *appartement*,’ said David, hoping this time, in his dismay, that he did *not* understand; ‘he promised to arrange everything.’

‘He has arranged nothing. Do you wish that I should provide some things? You can hire some furniture from me. And do you want service?’

The woman had a grasping eye. David’s frugal instincts took alarm.

‘*Merci*, Madame! My sister and I do not require much. We shall wait upon ourselves. If Madame will tell us the name of some restaurant near——’

Instead, Madame made an angry sound and thrust the key abruptly into Louie’s hand, David being laden with the bags.

‘There are two more flights,’ she said roughly; ‘then turn to the left, and go up the staircase straight in front of you—first door to the right. You’ve got eyes; you’ll find the way.’

‘*Mais, Madame*—’ cried David, bewildered by these directions, and trying to detain her.

But she was already halfway down the flight below them, throwing back remarks which, to judge from their tone, were not complimentary.

There was no help for it. Louie was dropping with fatigue, and beginning to be much out of temper. David with difficulty assumed a hopeful air, and up they went again. Leading off the next landing but one they found a narrow passage, and at the end of it a ladder-like staircase. At the top of this they came upon a corridor at right angles, in which the first door bore the welcome figures ‘26.’

‘All right,’ said David; ‘here we are. Now we’ll just go in, and look about us. Then if you’ll sit and rest a bit, I’ll run down and see where we can get something to eat.’

‘Be quick, then—do,’ said Louie. ‘I’m just fit to drop.’

With a beating heart he put the key into the lock of the door. It fitted, but he could not turn it. Both he and Louie tried in vain.

‘What a nuisance!’ said he at last. ‘I must go and fetch up that woman again. You sit down and wait.’

As he spoke there was a sound below of quick steps, and of a voice, a woman’s voice, humming a song.

‘Some one coming,’ he said to Louie; ‘perhaps they understand the lock.’

They ran down to the landing below to reconnoitre. There was, of course, gas on the staircase, and as they hung over the iron railing they saw mounting towards them a young girl. She wore a light fawn-coloured dress and a hat covered with Parma violets. Hearing voices above her, she threw her head back, and stopped a moment. Louie’s eye was caught by her hand and



its tiny wrist as it lay on the balustrade, and by the coils and twists of her fair hair. David saw no details, only what seemed to him a miracle of grace and colour, born in an instant, out of the dark—or out of his own excited fancy?

She came slowly up the steps, looking at them, at the tall dark youth and the girl beside him. Then on the top step she paused, instead of going past them. David took off his hat, but all the practical questions he had meant to ask deserted him. His French seemed to have flown.

‘You are strangers, aren’t you?’ she said, in a clear, high, somewhat imperious voice. ‘What number do you want?’

Her expression had a certain *hauteur*, as of one defending her native ground against intruders. Under the stimulus of it David found his tongue.

‘We have taken M. Paul Dubois’ rooms,’ he said. ‘We have found his door, but the key the *concierge* gave us does not fit it.’

She laughed, a free, frank laugh, which had a certain wild note in it.

‘These doors have to be coaxed,’ she said; ‘they don’t like foreigners. Give it me. This is my way, too.’

Stepping past them, she preceded them up the narrow stairs, and was just about to try the key in the lock, when a sudden recollection seemed to flash upon her.

‘I know!’ she said, turning upon them. ‘*Tenez—que je suis bête!* You are Dubois’ English friends. He told me something, and I had forgotten all about it. You are going to take his rooms?’

‘For a week or two,’ said David, irritated a little by the laughing malice, the sarcastic wonder of her eyes, ‘while he is doing some work in Brussels. It

seemed a convenient arrangement, but if we are not comfortable we shall go elsewhere. If you can open the door for us we shall be greatly obliged to you, Mademoiselle. But if not I must go down for the *concierge*. We have been travelling all day, and my sister is tired.'

'Where did you learn such good French?' she said carelessly, at the same time leaning her weight against the door, and manipulating the key in such a way that the lock turned, and the door flew open.

Behind it appeared a large dark space. The light from the gas-jet in the passage struck into it, but beyond a chair and a tall screen-like object in the middle of the floor, it seemed to David to be empty.

'That's his *atelier*, of course,' said the unknown; 'and mine is next to it, at the other end. I suppose he has a cupboard to sleep in somewhere. Most of us have. But I don't know anything about Dubois. I don't like him. He is not one of my friends.'

She spoke in a dry, masculine voice, which contrasted in the sharpest way with her youth, her dress, her dainty smallness. Then, all of a sudden, as her eyes travelled over the English pair standing bewildered on the threshold of Dubois' most uninviting apartment, she began to laugh again. Evidently the situation seemed to her extremely odd.

'Did you ask the people downstairs to get anything ready for you?' she inquired.

'No,' said David, hesitating; 'we thought we could manage for ourselves.'

'Well—perhaps—after the first,' she said, still laughing. 'But—I may as well warn you—the Merichat will be very uncivil to you if you don't manage to pay her for something. Hadn't you better explore? That thing in the middle is Dubois' easel, of course.'

David groped his way in, took some matches from

his pocket, found a gas-bracket with some difficulty, and lit up. Then he and Louie looked round them. They saw a gaunt high room, lit on one side by a huge studio-window, over which various tattered blinds were drawn; a floor of bare boards, with a few rags of carpet here and there; in the middle, a table covered with painter's apparatus of different kinds; palettes, paints, rags, tin-pots, and, thrown down amongst them, some stale crusts of bread; a large easel, with a number of old and dirty canvases piled upon it; two chairs, one of them without the usual complement of legs; a few etchings and oil-sketches and fragments of coloured stuffs pinned against the wall in wild confusion; and, spread out casually behind the easel, an iron folding-bedstead, without either mattress or bed-clothes. In the middle of the floor stood a smeared kettle on a spirit-stove, and a few odds and ends of glass and china were on the mantelpiece, together with a paraffin-lamp. Every article in the room was thick in dust.

When she had, more or less, ascertained these attractive details, Louie stood still in the middle of M. Dubois' apartment.

'What did he tell all those lies for?' she said to David fiercely. For in the very last communication received from him, Dubois had described himself as having made all necessary preparations '*et pour la toilette et pour le manger.*' He had also asked for the rent in advance, which David with some demur had paid.

