# Shirley

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Set in Yorkshire during the time of the Luddite unrest—a labor movement that began in 1811-1812 in an effort to protect the interests of the working class—the novel consists of two narrative strands woven together, one involving the struggles of workers against mill owners, and the other involving the romantic entanglements of the two heroines.

# PUBLISHER NOTES:

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Chapter

# 1 LEVITICAL.

Of late years an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England: they lie very thick on the hills; every parish has one or more of them; they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good. But not of late years are we about to speak; we are going back to the beginning of this century: late years—present years are dusty, sunburnt, hot, arid; we will evade the noon, forget it in siesta, pass the midday in slumber, and dream of dawn.

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting, perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal, but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic—ay, even an Anglo-Catholic—might eat on Good Friday in Passion Week: it shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs, and no roast lamb.

Of late years, I say, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England; but in eighteen-hundred-eleven-twelve that affluent rain had not descended. Curates were scarce then: there was no Pastoral Aid—no Additional Curates' Society to stretch a helping hand to worn-out old rectors and incumbents, and give them the wherewithal to pay a vigorous young colleague from Oxford or Cambridge. The present successors of the apostles, disciples of Dr. Pusey and tools of the Propaganda, were at that time being hatched under cradle-blankets, or undergoing regeneration by nursery-baptism in wash-hand basins. You could not have guessed by looking at any one of them that the Italian-ironed double frills of its net-cap surrounded the brows of a preordained, specially-sanctified successor of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. John; nor could you have foreseen in the folds of its long night-gown the white surplice in which it was hereafter cruelly to exercise the souls of its parishioners, and strangely to nonplus its old-fashioned vicar by flourishing aloft in a pulpit the shirt-like raiment which had never before waved higher than the reading-desk.

Yet even in those days of scarcity there were curates: the precious plant was rare, but it might be found. A certain favoured district in the

West Riding of Yorkshire could boast three rods of Aaron blossoming within a circuit of twenty miles. You shall see them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward into the little parlour. There they are at dinner. Allow me to introduce them to you: Mr. Donne, curate of Whinbury; Mr. Malone, curate of Briarfield; Mr. Sweeting, curate of Nunnely. These are Mr. Donne's lodgings, being the habitation of one John Gale, a small clothier. Mr. Donne has kindly invited his brethren to regale with him. You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard. At present, however, they are only eating; and while they eat we will talk aside.

These gentlemen are in the bloom of youth; they possess all the activity of that interesting age—an activity which their moping old vicars would fain turn into the channel of their pastoral duties, often expressing a wish to see it expended in a diligent superintendence of the schools, and in frequent visits to the sick of their respective parishes. But the youthful Levites feel this to be dull work; they prefer lavishing their energies on a course of proceeding which, though to other eyes it appear more heavy with *ennui*, more cursed with monotony, than the toil of the weaver at his loom, seems to yield them an unfailing supply of enjoyment and occupation.

I allude to a rushing backwards and forwards, amongst themselves, to and from their respective lodgings—not a round, but a triangle of visits, which they keep up all the year through, in winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Season and weather make no difference; with unintelligible zeal they dare snow and hail, wind and rain, mire and dust, to go and dine, or drink tea, or sup with each other. What attracts them it would be difficult to say. It is not friendship, for whenever they meet they quarrel. It is not religion—the thing is never named amongst them; theology they may discuss occasionally, but piety—never. It is not the love of eating and drinking: each might have as good a joint and pudding, tea as potent, and toast as succulent, at his own lodgings, as is served to him at his brother's. Mrs. Gale, Mrs. Hogg, and Mrs. Whipp—their respective landladies—affirm that "it is just for naught else but to give folk trouble." By "folk" the good ladies of course mean themselves, for indeed they are kept in a continual "fry" by this system of mutual invasion.

Mr. Donne and his guests, as I have said, are at dinner; Mrs. Gale waits on them, but a spark of the hot kitchen fire is in her eye. She considers that the privilege of inviting a friend to a meal occasionally, without additional charge (a privilege included in the terms on which she lets her lodgings), has been quite sufficiently exercised of late. The present week is yet but at Thursday, and on Monday Mr. Malone, the curate of Briarfield, came to breakfast and stayed dinner; on Tuesday Mr. Malone and Mr. Sweeting of Nunnely came to tea, remained to supper, occupied the spare bed, and favoured her with their company to breakfast on

Wednesday morning; now, on Thursday, they are both here at dinner, and she is almost certain they will stay all night. "C'en est trop," she would say, if she could speak French.

Mr. Sweeting is mincing the slice of roast beef on his plate, and complaining that it is very tough; Mr. Donne says the beer is flat. Ay, that is the worst of it: if they would only be civil Mrs. Gale wouldn't mind it so much, if they would only seem satisfied with what they get she wouldn't care; but "these young parsons is so high and so scornful, they set everybody beneath their 'fit.' They treat her with less than civility, just because she doesn't keep a servant, but does the work of the house herself, as her mother did afore her; then they are always speaking against Yorkshire ways and Yorkshire folk," and by that very token Mrs. Gale does not believe one of them to be a real gentleman, or come of gentle kin. "The old parsons is worth the whole lump of college lads; they know what belongs to good manners, and is kind to high and low."

"More bread!" cries Mr. Malone, in a tone which, though prolonged but to utter two syllables, proclaims him at once a native of the land of shamrocks and potatoes. Mrs. Gale hates Mr. Malone more than either of the other two; but she fears him also, for he is a tall, strongly-built personage, with real Irish legs and arms, and a face as genuinely national—not the Milesian face, not Daniel O'Connell's style, but the high-featured, North-American-Indian sort of visage, which belongs to a certain class of the Irish gentry, and has a petrified and proud look, better suited to the owner of an estate of slaves than to the landlord of a free peasantry. Mr. Malone's father termed himself a gentleman: he was poor and in debt, and besottedly arrogant; and his son was like him.

Mrs. Gale offered the loaf.

"Cut it, woman," said her guest; and the "woman" cut it accordingly. Had she followed her inclinations, she would have cut the parson also; her Yorkshire soul revolted absolutely from his manner of command.

The curates had good appetites, and though the beef was "tough," they ate a great deal of it. They swallowed, too, a tolerable allowance of the "flat beer," while a dish of Yorkshire pudding, and two tureens of vegetables, disappeared like leaves before locusts. The cheese, too, received distinguished marks of their attention; and a "spice-cake," which followed by way of dessert, vanished like a vision, and was no more found. Its elegy was chanted in the kitchen by Abraham, Mrs. Gale's son and heir, a youth of six summers; he had reckoned upon the reversion thereof, and when his mother brought down the empty platter, he lifted up his voice and wept sore.

The curates, meantime, sat and sipped their wine, a liquor of unpretending vintage, moderately enjoyed. Mr. Malone, indeed, would much rather have had whisky; but Mr. Donne, being an Englishman, did not keep the beverage. While they sipped they argued, not on politics,

nor on philosophy, nor on literature—these topics were now, as ever, totally without interest for them—not even on theology, practical or doctrinal, but on minute points of ecclesiastical discipline, frivolities which seemed empty as bubbles to all save themselves. Mr. Malone, who contrived to secure two glasses of wine, when his brethren contented themselves with one, waxed by degrees hilarious after his fashion; that is, he grew a little insolent, said rude things in a hectoring tone, and laughed clamorously at his own brilliancy.

