

drawn him safe to the green banks, where it was easy to stand firmly, he had let himself be dragged back into mud and slime in which it was useless to struggle. He had made ties for himself which robbed him of all wholesome motive, and were constant exasperation.

Still, there was one position worse than the present. It was the position he would be in when the ugly secret was disclosed; and the desire that continually triumphed over every other was that of warding off the evil day when he would have to bear the consequences of his father's violent resentment for the wound inflicted on his family pride; would have, perhaps, to turn his back on that hereditary ease and dignity which, after all, was a sort of reason for living, and would carry with him the certainty that he was banished forever from the sight and esteem of Nancy Lammeter. The longer the interval, the more chance there was of deliverance from some, at least, of the hateful consequences which he had sold himself; the more opportunities remained for him to snatch the strange gratification of seeing Nancy, and gathering some faint indications of her lingering regard. Towards this gratification he was impelled fitfully, every now and then, after having passed weeks in which he had avoided her, the far-off bright-winged prize, that only made him spring forward, and find his chain all the more galling. One of those fits of yearning was on him now, and it would have been strong enough to have persuaded him to trust Wildfire to Dunstan rather than disappoint the yearning, even if he had not had another reason for his disinclination towards the morrow's hunt. That other reason was the fact that the morning's meet was near Batherley, the market town where the unhappy woman lived, whose image became more odious to him every day; and to his thought the whole vicinage<sup>1</sup> was haunted by her. The yoke a man creates for himself by wrongdoing will breed hate in the kindest nature; and the good-humored, affectionate-hearted Godfrey Cass was fast becoming a bitter man, visited by cruel

<sup>1</sup> Neighborhood.

wishes, that seemed to enter, and depart, and enter again, like demons who had found in him a ready-garnished home.

What was he to do this evening to pass the time? He might as well go to the Rainbow, and hear the talk about the cock-fighting. Everybody was there, and what else was there to be done? Though, for his own part, he did not care a button for cockfighting. Snuff, the brown spaniel, who had placed herself in front of him, and had been watching him for some time, now jumped up in impatience for the expected caress. But Godfrey thrust her away without looking at her, and left the room, followed humbly by the unresenting Snuff—perhaps because she saw no other career open to her.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

DUNSTAN CASS, setting off in the raw morning, at the judiciously quiet pace of a man who is obliged to ride to cover<sup>1</sup> on his hunter, had to take his way along the lane which, at its farther extremity, passed by the piece of uninclosed ground called the Stone Pits, where stood the cottage, once a stonemason's shed, now for fifteen years inhabited by Silas Marner. The spot looked very dreary at this season, with the moist trodden clay about it, and the red muddy water high up in the deserted quarry. That was Dunstan's first thought as he approached it; the second was that the old fool of a weaver, whose loom he heard rattling already, had a great deal of money hidden somewhere. How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, who had often heard talk of Marner's miserliness, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending

<sup>1</sup> The place where the game was hidden. It was customary to cover up the earth holes of the fox the night before the hunt, thus obliging him to seek a temporary hiding place, or "cover," among the thickets of underbrush in the neighborhood.

the money on the excellent security of the young Squire's prospects? The resource occurred to him now as so easy and agreeable, especially as Marner's hoard was likely to be large enough to leave Godfrey a handsome surplus beyond his immediate needs, and enable him to accommodate his faithful brother, though he had almost turned the horse's head towards home again. Godfrey would be ready enough to accept the suggestion; he would snatch eagerly at a plan that might save him from parting with Wildfire. But when Dunstan's meditation reached this point, the inclination to go on grew strong and prevailed. He didn't want to give Godfrey that pleasure; he preferred that Master Godfrey should be vexed. Moreover, Dunstan enjoyed the self-important consciousness of having a horse to sell, and the opportunity of driving a bargain, swaggering, and, possibly, taking somebody in.<sup>1</sup> He might have all the satisfaction attendant on selling his brother's horse, and not the less have the further satisfaction of setting Godfrey to borrow Marner's money. So he rode on to cover.

Bryce and Keating were there, as Dunstan was quite sure they would be—he was such a lucky fellow.

"Heyday," said Bryce, who had long had his eye on Wildfire, "you're on your brother's horse to-day; how's that?"

"Oh, I've swapped with him," said Dunstan, whose delight in lying, grandly independent of utility, was not to be diminished by the likelihood that his hearer would not believe him,— "Wildfire's mine now."

"What! has he swapped with you for that big-boned hack of yours?" said Bryce, quite aware that he should get another answer.

"Oh, there was a little account between us," said Dunstan carelessly, "and Wildfire made it even. I accommodated him by taking the horse, though it was against my will, for I'd got aitch<sup>2</sup> for a mare o' Jortin's,—as rare a bit o' blood as ever

<sup>1</sup> "Taking somebody in," i.e., deceiving somebody.