'Here's something,' cried David; and, turning a handle in the wall, he pulled a flimsy door open and disclosed what seemed a cupboard. The cupboard, however, contained a bed, some bedding, blankets, and washing arrangements; and David joyously announced his discoveries. Louie took no notice of him. She

was tired, angry, disgusted. The illusion of Paris was, for the moment, all gone. She sat herself down on one of the two chairs, and, taking off her hat, she threw it from her on to the belittered table with a passionate gesture.

The French girl had so far stood just outside, leaning against the doorway, and looking on with unabashed amusement while they made their inspection. Now, however, as Louie uncovered, the spectator at the door made a little, quick sound, and then ran forward.

‘*Mais, mon Dieu!* how handsome you are!’ she said with a whimsical eagerness, stopping short in front of Louie, and driving her little hands deep into the pockets of her jacket. ‘What a head!—what eyes! Why didn’t I see before? You must sit to me—you *must!* You will, won’t you? I will pay you anything you like! You sha’n’t be dull—somebody shall come and amuse you. *Voyons—monsieur!*’ she called imperiously.

David came up. She stood with one hand on the table leaning her light weight backward, looking at them with all her eyes—the very embodiment of masterful caprice.

‘Both of them!’ she said under her breath, ‘*superbe!* Monsieur, look here. You and mademoiselle are tired. There is nothing in these rooms. Dubois is a scamp without a sou. He does no work, and he gambles on the Bourse. Everything he had he has sold by degrees. If he has gone to Brussels now to work honestly, it is for the first time in his life. He lives on the hope of getting money out of an uncle in England—that I know, for he boasts of it to everybody. It is just like him to play a practical joke on strangers. No doubt you have paid him already—*n’est-ce pas?* I thought as much. Well, never mind! My rooms are

next door. I am Elise Delaunay. I work in Taranne's *atelier*. I am an artist, pure and simple, and I live to please myself and nobody else. But I have a chair or two, and the woman downstairs looks after me because I make it worth her while. Come with me. I will give you some supper, and I will lend you a rug and a pillow for that bed. Then to-morrow you can decide what to do.'

David protested, stammering and smiling. But he had flushed a rosy red, and there was no real resistance in him. He explained the invitation to Louie, who had been looking helplessly from one to the other, and she at once accepted it. She understood perfectly that the French girl admired her; her face relaxed its frown; she nodded to the stranger with a sort of proud yielding, and then let herself be taken by the arm and led once more along the corridor.

Elise Delaunay unlocked her own door.

'*Bien!*' she said, putting her head in first, 'Merichat has earned her money. Now go in—go in!—and see if I don't give you some supper.'

## CHAPTER II

SHE pushed them in, and shut the door behind them. They looked round them in amazement. Here was an *atelier* precisely corresponding in size and outlook to Dubois'. But to their tired eyes the change was one from squalor to fairyland. The room was not in fact luxurious at all. But there was a Persian rug or two on the polished floor; there was a wood fire burning on the hearth, and close to it there was a low sofa or divan covered with pieces of old stuffs, and flanked by a table whereon stood a little meal, a roll, some cut

ham, part of a flat fruit tart from the *pâtissier* next door, a coffee pot, and a spirit kettle ready for lighting. There were two easels in the room; one was laden with sketches and photographs; the other carried a half-finished picture of a mosque interior in Oran—a rich splash of colour, making a centre for all the rest. Everywhere indeed, on the walls, on the floor, or standing on the chairs, were studies of Algeria, done with an ostentatiously bold and rapid hand. On the mantelpiece was a small reproduction in terra cotta of one of Dalou's early statues, a peasant woman in a long cloak straining her homely baby to her breast—true and passionate. Books lay about, and in a corner was a piano, open, with a confusion of tattered music upon it. And everywhere, as it seemed to Louie, were *shoes!*—the daintiest and most fantastic shoes imaginable—Turkish shoes, Pompadour shoes, old shoes and new shoes, shoes with heels and shoes without, shoes lined with fur, and shoes blown together, as one might think, out of cardboard and ribbons. The English girl's eyes fastened upon them at once.

'Ah, you tink my shoes pretty,' said the hostess, speaking a few words of English, '*c'est mon dada, voyez-vous—ma collection!*—*Tenez*—I cannot say dat in English, Monsieur; explain to your sister. My shoes are my passion, next to my foot. I am not pretty, but my foot is ravishing. Dalou modelled it for his Siren. That turned my head. Sit down, Mademoiselle—we will find some plates.'

She pushed Louie into a corner of the divan, and then she went over to a cupboard standing against the wall, and beckoned to David.

'Take the plates—and this potted meat. Now for the *petit vin* my doctor cousin brought me last week from the family estate. I have stowed it away some-

where. Ah! here it is. We are from the Gironde—at least my mother was. My father was nobody—*bourgeois* from tip to toe, though he called himself an artist. It was a *mésalliance* for her when she married him. Oh, he led her a life!—she died when I was small, and last year *he* died, eleven months ago. I did my best to cry. *Impossible!* He had made Maman and me cry too much. And now I am perfectly alone in the world, and perfectly well-behaved. Monsieur Prudhomme may talk—I snap my finger at him. You will have your ideas, of course. No matter! If you eat my salt, you will hardly be able to speak ill of me.'

'Mademoiselle!' cried David, inwardly cursing his shyness—a shyness new to him—and his complete apparent lack of anything to say, or the means of saying it.

'Oh, don't protest!—after that journey you can't afford to waste your breath. Move a little, Monsieur—let me open the other door of the cupboard—there are some chocolates worth eating on that back shelf. Do you admire my *armoire*? It is old Breton—it belonged to my grandmother, who was from Morbihan. She brought her linen in it. It is cherry wood, you see, mounted in silver. You may search Paris for another like it. Look at that flower work on the panels. It is not *banal* at all—it has character—there is real design in it. Now take the chocolates, and these sardines—put them down over there. As for me, I make the coffee.'

She ran over to the spirit lamp, and set it going; she measured out the coffee; then sitting down on the floor, she took the bellows and blew up the logs.

