There was a great sob from the whole room. Rough lads from the upland farms, shop-boys, mill-hands, strained forward, listening, thirsting, responding to every word.

Redemption—Salvation—the deliverance of the soul from itself—thither all religion comes at last, whether for the ranter or the philosopher. To the enriching of that conception, to the gradual hewing it out in historical shape, have gone the noblest poetry, the purest passion, the intensest spiritual vision of the highest races, since the human mind began to work. And the historical shape may crumble; but the need will last and the travail will go on; for man's quest of redemption is but the eternal yielding of the clay in the hands of the potter, the eternal answer of the creature to the urging indwelling Creator.

CHAPTER X

HALF an hour later, after the stormy praying and singing which had succeeded Mr. Dyson's address, David found himself tramping up the rough and lonely road leading to the high Kinder valley. The lights of Clough End had disappeared; against the night sky the dark woody side of Mardale Moor was still visible; beneath it sang the river; a few stars were to be seen; and every now and then the windows of a farm shone out to guide the wayfarer. But David stumbled on, noticing nothing. At the foot of the steep hill leading to the farm he stopped a moment, and leant over the gate. The little lad's cry was in his ears.

Presently he leapt the gate impatiently, and ran up whistling. Supper was over, but Hannah ungraciously brought him out some cold bacon and bread. Louie hung about him while he ate, studying him with quick furtive eyes.

'Whar yo bin?' she said abruptly, when Hannah had gone to the back kitchen for a moment. Reuben was dozing by the fire over the local paper.

'Nowhere as concerns yo,' said David, shortly. He finished his supper and went and sat on the steps. The dogs came and put their noses on his knees. He pulled absently at their coats, looking straight before him at the dark point of Kinder Low.

'Whar yo bin?' said Louie's voice again in his ear. She had squatted down on the step behind him.

'Be off wi yer,' said David, angrily, getting up in order to escape her.

But she pursued him across the farmyard.

'Have yo got a letter?'

'No, I haven't.'

'Did yo ask at t' post-office?'

'No, I didn't.'

'An why didn't yo?'

'Because I didn't want—soa there—get away.' And he stalked off. Louie, left behind, chewed the cud of reflection in the darkness.

Presently, to his great disgust, as he was sitting under a wall of one of the pasture-fields, hidden, as he conceived, from all the world by the night, he heard the rustle of a dress, the click of a stone, and there was Louie dangling her legs above him, having attacked him in the rear.

'Uncle Reuben's talkin 'is stuff about Mr. Dyson. I seed 'im gooin passt Wigsons' this afternoon. He's nowt—he's common, he is.'

The thin scornful voice out of the dark grated on him intolerably. He bent forward and shut his ears tight with both his hands. To judge from the muffled sounds he heard, Louie went on talking for a while; but at last there had been silence for so long, that he took his hands away, thinking she must have gone.

'Yo've been at t' prayer-meetin, I tell yo, an yo're a great stupid muffin-yed, soa theer.'

And a peremptory little kick on his shoulder from a substantial shoe gave the words point.

He sprang up in a rage, ran down the hill, jumped over a wall or two, and got rid of her. But he seemed to hear her elfish laugh for some time after. As for himself, he could not analyse what had come over him. But not even the attraction of an unopened parcel of books he had carried home that afternoon from Clough End—a loan from a young stationer he had lately made acquaintance with—could draw him back to the farm. He sat on and on in the dark. And when at last, roused by the distant sounds of shutting up the house, he slunk in and up to bed, he tossed about for a long time, and woke up often in the night. The tyrannous power of another man's faith was upon him. He could not get Mr. Dyson out of his head. How on earth could anybody be so *certain?* It was monstrous that any one should be. It was canting stuff.

Still, next day, hearing by chance that the new comer was going to preach at a hamlet the other side of Clough End, he went, found a large mixed meeting mostly of mill-hands, and the tide of Revivalism rolling high. This time Mr. Dyson picked him out at once—the face and head indeed were easily remembered. After the sermon, when the congregation were filing out, leaving behind those more particularly distressed in mind to be dealt with more intimately in a small prayer-meeting by Mr. Dyson and a prayer-leader, the minister suddenly stepped aside from a group of people he was talking with, and touched David on the arm as he was making for the door.

'Won't you stay?' he said peremptorily. 'Don't trifle with the Lord.'

And his feverish divining eyes seemed to look the boy through and through. David flushed, and pushed past him with some inarticulate answer. When he found himself in the open air he was half angry, half shaken with emotion. And afterwards a

curious instinct, the sullen instinct of the wild creature shrinking from a possible captor, made him keep himself as much as possible out of Mr. Dyson's way. At the prayer-meetings and addresses, which followed each other during the next fortnight in quick succession, David was almost always present; but he stood at the back, and as soon as the general function was over he fled. The preacher's strong will was piqued. He began to covet the boy's submission disproportionately, and laid schemes for meeting with him. But David evaded them all.

Other persons, however, succeeded better. Whenever the revivalist fever attacks a community, it excites in a certain number of individuals, especially women, an indescribable zeal for proselytising. The signs of 'conviction' in any hitherto unregenerate soul are marked at once, and the 'saved' make a prey of it, showing a marvellous cunning and persistence in its pursuit.

One day a woman, the wife of a Clough End shoemaker, slightly known to David, met him on the moors.