<sup>2</sup> A great desire.

rew your leg across. But I shall keep Wildfire, now I've got him, though I'd a bid of a hundred and fifty for him the other day from a man over at Flitton—he's buying for Lord Cromwell—a fellow with a cast in his eye,<sup>1</sup> and a green waistcoat. It I mean to stick to Wildfire; I sha'n't get a better at a fence in a hurry. The mare's got more blood, but she's a bit too weak in the hind quarters."

Bryce of course divined that Dunstan wanted to sell the horse, and Dunstan knew that he divined it (horse dealing is only one of many human transactions carried on in this ingenious manner); and they both considered that the bargain was in its first stage, when Bryce replied ironically:

"I wonder at that now; I wonder you mean to keep him; I never heard of a man who didn't want to sell his horse, getting a bid of half as much again as the horse was worth. You'll be lucky if you get a hundred."

Keating rode up now, and the transaction became more complicated. It ended in the purchase of the horse by Bryce for a hundred and twenty,<sup>2</sup> to be paid on the delivery of Wildfire, safe and sound, at the Batherley stables. It did occur to Dunstan that it might be wise for him to give up the day's hunting, proceeded at once to Batherley, and, having waited for Bryce's return, he rode a horse to carry him home with the money in his pocket. At the inclination for a run, encouraged by confidence in his horse, and by a draft of brandy from his pocket pistol<sup>3</sup> at the conclusion of the bargain, was not easy to overcome, especially when a horse under him that would take<sup>4</sup> the fences to the admiration of the field.<sup>5</sup> Dunstan, however, took one fence too many, and "staked" his horse. His own ill-favored person, which was quite unmarketable, escaped without injury, but poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank, and painfully panted his last. It happened that Dunstan, a short time

"With a cast in his eye," i.e., squint-eyed.

<sup>2</sup> A hundred and twenty pounds, equal now to about six hundred dollars.

<sup>3</sup> A dram flask for the pocket.

<sup>4</sup> Leap.

<sup>5</sup> All the riders.

before, having had to get down to arrange his stirrup, had muttered a good many curses at this interruption, which had thrown him in the rear of the hunt near the moment of glory, and under this exasperation had taken the fences more blindly. He would soon have been up with the hounds again, when the fatal accident happened; and hence he was between eager riders in advance, not troubling themselves about what happened behind them, and far-off stragglers, who were as likely as not to be quite aloof from the line of road in which Wildfire had fallen. Dunstan, whose nature it was to care more for immediate annoyances than for remote consequences, no sooner recovered his legs, and saw that it was all over with Wildfire, than he felt satisfaction at the absence of witnesses to a position which swaggering could make enviable. Reënforcing himself, after a shake, with a little brandy and much swearing, he walked as fast as he could to a coppice<sup>1</sup> on his right hand, through which had occurred to him that he could make his way to Batherley without danger of encountering any member of the hunt. His intention was to hire a horse there and ride home forthwith, and to walk many miles without a gun in his hand, and along an ordinary road, was as much out of the question to him as to other spirited young men of his kind. He did not much mind about taking the bad news to Godfrey, for he had to offer at the same time the resource of Marner's money; and if Godfrey kicked,<sup>2</sup> as he always did, at the notion of making a deal, from which he himself got the smallest share of advantage, why, he wouldn't kick long. Dunstan felt sure he could work Godfrey into anything. The idea of Marner's money kept glowing in vividness, now the want of it had become immediate; the prospect of having to make his appearance with the muddy boots of a pedestrian at Batherley, and encounter the grinning queue of stablemen, stood unpleasantly in the way of his impatience to be back at Raveloe and carry out his felicitous plan; and a cast of his waistcoat pocket, as he was ruminating, awakened

<sup>1</sup> Thicket of underbrush.

<sup>2</sup> Objected. A slang expression.

his memory to the fact that the two or three small coins his forefinger encountered there were of too pale a color to cover that small debt, without payment of which Jennings had declared he would never do any more business with Dunsey Cass. After all, according to the direction in which the run had brought him, he was not so very much farther from home than he was from Batherley; but Dunsey, not being remarkable for clearness of head, was only led to this conclusion by the gradual perception that there were other reasons for choosing the unprecedented course of walking home. It was now nearly four o'clock, and a mist was gathering; the sooner he got into the road the better. He remembered having crossed the road and seen the finger post only a little while before Wildfire broke down; so, buttoning his coat, twisting the lash of his hunting whip compactly round the handle, and rapping the tops of his boots with a self-possessed air, as if to assure himself that he was not at all taken by surprise, he set off with the sense that he was undertaking a remarkable feat of bodily exertion, which somehow, and at some time, he should be able to dress up and magnify to the admiration of a select circle at the Rainbow. When a young gentleman like Dunsey is reduced to so exceptional a mode of locomotion as walking, a whip in his hand is a desirable corrective to a too bewildering dreamy sense of unwontedness in his position; and Dunstan, as he went along through the gathering mist, was always rapping his whip somewhere. It was Godfrey's whip, which he had chosen to take without leave because it had a gold handle. Of course no one could see, when Dunstan held it, that the name *Godfrey Cass* was cut in deep letters on that gold handle; they could only see that it was a very handsome whip. Dunsey was not without fear that he might meet some acquaintance in whose eyes he would cut a pitiable figure, for mist is no screen where people get close to each other; but when he at last found himself in the well-known Raveloe lanes without having met a soul, he silently remarked that that was part of his usual good luck. But now the mist, helped by the evening darkness