'Tell me your name, Monsieur?' she said suddenly, looking round.

David gave it in full, his own name and Louie's.

Then he walked up to her, making an effort to be at his ease, and said something about their French descent. His mode of speaking was slow and bookish—correct, but wanting in life. After this year's devotion to French books, after all his compositions with Barbier, he had supposed himself so familiar with French! With the woman from the *loge*, indeed, he could have talked at large, had she been conversational instead of rude. But here, with this little glancing creature, he felt himself plunged in a perfect quagmire of ignorance and stupidity. When he spoke of being half French, she became suddenly grave, and studied him with an intent piercing look. 'No,' she said slowly, 'no, at bottom you are not French a bit, you are all English, I feel it. I should fight you—*à outrance!* *Grive*—what a strange name! It's a bird's name. You are not like it—you do not belong to it. But *David!*—ah, that is better. *Voyons!*'

She sprang up, ran over to the furthest easel, and, routing about amongst its disorder of prints and photographs, she hit upon one, which she held up triumphantly.

'There, Monsieur!—there is your prototype. That is David—the young David—scourge of the Philistine. You are bigger and broader. I would rather fight him than you—but it is like you, all the same. Take it.'

And she held out to him a photograph of the Donatello David at Florence—the divine young hero in his shepherd's hat, fresh from the slaying of the oppressor.

He looked at it, red and wondering, then shook his head.

'What is it? Who made it, Mademoiselle?'

'Donatello—oh, I never saw it. I was never in Italy, but a friend gave it me. It is like you, I tell



you. But, what use is that? You are English—yes, you *are*, in spite of your mother. It is very well to be called David—you may be Goliath all the time!’

Her tone had grown hard and dry—insulting almost. Her look sent him a challenge.

He stared at her dumbfounded. All the self-confidence with which he had hitherto governed his own world had deserted him. He was like a tongue-tied child in her hands.

She enjoyed her mastery, and his discomfiture. Her look changed and melted in an instant.

‘I am rude,’ she said, ‘and you can’t answer me back—not yet—for a day or two. *Pardon!* Monsieur David—Mademoiselle—will you come to supper?’

She put chairs and waved them to their places with the joyous animation of a child, waiting on them, fetching this and that, with the quickest, most graceful motions. She had brought from the *armoire* some fine white napkins, and now she produced a glass or two and made her guests provide themselves with the red wine which neither had ever tasted before, and over which Louie made an involuntary face. Then she began to chatter and to eat—both as fast as possible—now laughing at her own English or at David’s French, and now laying down her knife and fork that she might look at Louie, with an intent professional look which contrasted oddly with the wild freedom of her talk and movements.

Suddenly she took up a wineglass and held it out to David with a piteous childish gesture.

‘Fill it, Monsieur, and then drink—drink to my good luck. I wish for something—with my *life*—my *soul*; but there are people who hate me, who would delight to see me crushed. And it will be three weeks—three long long weeks, almost—before I know.’

She was very pale, the tears had sprung to her

eyes, and the hand holding the glass trembled. David flushed and frowned in the vain desire to understand her.

‘What am I to do?’ he said, taking the glass mechanically, but making no use of it.

‘Drink!—drink to my success. I have two pictures, Monsieur, in the Salon; you know what that means? the same as your *Académie? Parfaitement!* ah! you understand. One is well hung, on the line; the other has been shamefully treated—but *shamefully!* And all the world knows why. I have some enemies on the jury, and they delight in a mean triumph over me—a triumph which is a scandal. But I have friends, too—good friends—and in three weeks the rewards will be voted. You understand? the medals, and the *mentions honorables*. As for a medal!—no! I am only two years in the *atelier*; I am not unreasonable. But a *mention!*—ah! Monsieur David, if they don’t give it me I shall be very miserable.’

Her voice had gone through a whole gamut of emotion in this speech—pride, elation, hope, anger, offended dignity—sinking finally to the plaintive note of a child asking for consolation.

And luckily David had followed her. His French novels had brought him across the Salon and the jury system; and Barbier had told him tales. His courage rose. He poured the wine into the glass with a quick, uncertain hand, and raised it to his lips.

‘*A la gloire de Mademoiselle!*’ he cried, tossing it down with a gesture almost as free and vivid as her own.

Her eye followed him with excitement, taking in every detail of the action—the masculine breadth of chest, the beauty of the dark head and short upper lip.

‘Very good—very good!’ she said, clapping her

small hands. 'You did that admirably—you improve—*n'est-ce pas, Mademoiselle?*'

But Louie only stared blankly and somewhat haughtily in return. She was beginning to be tired of her silent *rôle*, and of the sort of subordination it implied. The French girl seemed to divine it, and her.

'She does not like me,' she said, with a kind of wonder under her breath, so that David did not catch the words. 'The other is quite different.'

Then, springing up, she searched in the pockets of her jacket for something—lips pursed, brows knitted, as though the quest were important.

'Where are my cigarettes?' she demanded sharply. 'Ah! here they are. *Mademoiselle—Monsieur.*'

Louie laughed rudely, pushing them back without a word. Then she got up, and began boldly to look about her. The shoes attracted her, and some Algerian scarves and burnouses that were lying on a distant chair. She went to turn them over.

*Mademoiselle Delaunay* looked after her for a moment—with the same critical attention as before—then with a shrug she threw herself into a corner of the divan, drawing about her a bit of old embroidered stuff which lay there. It was so flung, however, as to leave one dainty foot in an embroidered silk stocking visible beyond it. The tone of the stocking was repeated in the bunch of violets at her neck, and the purples of the flowers told with charming effect against her white skin and the pale fawn colour of her dress and hair. David watched her with intoxication. She could hardly be taller than most children of fourteen, but her proportions were so small and delicate that her height, whatever it was, seemed to him the perfect height for a woman. She handled her cigarette with mannish airs; unless it were some old har-

ridan in a collier's cottage, he had never seen a woman smoke before, and certainly he had never guessed it could become her so well. Not pretty! He was in no mood to dissect the pale irregular face with its subtleties of line and expression; but, as she sat there smoking and chatting, she was to him the realisation—the climax of his dream of Paris. All the lightness and grace of that dream, the strangeness, the thrill of it seemed to have passed into her.