'Will yo coom to-night?' she said, nodding to him. 'Theer'll be prayin' at our house—about half a dozen.'

Then, as the boy stopped, amazed and hesitating, she fixed him with her shining ecstatic eyes.

'Awake, thou that sleepest,' she said under her breath, 'and Christ shall give thee light.'

She had been carrying a bundle to a distant farm. A child was in her arms, and she looked dragged and worn. But all the way down the moor as she came towards him David had heard her singing hymns.

He hung his head and passed on. But in the evening he went, found three or four other boys his own age or older, the woman, and her husband. The woman sang some of the most passionate Methodist hymns; the husband, a young shoemaker, already half dead of asthma and bronchitis, told his 'experiences' in a voice broken by incessant coughing; one of the boys, a rough specimen, known to David as a van-boy from some calico-printing works in the neighbourhood, prayed aloud, breaking down into sobs in the middle; and David, at first obstinately silent, found himself joining before the end in the groans and 'Amens,' by force of a contagious excitement he half despised but could not withstand.

The little prayer-meeting, however, broke up somewhat in confusion. There was not much real difference of opinion at this time in Clough End, which was, on the whole, a strongly religious town. Even the Churchmanship of it was decidedly evangelical, ready at any moment to make common cause with Dissent against Ritualism, if such a calamity should ever threaten the little community, and very ready to join, more or less furtively, in the excitements of Dissenting revivals. Jerry Timmins and his set represented the only serious blot on what the pious Clough Endian might reasonably regard as a fair picture. But this set contained some sharp fellows—provided outlet for a considerable amount of energy of a raw and roving sort, and, no doubt, did more to maintain the mental equilibrium of the small factory-town than any enthusiast on the other side would for a moment have allowed. The excitement which followed in the train of a man like Mr. Dyson roused, of course, an answering hubbub among the Timminsites. The whole of Jerry's circle was stirred up, in fact, like a hive of wasps; their ribaldry grew with what it fed on; and every day some new and exquisite method of harrying the devout occurred to the more ingenious among them.

David had hitherto escaped notice. But on this evening, while he and his half-dozen companions were still on their knees, they were first disturbed by loud drummings on the shoemaker's door, which opened directly into the little room where they were congregated; and then, when they emerged into the street, they found a mock prayer-meeting going on outside, with all the usual 'manifestations' of revivalist fervour—sighs, groans, shouts, and the rest of it—in full flow. At the sight of David Grieve there were first stares and then shrieks of laughter.

'I say, Davy,' cried a drunken young weaver, sidling up to him on his knees and embracing him from behind, 'my heart's real touched. Gie me yor coat, Davy; it's better nor mine, Davy; and I'm yor Christian brother, Davy.'

The emotion of this appeal drew uproarious merriment from the knot of Secularists. David, in a frenzy, kicked out, so that his assailant dropped him with a howl. The weaver's friends closed upon the 'Ranters,' who had to fight their way through. It was not till they had gained the outskirts of the town that the shower of stones ceased, and that they could pause to take stock of their losses. Then it appeared that, though all were bruised, torn, and furious, some were inclined to take a mystical joy in persecution, and to find compensation in certain plain and definite predictions as to the eternal fate in store for 'Jerry Timmins's divils.' David, on the other hand, was much more inclined to vent his wrath on his own side than on the Timminsites.

'Why can't yo keep what yo're doin to yorsels?' he called out fiercely to the knot of panting boys, as he faced round upon them at the gate leading to the Kinder road. 'Yo're a parcel o' fools—always chatterin and clatterin.'

The others defended themselves warmly. 'Them Timmins lot' were always spying about. They daren't attack the large meetings, but they had a diabolical way of scenting out the small ones. The meetings at the shoemaker's had been undisturbed for some few nights, then a Timminsite passing by had heard hymns, probably listened at the keyhole, and of course informed the main body of the enemy.

'They're like them nassty earwigs,' said one boy in disgust, 'they'll wriggle in onywheres.'

'Howd yor noise!' said David, peremptorily. 'If yo wanted to keep out o' their way, yo could do 't fasst enough.'

'How!' they inquired, with equal curtness.

'Yo needn't meet in th' town at aw. Theer's plenty o' places up on t' moor,' and he waved his hand towards the hills behind him, lying clear in the autumn moonlight. 'Theer's th' owd smithy—who'd find yo there?'

The mention of the smithy was received as an inspiration. There is a great deal of pure romantic temper roused by these revivalistic outbreaks in provincial England. The idea of the moors and the old ruin as setting for a secret prayer-meeting struck the group of excited lads as singularly attractive. They parted cheerfully upon it, in spite of their bruises.

David, however, walked home fuming. The self-abandonment of the revival had been all along wellnigh intolerable to him—and now, that he should have allowed the Timminsites to know anything about his prayers! He very nearly broke off from it altogether in his proud disgust.

However he did ultimately nothing of the sort. As soon as he grew cool again, he was as much tormented as before by what was at bottom more an intellectual curiosity than a moral anguish. There was *some* moral awakening in it; he had some real qualms about sin, some real aspirations after holiness, and, so far, the self-consciousness which had first stirred at Haworth was deepened and fertilised. But the thirst for emotion and sensation was the main force at work. He could not make out what these religious people meant by their 'experiences,' and for the first time he wanted to make out. So when it was proposed to him to meet at the smithy on a certain Saturday evening, he agreed.