Each of his companions became in turn his butt. Malone had a stock of jokes at their service, which he was accustomed to serve out regularly on convivial occasions like the present, seldom varying his wit; for which, indeed, there was no necessity, as he never appeared to consider himself monotonous, and did not at all care what others thought. Mr. Donne he favoured with hints about his extreme meagreness, allusions to his turned-up nose, cutting sarcasms on a certain threadbare chocolate surtout which that gentleman was accustomed to sport whenever it rained or seemed likely to rain, and criticisms on a choice set of cockney phrases and modes of pronunciation, Mr. Donne's own property, and certainly deserving of remark for the elegance and finish they communicated to his style.

Mr. Sweeting was bantered about his stature—he was a little man, a mere boy in height and breadth compared with the athletic Malone; rallied on his musical accomplishments—he played the flute and sang hymns like a seraph, some young ladies of his parish thought; sneered at as "the ladies' pet;" teased about his mamma and sisters, for whom poor Mr. Sweeting had some lingering regard, and of whom he was foolish enough now and then to speak in the presence of the priestly Paddy, from whose anatomy the bowels of natural affection had somehow been omitted.

The victims met these attacks each in his own way: Mr. Donne with a stilted self-complacency and half-sullen phlegm, the sole props of his otherwise somewhat rickety dignity; Mr. Sweeting with the indifference of a light, easy disposition, which never professed to have any dignity to maintain.

When Malone's raillery became rather too offensive, which it soon did, they joined, in an attempt to turn the tables on him by asking him how many boys had shouted "Irish Peter!" after him as he came along the road that Malone); requesting to be informed whether it was the mode in Ireland for clergymen to carry loaded pistols in their pockets, and a shillelah in their hands, when they made pastoral visits; inquiring the signification of such words as vele, firrum, hellum, storrum (so Mr. Malone invariably pronounced veil, firm, helm, storm), and employing such other methods of retaliation as the innate refinement of their minds suggested.

This, of course, would not do. Malone, being neither good-natured nor phlegmatic, was presently in a towering passion. He vociferated, gesticulated; Donne and Sweeting laughed. He reviled them as Saxons and snobs at the very top pitch of his high Celtic voice; they taunted him with being the native of a conquered land. He menaced rebellion in the name of his "counthry," vented bitter hatred against English rule; they spoke of rags, beggary, and pestilence. The little parlour was in an uproar; you would have thought a duel must follow such virulent abuse; it seemed a wonder that Mr. and Mrs. Gale did not take alarm at the noise, and send for a constable to keep the peace. But they were accustomed to such demonstrations; they well knew that the curates never dined or took tea together without a little exercise of the sort, and were quite easy as to consequences, knowing that these clerical quarrels were as harmless as they were noisy, that they resulted in nothing, and that, on whatever terms the curates might part to-night, they would be sure to meet the best friends in the world to-morrow morning.

As the worthy pair were sitting by their kitchen fire, listening to the repeated and sonorous contact of Malone's fist with the mahogany plane of the parlour table, and to the consequent start and jingle of decanters and glasses following each assault, to the mocking laughter of the allied English disputants, and the stuttering declamation of the isolated Hibernian—as they thus sat, a foot was heard on the outer door-step, and the knocker quivered to a sharp appeal.

Mr. Gale went and opened.

"Whom have you upstairs in the parlour?" asked a voice—a rather remarkable voice, nasal in tone, abrupt in utterance.

"O Mr. Helstone, is it you, sir? I could hardly see you for the darkness; it is so soon dark now. Will you walk in, sir?"

"I want to know first whether it is worth my while walking in. Whom have you upstairs?"

"The curates, sir."

"What! all of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Been dining here?"

"Yes, sir."

"That will do."

With these words a person entered—a middle-aged man, in black. He walked straight across the kitchen to an inner door, opened it, inclined his head forward, and stood listening. There was something to listen to, for the noise above was just then louder than ever.

"Hey!" he ejaculated to himself; then turning to Mr. Gale—"Have you often this sort of work?"

Mr. Gale had been a churchwarden, and was indulgent to the clergy.

"They're young, you know, sir—they're young," said he deprecatingly.

"Young! They want caning. Bad boys—bad boys! And if you were a Dissenter, John Gale, instead of being a good Churchman, they'd do the like—they'd expose themselves; but I'll——"

By way of finish to this sentence, he passed through the inner door, drew it after him, and mounted the stair. Again he listened a few minutes when he arrived at the upper room. Making entrance without warning, he stood before the curates.

And they were silent; they were transfixed; and so was the invader. He—a personage short of stature, but straight of port, and bearing on broad shoulders a hawk's head, beak, and eye, the whole surmounted by a Rehoboam, or shovel hat, which he did not seem to think it necessary to lift or remove before the presence in which he then stood—*he* folded his arms on his chest and surveyed his young friends, if friends they were, much at his leisure.

"What!" he began, delivering his words in a voice no longer nasal, but deep—more than deep—a voice made purposely hollow and cavernous—"what! has the miracle of Pentecost been renewed? Have the cloven tongues come down again? Where are they? The sound filled the whole house just now. I heard the seventeen languages in full action: Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; every one of these must have had its representative in this room two minutes since."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Helstone," began Mr. Donne; "take a seat, pray, sir. Have a glass of wine?"

His civilities received no answer. The falcon in the black coat proceeded,—

"What do I talk about the gift of tongues? Gift, indeed! I mistook the chapter, and book, and Testament—gospel for law, Acts for Genesis, the city of Jerusalem for the plain of Shinar. It was no gift but the confusion of tongues which has gabbled me deaf as a post. *You*, apostles? What! you three? Certainly not; three presumptuous Babylonish masons—neither more nor less!"

"I assure you, sir, we were only having a little chat together over a glass of wine after a friendly dinner—settling the Dissenters!"

"Oh! settling the Dissenters, were you? Was Malone settling the Dissenters? It sounded to me much more like settling his co-apostles. You were quarrelling together, making almost as much noise—you three alone—as Moses Barraclough, the preaching tailor, and all his hearers are making in the Methodist chapel down yonder, where they are in the thick of a revival. I know whose fault it is.—It is yours, Malone."

"Mine, sir?"

"Yours, sir. Donne and Sweeting were quiet before you came, and would be quiet if you were gone. I wish, when you crossed the Channel,

you had left your Irish habits behind you. Dublin student ways won't do here. The proceedings which might pass unnoticed in a wild bog and mountain district in Connaught will, in a decent English parish, bring disgrace on those who indulge in them, and, what is far worse, on the sacred institution of which they are merely the humble appendages."

There was a certain dignity in the little elderly gentleman's manner of rebuking these youths, though it was not, perhaps, quite the dignity most appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Helstone, standing straight as a ramrod, looking keen as a kite, presented, despite his clerical hat, black coat, and gaiters, more the air of a veteran officer chiding his subalterns than of a venerable priest exhorting his sons in the faith. Gospel mildness, apostolic benignity, never seemed to have breathed their influence over that keen brown visage, but firmness had fixed the features, and sagacity had carved her own lines about them.

"I met Supplehough," he continued, "plodding through the mud this wet night, going to preach at Milldean opposition shop. As I told you, I heard Barraclough bellowing in the midst of a conventicle like a possessed bull; and I find *you*, gentlemen, tarrying over your half-pint of muddy port wine, and scolding like angry old women. No wonder Supplehough should have dipped sixteen adult converts in a day—which he did a fortnight since; no wonder Barraclough, scamp and hypocrite as he is, should attract all the weaver-girls in their flowers and ribbons, to witness how much harder are his knuckles than the wooden brim of his tub; as little wonder that *you*, when you are left to yourselves, without your rectors—myself, and Hall, and Boultby—to back you, should too often perform the holy service of our church to bare walls, and read your bit of a dry discourse to the clerk, and the organist, and the beadle. But enough of the subject. I came to see Malone.—I have an errand unto thee, O captain!"