'Will you stay in those rooms?' she inquired, slowly blowing away the curls of smoke in front of her.

David replied that he could not yet decide. He looked as he felt—in a difficulty.

'Oh! *you* will do well enough there. But your sister—*Tenez!* There is a family on the floor below—an artist and his wife. I have known them take *pensionnaires*. They are not the most distinguished persons in the world—*mais enfin!*—it is not for long. Your sister might do worse than board with them.'

David thanked her eagerly. He would make all inquiries. He had in his pocket a note of introduction from Dubois to Madame Cervin, and another, he believed, to the gentleman on the ground floor—to M. Montjoie, the sculptor.

'Ah! M. Montjoie!'

Her brows went up, her grey eyes flashed. As for her tone it was half amused, half contemptuous. She began to speak, moved restlessly, then apparently thought better of it.

'After all,' she said, in a rapid undertone, '*qu'est-ce que cela me fait? Allons.* Why did you come here at all, instead of to an hotel, for so short a time?'

He explained as well as he was able.

'You wanted to see something of French life, and French artists or writers?' she repeated slowly, 'and

you come with introductions from Xavier Dubois! *C'est drôle, ça.* Have you studied art?’

He laughed.

‘No—except in books.’

‘What books?’

‘Novels—George Sand’s.’

It was her turn to laugh now.

‘You are really too amusing! No, Monsieur, no; you interest me. I have the best will in the world towards you; but I cannot ask Consuelos and Teverinos to meet you. *Pas possible.* I regret——’

She fell into silence a moment, studying him with a merry look. Then she broke out again.

‘Are you a connoisseur in pictures, Monsieur?’

He had reddened already under her *persiflage*. At this he grew redder still.

‘I have never seen any, Mademoiselle,’ he said, almost piteously; ‘except once a little exhibition in Manchester.’

‘Nor sculpture?’

‘No,’ he said honestly; ‘nor sculpture.’

It seemed to him he was being held under a microscope, so keen and pitiless were her laughing eyes. But she left him no time to resent it.

‘So you are a blank page, Monsieur—virgin soil—and you confess it. You interest me extremely. I should even like to teach you a little. I am the most ignorant person in the world. I know nothing about artists in books. *Mais je suis artiste, moi! fille d'artiste.* I could tell you tales——’

She threw her graceful head back against the cushion behind her, and smiled again broadly, as though her sense of humour were irresistibly tickled by the situation.

Then a whim seized her, and she sat up, grave and eager.

‘I have drawn since I was eight years old,’ she said; ‘would you like to hear about it? It is not romantic—not the least in the world—but it is true.’

And with what seemed to his foreign ear a marvellous swiftness and fertility of phrase, she poured out her story. After her mother died she had been sent at eight years old to board at a farm near Rouen by her father, who seemed to have regarded his daughter now as plaything and model, now as an intolerable drag on the freedom of a vicious career. And at the farm the child’s gift declared itself. She began with copying the illustrations, the saints and holy families in a breviary belonging to one of the farm servants; she went on to draw the lambs, the carts, the horses, the farm buildings, on any piece of white wood she could find littered about the yard, or any bit of paper saved from a parcel, till at last the old curé took pity upon her and gave her some chalks and a drawing-book. At fourteen her father, for a caprice, reclaimed her; and she found herself alone with him in Paris. To judge from the hints she threw out, her life during the next few years had been of the roughest and wildest, protected only by her indomitable resolve to learn, to make herself an artist, come what would. ‘I meant to be *famous*, and I mean it still!’ she said, with a passionate emphasis which made David open his eyes. Her father refused to believe in her gift, and was far too self-indulgent and brutal to teach her. But some of his artist friends were kind to her, and taught her intermittently; by the help of some of them she got permission, although under age, to copy in the Louvre, and with hardly any technical knowledge worked there feverishly from morning to night; and at last Taranne—the great Taranne, from whose *atelier* so many considerable artists had gone out to the conquest of the public—Taranne had

seen some of her drawings, heard her story, and generously taken her as a pupil.

Then emulation took hold of her—the fierce desire to be first in all the competitions of the *atelier*. David had the greatest difficulty in following her rapid speech, with its slang, its technical idioms, its extravagance and variety; but he made out that she had been for a long time deficient in sound training, and that her rivals at the *atelier* had again and again beaten her easily in spite of her gift, because of her weakness in the grammar of her art.

‘And whenever they beat me I could have killed my conquerors; and whenever I beat them, I despised my judges and wanted to give the prize away. It is not my fault. *Je suis faite comme ça—voilà!* I am as vain as a peacock; yet when people admire anything I do, I think them fools—*fools!* I am jealous and proud and absurd—so they all say; yet a word, a look from a real artist—from one of the great men who *know*—can break me, make me cry. *Démêlez ça, Monsieur, si vous pouvez!*’

She stopped, out of breath. Their eyes were on each other. The fascination, the absorption expressed in the Englishman’s look startled her. She hurriedly turned away, took up her cigarette again, and nestled into the cushion. He vainly tried to clothe some of the quick comments running through his mind in adequate French, could find nothing but the most commonplace phrases, stammered out a few, and then blushed afresh. In her pity for him she took up her story again.

After her father’s sudden death, the shelter, such as it was, of his name and companionship was withdrawn. What was she to do? It turned out that she possessed a small *rente* which had belonged to her mother, and which her father had never been able to squander. Two relations from her mother’s country near Bordeaux

turned up to claim her, a country doctor and his sister—middle-aged, devout—to her wild eyes at least, altogether forbidding.

They made too much of their self-sacrifice in taking me to live with them,' she said with her little ringing laugh. 'I said to them—"My good uncle and aunt, it is too much—no one could have the right to lay such a burden upon you. Go home and forget me. I am incorrigible. I am an artist. I mean to live by myself, and work for myself. I am sure to go to the bad—good morning." They went home and told the rest of my mother's people that I was insane. But they could not keep my money from me. It is just enough for me. Besides, I shall be selling soon,—certainly I shall be selling! I have had two or three inquiries already about one of the exhibits in the Salon. Now then—*talk*, Monsieur David!' and she emphasised the words by a little frown; 'it is your turn.'