was more of a screen than he desired, for it hid the ruts in which his feet were liable to slip,—hid everything, so that he could guide his steps by dragging his whip along the low bushes and the advance of the hedgerow. He must soon, he thought, be getting near the opening at the Stone Pits; he should find it out through the break in the hedgerow. He found it out, however, to his surprise, at this double motion the door opened, and he found himself in front of a bright fire, which lit up every corner of the cottage—the bed, the loom, the three chairs, and the table—and showed him that Marner was not there. Nothing at that moment could be much more inviting to Dunstan than the bright fire on the brick hearth; he walked in and seated himself by it at once. There was something in front of the fire, too, that would have been inviting to a hungry man, if it had been in a different stage of cooking. It was a small bit of pork suspended from the kettle hanger<sup>1</sup> by a string passed through a large door key, in a way known to primitive housekeepers unpossessed of jacks.<sup>2</sup> But the pork had been hung at the farthest extremity of the hanger, apparently to prevent the meat from proceeding too rapidly during the owner's absence. "The old staring simpleton had hot meat for his supper, then?" thought Dunstan. People had always said he lived on moldy bread, on purpose to check his appetite. But where could he be at this time, and on such an evening, leaving his supper in this stage of preparation, and his door unfastened? Dunstan's own recent difficulty in making his way suggested to him that the weaver had perhaps gone outside his cottage to fetch in fuel, or for some such brief purpose, and had slipped into the stone pit. That was an interesting idea to Dunstan, carrying consequences of entire novelty. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?* He

<sup>1</sup> A crane, or iron bar suspended horizontally above the fireplace, and supported at one end on a pivot.

<sup>2</sup> Machines for turning the roast.

1020123750

went no farther into the subtleties of evidence. The pressing question, "Where *is* the money?" now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty. A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that notion from which the inference started was purely problematical. And Dunstan's mind was as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is. There were only three hiding places where he had ever heard of cottagers' hoards being found: the thatch, the beam, and a hole in the floor. Marner's cottage had no thatch; and Dunstan's first act, after a train of thought made rapid by the stimulus of cupidity, was to go up to the bed; but while he did so, his eyes traveled eagerly over the floor, where the bricks, distinct in the firelight, were discernible under the sprinkling of sand. But not everywhere; for there was one spot, and only one, which was quite covered with sand, and sand showing marks of fingers, which had apparently been careful to spread over a given space. It was near the treddles<sup>1</sup> of the loom. At an instant Dunstan darted to that spot, swept away the sand with his whip, and, inserting the thin end of the hook between the bricks, found that they were loose. In haste he lifted two bricks, and saw what he had no doubt was the object of his search; for what could there be but money in those two leather bags? and, from their weight, they must be filled with guineas. Dunstan felt round the hole, to be certain that it held no more; then hastily replaced the bricks, and spread the sand over them. Hardly more than five minutes had passed since he entered the cottage, but it seemed to Dunstan like a long while; and though he was without any distinct recognition of the possibility that Marner might be alive, and might reënter the cottage at any moment, he felt an indefinable dread laying hold on him, as he rose to his feet with the bags in his hand. He would hasten into the darkness, and then consider what he should do with the bags. He closed the door behind him immediately, that

<sup>1</sup> The parts moved by the feet; usually spelled *treadles*.

might shut in the stream of light; a few steps would be enough to carry him beyond betrayal by the gleams from the shutter cracks and the latch hole. The rain and darkness had got thicker, and he was glad of it; though it was awkward walking with both hands filled, so that it was as much as he could do to grasp his whip along with one of the bags. But when he had gone a yard or two, he might take his time. So he stepped forward into the darkness.

---

## CHAPTER V.

WHEN Dunstan Cass turned his back on the cottage, Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away from it, plodding along from the village with a sack thrown round his shoulders as an overcoat, and with a horn lantern<sup>1</sup> in his hand. His legs were weary, but his mind was at ease, free from the resentment of change. The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he has worked in a mine for forty years unhurt by an accident, as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink; and it is often observable that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death. This influence of habit was necessarily strong in a man whose life was so monotonous as Marner's,—who saw no new people and heard of no new events to keep alive in him the idea of the unexpected and the changeful; and

<sup>1</sup> A lantern made by inclosing a candle in a large horn scraped very thin.