Meanwhile, Louie was sitting up in bed every night, with her hands round her sharp knees, and her black brows knit over David's follies. It seemed to her he no longer cared 'a haporth' about getting a letter from Mr. Ancrum, about going to Manchester, about all those entrancing anti-meat schemes which were to lead so easily to a paradise of free 'buying' for both of them. Whenever she tried to call him back to these things he shook her off impatiently, and their new-born congeniality to each other had been all swamped in this craze for 'shoutin hollerin' people she despised with all her heart. When she flew out at him, he just avoided her. Indeed, he avoided her now at all times, whether she flew out or not. There was an invincible heathenism about Louie, which made her the natural enemy of any 'awakened' person.

The relation of the elders in the farm to the new development in David was a curious one. Hannah viewed it with a secret satisfaction. Christians have less time than other people—such, at least, had been her experience with Reuben—to spend in thirsting for the goods of this world. The more David went to prayer-meetings, the less likely was he to make inadmissible demands on what belonged to him. As for poor Reuben, he seemed to have got his wish; while he and Hannah had been

doing their best to drive Sandy's son to perdition through a downward course of 'loafing,' God had sent Mr. Dyson to put Davy back on the right road. But he was ill at ease; he watched the excitement, which all the lad's prickly reticence could not hide from those about him, with strange and variable feelings. As a Christian, he should have rejoiced; instead, the uncle and nephew shunned each other more than ever, and shunned especially all talk of the revival. Perhaps the whole situation—the influence of the new man, of the local talk, of the quickened spiritual life around him, did but aggravate the inner strain in Reuben. Perhaps his wife's satisfaction, which his sharpened conscience perceived and understood, troubled him intolerably. At any rate, his silence and disquiet grew, and his only pleasure lay, more than ever, in those solitary cogitations we have already spoken of.

The 15th of October approached—as it happened, the Friday before the smithy prayer-meeting. On that day of the year, according to ancient and invariable custom, the Yorkshire stock—steers, heifers, young horses—which are transferred to the Derbyshire farms on the 15th of May, are driven back to their Yorkshire owners, with all the fatness of Derbyshire pastures showing on their sleek sides. Breeders and farmers meet again at Woodhead, just within the Yorkshire border. The animals are handed over to their owners, paid for at so much a head, and any preventible damage or loss occurring among them is reckoned against the farmer returning them, according to certain local rules.

As the middle of the month came nearer, Reuben began to talk despondently to Hannah of his probable gains from his Yorkshire 'boarders.' It had been a cold wet summer; he was 'feart' the owners would think he might have taken more care of some of the animals, especially of the young horses, and he mentioned certain ailments springing from damp and exposure for which he might be held responsible. Hannah grew irritated and anxious. The receipts from this source were the largest they could reckon upon in the year. But the fields on which the Yorkshire animals pastured were at some distance from the house; this department of the farm business was always left wholly to Reuben; and, with much grumbling and scolding, she took his word for it as to the probable lowness of the sum he should bring back.

David, meanwhile, was sometimes a good deal puzzled by Reuben's behaviour. It seemed to him that his uncle told some queer tales at home about their summer stock. And when Reuben announced his intention of going by himself to Woodhead, and leaving David at home, the boy was still more astonished.

However, he was glad enough to be spared the tramp with a set of people whose ways and talk were more and more uncongenial to him; and after his uncle's departure he lay for hours hidden from Louie among the heather, sometimes arguing out imaginary

arguments with Mr. Dyson, sometimes going through passing thrills of emotion and fear. What was meant, he wanted to know, by '*the sense of pardon*'? Person after person at the prayer-meetings he had been frequenting had spoken of attaining it with ecstasy, or of being still shut out from it with anguish. But how, after all, did it differ from pardoning yourself? You had only, it seemed to him, to think very hard that you were pardoned, and the feeling came. How could anybody tell it was more than that? David racked his brain endlessly over the same subject. Who could be sure that 'experience' was not all moonshine? But he was as yet much too touched and shaken by what he had been going through to draw any trenchant conclusions. He asked the question, however, and therein lay the great difference between him and the true stuff of Methodism.

Meanwhile, in his excitement, he, for the first time, ceased to go to the Dawsons' as usual. To begin with, they dropped out of a mind which was preoccupied with one of the first strong emotions of adolescence. Then, some one told him casually that 'Lias was more ailing than usual, and that Margaret was in much trouble. He was pricked with remorse, but just because Margaret would be sure to question him, a raw shyness came in and held him back from the effort of going.

On the Saturday evening David, having ingeniously given Louie the slip, sped across the fields to the smithy. It was past five o'clock, and the light was fading. But the waning gold of the sunset as he jumped the wall on to the moor made the whole autumnal earth about him, and the whole side of the Scout, one splendour. Such browns and pinks among the withering ling; such gleaming greens among the bilberry leaf; such reds among the turning ferns; such fiery touches on the mountain ashes overhanging the Red Brook! The western light struck in great shafts into the bosom of the Scout; and over its grand encompassing mass hung some hovering clouds just kindling into rosy flame. As the boy walked along he saw and thrilled to the beauty which lay spread about him. His mood was simple, and sweeter than usual. He felt a passionate need of expression, of emotion. There was a true disquiet, a genuine disgust with self at the bottom of him, and God seemed more than imaginatively near. Perhaps, on this day of his youth, of all days, he was closest to the Kingdom of Heaven.