And gradually by skill and patience she made him talk, made him give her back some of her confidences. It seemed to amuse her greatly that he should be a bookseller. She knew no booksellers in Paris; she could assure him they were all pure *bourgeois*, and there was not one of them that could be likened to Donatello's David. Manchester she had scarcely heard of; she shook her fair head over it. But when he told her of his French reading, when he waxed eloquent about Rousseau and George Sand, then her mirth became uncontrollable.

'You came to France to talk of Rousseau and George Sand?' she asked him with dancing eyes—'*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* what do you take us for?'

This time his vanity was hurt. He asked her to tell him what she meant—why she laughed at him.

'I will do better than that,' she said; 'I will get some friend of mine to take you to-morrow to "*Les Trois Rats*."'



‘What is “Les Trois Rats?”’ he asked, half wounded and half mystified.

‘“Les Trois Rats,” Monsieur, is an artist’s café. It is famous, it is characteristic; if you are in search of local colour you must certainly go there. When you come back you will have some fresh ideas, I promise you.’

He asked if ladies also went there.

‘Some do; I don’t. Conventions mean nothing to me, as you perceive, or I should have a companion here to play propriety. But like you, perhaps, I am Romantic. I believe in the grand style. I have ideas as to how men should treat me. I can read Octave Feuillet. I have a terrible weakness for those *cavaliers* of his. And garbage makes me ill. So I avoid the “Trois Rats.”’

She fell silent, resting her little chin on her hand. Then with a sudden sly smile she bent forward and looked him in the eyes.

‘Are you pious, Monsieur, like all the English? There is some religion left in your country, isn’t there?’

‘Yes, certainly,’ he admitted, ‘there was a good deal.’

Then, hesitating, he described his own early reading of Voltaire, watching its effect upon her, afraid lest here too he should say something fatuous, behind the time, as he seemed to have been doing all through.

‘Voltaire!’—she shrugged her little shoulders—‘Voltaire to me is just an old *perruque*—a prating philanthropical person who talked about *le bon Dieu*, and wrote just what every *bourgeois* can understand. If he had had his will and swept away the clergy and the Church, how many fine subjects we artists should have lost!’

He sat helplessly staring at her. She enjoyed his

perplexity a minute; then she returned to the charge.

‘Well, my credo is very short. Its first article is art—and its second is art—and its third is art!’

Her words excited her. The delicate colour flushed into her cheek. She flung her head back and looked straight before her with half-shut eyes.

‘Yes—I believe in art—and expression—and colour—and *le vrai*. Velazquez is my God, and—and he has too many prophets to mention! I was devout once for three months—since then I have never had as much faith of the Church sort as would lie on a ten-sous piece. But’—with a sudden whimsical change of voice—‘I am as credulous as a Breton fisherman, and as superstitious as a gipsy! Wait and see. Will you look at my pictures?’

She sprang up and showed her sketches. She had been a winter in Algiers, and had there and in Spain taken a passion for the East, for its colour, its mystery, its suggestions of cruelty and passion. She chattered away, explaining, laughing, haranguing, and David followed her submissively from thing to thing, dumb with the interest and curiosity of this new world and language of the artist.

Louie meanwhile, who, after the refreshment of supper, had been forgetting both her fatigue and the other two in the entertainment provided her by the shoes and the Oriental dresses, had now found a little inlaid coffer on a distant table, full of Algerian trinkets, and was examining them. Suddenly a loud crash was heard from her neighbourhood.

Elise Delaunay stood still. Her quick speech died on her lips. She made one bound forward to Louie; then, with a cry, she turned deathly pale, tottered, and would have fallen, but that David ran to her.

‘The glass is broken,’ she said, or rather gasped;

‘ she has broken it—that old Venetian glass of Maman’s. Oh! my pictures!—my pictures! How can I undo it? *Je suis perdue!* Oh go!—go!—go—both of you! Leave me alone! Why did I ever see you?’

She was beside herself with rage and terror. She laid hold of Louie, who stood in sullen awkwardness and dismay, and pushed her to the door so suddenly and so violently that the stronger, taller girl yielded without an attempt at resistance. Then holding the door open, she beckoned imperiously to David, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

‘ Adieu, Monsieur—say nothing—there is nothing to be said—go!’

He went out bewildered, and the two in their amazement walked mechanically to their own door.

‘ She is mad!’ said Louie, her eyes blazing, when they paused and looked at each other. ‘ She must be mad. What did she say?’

‘ What happened?’ was all he could reply.

‘ I threw down that old glass—it wasn’t my fault—I didn’t see it. It was standing on the floor against a chair. I moved the chair back just a trifle, and it fell. A shabby old thing—I could have paid for another easily. Well, I’m not going there again to be treated like that.’

The girl was furious. All that chafed sense of exclusion and slighted importance which had grown upon her during David’s *tête-à-tête* with their strange hostess came to violent expression in her resentment. She opened the door of their room, saying that whatever he might do she was going to bed and to sleep somewhere, if it was on the floor.

David made a melancholy light in the squalid room, and Louie went about her preparations in angry silence. When she had withdrawn into the little cupboard-room, saying carelessly that she supposed he

could manage with one of the bags and his great coat, he sat down on the edge of the bare iron bedstead, and recognised with a start that he was quivering all over—with fatigue, or excitement? His chief feeling perhaps was one of utter discomfiture, flatness, and humiliation.

He had sat there in the dark without moving for some minutes, when his ear caught a low uncertain tapping at the door. His heart leapt. He sprang up and turned the key in an instant.

There on the landing stood Elise Delaunay, her arms filled with what looked like a black bearskin rug, her small tremulous face and tear-wet eyes raised to his.