"What is it?" inquired Malone discontentedly. "There can be no funeral to take at this time of day."

"Have you any arms about you?"

"Arms, sir?—yes, and legs." And he advanced the mighty members.

"Bah! weapons I mean."

"I have the pistols you gave me yourself. I never part with them. I lay them ready cocked on a chair by my bedside at night. I have my blackthorn."

"Very good. Will you go to Hollow's Mill?"

"What is stirring at Hollow's Mill?"

"Nothing as yet, nor perhaps will be; but Moore is alone there. He has sent all the workmen he can trust to Stilbro'; there are only two women left about the place. It would be a nice opportunity for any of his well-wishers to pay him a visit, if they knew how straight the path was made before them."

"I am none of his well-wishers, sir. I don't care for him."

"Soh! Malone, you are afraid."

"You know me better than that. If I really thought there was a chance of a row I would go: but Moore is a strange, shy man, whom I never pretend to understand; and for the sake of his sweet company only I would not stir a step."

"But there *is* a chance of a row; if a positive riot does not take place—of which, indeed, I see no signs—yet it is unlikely this night will pass quite tranquilly. You know Moor has resolved to have new machinery, and he expects two wagon-loads of frames and shears from Stilbro' this evening. Scott, the overlooker, and a few picked men are gone to fetch them."

"They will bring them in safely and quietly enough, sir."

"Moore says so, and affirms he wants nobody. Some one, however, he must have, if it were only to bear evidence in case anything should happen. I call him very careless. He sits in the counting-house with the shutters unclosed; he goes out here and there after dark, wanders right up the hollow, down Fieldhead Lane, among the plantations, just as if he were the darling of the neighbourhood, or—being, as he is, its detestation—bore a 'charmed life,' as they say in tale-books. He takes no warning from the fate of Pearson, nor from that of Armitage—shot, one in his own house and the other on the moor."

"But he should take warning, sir, and use precautions too," interposed Mr. Sweeting; "and I think he would if he heard what I heard the other day."

"What did you hear, Davy?"

"You know Mike Hartley, sir?"

"The Antinomian weaver? Yes."

"When Mike has been drinking for a few weeks together, he generally winds up by a visit to Nunnely vicarage, to tell Mr. Hall a piece of his mind about his sermons, to denounce the horrible tendency of his doctrine of works, and warn him that he and all his hearers are sitting in outer darkness."

"Well, that has nothing to do with Moore."

"Besides being an Antinomian, he is a violent Jacobin and leveller, sir."

"I know. When he is very drunk, his mind is always running on regicide. Mike is not unacquainted with history, and it is rich to hear him going over the list of tyrants of whom, as he says, 'the revenger of blood has obtained satisfaction.' The fellow exults strangely in murder done on crowned heads or on any head for political reasons. I have already heard it hinted that he seems to have a queer hankering after Moore. Is that what you allude to, Sweeting?"

"You use the proper term, sir. Mr. Hall thinks Mike has no personal hatred of Moore. Mike says he even likes to talk to him and run after him, but he has a *hankering* that Moore should be made an example of. He was extolling him to Mr. Hall the other day as the mill-owner with

the most brains in Yorkshire, and for that reason he affirms Moore should be chosen as a sacrifice, an oblation of a sweet savour. Is Mike Hartley in his right mind, do you think, sir?" inquired Sweeting simply.

"Can't tell, Davy. He may be crazed, or he may be only crafty, or perhaps a little of both."

"He talks of seeing visions, sir."

"Ay! He is a very Ezekiel or Daniel for visions. He came just when I was going to bed last Friday night to describe one that had been revealed to him in Nunnely Park that very afternoon."

"Tell it, sir. What was it?" urged Sweeting.

"Davy, thou hast an enormous organ of wonder in thy cranium. Malone, you see, has none. Neither murders nor visions interest him. See what a big vacant Saph he looks at this moment."

"Saph! Who was Saph, sir?"

"I thought you would not know. You may find it out. It is biblical. I know nothing more of him than his name and race; but from a boy upwards I have always attached a personality to Saph. Depend on it he was honest, heavy, and luckless. He met his end at Gob by the hand of Sibbechai."

"But the vision, sir?"

"Davy, thou shalt hear. Donne is biting his nails, and Malone yawning, so I will tell it but to thee. Mike is out of work, like many others, unfortunately. Mr. Grame, Sir Philip Nunnely's steward, gave him a job about the priory. According to his account, Mike was busy hedging rather late in the afternoon, but before dark, when he heard what he thought was a band at a distance—bugles, fifes, and the sound of a trumpet; it came from the forest, and he wondered that there should be music there. He looked up. All amongst the trees he saw moving objects, red, like poppies, or white, like may-blossom. The wood was full of them; they poured out and filled the park. He then perceived they were soldiers—thousands and tens of thousands; but they made no more noise than a swarm of midges on a summer evening. They formed in order, he affirmed, and marched, regiment after regiment, across the park. He followed them to Nunnely Common; the music still played soft and distant. On the common he watched them go through a number of evolutions. A man clothed in scarlet stood in the centre and directed them. They extended, he declared, over fifty acres. They were in sight half an hour; then they marched away quite silently. The whole time he heard neither voice nor tread—nothing but the faint music playing a solemn march."

"Where did they go, sir?"

"Towards Briarfield. Mike followed them. They seemed passing Fieldhead, when a column of smoke, such as might be vomited by a park of artillery, spread noiseless over the fields, the road, the common, and rolled, he said, blue and dim, to his very feet. As it cleared away he

looked again for the soldiers, but they were vanished; he saw them no more. Mike, like a wise Daniel as he is, not only rehearsed the vision but gave the interpretation thereof. It signifies, he intimated, bloodshed and civil conflict."

"Do you credit it, sir?" asked Sweeting.

"Do you, Davy?—But come, Malone; why are you not off?"

"I am rather surprised, sir, you did not stay with Moore yourself. You like this kind of thing."

"So I should have done, had I not unfortunately happened to engage Boultby to sup with me on his way home from the Bible Society meeting at Nunnely. I promised to send you as my substitute; for which, by-the-bye, he did not thank me. He would much rather have had me than you, Peter. Should there be any real need of help I shall join you. The mill-bell will give warning. Meantime, go—unless (turning suddenly to Messrs. Sweeting and Donne)—unless Davy Sweeting or Joseph Donne prefers going.—What do you say, gentlemen? The commission is an honourable one, not without the seasoning of a little real peril; for the country is in a queer state, as you all know, and Moore and his mill and his machinery are held in sufficient odium. There are chivalric sentiments, there is high-beating courage, under those waistcoats of yours, I doubt not. Perhaps I am too partial to my favourite Peter. Little David shall be the champion, or spotless Joseph.—Malone, you are but a great floundering Saul after all, good only to lend your armour. Out with your firearms; fetch your shillelah. It is there—in the corner."

With a significant grin Malone produced his pistols, offering one to each of his brethren. They were not readily seized on. With graceful modesty each gentleman retired a step from the presented weapon.

"I never touch them. I never did touch anything of the kind," said Mr. Donne.

"I am almost a stranger to Mr. Moore," murmured Sweeting.

"If you never touched a pistol, try the feel of it now, great satrap of Egypt. As to the little minstrel, he probably prefers encountering the Philistines with no other weapon than his flute.—Get their hats, Peter. They'll both of 'em go."