At the smithy he found about a dozen persons, mostly youths, just come out from the two or three mills which give employment to Clough End, and one rather older than the rest, a favourite prayer-leader in Sunday meetings. At first, everything felt strange; the boys eyed one another; even David as he stepped in among them had a momentary reaction, and was more conscious of the presence of a red-haired fellow there with whom he had fought a mighty fight on the Huddersfield expedition, than of any spiritual needs.

However, the prayer-leader knew his work. He was slow and pompous; his tone with the Almighty might easily have roused a hostile sense of humour; but Dissent in its active and emotional forms kills the sense of humour; and, besides, there was a real, ungainly power in the man. Every phrase of his opening prayer was hackneyed; every gesture uncouth. But his heart was in it, and religious conviction is the most infectious thing in the world. He warmed, and his congregation warmed with him. The wild scene, too, did its part—the world of darkening moors spread out before them; the mountain wall behind them; the October wind sighing round the ruined walls; the lonely unaccustomed sounds of birds and water. When he ceased, boy after boy broke out into more or less incoherent praying. Soon in the dusk they could no longer see each other's faces; and then it was still easier to break through reserve.

At last David found himself speaking. What he said was at first almost inaudible, for he was kneeling between the wall and the pan which had been his childish joy, with his face and arms crushed against the stones. But when he began the boys about pricked up their ears, and David was conscious suddenly of a deepened silence. There were warm tears on his hidden cheeks; but it pleased him keenly they should listen so, and he prayed more audibly and freely. Then, when his voice dropped at last, the prayer-leader gave out the familiar hymn, 'Come, O thou Traveller unknown:'—

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,
  Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
  And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

Wilt thou not yet to me reveal
  Thy new unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell—
  To know it now resolved I am.
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

* * * *

'Tis Love! 'tis Love—thou lovest me!
  I hear thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
  Pure universal Love thou art;
To me, to all, thy mercies move,
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

Again and again the lines rose on the autumn air; each time the hymn came to an end it was started afresh, the sound of it spreading far and wide into the purple breast of Kinder Scout. At last the painful sobbing of poor Tom Mullins almost drowned

the singing. The prayer-leader, himself much moved, bent over and seized him by the arm.

'Look to Jesus, Tom. Lay hold on the Saviour. Don't think of your sins; they're done away i' th' blood o' the Lamb. Howd Him fast. Say, "I believe," and the Lord ull deliver yo.'

With a cry, the great hulking lad sprang to his feet, and clasped his arms above his head—

'I do believe—I will believe. Help me, Lord Jesus. Oh, I'm saved! I'm saved!' And he remained standing in an ecstasy, looking to the sky above the Scout, where the red sunset glow still lingered.

'Hallelujah! hallelujah! Thanks be to God!' cried the prayer-leader, and the smithy resounded in the growing darkness with similar shouts. David was almost choking with excitement. He would have given worlds to spring to Tom Mullins's side and proclaim the same faith. But the inmost heart of him, his real self, seemed to him at this testing moment something dead and cold. No heavenly voice spoke to *him*, David Grieve. A genuine pang of religious despair seized him. He looked out over the moor through a gap in the stones. There was a dim path below; the fancy struck him that Christ, the 'Traveller unknown,' was passing along it. He had already stretched out His hand of blessing to Tom Mullins.

'To me! to me, too!' David cried under his breath, carried away by the haunting imagination, and straining his eyes into the dusk. Had the night opened to his sight there and then in a vision of glory, he would have been no whit surprised.

Hark!—what was that sound?

A weird scream rose on the wind. The startled congregation in the smithy scrambled to their feet. Another scream, nearer apparently than the first, and then a loud wailing, broken every few seconds by a strange slight laugh, of which the distance seemed quite indefinite. Was it close by, or beyond the Red Brook?

The prayer-leader turned white, the boys stood huddled round him in every attitude of terror. Again the scream, and the little ghostly laugh! Looking at each other wildly, the whole congregation broke from the smithy down the hill. But the leader stopped himself.

'It's mebbe soom one in trouble,' he said manfully, every limb trembling. 'We mun go and see, my lads.' And he rushed off in the direction whence the first sound had seemed to come—towards the Red Brook—half a dozen of the bolder spirits following. The rest stood cowering on the slope under the smithy. David meanwhile had climbed the ruined wall, and stood with head strained forward, his eyes sweeping the moor. But every outline was sinking fast into the gulf of the night; only a few indistinct masses—a cluster of gorse-bushes, a clump of mountain ash—still showed here and there.

The leader made for one of these darker patches on the

mountain-side, led on always by the recurrent screams. He reached it; it was a patch of juniper overhanging the Red Brook—when suddenly from behind it there shot up a white thing, taller than the tallest man, with nodding head and outspread arms, and such laughter—so faint, so shrill, so evil, breaking midway into a hoarse angry yell.

'*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*' cried the whole band with one voice, and, wheeling round, they ran down the Scout, joined by the contingent from the smithy, some of them falling headlong among the heather in their agony of flight, others ruthlessly knocking over those in front of them who seemed to be in their way. In a few seconds, as it seemed, the whole Scout was left to itself and the night. Footsteps, voices, all were gone—save for one long peal of most human, but still elfish mirth, which came from the Red Brook.