‘*Pardon, Monsieur,*’ she said hurriedly. ‘I told you I was superstitious—well, now you see. Will you take this rug?—one can sleep anywhere with it though it is so old. And has your sister what she wants? Can I do anything for her? No! *Alors*—I must talk to you about her in the morning. I have some more things in my head to say. *Pardon!—et bonsoir.*’

She pushed the rug into his hands. He was so moved that he let it drop on the floor unheeding, and as she looked at him, half audacious, half afraid, she saw a painful struggle, as of some strange new birth, pass across his dark young face. They stood so a moment, looking at each other. Then he made a quick step forward with some inarticulate words. In an instant she was halfway along the corridor, and, turning back so that her fair hair and smiling eyes caught the light she held, she said to him with the queenliest gesture of dismissal:

‘*Au revoir, Monsieur David, sleep well.*’

## CHAPTER III

DAVID woke early from a restless sleep. He sprang up and dressed. Never had the May sun shone so brightly ; never had life looked more alluring.

In the first place he took care to profit by the hints of the night before. He ran down to make friends with Madame Merichat—a process which was accomplished without much difficulty, as soon as a franc or two had passed, and arrangements had been made for the passing of a few more. She was to take charge of the *appartement*, and provide them with their morning coffee and bread. And upon this her grim countenance cleared. She condescended to spend a quarter of an hour gossiping with the Englishman, and she promised to stand as a buffer between him and Dubois' irate landlord.

'A job of work at Brussels, you say, Monsieur ? *Bien* ; I will tell the *propriétaire*. He won't believe it—Monsieur Dubois tells too many lies ; but perhaps it will keep him quiet. He will think of the return—of the money in the pocket. He will bid me inform him the very moment Monsieur Dubois shows his nose, that he may descend upon him, and so you will be let alone.'

He mounted the stairs again, and stood a moment looking along the passage with a quickening pulse. There was a sound of low singing, as of one crooning over some occupation. It must be she ! Then she had recovered her trouble of the night before—her strange trouble. Yet he dimly remembered that in the farm-houses of the Peak also the breaking of a looking-glass had been held to be unlucky. And, of course, in inter-

preting the omen she had thought of her pictures and the jury.

How could he see her again? Suddenly it occurred to him that she had spoken of taking a holiday since the Salon opened. A holiday which for her meant 'copying in the Louvre.' And where else, pray, does the tourist naturally go on the first morning of a visit to Paris?

The young fellow went back into his room with a radiant face, and spent some minutes, as Louie had not yet appeared, in elaborating his toilette. The small cracked glass above the mantelpiece was not flattering, and David was almost for the first time anxious about and attentive to what he saw there. Yet, on the whole, he was pleased with his short serge coat and his new tie. He thought they gave him something of a student air, and would not disgrace even *her* should she deign to be seen in his company. As he laid his brush down he looked at his own brown hand, and remembered hers with a kind of wonder—so small and white, the wrist so delicately rounded.

When Louie emerged she was not in a good temper. She declared that she had hardly slept a wink; that the bed was not fit to sleep on; that the cupboard was alive with mice, and smelt intolerably. David first endeavoured to appease her with the coffee and rolls which had just arrived, and then he broached the plan of sending her to board with the Cervins, which Mademoiselle Delaunay had suggested. What did she think? It would cost more, perhaps, but he could afford it. On their way out he would deliver the two notes of introduction, and no doubt they could settle it directly if she liked.

Louie yawned, put up objections, and refused to see anything in a promising light. Paris was horrid, and

the man who had let them the rooms ought to be 'had up.' As for people who couldn't talk any English she hated the sight of them.

The remark from an Englishwoman in France had its humour. But David did not see that point of it. He flushed hotly and with difficulty held an angry tongue. However, he was possessed with an inward dread—the dread of the idealist who sees his pleasure as a beautiful whole—lest they should so quarrel as to spoil the visit and the new experience. Under this curb he controlled himself, and presently, with more *savoir vivre* than he was conscious of, proposed that they should go out and see the shops.

Louie, at the mere mention of shops, passed into another mood. After she had spent some time on dressing they sallied forth, David delivering his notes on the way down. Both noticed that the house was squalid and ill-kept, but apparently full of inhabitants. David surmised that they were for the most part struggling persons of small means and extremely various occupations. There were three *ateliers* in the building, the two on their own top floor, and M. Montjoie's, which was apparently built out at the back on the ground floor. The first floor was occupied by a dressmaker, the *propriétaire's* best tenant, according to Madame Merichat. Above her was a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior, with his wife and two or three children; above them again the Cervins, and a couple of commercial travellers, and so on.

The street outside, in its general aspect, suggested the same small, hard-pressed professional life. It was narrow and dull; it mounted abruptly towards the hill of Montmartre, with its fort and cemetery, and, but for the height of the houses, which is in itself a dignified architectural feature, would have been no more inspiring than a street in London.

A few steps, however, brought them on to the Boulevard Montmartre, and then, taking the Rue Lafitte, they emerged upon the Boulevard des Italiens.

Louie looked round her, to this side and that, paused for a moment, bewildered as it were by the general movement and gaiety of the scene. Then a *lingerie* shop caught her eye, and she made for it. Soon the last cloud had cleared from the girl's brow. She gave herself with ecstasy to the shops, to the people. What jewellery, what dresses, what delicate cobwebs of lace and ribbon, what miracles of colour in the florists' windows, what suggestions of wealth and lavishness everywhere! Here in this world of costly contrivance, of an eager and inventive luxury, Louise Suveret's daughter felt herself at last at home. She had never set foot in it before; yet already it was familiar, and she was part of it.

Yes, she was as well dressed as anybody, she concluded, except perhaps the ladies in the closed carriages whose dress could only be guessed at. As for good looks, there did not seem to be much of *them* in Paris. She called the Frenchwomen downright plain. They knew how to put on their clothes; there was style about them, she did not deny that; but she was prepared to maintain that there was hardly a decent face among them.