it explains, simply enough, why his mind could be at ease, though he had left his house and his treasure more defenseless than usual. Silas was thinking with double complacency of his supper; first, because it would be hot and savory, and secondly because it would cost him nothing. For the little bit of pork was a present from that excellent housewife, Miss Priscilla Lameter, to whom he had this day carried home a handsome piece of linen; and it was only on occasion of a present like this, that Silas indulged himself with roast meat. Supper was his favorite meal, because it came at his time of revelry, when his heart warmed over his gold; whenever he had roast meat, he always chose to have it for supper. But this evening, he had no sooner ingeniously knotted his string fast round his bit of pork, twisted the string according to rule over his door key, passed it through the handle, and made it fast on the hanger, than he remembered that a piece of very fine twine was indispensable to his "setting up" a new piece of work in his loom early in the morning. It had slipped his memory, because, in coming from Mr. Lameter's, he had not had to pass through the village; but to let time by going on errands in the morning was out of the question. It was a nasty fog to turn out into, but there were things Silas loved better than his own comfort; so, drawing his pork to the extremity of the hanger, and arming himself with his lantern and his old sack, he set out on what, in ordinary weather, would have been a twenty minutes' errand. He could not have locked his door without undoing his well knotted string and retarding his supper; it was not worth his while to make that sacrifice. Who would find his way to the Stone Pits on such a night as this? and why should he come on this particular night, when he had never come through all the fifteen years before? The questions were not distinctly present in Silas's mind; they merely served to represent the vaguely felt foundation of his freedom from anxiety. *5-30-67 Jues.*

He reached his door in much satisfaction that his errand was done. He opened it, and to his shortsighted eyes everything

remained as he had left it, except that the fire sent out a welcome increase of heat. He trod about the floor while putting on his lantern and throwing aside his hat and sack, so as to obliterate the marks of Dunstan's feet on the sand in the marks of his own nailed boots. Then he moved his pork nearer to the fire, and sat down to the agreeable business of tending the meat and warming himself at the same time.

Any one who had looked at him as the red light shone upon his pale face, strange straining eyes, and meager form, would perhaps have understood the mixture of contemptuous pity, dread, and suspicion with which he was regarded by his neighbors in Raveloe. Yet few men could be more harmless than poor Marnier. In his truthful, simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget any vice directly injurious to others. The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money; and like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves. His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own.

As soon as he was warm he began to think it would be a long while to wait till after supper before he drew out his guineas, and it would be pleasant to see them on the table before him as he ate his unwonted feast; for joy is the best of wine, and Silas's guineas were a golden wine of that sort.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once; only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him;

then he held the candle in the hole and examined it curiously. As he opened it the rain beat in upon him, for it was trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that the candle fell more and more heavily. There were no footsteps to be heard, but he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think. Had he put his gold somewhere during Silas's absence in the daytime the door had been locked, where else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then forgotten there had been no marks of any inroad on his return by daylight? A man falling into dark waters seeks a momentary foothold. And in the evening, too, he said to himself, everything was as the same as when he had left it. The sand and bricks were false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded every cushion, he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. Which of these had delighted in making him a second time desolate? There was no other place to be searched, he knelt down at the grate? He shrank from this vaguer dread, and fixed his mind and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth. He struggled with the robber with hands, who could be reached by hands. His thoughts glanced at all the neighbors who had made any remarks, or asked any questions which he might now regard as a ground of suspicion. There was Jem Rodney, a known poacher, and otherwise disreputable. He had often met Marner in his journeys across the fields, and had said that expectation of impossibilities, that belief in contradictions, which is still distinct from madness, because it is capable of being dissipated by the external fact. Silas got up from the table, and looked round at the table. Didn't the great pipe, instead of going about his business. Jem Rodney was looked behind him,—looked all round his dwelling, seeming as if he had made to restore the money. Marner did not want to punish where he had already sought them in vain. He could see evidence, but only to get back his gold which had gone from him, and object in his cottage—and his gold was not there. It left his soul like a forlorn traveler on an unknown desert. The

Again he put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a cry, a wild, ringing scream, the cry of desolation. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss; after, he stood motionless; but the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of the truth. He turned, and tottered towards his loom, and got into the seat where he worked, and stinctively seeking this as the strongest assurance of reality. Under the stimulus of this hope, forgetting to cover his head, not caring to fasten his door; for he felt as if he had nothing left to lose. He ran swiftly, till want of breath compelled him to stop himself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The thought brought some new strength with it, and he started from his loom to

robber must be laid hold of. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss; after, he stood motionless; but the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of the truth. He turned, and tottered towards his loom, and got into the seat where he worked, and stinctively seeking this as the strongest assurance of reality. Under the stimulus of this hope, forgetting to cover his head, not caring to fasten his door; for he felt as if he had nothing left to lose. He ran swiftly, till want of breath compelled him to stop himself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The thought brought some new strength with it, and he started from his loom to