CHAPTER XI

A DARK figure sprang down from the wall of the smithy, leapt along the heather, and plunged into the wiry grass along the brook. A cry in another key was heard.

David emerged, dragging something behind him.

'Yo limb, yo! How dare yo, yo little beast? Yo impident little toad!' And in a perfect frenzy of rage he shook what he held. But Louie—for naturally it was Louie—wrenched herself away, and stood confronting him, panting, but exultant.

'I freetened 'em! just didn't I? Cantin humbugs! "*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*"' And, mimicking the voice of the leader, she broke again into an hysterical shout of laughter.

David, beside himself, hit out and struck her. It was a heavy blow which knocked her down, and for a moment seemed to stun her. Then she recovered her senses, and flew at him in a mad passion, weeping wildly with the smart and excitement.

He held her off, ashamed of himself, till she flung away, shrieking out—

'Go and say its prayers, do—good little boy—poor little babby. Ugh, yo coward! hittin gells, that's all yo're good for.'

And she ran off so fast that all sight of her was lost in a few seconds. Only two or three loud sobs seemed to come back from the dark hollow below. As for the boy, he stopped a second to disentangle his feet from the mop and the tattered sheet wherewith Louie had worked her transformation scene. Then he dashed up the hill again, past the smithy, and into a track leading out on to the high road between Castleton and Clough End. He did not care where he went. Five minutes ago he had been almost in heaven; now he was in hell. He hated Louie, he hated the boys who had cut and run, he loathed himself. No!—religion was not for such as he. No more canting—no more praying—away with it! He seemed to shake all the emotion of the last

few weeks from him with scorn and haste, as he ran on, his strong young limbs battling with the wind.

Presently he emerged on the high road. To the left, a hundred yards away, were the lights of a wayside inn; a farm waggon and a pair of horses standing with drooped and patient heads were drawn up on the cobbles in front of it. David felt in his pockets. There was eighteenpence in them, the remains of half-a-crown a strange gentleman had given him in Clough End the week before for stopping a runaway horse. In he stalked.

'Two penn'orth of gin—hot!' he commanded.

The girl serving the bar brought it and stared at him curiously. The glaring paraffin lamp above his head threw the frowning brows and wild eyes, the crimson cheeks, heaving chest, and tumbled hair into strong light and shade. 'That's a quare un!' she thought, but she found him handsome all the same, and, retreating behind the beer-taps, she eyed him surreptitiously. She was a raw country lass, not yet stript of all her natural shyness, or she would have begun to 'chaff' him.

'Another!' said David, pushing forward his glass. This time he looked at her. His fierce gaze travelled over her coarse and comely face, her full figure, her bare arms. He drank the glass she gave him, and got another. She began to feel half afraid of him, and moved away. The hot stimulant ran through his veins. Suddenly he felt his head whirling from the effects of it, but that horrible clutch of despair was no longer on him. He raised himself defiantly and turned to go, staggering along the floor. He was near the entrance when an inner door opened, and the carter, who had been gossiping in a room behind with the landlord, emerged. He started with astonishment when he saw David.

'Hullo, Davy, what are yo after?'

David turned, nearly losing his balance as he did so, and clutching at the bar for support. He found himself confronted with Jim Wigson—his old enemy—who had been to Castleton with a load of hay and some calves, and was on his way back to Kinder again. When he saw who it was clinging to the bar counter, Jim first stared and then burst into a hoarse roar of laughter.

'Coom here! coom here!' he shouted to the party in the back parlour. 'Here's a rum start! I do declare this beats cock-fighting!—this do. Damn my eyes iv it doosn't! Look at that yoong limb. Why they towd me down at Clough End this mornin he'd been took "serious"—took wi a prayin turn—they did. Look at un! It ull tak 'im till to-morrow mornin to know his yed from his heels. He! he! he! Yo're a deep un, Davy—yo are. But yo'll get a bastin when Hannah sees yo—prayin or no prayin.'

And Jim went off into another guffaw, pointing his whip the while at Davy. Some persons from the parlour crowded in, enjoying the fun. David did not see them. He reached out his

hand for the glass he had just emptied, and steadying himself by a mighty effort, flung it swift and straight in Jim Wigson's face. There was a crash of fragments, a line of blood appeared on the young carter's chin, and a chorus of wrath and alarm rose from the group behind him. With a furious oath Jim placed a hand on the bar, vaulted it, and fell upon the lad. David defended himself blindly, but he was dazed with drink, and his blows and kicks rained aimlessly on Wigson's iron frame. In a second or two Jim had tripped him up, and stood over him, his face ablaze with vengeance and conquest.

'Yo yoong varmint—yo cantin yoong hypocrite! I'll teach yo to show imperence to your betters. Yo bin allus badly i' want o' soombody to tak yo down a peg or two. Now I'll show yo. I'll not fight yo, but I'll flog yo—*flog yo*—d' yo hear?'

And raising his carter's whip he brought it down on the boy's back and legs. David tried desperately to rise—in vain—Jim had him by the collar; and four or five times more the heavy whip came down, avenging with each lash many a slumbering grudge in the victor's soul.

Then Jim felt his arm firmly caught. 'Now, Mister Wigson,' cried the landlord—a little man, but a wiry—'yo'll not get me into trooble. Let th' yoong ripstitch go. Yo've gien him a taste he'll not forget in a week o' Sundays. Let him go.'