"No, sir; no, Mr. Helstone. My mother wouldn't like it," pleaded Sweeting.

"And I make it a rule never to get mixed up in affairs of the kind," observed Donne.

Helstone smiled sardonically; Malone laughed a horse-laugh. He then replaced his arms, took his hat and cudgel, and saying that "he never felt more in tune for a shindy in his life, and that he wished a score of greasy cloth-dressers might beat up Moore's quarters that night," he made his exit, clearing the stairs at a stride or two, and making the house shake with the bang of the front-door behind him.

Chapter

# 2 THE WAGONS.

The evening was pitch dark: star and moon were quenched in gray rain-clouds—gray they would have been by day; by night they looked sable. Malone was not a man given to close observation of nature; her changes passed, for the most part, unnoticed by him. He could walk miles on the most varying April day and never see the beautiful dallying of earth and heaven—never mark when a sunbeam kissed the hill-tops, making them smile clear in green light, or when a shower wept over them, hiding their crests with the low-hanging, dishevelled tresses of a cloud. He did not, therefore, care to contrast the sky as it now appeared—a muffled, streaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro' ironworks threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon—with the same sky on an unclouded frosty night. He did not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and the planets were gone, or to regret the "black-blue" serenity of the air-ocean which those white islets stud, and which another ocean, of heavier and denser element, now rolled below and concealed. He just doggedly pursued his way, leaning a little forward as he walked, and wearing his hat on the back of his head, as his Irish manner was. "Tramp, tramp," he went along the causeway, where the road boasted the privilege of such an accommodation; "splash, splash," through the mire-filled cart ruts, where the flags were exchanged for soft mud. He looked but for certain landmarks—the spire of Briarfield Church; farther on, the lights of Redhouse. This was an inn; and when he reached it, the glow of a fire through a half-curtained window, a vision of glasses on a round table, and of revellers on an oaken settle, had nearly drawn aside the curate from his course. He thought longingly of a tumbler of whisky-and-water. In a strange place he would instantly have realized the dream; but the company assembled in that kitchen were Mr. Helstone's own parishioners; they all knew him. He sighed, and passed on.

The highroad was now to be quitted, as the remaining distance to Hollow's Mill might be considerably reduced by a short cut across fields. These fields were level and monotonous. Malone took a direct course through them, jumping hedge and wall. He passed but one building here, and that seemed large and hall-like, though irregular. You could see a high gable, then a long front, then a low gable, then a thick, lofty stack of chimneys. There were some trees behind it. It was dark; not a candle shone from any window. It was absolutely still; the rain running from the eaves, and the rather wild but very low whistle of the wind

round the chimneys and through the boughs were the sole sounds in its neighbourhood.

This building passed, the fields, hitherto flat, declined in a rapid descent. Evidently a vale lay below, through which you could hear the water run. One light glimmered in the depth. For that beacon Malone steered.

He came to a little white house—you could see it was white even through this dense darkness—and knocked at the door. A fresh-faced servant opened it. By the candle she held was revealed a narrow passage, terminating in a narrow stair. Two doors covered with crimson baize, a strip of crimson carpet down the steps, contrasted with light-coloured walls and white floor, made the little interior look clean and fresh.

"Mr. Moore is at home, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, but he is not in."

"Not in! Where is he then?"

"At the mill—in the counting-house."

Here one of the crimson doors opened.

"Are the wagons come, Sarah?" asked a female voice, and a female head at the same time was apparent. It might not be the head of a goddess—indeed a screw of curl-paper on each side the temples quite forbade that supposition—but neither was it the head of a Gorgon; yet Malone seemed to take it in the latter light. Big as he was, he shrank bashfully back into the rain at the view thereof, and saying, "I'll go to him," hurried in seeming trepidation down a short lane, across an obscure yard, towards a huge black mill.

The work-hours were over; the "hands" were gone. The machinery was at rest, the mill shut up. Malone walked round it. Somewhere in its great sooty flank he found another chink of light; he knocked at another door, using for the purpose the thick end of his shillelah, with which he beat a rousing tattoo. A key turned; the door unclosed.

"Is it Joe Scott? What news of the wagons, Joe?"

"No; it's myself. Mr. Helstone would send me."

"Oh! Mr. Malone." The voice in uttering this name had the slightest possible cadence of disappointment. After a moment's pause it continued, politely but a little formally,—

"I beg you will come in, Mr. Malone. I regret extremely Mr. Helstone should have thought it necessary to trouble you so far. There was no necessity—I told him so—and on such a night; but walk forwards."

Through a dark apartment, of aspect undistinguishable, Malone followed the speaker into a light and bright room within—very light and bright indeed it seemed to eyes which, for the last hour, had been striving to penetrate the double darkness of night and fog; but except for its excellent fire, and for a lamp of elegant design and vivid lustre burning on a table, it was a very plain place. The boarded floor was

carpetless; the three or four stiff-backed, green-painted chairs seemed once to have furnished the kitchen of some farm-house; a desk of strong, solid formation, the table aforesaid, and some framed sheets on the stone-coloured walls, bearing plans for building, for gardening, designs of machinery, etc., completed the furniture of the place.

Plain as it was, it seemed to satisfy Malone, who, when he had removed and hung up his wet surtout and hat, drew one of the rheumatic-looking chairs to the hearth, and set his knees almost within the bars of the red grate.

"Comfortable quarters you have here, Mr. Moore; and all snug to yourself."

"Yes, but my sister would be glad to see you, if you would prefer stepping into the house."

"Oh no! The ladies are best alone, I never was a lady's man. You don't mistake me for my friend Sweeting, do you, Mr. Moore?"

"Sweeting! Which of them is that? The gentleman in the chocolate overcoat, or the little gentleman?"

"The little one—he of Nunnely; the cavalier of the Misses Sykes, with the whole six of whom he is in love, ha! ha!"

"Better be generally in love with all than specially with one, I should think, in that quarter."

"But he is specially in love with one besides, for when I and Donne urged him to make a choice amongst the fair bevy, he named—which do you think?"

With a queer, quiet smile Mr. Moore replied, "Dora, of course, or Harriet."

"Ha! ha! you've an excellent guess. But what made you hit on those two?"

"Because they are the tallest, the handsomest, and Dora, at least, is the stoutest; and as your friend Mr. Sweeting is but a little slight figure, I concluded that, according to a frequent rule in such cases, he preferred his contrast."

"You are right; Dora it is. But he has no chance, has he, Moore?"

"What has Mr. Sweeting besides his curacy?"

This question seemed to tickle Malone amazingly. He laughed for full three minutes before he answered it.

"What has Sweeting? Why, David has his harp, or flute, which comes to the same thing. He has a sort of pinchbeck watch; ditto, ring; ditto, eyeglass. That's what he has."

"How would he propose to keep Miss Sykes in gowns only?"

"Ha! ha! Excellent! I'll ask him that next time I see him. I'll roast him for his presumption. But no doubt he expects old Christopher Sykes would do something handsome. He is rich, is he not? They live in a large house."

"Sykes carries on an extensive concern."

"Therefore he must be wealthy, eh?"

"Therefore he must have plenty to do with his wealth, and in these times would be about as likely to think of drawing money from the business to give dowries to his daughters as I should be to dream of pulling down the cottage there, and constructing on its ruins a house as large as Fieldhead."

"Do you know what I heard, Moore, the other day?"

"No. Perhaps that I *was* about to effect some such change. Your Briarfield gossips are capable of saying that or sillier things."