The Rainbow, in Marner's view, was a place of luxurious re-

sort for rich and stout husbands, whose wives had superfluous stores of linen; it was the place where he was likely to find the powers and dignities of Raveloe, and where he could most speedily make his loss public. He lifted the latch, and turned into the bright bar or kitchen on the right hand, where the lofty customers of the house were in the habit of assembling, the parlor on the left being reserved for the more select society, which Squire Cass frequently enjoyed the double pleasure of conversation and vivacity and condescension. But the parlor was dark to-night, the chief personages who ornamented its circle being all at Mr. Osgood's birthday dance, as Godfrey Cass was. And in consequence of this, the party on the high-screened seats in the kitchen was more numerous than usual; several personages, who would otherwise have been admitted into the parlor, and enlarged the opportunity of hectoring<sup>1</sup> and condescension for their better being content this evening to vary their enjoyment by taking their spirits and water where they could themselves hector and condescend in company that called for beer.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

THE conversation, which was at a high pitch of animation when Silas approached the door of the Rainbow, had, as usual, been slow and intermittent when the company first assembled. The pipes began to be puffed in a silence which had an air of severity; the more important customers, who drank spirit and sat nearest the fire, staring at each other as if a bet were depending on the first man who winked; while the beer drinkers, chiefly men in fustian jackets and smock frocks, kept their eyelids down, and rubbed their hands across their mouths, as if the drafts of beer were a funereal duty attended with embarrassment and sadness. At last, Mr. Snell, the landlord, a man of a neutral

<sup>1</sup> Blustering; bullying.

disposition, accustomed to stand aloof from human differences, those of beings who were all alike in need of liquor, broke silence, by saying in a doubtful tone to his cousin the butcher: "Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?"

The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat and replied, "And they wouldn't be fur wrong, John."

After this feeble, delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before.

"Was it a red Durham?" said the farrier, taking up the thread of discourse after the lapse of a few minutes.

The farrier looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at the butcher, as the person who must take the responsibility of answering.

"Red it was," said the butcher, in his good-humored husky tone, "and a Durham it was."

"Then you needn't tell *me* who you bought it of," said the farrier, looking round with some triumph; "I know who it is has got the red Durhams o' this countryside. And she'd a white mark on her brow, I'll bet a penny?" The farrier leaned forward with his hands on his knees as he put this question, and his eyes twinkled knowingly.

"Well; yes—she might," said the butcher slowly, considering that he was giving a decided affirmative. "I don't say contrary."

"I knew that very well," said the farrier, throwing himself backward again, and speaking defiantly; "if I don't know Mr. Hammer's cows, I should like to know who does, that's all. And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've seen at the drenching of her,<sup>1</sup> contradick me who will."

The farrier looked fierce, and the mild butcher's conversational spirit was roused a little.

<sup>1</sup> "Been at the drenching of her," i.e., forced potions of medicine down her throat.



"I'm not for contradicking no man," he said; "I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs; I'm for cutting 'em short myself; but I don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss, and anybody as was reasonable, it 'ud be tears into their eyes to look at it."

"Well, it's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is," pursued the farrier angrily; "and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham."

"I tell no lies," said the butcher, with the same mild huskiness as before, "and I contradick none,—not if a man was to swear himself black; he's no meat o' mine, or none o' my bargain. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss; and what I say I'll stick to, but I'll quarrel wi' no man."

"No," said the farrier with bitter sarcasm, looking at the company generally; "and p'raps you aren't pig-headed; and p'raps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham; and p'raps you didn't say she'd got a star on her brow,—stick to that, now you're at it."

"Come, come," said the landlord; "let the cow alone. The truth lies atween you; you're both right and both wrong, as the allays say. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that; but this I say, as the Rainbow's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeter's cow, you know the most upo' that head, eh, Mr. Macey? You remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father came into these parts, and took the Warrens?"

Mr. Macey, tailor and parish clerk, the latter of which functions rheumatism had of late obliged him to share with a small, well-featured young man who sat opposite him, held his white handkerchief on one side, and twirled his thumbs with an air of complacency, slightly seasoned with criticism. He smiled pityingly in answer to the landlord's appeal, and said:

"Ay, ay; I know, I know; but I let other folks talk. I'm laid by now, and gev up to the young uns. Ask them as has been to school at Tarley. They've learnt pernouncing; they'll come up since my day."

"If you're pointing at me, Mr. Macey," said the deputy clerk, with an air of anxious propriety, "I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says,

'I know what's right, nor only so,  
But also practice what I know.'

"Well, then, I wish you'd keep hold o' the tune, when it's set to you; if you're for practicing, I wish you'd practice that," said a large jocose-looking man, an excellent wheelwright in his weekly capacity, but on Sundays leader of the choir. He winked, and he spoke, at two of the company, who were known officially as the "bassoon" and the "key bugle," in the confidence that he was expressing the sense of the musical profession in Raveloe.