Jim, with more oaths, struggled to get free, but the landlord had quelled many rows in his time, and his wrists were worthy of his calling. Meanwhile his wife helped up the boy. David was no sooner on his feet than he made another mad rush for Wigson, and it needed the combined efforts of landlord, landlady, and servant-girl to part the two again. Then the landlord, seizing David from behind by 'the scuft of the neck,' ran him out to the door in a twinkling.

'Go 'long wi yo! An if yo coom raisin th' divil here again, see iv I don't gie yo a souse on th' yed mysel.' And he shoved his charge out adroitly and locked the door.

David staggered across the road as though still under the impetus given by the landlord's shove.

The servant-girl took advantage of the loud cross-fire of talk which immediately rose at the bar round Jim Wigson to run to a corner window and lift the blind. The boy was sitting on a heap of stones for mending the road, looking at the inn. Other passers-by had come in, attracted by the row, and the girl slipped out unperceived, opened the side door, and ran across the road. It had begun to rain, and the drops splashed in her face.

David was sitting leaning forward, his eyes fixed on the lighted windows of the house opposite. The rays which came from them showed her that his nose and forehead were bleeding, and that the blood was dripping unheeded on the boy's clothes. He was utterly powerless, and trembling all over, but his look 'gave her a turn.'

'Now, luke here,' she said, bending down to him. 'Yo jes go

whoam. Wigson, he'll be out direckly, an he'll do yo a hurt iv he finds yo. Coom, I'll put yo i' the way for Kinder.'

And before he could gather his will to resist, she had dragged him up with her strong countrywoman's arms and was leading him along the road to the entrance of the lane he had come by.

'Lor, yo *are* bleedin,' she said compassionately; 'he shud ha thowt as how yo wor nobbut a lad—an it wor he begun aggin fust. He's a big bully is Wigson.' And impulsively raising her apron she applied it to the blood, David quite passive all the while. The great clumsy lass nearly kissed him for pity.

'Now then,' she said at last, turning him into the lane, 'yo know your way, an I mun goo, or they'll be raisin the parish arter me. Gude neet to yo, an keep out o' Wigson's seet. Rest yursel a bit theer—agen th' wall.'

And leaving him leaning against the wall, she reluctantly departed, stopping to look back at him two or three times in spite of the rain, till the angle of the wall hid him from view.

The rain poured down and the wind whistled through the rough lane. David presently slipped down upon a rock jutting from the wall, and a fevered, intermittent sleep seized him—the result of the spirits he had been drinking. His will could oppose no resistance; he slept on hour after hour, sheltered a little by an angle of the wall, but still soaked by rain and buffeted by the wind.

When he awoke he staggered suddenly to his feet. The smart of his back and legs recalled him, after a few moments of bewilderment, to a mental torture he had scarcely yet had time to feel. He—David Grieve—had been beaten—thrashed like a dog—by Jim Wigson! The remembered fact brought with it a degradation of mind and body—a complete unstringing of the moral fibres, which made even revenge seem an impossible output of energy. A nature of this sort, with such capacities and ambitions, carries about with it a sense of supremacy, a natural, indispensable self-conceit which acts as the sheath to the bud, and is the condition of healthy development. Break it down and you bruise and jeopardise the flower of life.

Jim Wigson!—the coarse, ignorant lout with whom he had been, more or less, at feud since his first day in Kinder, whom he had despised with all the strength of his young vanity. By to-morrow all Kinder would know, and all Kinder would laugh. 'What! yo whopped Reuben Grieve's nevvy, Jim? Wal, an a good thing, too! A lick now an again ud do *him* noa harm—a cantankerous yoong rascot—pert an proud, like t' passon's pig, I say.' David could hear the talk to be as though it were actually beside him. It burnt into his ear.

He groped his way through the lane and on to the moor—trembling with physical exhaustion, the morbid frenzy within him choking his breath, the storm beating in his face. What was that black mass to his right?—the smithy? A hard sob rose in his

throat. Oh, he had been so near to an ideal world of sweetness, purity, holiness! Was it a year ago?

With great difficulty he found the crossing-place in the brook, and then the gap in the wall which led him into the farm fields. When he was still a couple of fields off the house he heard the dogs beginning. But he heard them as though in a dream.

At last he stood at the door and fumbled for the handle. Locked! Why, what time could it be? He tried to remember what time he had left home, but failed. At last he knocked, and just as he did so he perceived through a chink of the kitchen shutter a light on the scrubbed deal table inside, and Hannah's figure beside it. At the sound of the knocker Hannah rose, put away her work with deliberation, snuffed the candle, and then moved with it to the door of the kitchen. The boy watched her with a quickly beating heart and whirling brain. She opened the door.

'Whar yo bin?' she demanded sternly. 'I'd like to know what business yo have to coom in this time o' neet, an your uncle fro whoam. Yo've bin in mischief, I'll be bound. Theer's Louie coom back wi a black eye, an jes because she woan't say nowt about it, I know as it's yo are at t' bottom o' 't. I'm reg'lar sick o' sich doins in a decent house. Whar yo bin, I say?'

And this time she held the candle up so as to see him. She had been sitting fuming by herself, and was in one of her blackest tempers. David's misdemeanour was like food to a hungry instinct.

'I went to prayer-meetin,' the lad said thickly. It seemed to him as though the words came all in the wrong order.