"That you were going to take Fieldhead on a lease (I thought it looked a dismal place, by-the-bye, to-night, as I passed it), and that it was your intention to settle a Miss Sykes there as mistress—to be married, in short, ha! ha! Now, which is it? Dora, I am sure. You said she was the handsomest."

"I wonder how often it has been settled that I was to be married since I came to Briarfield. They have assigned me every marriageable single woman by turns in the district. Now it was the two Misses Wynns—first the dark, then the light one; now the red-haired Miss Armitage; then the mature Ann Pearson. At present you throw on my shoulders all the tribe of the Misses Sykes. On what grounds this gossip rests God knows. I visit nowhere; I seek female society about as assiduously as you do, Mr. Malone. If ever I go to Whinbury, it is only to give Sykes or Pearson a call in their counting-house, where our discussions run on other topics than matrimony, and our thoughts are occupied with other things than courtships, establishments, dowries. The cloth we can't sell, the hands we can't employ, the mills we can't run, the perverse course of events generally, which we cannot alter, fill our hearts, I take it, pretty well at present, to the tolerably complete exclusion of such figments as love-making, etc."

"I go along with you completely, Moore. If there is one notion I hate more than another, it is that of marriage—I mean marriage in the vulgar weak sense, as a mere matter of sentiment—two beggarly fools agreeing to unite their indigence by some fantastic tie of feeling. Humbug! But an advantageous connection, such as can be formed in consonance with dignity of views and permanency of solid interests, is not so bad—eh?"

"No," responded Moore, in an absent manner. The subject seemed to have no interest for him; he did not pursue it. After sitting for some time gazing at the fire with a preoccupied air, he suddenly turned his head.

"Hark!" said he. "Did you hear wheels?"

Rising, he went to the window, opened it, and listened. He soon closed it. "It is only the sound of the wind rising," he remarked, "and the rivulet a little swollen, rushing down the hollow. I expected those wagons at six; it is near nine now."

"Seriously, do you suppose that the putting up of this new machinery will bring you into danger?" inquired Malone. "Helstone seems to think it will."

"I only wish the machines—the frames—were safe here, and lodged within the walls of this mill. Once put up, I defy the frame-breakers. Let them only pay me a visit and take the consequences. My mill is my castle."

"One despises such low scoundrels," observed Malone, in a profound vein of reflection. "I almost wish a party would call upon you to-night; but the road seemed extremely quiet as I came along. I saw nothing astir."

"You came by the Redhouse?"

"Yes."

"There would be nothing on that road. It is in the direction of Stilbro' the risk lies."

"And you think there is risk?"

"What these fellows have done to others they may do to me. There is only this difference: most of the manufacturers seem paralyzed when they are attacked. Sykes, for instance, when his dressing-shop was set on fire and burned to the ground, when the cloth was torn from his tenters and left in shreds in the field, took no steps to discover or punish the miscreants: he gave up as tamely as a rabbit under the jaws of a ferret. Now I, if I know myself, should stand by my trade, my mill, and my machinery."

"Helstone says these three are your gods; that the 'Orders in Council' are with you another name for the seven deadly sins; that Castlereagh is your Antichrist, and the war-party his legions."

"Yes; I abhor all these things because they ruin me. They stand in my way. I cannot get on. I cannot execute my plans because of them. I see myself baffled at every turn by their untoward effects."

"But you are rich and thriving, Moore?"

"I am very rich in cloth I cannot sell. You should step into my warehouse yonder, and observe how it is piled to the roof with pieces. Roakes and Pearson are in the same condition. America used to be their market, but the Orders in Council have cut that off."

Malone did not seem prepared to carry on briskly a conversation of this sort. He began to knock the heels of his boots together, and to yawn.

"And then to think," continued Mr. Moore who seemed too much taken up with the current of his own thoughts to note the symptoms of his guest's *ennui*—"to think that these ridiculous gossips of Whinbury and Briarfield will keep pestering one about being married! As if there was nothing to be done in life but to 'pay attention,' as they say, to some young lady, and then to go to church with her, and then to start on a bridal tour, and then to run through a round of visits, and then, I suppose, to be 'having a family.' Oh, que le diable emporte!" He broke off

the aspiration into which he was launching with a certain energy, and added, more calmly, "I believe women talk and think only of these things, and they naturally fancy men's minds similarly occupied."

"Of course—of course," assented Malone; "but never mind them." And he whistled, looked impatiently round, and seemed to feel a great want of something. This time Moore caught and, it appeared, comprehended his demonstrations.

"Mr. Malone," said he, "you must require refreshment after your wet walk. I forget hospitality."

"Not at all," rejoined Malone; but he looked as if the right nail was at last hit on the head, nevertheless. Moore rose and opened a cupboard.

"It is my fancy," said he, "to have every convenience within myself, and not to be dependent on the feminity in the cottage yonder for every mouthful I eat or every drop I drink. I often spend the evening and sup here alone, and sleep with Joe Scott in the mill. Sometimes I am my own watchman. I require little sleep, and it pleases me on a fine night to wander for an hour or two with my musket about the hollow. Mr. Malone, can you cook a mutton chop?"

"Try me. I've done it hundreds of times at college."

"There's a dishful, then, and there's the gridiron. Turn them quickly. You know the secret of keeping the juices in?"

"Never fear me; you shall see. Hand a knife and fork, please."

The curate turned up his coat-cuffs, and applied himself to the cookery with vigour. The manufacturer placed on the table plates, a loaf of bread, a black bottle, and two tumblers. He then produced a small copper kettle—still from the same well-stored recess, his cupboard—filled it with water from a large stone jar in a corner, set it on the fire beside the hissing gridiron, got lemons, sugar, and a small china punch-bowl; but while he was brewing the punch a tap at the door called him away.

"Is it you, Sarah?"

"Yes, sir. Will you come to supper, please, sir?"

"No; I shall not be in to-night; I shall sleep in the mill. So lock the doors, and tell your mistress to go to bed."

He returned.

"You have your household in proper order," observed Malone approvingly, as, with his fine face ruddy as the embers over which he bent, he assiduously turned the mutton chops. "You are not under petticoat government, like poor Sweeting, a man—whew! how the fat spits! it has burnt my hand—destined to be ruled by women. Now you and I, Moore—there's a fine brown one for you, and full of gravy—you and I will have no gray mares in our stables when we marry."

"I don't know; I never think about it. If the gray mare is handsome and tractable, why not?"

"The chops are done. Is the punch brewed?"

"There is a glassful. Taste it. When Joe Scott and his minions return they shall have a share of this, provided they bring home the frames intact."

Malone waxed very exultant over the supper. He laughed aloud at trifles, made bad jokes and applauded them himself, and, in short, grew unmeaningly noisy. His host, on the contrary, remained quiet as before. It is time, reader, that you should have some idea of the appearance of this same host. I must endeavour to sketch him as he sits at table.

He is what you would probably call, at first view, rather a strange-looking man; for he is thin, dark, sallow, very foreign of aspect, with shadowy hair carelessly streaking his forehead. It appears that he spends but little time at his toilet, or he would arrange it with more taste. He seems unconscious that his features are fine, that they have a southern symmetry, clearness, regularity in their chiselling; nor does a spectator become aware of this advantage till he has examined him well, for an anxious countenance and a hollow, somewhat haggard, outline of face disturb the idea of beauty with one of care. His eyes are large, and grave, and gray; their expression is intent and meditative, rather searching than soft, rather thoughtful than genial. When he parts his lips in a smile, his physiognomy is agreeable—not that it is frank or cheerful even then, but you feel the influence of a certain sedate charm, suggestive, whether truly or delusively, of a considerate, perhaps a kind nature, of feelings that may wear well at home—patient, forbearing, possibly faithful feelings. He is still young—not more than thirty; his stature is tall, his figure slender. His manner of speaking displeases. He has an outlandish accent, which, notwithstanding a studied carelessness of pronunciation and diction, grates on a British, and especially on a Yorkshire, ear.