Mr. Tookey, the deputy clerk, who shared the unpopularity common to deputies, turned very red, but replied, with careful moderation: "Mr. Winthrop, if you'll bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong, I'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there's people set up their own ears for a standard, and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I suppose."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, who felt very well satisfied with his attack on youthful presumption; "you're right there, Tookey; there's allays two 'pinions; there's the 'pinion a man has of his own sense, and there's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself."

"Well, Mr. Macey," said poor Tookey, serious amidst the general laughter, "I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish clerk by Mr. Crackenthorp's desire, whenever your infirmities would make you unfitting; and it's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir, else why have you done the same yourself?"

"Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks," said Ben Crackenthorp. "The old gentleman's got a gift. Why the Squire would invite him to take a glass, only to hear him sing the 'Red Rover;' didn't he, Mr. Macey? It's a nat'ral gift. There's my

little lad Aaron, he's got a gift; he can sing a tune off strai like a throstle. But as for you, Master Tookey, you'd be stick to your 'Amens.' Your voice is well enough when you k it up in your nose. It's your inside as isn't right made for mus it's no better nor a hollow stalk."

This kind of unflinching frankness was the most piquant fo of joke to the company at the Rainbow, and Ben Winthrop's sult was felt by everybody to have capped Mr. Macey's epigr

"I see what it is plain enough," said Mr. Tookey, unabl keep cool any longer. "There's a conspiracy to turn me ou to the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money,—th where it is. But I shall speak to Mr. Crackenthorp; I'll not put upon by no man."

"Nay, nay, Tookey," said Ben Winthrop. "We'll pay your share to keep out of it,—that's what we'll do. The things folks 'ud pay to be rid on, besides varmin."

"Come, come," said the landlord, who felt that paying peo for their absence was a principle dangerous to society; "a jok a joke. We're all good friends here, I hope. We must give take. You're both right and you're both wrong, as I say. agree with Mr. Macey here, as there's two opinions; and if m was asked, I should say they're both right. Tookey's right a Winthrop's right, and they've only got to split the difference a make themselves even."

The farrier was puffing his pipe rather fiercely, in some c tempt at this trivial discussion. He had no ear for music h self, and never went to church, as being of the medical pro sion, and likely to be in requisition for delicate cows. But butcher, having music in his soul, had listened with a divid desire for Tookey's defeat, and for the preservation of the pee

"To be sure," he said, following up the landlord's conciliat view, "we're fond of our old clerk; it's nat'ral, and him useo be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first dler in this countryside. Eh, it's a pity but what Solomon li in our village, and could give us a tune when we liked; eh, I

Macey? I'd keep him in liver and lights<sup>1</sup> for nothing, that I ould."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, in the height of complacency; our family's been known for musicianers as far back as any- body can tell. But them things are dying out, as I tell Solomon every time he comes round; there's no voices like what there sed to be, and there's nobody remembers what we remember, if isn't the old crows."

"Ay, you remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come to these parts, don't you, Mr. Macey?" said the landlord.

"I should think I did," said the old man, who had now gone rough that complimentary process necessary to bring him up to the point of narration; "and a fine old gentleman he was,—

fine, and finer nor the Mr. Lammeter as now is. He came om a bit north'ard, so far as I could ever make out. But ere's nobody rightly knows about those parts; only it couldn't e far north'ard, nor much different from this country, for he ough a fine breed o' sheep with him, so there must be pastures ere, and everything reasonable. We heared tell as he'd sold s own land to come and take the Warrens, and that seemed ld for a man as had land of his own, to come and rent a farm a strange place. But they said it was along<sup>2</sup> of his wife's ying; though there's reasons in things as nobody knows on—

at's pretty much what I've made out; though some folks are so ise, they'll find you fifty reasons straight off, and all the while e real reason's winking at 'em in the corner, and they niver e't. Howsomever, it was soon seen as we'd got a new parish- er as know'd the rights and customs o' things, and kep' a good use, and was well looked on by everybody. And the young an—that's the Mr. Lammeter as now is, for he'd niver a sister -soon begun to court Miss Osgood, that's the sister o' the Mr. -sgood as now is, and a fine handsome lass she was—eh, you n't think—they pretend this young lass is like her, but that's

<sup>1</sup> Beef lungs.

<sup>2</sup> In consequence.

the way wi' people as don't know what come before 'em. lock?' For the parson meant right, and the bride and bride-should know, for I helped the old rector,— Mr. Drumlow groom meant right. But then, when I come to think on it, was,— I helped him marry 'em." meanin' goes but a little way i' most things, for you may mean

Here Mr. Macey paused; he always gave his narrative in o stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then stallments, expecting to be questioned according to precedent, where are you? And so I says to mysen, 'It isn't the meanin',

"Ay, and a partic'lar thing happened, didn't it, Mr. Macey, 's the glue.' And I was worreted as if I'd got three bells to as you were likely to remember that marriage?" said the lapull at once, when we got into the vestry, and they begun to lord, in a congratulatory tone. sign their names. But where's the use o' talking? you can't think