Hannah bent forward and gave a sudden cry.

'Why, yo bin fightin! Yo're all ower blood! Yo bin fightin, and I'll bet a thousand pund yo draw'd in Louie too. And *sperrits*! Why, yo *smell* o' sperrits! Yo're jes *reekin* wi 'em! Wal, upon my word!'—and Hannah drew herself back, flinging every slow word in his face like a blow. 'Yo feature your mither, yo do, boath on you, pretty close. I allus said it ud coom out i' yo too. Prayer-meetin! Yo yoong hypocrite! Gang your ways! Yo may sleep i' th' stable; it's good enough liggin for yo this neet.'

And before he had taken in her words she had slammed the door in his face, and locked it. He made a feeble rush for it in vain. Hannah marched back into the kitchen, listening instinctively first to him left outside, and then for any sound there might be from upstairs. In a minute or two she heard uneven steps going away; but there was no movement in the room overhead. Louie was sleeping heavily. As for Hannah, she sat down again with a fierce decision of gesture, which seemed to vibrate through the kitchen and all it held. Who could find fault with her? It would be a lesson to him. It was not a cold night, and there was straw in the stable—a deal better lying than such a boy deserved. As she thought of his 'religious' turn she shrugged her shoulders with a bitter scorn.

The night wore on in the high Kinder valley. The stormy wind and rain beat in great waves of sound and flood against the breast of the mountain; the Kinder stream and the Red Brook danced under the heavy drops. The grouse lay close and silent in the sheltering heather; even the owls in the lower woods made no sound. Still, the night was not perfectly dark, for towards midnight a watery moon rose, and showed itself at intervals between the pelting showers.

In the Dawsons' little cottage on Frimley Moor there were still lights showing when that pale moon appeared. Margaret was watching late. She and another woman sat by the fire talking under their breaths. A kettle was beside her with a long spout, which sent the steam far into the room, keeping the air of it moist and warm for the poor bronchitic old man who lay close-curtained from the draughts on the wooden bed in the corner.

The kettle sang, the fire crackled, and the wind shook the windows and doors. But suddenly, through the other sounds, Margaret was aware of an intermittent knocking—a low, hesitating sound, as of some one outside afraid, and yet eager, to make himself heard.

She started up, and her companion—a homely neighbour, one of those persons whose goodness had, perhaps, helped to shape poor Margaret's philosophy of life—looked round with a scared expression.

'Whoiver can it be, this time o' neet?' said Margaret—and she looked at the old clock—'why, it's close on middle-neet!'

She hesitated a moment, then she went to the door, and bent her mouth to the chink—

'Who are yo? What d' yo want?' she asked, in a distinct but low voice, so as not to disturb 'Lias.

No answer for a minute. Then her ear caught some words from outside. With an exclamation she unlocked the door and threw it open.

'Davy! Davy!' she cried, almost forgetting her patient.

The boy clung to the lintel without a word.

'Coom your ways in!' she said peremptorily, catching him by the sleeve. 'We conno ha no draughts on th' owd man.'

And she drew him into the light, and shut the door. Then as the shaded candle and firelight fell on the tall lad, wavering now to this side, now to that, as though unable to support himself, his clothes dripping on the flags, his face deadly white, save for the smears of blood upon it, the two women fell back in terror.

'Will yo gie me shelter?' said the boy, hoarsely; 'I bin lying hours i' th' wet. Aunt Hannah turned me out.'

Margaret came close to him and looked him all over.

'What for did she turn yo out, Davy?'

'I wor late. I'd been fightin Jim Wigson, an she smelt me o' drink.'

And suddenly the lad sank down on a stool near, and laid his head in his hands, as though he could hold it up no longer.

Margaret's blanched old face melted all in a minute.

'Howd 'un up quick!' she said to her companion, still in a whisper. 'He hanno got a dry thread on—and luke at that cut on his yed—why, he'll be laid up for weeks, maybe, for this. Get his cloos off, an we'll put him on my bed then.'

And between them they dragged him up, and Margaret began to strip off his jacket. As they held him—David surrendering himself passively—the curtain of the bed was drawn back, and 'Lias, raising himself on an elbow, looked out into the room. As he caught sight of the group of the boy and the two women, arrested in their task by the movement of the curtain, the old man's face expressed, first a weak and agitated bewilderment, and then in an instant it cleared.

His dream wove the sight into itself, and 'Lias knew all about it. His thin long features, with the white hair hanging about them, took an indulgent amused look.

'*Bony*—eh, Bony, is that *yo*, man? Eh, but yo're cold an pinched, loike! A gude glass o' English grog ud not come amiss to yo. An your coat, an your boots—what is 't drippin? *Snaw?* Yo make a man's backbane freeze t' see yo. An there's hot wark behind yo, too. Moscow might ha warmed yo, I'm thinkin, an—'

But the weak husky voice gave way, and 'Lias fell back, still holding the curtain, though, in his emaciated hand, and straining his dim eyes on David. Margaret, with tears, ran to him, tried to quiet him and to shut out the light from him again. But he pushed her irritably aside.

'No, Margaret,—doan't intrude. What d' yo know about it? Yo know nowt, Margaret. When did yo iver heer o' the Moscow campaign? Let me be, woan't yo?'

But perceiving that he would not be quieted, she turned him on his pillows, so that he could see the boy at his ease.