Mr. Moore, indeed, was but half a Briton, and scarcely that. He came of a foreign ancestry by the mother's side, and was himself born and partly reared on a foreign soil. A hybrid in nature, it is probable he had a hybrid's feeling on many points—patriotism for one; it is likely that he was unapt to attach himself to parties, to sects, even to climes and customs; it is not impossible that he had a tendency to isolate his individual person from any community amidst which his lot might temporarily happen to be thrown, and that he felt it to be his best wisdom to push the interests of Robert Gérard Moore, to the exclusion of philanthropic consideration for general interests, with which he regarded the said Gérard Moore as in a great measure disconnected. Trade was Mr. Moore's hereditary calling: the Gérards of Antwerp had been merchants for two centuries back. Once they had been wealthy merchants; but the uncertainties, the involvements, of business had come upon them; disastrous speculations had loosened by degrees the foundations of their credit. The house had stood on a tottering base for a dozen years; and at last, in the shock of the French Revolution, it had

rushed down a total ruin. In its fall was involved the English and Yorkshire firm of Moore, closely connected with the Antwerp house, and of which one of the partners, resident in Antwerp, Robert Moore, had married Hortense Gérard, with the prospect of his bride inheriting her father Constantine Gérard's share in the business. She inherited, as we have seen, but his share in the liabilities of the firm; and these liabilities, though duly set aside by a composition with creditors, some said her son Robert accepted, in his turn, as a legacy, and that he aspired one day to discharge them, and to rebuild the fallen house of Gérard and Moore on a scale at least equal to its former greatness. It was even supposed that he took by-past circumstances much to heart; and if a childhood passed at the side of a saturnine mother, under foreboding of coming evil, and a manhood drenched and blighted by the pitiless descent of the storm, could painfully impress the mind, *his* probably was impressed in no golden characters.

If, however, he had a great end of restoration in view, it was not in his power to employ great means for its attainment. He was obliged to be content with the day of small things. When he came to Yorkshire, he—whose ancestors had owned warehouses in this seaport, and factories in that inland town, had possessed their town-house and their country-seat—saw no way open to him but to rent a cloth-mill in an out-of-the-way nook of an out-of-the-way district; to take a cottage adjoining it for his residence, and to add to his possessions, as pasture for his horse, and space for his cloth-tenters, a few acres of the steep, rugged land that lined the hollow through which his mill-stream brawled. All this he held at a somewhat high rent (for these war times were hard, and everything was dear) of the trustees of the Fieldhead estate, then the property of a minor.

At the time this history commences, Robert Moore had lived but two years in the district, during which period he had at least proved himself possessed of the quality of activity. The dingy cottage was converted into a neat, tasteful residence. Of part of the rough land he had made garden-ground, which he cultivated with singular, even with Flemish, exactness and care. As to the mill, which was an old structure, and fitted up with old machinery, now become inefficient and out of date, he had from the first evinced the strongest contempt for all its arrangements and appointments. His aim had been to effect a radical reform, which he had executed as fast as his very limited capital would allow; and the narrowness of that capital, and consequent check on his progress, was a restraint which galled his spirit sorely. Moore ever wanted to push on. "Forward" was the device stamped upon his soul; but poverty curbed him. Sometimes (figuratively) he foamed at the mouth when the reins were drawn very tight.

In this state of feeling, it is not to be expected that he would deliberate much as to whether his advance was or was not prejudicial to others.

Not being a native, nor for any length of time a resident of the neighbourhood, he did not sufficiently care when the new inventions threw the old workpeople out of employ. He never asked himself where those to whom he no longer paid weekly wages found daily bread; and in this negligence he only resembled thousands besides, on whom the starving poor of Yorkshire seemed to have a closer claim.

The period of which I write was an overshadowed one in British history, and especially in the history of the northern provinces. War was then at its height. Europe was all involved therein. England, if not weary, was worn with long resistance—yes, and half her people were weary too, and cried out for peace on any terms. National honour was become a mere empty name, of no value in the eyes of many, because their sight was dim with famine; and for a morsel of meat they would have sold their birthright.

The "Orders in Council," provoked by Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees, and forbidding neutral powers to trade with France, had, by offending America, cut off the principal market of the Yorkshire woollen trade, and brought it consequently to the verge of ruin. Minor foreign markets were glutted, and would receive no more. The Brazils, Portugal, Sicily, were all overstocked by nearly two years' consumption. At this crisis certain inventions in machinery were introduced into the staple manufactures of the north, which, greatly reducing the number of hands necessary to be employed, threw thousands out of work, and left them without legitimate means of sustaining life. A bad harvest supervened. Distress reached its climax. Endurance, overgoaded, stretched the hand of fraternity to sedition. The throes of a sort of moral earthquake were felt heaving under the hills of the northern counties. But, as is usual in such cases, nobody took much notice. When a food-riot broke out in a manufacturing town, when a gig-mill was burnt to the ground, or a manufacturer's house was attacked, the furniture thrown into the streets, and the family forced to flee for their lives, some local measures were or were not taken by the local magistracy. A ringleader was detected, or more frequently suffered to elude detection; newspaper paragraphs were written on the subject, and there the thing stopped. As to the sufferers, whose sole inheritance was labour, and who had lost that inheritance—who could not get work, and consequently could not get wages, and consequently could not get bread—they were left to suffer on, perhaps inevitably left. It would not do to stop the progress of invention, to damage science by discouraging its improvements; the war could not be terminated; efficient relief could not be raised. There was no help then; so the unemployed underwent their destiny—ate the bread and drank the waters of affliction.

Misery generates hate. These sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the buildings which contained those machines; they hated the manufacturers who owned

those buildings. In the parish of Briarfield, with which we have at present to do, Hollow's Mill was the place held most abominable; Gérard Moore, in his double character of semi-foreigner and thorough-going progressist, the man most abominated. And it perhaps rather agreed with Moore's temperament than otherwise to be generally hated, especially when he believed the thing for which he was hated a right and an expedient thing; and it was with a sense of warlike excitement he, on this night, sat in his counting-house waiting the arrival of his frame-laden wagons. Malone's coming and company were, it may be, most unwelcome to him. He would have preferred sitting alone; for he liked a silent, sombre, unsafe solitude. His watchman's musket would have been company enough for him; the full-flowing beck in the den would have delivered continuously the discourse most genial to his ear.

With the queerest look in the world had the manufacturer for some ten minutes been watching the Irish curate, as the latter made free with the punch, when suddenly that steady gray eye changed, as if another vision came between it and Malone. Moore raised his hand.

"Chut!" he said in his French fashion, as Malone made a noise with his glass. He listened a moment, then rose, put his hat on, and went out at the counting-house door.

The night was still, dark, and stagnant: the water yet rushed on full and fast; its flow almost seemed a flood in the utter silence. Moore's ear, however, caught another sound, very distant but yet dissimilar, broken and rugged—in short, a sound of heavy wheels crunching a stony road. He returned to the counting-house and lit a lantern, with which he walked down the mill-yard, and proceeded to open the gates. The big wagons were coming on; the dray-horses' huge hoofs were heard splashing in the mud and water. Moore hailed them.