Such air, and such a sky! The trees were rushing into leaf; summer dresses were to be seen everywhere; the shops had swung out their awnings, and the day promised a summer heat still tempered by a fresh spring breeze. For a time David was content to lounge along, stopping when his companion did, lost as she was in the enchantment and novelty of the scene, drinking in Paris as it were at great gulps, saying to himself they would be at the Opera directly, then the Théâtre-Français, the Louvre, the Tuileries,



the Place de la Concorde! Every book that had ever passed through his hands containing illustrations and descriptions of Paris he had read with avidity. He, too, like Louie, though in a different way, was at home in these streets, and hardly needed a look at the map he carried to find his way. Presently, when he could escape from Louie, he would go and explore to his heart's content, see all that the tourist sees, and then penetrate further, and judge for himself as to those sweeping and iconoclastic changes which, for its own tyrant's purposes, the Empire had been making in the older city. As he thought of the Emperor and the government his gorge rose within him. Barbier's talk had insensibly determined all his ideas of the imperial régime. How much longer would France suffer the villainous gang who ruled her? He began an inward declamation in the manner of Hugo, exciting himself as he walked—while all the time it was the spring of 1870 which was swelling and expanding in the veins and branches of the plane trees above him—May was hurrying on, and Wörth lay three short months ahead!

Then suddenly into the midst of his political musings and his traveller's ardour the mind thrust forward a disturbing image—the figure of a little fair-haired artist. He looked round impatiently. Louie's loiterings began to chafe him.

'Come along, do,' he called to her, waking up to the time; 'we shall never get there.'

'Where?' she demanded.

'Why, to the Louvre.'

'What's there to see there?'

'It's a great palace. The Kings of France used to live there once. Now they've put pictures and statues into it. You must see it, Louie—everybody does. Come along.'

‘I’ll not hurry,’ she said perversely. ‘I don’t care *that* about silly old pictures.’

And she went back to her shop-gazing. David felt for a moment precisely as he had been used to feel in the old days on the Scout, when he had tried to civilise her on the question of books. And now as then he had to wrestle with her, using the kind of arguments he felt might have a chance with her. At last she sulkily gave way, and let him lead on at a quick pace. In the Rue Saint-Honoré, indeed, she was once more almost unmanageable; but at last they were safely on the stairs of the Louvre, and David’s brow smoothed, his eye shone again. He mounted the interminable steps with such gaiety and eagerness that Louie’s attention was drawn to him.

‘Whatever do you go that pace for?’ she said crossly. ‘It’s enough to kill anybody going up this kind of thing!’

‘It isn’t as bad as the Downfall,’ said David, laughing, ‘and I’ve seen you get up that fast enough. Come, catch hold of my umbrella and I’ll drag you up.’

Louie reached the top, out of breath, turned into the first room to the right, and looked scornfully round her.

‘Well I never!’ she ejaculated. ‘What’s the good of this?’

Meanwhile David shot on ahead, beckoning to her to follow. She, however, would take her own pace, and walked sulkily along, looking at the people who were not numerous enough to please her, and only regaining a certain degree of serenity when she perceived that here as elsewhere people turned to stare after her.

David meanwhile threw wondering glances at the great Veronese, at Raphael’s archangel, at the tower-

ing Vandyke, at the 'Virgin of the Rocks.' But he passed them by quickly. Was she here? Could he find her in this wilderness of rooms? His spirits wavered between delicious expectancy and the fear of disappointment. The gallery seemed to him full of copyists young and old: beardless *rapins* laughing and chatting with fresh maidens; old men sitting crouched on high seats with vast canvases before them; or women, middle-aged and plain, with knitted shawls round their shoulders, at work upon the radiant Greuzes and Lancrets; but that pale golden head—nowhere!

*At last!*

He hurried forward, and there, in front of a Velazquez, he found her, in the company of two young men, who were leaning over the back of her chair criticising the picture on her easel.

'Ah, Monsieur David!'

She took up the brush she held with her teeth for a moment, and carelessly held him out two fingers of her right hand.

'Monsieur—make a diversion—tell the truth—these gentlemen here have been making a fool of me.'

And throwing herself back with a little laughing, coquettish gesture, she made room for him to look.

'Ah, but I forgot; let me present you. M. Alphonse, this is an Englishman; he is new to Paris, and he is an acquaintance of mine. You are not to play any joke upon him. M. Lenain, this gentleman wishes to be made acquainted with art; you will undertake his education—you will take him to-night to "Les Trois Rats." I promised for you.'

She threw a merry look at the elder of her two attendants, who ceremoniously took off his hat to David and made a polite speech, in which the word *enchanté* recurred. He was a dark man, with a short

black beard, and full restless eye; some ten years older apparently than the other, who was a dare-devil boy of twenty.

‘*Allons!* tell me what you think of my picture, M. David.’

The three waited for the answer, not without malice. David looked at it perplexed. It was a copy of the black and white *Infanta*, with the pink rosettes, which, like everything else that France possesses from the hand of Velazquez, is to the French artist of to-day among the sacred things, the flags and battle-cries of his art. Its strangeness, its unlikeness to anything of the picture kind that his untrained provincial eyes had ever lit upon, tied his tongue. Yet he struggled with himself.

‘*Mademoiselle*, I cannot explain—I cannot find the words. It seems to me ugly. The child is not pretty nor the dress. But——’

He stared at the picture, fascinated—unable to express himself, and blushing under the shame of his incapacity.

The other three watched him curiously.

‘*Taranne* should get hold of him,’ the elder artist murmured to his companion, with an imperceptible nod towards the Englishman. ‘The models lately have been too common. There was a rebellion yesterday in the *atelier de femmes*; one and all declared the model was not worth drawing, and one and all left.’

‘*Minxes!*’ said the other coolly, a twinkle in his wild eye. ‘*Taranne* will have to put his foot down. There are one or two demons among them; one should make them know their place.’

Lenain threw back his head and laughed—a great, frank laugh, which broke up the ordinary discontent of the face agreeably. The speaker, M. Alphonse Duchatel, had been already turned out of two *ateliers* for

a series of the most atrocious *charges* on record. He was now with Taranne, on trial, the authorities keeping a vigilant eye on him.

Meanwhile Elise, still leaning back with her eyes on her picture, was talking fast to David, who hung over her, absorbed. She was explaining to him some of the Infanta's qualities, pointing to this and that with her brush, talking a bright, untranslatable artist's language which dazzled him, filled him with an exciting medley of new impressions and ideas, while all the time his quick sense responded with a delightful warmth and eagerness to the personality beside him—child, prophetess, egotist, all in one—noticing each characteristic detail, the drooping melancholy trick of the eyes, the nervous delicacy of the small hand holding the brush.