"I should think there did—a *very* partic'lar thing," said what goes on in a 'cute man's inside." Macey, nodding sideways. "For Mr. Drumlow—poor old ge "But you held in, for all that, didn't you, Mr. Macey?" said tleman, I was fond on him, though he'd got a bit confused in he landlord.

head, what wi' age and wi' taking a drop o' summat warm wh "Ay, I held in tight till I was by mysen wi' Mr. Drumlow, the service come of a cold morning. And young Mr. Lammeter and then I out wi' everything, but respectful, as I allays did. he'd have no way but he must be married in Janiuary, which, and he made light on it, and he says, 'Pooh, pooh, Macey, be sure, 's a unreasonable time to be married in, for it isn't likaake yourself easy,' he says; 'it's neither the meaning nor the christening or a burying, as you can't help; and so Mr. Drwords; it's the regzster does it; that's the glue.' So you see low—poor old gentleman, I was fond on him—but when e settled it easy; for parsons and doctors know everything by come to put the questions, he put 'em by the rule o' contraheart, like, so as they aren't worreted wi' thinking what's the like, and he says, 'Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded wifights and wrongs o' things, as I'n been many and many's the says he, and then he says, 'Wilt thou have this woman to me. And sure enough the wedding turned out all right, on'y wedded husband?' says he. But the partic'larest thing of aloor Mrs. Lammeter—that's Miss Osgood as was—died afore as nobody took any notice on it but me, and they answee lasses were growed up; but for prosperity and everything straight off 'Yes,' like as if it had been me saying 'Amen' i' respectable, there's no family more looked on." right place, without listening to what went before."

Every one of Mr. Macey's audience had heard this story many ymes, but it was listened to as if it had been a favorite tune, and Mr. Macey? You were live enough, eh?" said the butcher. t certain points the puffing of the pipes was momentarily sus-

"Lor bless you!" said Mr. Macey, pausing, and smiling ended, that the listeners might give their whole minds to the pity at the impotence of his hearer's imagination—"why, I expected words. But there was more to come; and Mr. Snell, all of a tremble; it was as if I'd been a coat pulled by the ne landlord, duly put the leading question.

ails, like; for I couldn't stop the parson, I couldn't take up "Why, old Mr. Lammeter had a pretty fortin, didn't they say, me to do that; and yet I said to myself, I says, 'Suppose then he come into these parts?'"

shouldn't be fast married, 'cause the words are contrairy?' "Well, yes," said Mr. Macey; "but I dare say it's as much my head went working like a mill, for I was allays uncomms this Mr. Lammeter has done to keep it whole. For there was for turning things over and seeing all round 'em; and I says lays a talk as nobody could get rich on the Warrens; though myself, 'Is't the meanin' or the words as makes folks fast i' we holds it cheap, for it's what they call Charity Land."

"Ay, and there's few folks know so well as you how it co  
to be Charity Land, eh, Mr. Macey?" said the butcher.

"How should they?" said the old clerk, with some contem  
"Why, my grandfather made the grooms' livery for that M  
Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens. W  
they're stables four times as big as Squire Cass's, for he thou  
o' nothing but hosses and hunting, Cliff didn't; a Lunnon tail  
some folks said, as had gone mad wi' cheating. For he could  
ride; lor bless you! they said he'd got no more grip o' the h  
than if his legs had been cross sticks; my grandfather heard  
Squire Cass say so many and many a time. But ride he woul  
as if Old Harry had been a-driving him; and he'd a son, a lad  
sixteen; and nothing would his father have him do, but he m  
ride and ride, though the lad was frightened, they said. And  
was a common saying as the father wanted to ride the tailor  
o' the lad, and make a gentleman on him,—not but what I  
a tailor myself, but in respect as God made me such, I'm pro  
on it, for 'Macey, tailor;' 's been wrote up over our door sin  
afore the Queen's heads went out on the shillings.<sup>1</sup> But Cl  
he was ashamed o' being called a tailor, and he was sore ven  
as his riding was laughed at, and nobody o' the gentlefolks he  
abouts could abide him. Howsomever, the poor lad got sicke  
and died, and the father didn't live long after him, for he  
queerer nor ever, and they said he used to go out i' the dead  
the night, wi' a lantern in his hand, to the stables, and set a  
o' lights burning, for he got as he couldn't sleep; and there  
stand, cracking his whip and looking at his hosses; and they  
it was a mercy as the stables didn't get burnt down wi' the p  
dumb creaturs in 'em. But at last he died raving, and the  
found as he'd left all his property, Warrens and all, to a Lun  
Charity, and that's how the Warrens come to be Charity Lan  
though, as for the stables, Mr. Lammeter never uses 'em,—they  
out o' all charicter; lor bless you! if you was to set the do  
a-banging in 'em, it 'ud sound like thunder half o'er the parish

<sup>1</sup> Shillings made in the time of Queen Anne (1702-14).