"Hey, Joe Scott! Is all right?"

Probably Joe Scott was yet at too great a distance to hear the inquiry. He did not answer it.

"Is all right, I say?" again asked Moore, when the elephant-like leader's nose almost touched his.

Some one jumped out from the foremost wagon into the road; a voice cried aloud, "Ay, ay, divil; all's raight! We've smashed 'em."

And there was a run. The wagons stood still; they were now deserted.

"Joe Scott!" No Joe Scott answered. "Murgatroyd! Pighills! Sykes!" No reply. Mr. Moore lifted his lantern and looked into the vehicles. There was neither man nor machinery; they were empty and abandoned.

Now Mr. Moore loved his machinery. He had risked the last of his capital on the purchase of these frames and shears which to-night had been expected. Speculations most important to his interests depended on the results to be wrought by them. Where were they?

The words "we've smashed 'em" rang in his ears. How did the catastrophe affect him? By the light of the lantern he held were his features visible, relaxing to a singular smile—the smile the man of determined spirit wears when he reaches a juncture in his life where this determined spirit is to feel a demand on its strength, when the strain is to be made, and the faculty must bear or break. Yet he remained silent, and even motionless; for at the instant he neither knew what to say nor what to do. He placed the lantern on the ground, and stood with his arms folded, gazing down and reflecting.

An impatient trampling of one of the horses made him presently look up. His eye in the moment caught the gleam of something white attached to a part of the harness. Examined by the light of the lantern this proved to be a folded paper—a billet. It bore no address without; within was the superscription:—

"To the Divil of Hollow's Miln."

We will not copy the rest of the orthography, which was very peculiar, but translate it into legible English. It ran thus:—

"Your hellish machinery is shivered to smash on Stilbro' Moor, and your men are lying bound hand and foot in a ditch by the roadside. Take this as a warning from men that are starving, and have starving wives and children to go home to when they have done this deed. If you get new machines, or if you otherwise go on as you have done, you shall hear from us again. Beware!"

"Hear from you again? Yes, I'll hear from you again, and you shall hear from me. I'll speak to you directly. On Stilbro' Moor you shall hear from me in a moment."

Having led the wagons within the gates, he hastened towards the cottage. Opening the door, he spoke a few words quickly but quietly to two females who ran to meet him in the passage. He calmed the seeming alarm of one by a brief palliative account of what had taken place; to the other he said, "Go into the mill, Sarah—there is the key—and ring the mill-bell as loud as you can. Afterwards you will get another lantern and help me to light up the front."

Returning to his horses, he unharnessed, fed, and stabled them with equal speed and care, pausing occasionally, while so occupied, as if to listen for the mill-bell. It clanged out presently, with irregular but loud and alarming din. The hurried, agitated peal seemed more urgent than if the summons had been steadily given by a practised hand. On that still night, at that unusual hour, it was heard a long way round. The guests in the kitchen of the Redhouse were startled by the clamour, and declaring that "there must be summat more nor common to do at Hollow's Miln," they called for lanterns, and hurried to the spot in a body. And scarcely had they thronged into the yard with their gleaming lights, when the tramp of horses was heard, and a little man in a shovel hat, sitting erect

on the back of a shaggy pony, "rode lightly in," followed by an aide-de-camp mounted on a larger steed.

Mr. Moore, meantime, after stabling his dray-horses, had saddled his hackney, and with the aid of Sarah, the servant, lit up his mill, whose wide and long front now glared one great illumination, throwing a sufficient light on the yard to obviate all fear of confusion arising from obscurity. Already a deep hum of voices became audible. Mr. Malone had at length issued from the counting-house, previously taking the precaution to dip his head and face in the stone water-jug; and this precaution, together with the sudden alarm, had nearly restored to him the possession of those senses which the punch had partially scattered. He stood with his hat on the back of his head, and his shillelah grasped in his dexter fist, answering much at random the questions of the newly-arrived party from the Redhouse. Mr. Moore now appeared, and was immediately confronted by the shovel hat and the shaggy pony.

"Well, Moore, what is your business with us? I thought you would want us to-night—me and the hetman here (patting his pony's neck), and Tom and his charger. When I heard your mill-bell I could sit still no longer, so I left Boultby to finish his supper alone. But where is the enemy? I do not see a mask or a smutted face present; and there is not a pane of glass broken in your windows. Have you had an attack, or do you expect one?"

"Oh, not at all! I have neither had one nor expect one," answered Moore coolly. "I only ordered the bell to be rung because I want two or three neighbours to stay here in the Hollow while I and a couple or so more go over to Stilbro' Moor."

"To Stilbro' Moor! What to do? To meet the wagons?"

"The wagons are come home an hour ago."

"Then all's right. What more would you have?"

"They came home empty; and Joe Scott and company are left on the moor, and so are the frames. Read that scrawl."

Mr. Helstone received and perused the document of which the contents have before been given.

"Hum! They've only served you as they serve others. But, however, the poor fellows in the ditch will be expecting help with some impatience. This is a wet night for such a berth. I and Tom will go with you. Malone may stay behind and take care of the mill. What is the matter with him? His eyes seem starting out of his head."

"He has been eating a mutton chop."

"Indeed!—Peter Augustus, be on your guard. Eat no more mutton chops to-night. You are left here in command of these premises—an honourable post!"

"Is anybody to stay with me?"

"As many of the present assemblage as choose.—My lads, how many of you will remain here, and how many will go a little way with me and Mr.

Moore on the Stilbro' road, to meet some men who have been waylaid and assaulted by frame-breakers?"

The small number of three volunteered to go; the rest preferred staying behind. As Mr. Moore mounted his horse, the rector asked him in a low voice whether he had locked up the mutton chops, so that Peter Augustus could not get at them? The manufacturer nodded an affirmative, and the rescue-party set out.

Chapter

# 3 MR. YORKE.

Cheerfulness, it would appear, is a matter which depends fully as much on the state of things within as on the state of things without and around us. I make this trite remark, because I happen to know that Messrs. Helstone and Moore trotted forth from the mill-yard gates, at the head of their very small company, in the best possible spirits. When a ray from a lantern (the three pedestrians of the party carried each one) fell on Mr. Moore's face, you could see an unusual, because a lively, spark dancing in his eyes, and a new-found vivacity mantling on his dark physiognomy; and when the rector's visage was illuminated, his hard features were revealed all agrin and ashine with glee. Yet a drizzling night, a somewhat perilous expedition, you would think were not circumstances calculated to enliven those exposed to the wet and engaged in the adventure. If any member or members of the crew who had been at work on Stilbro' Moor had caught a view of this party, they would have had great pleasure in shooting either of the leaders from behind a wall: and the leaders knew this; and the fact is, being both men of steely nerves and steady-beating hearts, were elate with the knowledge.

I am aware, reader, and you need not remind me, that it is a dreadful thing for a person to be warlike; I am aware that he should be a man of peace. I have some faint outline of an idea of what a clergyman's mission is amongst mankind, and I remember distinctly whose servant he is, whose message he delivers, whose example he should follow; yet, with all this, if you are a parson-hater, you need not expect me to go along with you every step of your dismal, downward-tending, unchristian road; you need not expect me to join in your deep anathemas, at once so narrow and so sweeping, in your poisonous rancour, so intense and so absurd, against "the cloth;" to lift up my eyes and hands with a Supplehough, or to inflate my lungs with a Barraclough, in horror and denunciation of the diabolical rector of Briarfield.