'David—*David!* I'm tired of this, I tell you! I'm not going to stay, so I thought I'd come and tell you. Good-bye!'

He turned abruptly, and saw Louie standing defiantly a few paces behind him.

'What do you want, Louie?' he said impatiently, going up to her. It was no longer the same man, the same voice.

'I want to go. I hate this!'

'I'm not ready, and you can't go by yourself. Do you see'—(in an undertone)—'This is Mademoiselle Delaunay?'

'That don't matter,' she said sulkily, making no movement. 'If you ain't going, I am.'

By this time, however, Elise, as well as the two artists, had perceived Louie's advent. She got up from her seat with a slight sarcastic smile, and held out her hand.

'*Bonjour, Mademoiselle!* You forgave me for dat I did last night? I ask your pardon—oh, *de tout mon cœur!*'

Even Louie perceived that the tone was enigmatical. She gave an inward gulp of envy, however, excited by the cut of the French girl's black and white cotton. Then she dropped Elise's hand, and moved away.

'Louie!' cried David, pursuing her in despair; 'now just wait half an hour, there's a good girl, while I look at a few things, and then afterwards I'll take you to the street where all the best shops are, and you can look at them as much as you like.'

Louie stood irresolute.

'What is it?' said Elise to him in French. 'Your sister wants to go? Why, you have only just come!'

'She finds it dull looking at pictures,' said David, with an angry brow, controlling himself with difficulty. 'She must have the shops.'

Elise shrugged her shoulders and, turning her head, said a few quick words that David did not follow to the two men behind her. They all laughed. The artists, however, were both much absorbed in Louie's appearance, and could not apparently take their eyes off her.

'Ah!' said Elise, suddenly.

She had recognised some one at a distance, to whom she nodded. Then she turned and looked at the English girl, laughed, and caught her by the wrist.

'Monsieur David, here are Monsieur and Madame Cervin. Have you thought of sending your sister to them? If so, I will present you. Why not? They would amuse her. Madame Cervin would take her to all the shops, to the races, to the Bois. *Que sais-je?*'

All the while she was looking from one to the other. David's face cleared. He thought he saw a way out of this *impasse*.

'Louie, come here a moment. I want to speak to you.'

And he carried her off a few yards, while the Cer-

vins came up and greeted the group round the Infanta. A powerfully built, thickset man in a grey suit, who had been walking with them, fell back as they joined Elise Delaunay, and began to examine a Pieter de Hooghe with minuteness.

Meanwhile David wrestled with his sister. She had much better let Mademoiselle Delaunay arrange with these people. Then Madame Cervin could take her about wherever she wanted to go. He would make a bargain to that effect. As for him, he must and would see Paris—pictures, churches, public buildings. If the Louvre bored her, everything would bore her, and it was impossible either that he should spend his time at her apron-string, flattening his nose against the shop-windows, or that she should go about alone. He was not going to have her taken for ‘a bad lot,’ and treated accordingly, he told her frankly, with an imperious tightening of all his young frame. He had discovered some time since that it was necessary to be plain with Louie.

She hated to be disposed of on any occasion, except by her own will and initiative, and she still made difficulties for the sake of making them, till he grew desperate. Then, when she had pushed his patience to the very last point, she gave way.

‘You tell her she’s to do as I want her,’ she said, threateningly. ‘I won’t stay if she doesn’t. And I’ll not have her paid too much.’

David led her back to the rest.

‘My sister consents. Arrange it if you can, Mademoiselle,’ he said imploringly to Elise.

A series of quick and somewhat noisy colloquies followed, watched with disapproval by the *gardien* near, who seemed to be once or twice on the point of interfering.

Mademoiselle Delaunay opened the matter to

Madam Cervin, a short, stout woman, with no neck, and a keen, small eye. Money was her daily and hourly préoccupation, and she could have kissed the hem of Elise Delaunay's dress in gratitude for these few francs thus placed in her way. It was some time now since she had lost her last boarder, and had not been able to obtain another. She took David aside, and, while her look sparkled with covetousness, explained to him volubly all that she would do for Louie, and for how much. And she could talk some English too—certainly she could. Her education had been *excellent*, she was thankful to say.

'*Mon Dieu, qu'elle est belle!*' she wound up. 'Ah, Monsieur, you do very right to entrust your sister to me. A young fellow like you—no!—that is not *convenable*. But I—I will be a dragon. Make your mind quite easy. With me all will go well.'

Louie stood in an impatient silence while she was being thus talked over, exchanging looks from time to time with the two artists, who had retired a little behind Mademoiselle Delaunay's easel, and from that distance were perfectly competent to let the bold-eyed English girl know what they thought of her charms.

At last the bargain was concluded, and the Cervins walked away with Louie in charge. They were to take her to a restaurant, then show her the Rue Royale and the Rue de la Paix, and, finally—David making no demur whatever about the expense—there was to be an afternoon excursion through the Bois to Longchamps, where some of the May races were being run.

As they receded, the man in grey, before the Pieter de Hooghe, looked up, smiled, dropped his eyeglass, and resumed his place beside Madame Cervin. She made a gesture of introduction, and he bowed across her to the young stranger.



For the first time Elise perceived him. A look of annoyance and disgust crossed her face.

'Do you see,' she said, turning to Lenain; 'there is that animal, Montjoie? He did well to keep his distance. What do the Cervins want with him?'

The others shrugged their shoulders.

'They say his Menad would be magnificent if he could keep sober enough to finish her,' said Lenain; 'it is his last chance; he will go under altogether if he fails; he is almost done for already.'

'And what a gift!' said Alphonse, in a lofty tone of critical regret. 'He should have been a second Barye. *Ah, la vie Parisienne—la maudite vie Parisienne!*'

Again Lenain exploded.

'Come and lunch, you idiot,' he said, taking the lad's arm; 'for whom are you posing?'

But before they departed, they inquired of David in the politest way what they could do for him. He was a stranger to Mdle. Delaunay's acquaintance; they were at his service. Should they take him somewhere at night? David, in an effusion of gratitude, suggested 'Les Trois Rats.' He desired greatly to see the artist world, he said. Alphonse grinned. An appointment was made for eight o'clock, and the two friends walked off.







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