"Ay, but there's more going on in the stables than what folks  
see by daylight, eh, Mr. Macey?" said the landlord.

"Ay, ay; go that way of a dark night, that's all," said Mr.  
Macey, winking mysteriously, "and then make believe, if you  
like, as you didn't see lights i' the stables, nor hear the stamping  
the hosses, nor the cracking o' the whips, and howling, too, if  
s tow'rt daybreak. 'Cliff's Holiday' has been the name of it  
ever sin' I were a boy; that's to say some said as it was the holi-  
day Old Harry gev him from roasting, like. That's what my  
father told me, and he was a reasonable man, though there's  
folks nowadays know what happened afore they were born better  
or they know their own business."

"What do you say to that, eh, Dowlas?" said the landlord,  
turning to the farrier, who was swelling with impatience for his  
share. "There's a nut for *you* to crack."

Mr. Dowlas was the negative spirit in the company, and was  
proud of his position.

"Say? I say what a man *should* say as doesn't shut his eyes  
look at a finger post. I say as I'm ready to wager any man  
ten pound, if he'll stand out wi' me any dry night in the pasture  
before the Warren stables, as we shall neither see lights nor hear  
noises, if it isn't the blowing of our own noses. That's what I  
say, and I've said it many a time; but there's nobody 'ull ventur  
ten-pun' note on their ghos'es as they make so sure of."

"Why, Dowlas, that's easy betting, that is," said Ben Win-  
throp. "You might as well bet a man as he wouldn't catch the  
seumatise if he stood up to 's neck in the pool of a frosty night.  
'ud be fine fun for a man to win his bet as he'd catch the  
seumatise. Folks as believe in Cliff's Holiday aren't a-going  
ventur near it for a matter o' ten pound."

"If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth on it," said Mr.  
Macey, with a sarcastic smile, tapping his thumbs together, "he's  
call to lay any bet; let him go and stan' by himself,—there's  
nobody 'ull hinder him; and then he can let the parish'ners know  
they're wrong."

"Thank you! I'm obliged to you," said the farrier, with a snort of scorn. "If folks are fools, it's no business o' mine, I don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es: I know it a'ready. But I'm not against a bet, everything fair and open. Let any man bet me ten pound as I shall see Cliff's Holiday and I'll go and stand by myself. I want no company. I'll believe what I like do it as I'd fill this pipe."

"Ah, but who's to watch you, Dowlas, and see you do that? That's no fair bet," said the butcher.

"No fair bet?" replied Mr. Dowlas angrily. "I should like to hear any man stand up and say I want to bet unfair. Come now, Master Lundy, I should like to hear you say it."

"Very like you would," said the butcher. "But it's no business o' mine. You're none o' my bargains, and I aren't a-going to try and 'bate your price. If anybody'll bid for you at your own vallying, let him. I'm for peace and quietness, I am."

"Yes, that's what every yapping cur is, when you hold a stick up at him," said the farrier. "But I'm afraid o' neither ghost nor ghost, and I'm ready to lay a fair bet. I aren't a turning cur."

"Ay, but there's this in it, Dowlas," said the landlord, speaking in a tone of much candor and tolerance. "There's folks, in my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pikestaff before 'em. And there's reason i' that. For the woman my wife now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' chives under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself; but then I never put it to myself, 'Very like I haven't got the smell for 'em.' I might be putting a ghost for a smell, or else contrairiways. And so, for holding with both sides; for, as I say, the truth lies between 'em. And if Dowlas was to go and stand, and say he'd never seen a wink o' Cliff's Holiday all the night through, I'd believe him; and if anybody said as Cliff's Holiday was certain sure of all that, I'd back *him* too. For the smell's what I go by."

The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier, a man intensely opposed to compromise.

"Tut, tut," he said, setting down his glass with refreshed irritation; "what's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That's what I should like to know. I don't want ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places; let 'em come where there's company and candles."

"As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignorant!" said Mr. Macey, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass<sup>1</sup> incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

YET the next moment there seemed to be some evidence that ghosts had a more condescending disposition than Mr. Macey attributed to them; for the pale, thin figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing in the warm light, uttering a word, but looking round at the company with his strange unearthly eyes. The long pipes gave a simultaneous movement, like the antennæ of startled insects, and every man present, not excepting even the skeptical farrier, had an impression that he saw, not Silas Marner in the flesh, but an apparition; for the manner by which Silas had entered was hidden by the high-screened wainscots, and no one had noticed his approach. Mr. Macey, sitting long way off the ghost, might be supposed to have felt an egotistical triumph, which would tend to neutralize his share in the general alarm. Had he not always said that when Silas Marner was in that strange trance of his, his soul went loose from his body? Here was the demonstration; nevertheless, on the whole, he would have been as well contented without it. For a few moments there was a dead silence, Marner's want of breath and agitation not allowing him to speak. The landlord, under the habitual sense that he was bound to keep his house

<sup>1</sup> Gross.