He was not diabolical at all. The evil simply was—he had missed his vocation. He should have been a soldier, and circumstances had made him a priest. For the rest, he was a conscientious, hard-headed, hard-handed, brave, stern, implacable, faithful little man; a man almost without sympathy, ungentle, prejudiced, and rigid, but a man true to principle, honourable, sagacious, and sincere. It seems to me, reader, that you cannot always cut out men to fit their profession, and that you ought not to curse them because their profession sometimes hangs on them ungracefully. Nor will I curse Helstone, clerical Cossack as he was.

Yet he *was* cursed, and by many of his own parishioners, as by others he was adored—which is the frequent fate of men who show partiality in friendship and bitterness in enmity, who are equally attached to principles and adherent to prejudices.

Helstone and Moore being both in excellent spirits, and united for the present in one cause, you would expect that, as they rode side by side, they would converse amicably. Oh no! These two men, of hard, bilious natures both, rarely came into contact but they chafed each other's moods. Their frequent bone of contention was the war. Helstone was a high Tory (there were Tories in those days), and Moore was a bitter Whig—a Whig, at least, as far as opposition to the war-party was concerned, that being the question which affected his own interest; and only on that question did he profess any British politics at all. He liked to infuriate Helstone by declaring his belief in the invincibility of Bonaparte, by taunting England and Europe with the impotence of their efforts to withstand him, and by coolly advancing the opinion that it was as well to yield to him soon as late, since he must in the end crush every antagonist, and reign supreme.

Helstone could not bear these sentiments. It was only on the consideration of Moore being a sort of outcast and alien, and having but half measure of British blood to temper the foreign gall which corroded his veins, that he brought himself to listen to them without indulging the wish he felt to cane the speaker. Another thing, too, somewhat allayed his disgust—namely, a fellow-feeling for the dogged tone with which these opinions were asserted, and a respect for the consistency of Moore's crabbed contumacy.

As the party turned into the Stilbro' road, they met what little wind there was; the rain dashed in their faces. Moore had been fretting his companion previously, and now, braced up by the raw breeze, and perhaps irritated by the sharp drizzle, he began to goad him.

"Does your Peninsular news please you still?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" was the surly demand of the rector.

"I mean, have you still faith in that Baal of a Lord Wellington?"

"And what do you mean now?"

"Do you still believe that this wooden-faced and pebble-hearted idol of England has power to send fire down from heaven to consume the French holocaust you want to offer up?"

"I believe Wellington will flog Bonaparte's marshals into the sea the day it pleases him to lift his arm."

"But, my dear sir, you can't be serious in what you say. Bonaparte's marshals are great men, who act under the guidance of an omnipotent master-spirit. Your Wellington is the most humdrum of commonplace martinets, whose slow, mechanical movements are further cramped by an ignorant home government."

"Wellington is the soul of England. Wellington is the right champion of a good cause, the fit representative of a powerful, a resolute, a sensible, and an honest nation."

"Your good cause, as far as I understand it, is simply the restoration of that filthy, feeble Ferdinand to a throne which he disgraced. Your fit representative of an honest people is a dull-witted drover, acting for a duller-witted farmer; and against these are arrayed victorious supremacy and invincible genius."

"Against legitimacy is arrayed usurpation; against modest, single-minded, righteous, and brave resistance to encroachment is arrayed boastful, double-tongued, selfish, and treacherous ambition to possess. God defend the right!"

"God often defends the powerful."

"What! I suppose the handful of Israelites standing dryshod on the Asiatic side of the Red Sea was more powerful than the host of the Egyptians drawn up on the African side? Were they more numerous? Were they better appointed? Were they more mighty, in a word—eh? Don't speak, or you'll tell a lie, Moore; you know you will. They were a poor, overwrought band of bondsmen. Tyrants had oppressed them through four hundred years; a feeble mixture of women and children diluted their thin ranks; their masters, who roared to follow them through the divided flood, were a set of pampered Ethiops, about as strong and brutal as the lions of Libya. They were armed, horsed, and charioted; the poor Hebrew wanderers were afoot. Few of them, it is likely, had better weapons than their shepherds' crooks or their masons' building-tools; their meek and mighty leader himself had only his rod. But bethink you, Robert Moore, right was with them; the God of battles was on their side. Crime and the lost archangel generalled the ranks of Pharaoh, and which triumphed? We know that well. 'The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore'—yea, 'the depths covered them, they sank to the bottom as a stone.' The right hand of the Lord became glorious in power; the right hand of the Lord dashed in pieces the enemy!"

"You are all right; only you forget the true parallel. France is Israel, and Napoleon is Moses. Europe, with her old overgorged empires and rotten dynasties, is corrupt Egypt; gallant France is the Twelve Tribes, and her fresh and vigorous Usurper the Shepherd of Horeb."

"I scorn to answer you."

Moore accordingly answered himself—at least, he subjoined to what he had just said an additional observation in a lower voice.

"Oh, in Italy he was as great as any Moses! He was the right thing there, fit to head and organize measures for the regeneration of nations. It puzzles me to this day how the conqueror of Lodi should have condescended to become an emperor, a vulgar, a stupid humbug; and

still more how a people who had once called themselves republicans should have sunk again to the grade of mere slaves. I despise France! If England had gone as far on the march of civilization as France did, she would hardly have retreated so shamelessly."

"You don't mean to say that besotted imperial France is any worse than bloody republican France?" demanded Helstone fiercely.

"I mean to say nothing, but I can think what I please, you know, Mr. Helstone, both about France and England; and about revolutions, and regicides, and restorations in general; and about the divine right of kings, which you often stickle for in your sermons, and the duty of non-resistance, and the sanity of war, and——"

Mr. Moore's sentence was here cut short by the rapid rolling up of a gig, and its sudden stoppage in the middle of the road. Both he and the rector had been too much occupied with their discourse to notice its approach till it was close upon them.

"Nah, maister; did th' wagons hit home?" demanded a voice from the vehicle.

"Can that be Joe Scott?"

"Ay, ay!" returned another voice; for the gig contained two persons, as was seen by the glimmer of its lamp. The men with the lanterns had now fallen into the rear, or rather, the equestrians of the rescue-party had outridden the pedestrians. "Ay, Mr. Moore, it's Joe Scott. I'm bringing him back to you in a bonny pickle. I fand him on the top of the moor yonder, him and three others. What will you give me for restoring him to you?"

"Why, my thanks, I believe; for I could better have afforded to lose a better man. That is you, I suppose, Mr. Yorke, by your voice?"

"Ay, lad, it's me. I was coming home from Stilbro' market, and just as I got to the middle of the moor, and was whipping on as swift as the wind (for these, they say, are not safe times, thanks to a bad government!), I heard a groan. I pulled up. Some would have whipt on faster; but I've naught to fear that I know of. I don't believe there's a lad in these parts would harm me—at least, I'd give them as good as I got if they offered to do it. I said, 'Is there aught wrong anywhere?' ''Deed is there,' somebody says, speaking out of the ground, like. 'What's to do? Be sharp and tell me,' I ordered. 'Nobbut four on us ligging in a ditch,' says Joe, as quiet as could be. I telled 'em more shame to 'em, and bid them get up and move on, or I'd lend them a lick of the gig-whip; for my notion was they were all fresh. 'We'd ha' done that an hour sin', but we're teed wi' a bit o' band,' says Joe. So in a while I got down and loosed 'em wi' my penknife; and Scott would ride wi' me, to tell me all how it happened; and t' others are coming on as fast as their feet will bring them."

"Well, I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Yorke."

"Are you, my lad? You know you're not. However, here are the rest approaching. And here, by the Lord, is another set with lights in their