'He's bin out i' th' wet, 'Lias dear, has Davy,' she said; 'and it's nobbut a clashy night. We mun gie him summat hot, and a place to sleep in.'

But the old man did not listen to her. He lay looking at David, his pale blue eyes weirdly visible in his haggard face, muttering to himself. He was still tramping in the snow with the French army.

Then, suddenly, for the first time, he seemed troubled. He stared up at the pale miserable boy who stood looking at him with trembling lips. His own face began to work painfully, his dream struggled with recognition.

Margaret drew David quickly away. She hurried him into the further corner of the cottage, where he was out of sight of the bed. There she quickly stripped him of his wet garments, as any mother might have done, found an old flannel shirt of 'Lias's for him, and, wrapping him close in a blanket, she made him lie down on her own bed, he being now much too weak to realise what was done with him. Then she got an empty bottle, filled it

from the kettle, and put it to his feet; and finally she brought a bowlful of warm water and a bit of towel, and, sitting down by him, she washed the blood and dirt away from his face and hand, and smoothed down the tangled black hair. She, too, noticed the smell of spirits, and shook her head over it; but her motherliness grew with every act of service, and when she had made him warm and comfortable, and he was dropping into the dead sleep of exhaustion, she drew her old hand tenderly across his brow.

'He do feature yan o' my own lads so as he lies theer,' she said tremulously to her friend at the fire, as though explaining herself. 'When they'd coom home late fro wark, I'd use to hull 'em up so mony a time. Ay, I'd been woonderin what had coom to th' boy. I thowt he'd been goin wrang soomhow, or he'd ha coom aw these weeks to see 'Lias an me. It's a poor sort o' family he's got. That Hannah Grieve's a hard un, I'll uphowd yo. Theer's a deal o' her fault in 't, yo may mak sure.'

Then she went to give 'Lias some brandy—he lived on little else now. He dropped asleep again, and, coming back to the hearth, she consented to lie down before it while her friend watched. Her failing frame was worn out with nursing and want of rest, and she was soon asleep.

When Davy awoke the room was full of a chill daylight. As he moved he felt himself stiff all over. The sensation brought back memory, and the boy's whole being seemed to shrink together. He burrowed first under his coverings out of the light, then suddenly he sat up in bed, in the shadow of the little staircase—or rather ladder—which led to the upper story, and looked about him.

The good woman who had shared Margaret's watch was gone back to her own home and children. Margaret had made up the fire, tidied the room, and, at 'Lias's request, drawn up the blinds. She had just given him some beef-tea and brandy, sponged his face, and lifted him on his pillows. There seemed to be a revival of life in the old man, death was for the moment driven back; and Margaret hung over him in an ecstasy, the two crooning together. David could see her thin bent figure—the sharpened delicacy of the emaciated face set in the rusty black net cap which was tied under the chin, and fell in soft frills on the still brown and silky hair. He saw her weaver's hand folded round 'Lias's, and he could hear 'Lias speaking in a weak thread of a voice, but still sanely and rationally. It gave him a start to catch some of the words—he had been so long accustomed to the visionary 'Lias.

'Have yo rested, Margaret?'

'Ay, dear love, three hours an moor. Betsy James wor here; she saw yo wanted for nowt. She's a gude creetur, ain't she, 'Lias?'

'Ay, but noan so good as my Margaret,' said the old man, looking at her wistfully. 'But yo'll wear yorsel down, Margaret;

'yo've had no rest for neets. Yo're allus toilin' and moilin', an I'm no worth it, Margaret.'

The tears gushed to the wife's eyes. It was only with the nearness of death that 'Lias seemed to have found out his debt to her. To both, her lifelong service had been the natural offering of the lower to the higher; she had not been used to gratitude, and she could not bear it.

'Dear heart! dear love!' David heard her say; and then there came to his half-reluctant ear caresses such as a mother gives her child. He laid his head on his knees, trying to shut them out. He wished with a passionate and bitter regret that he had not been so many weeks without coming near these two people; and now 'Lias was going fast, and after to-day he would see them both no more—for ever?

Margaret heard him moving, and nodded back to him over her shoulder.

'Yo've slept well, Davy,—better nor I thowt yo would. Your cloos are by yo—atwixt yo an t' stairs.'

And there he found them, dry and brushed. He dressed hastily and came forward to the fire. 'Lias recognised him feebly, Margaret watching anxiously to see whether his fancies would take him again. In this tension of death and parting his visions had become almost more than she could bear. But 'Lias lay quiet.

'Davy wor caught i' th' rain, and I gave him a bed,' she explained again, and the old man nodded without a word.

Then as she prepared him a bowl of oatmeal she stood by the fire giving the boy motherly advice. He must go back home, of course, and never mind Hannah; there would come a time when he would get his chance like other people; and he mustn't drink, for, 'i' th' first place, drink wor a sad waste o' good wits,' and David's were 'better'n most;' and in the second, 'it wor a sin agen the Lord.'

David sat with his head drooped in his hand apparently listening. In reality, her gentle babble passed over him almost unheeded. He was aching in mind and body; his strong youth, indeed, had but just saved him from complete physical collapse; for he had lain an indefinite time on the soaking moor, till misery and despair had driven him to Margaret's door. But his moral equilibrium was beginning to return, in virtue of a certain resolution, the one thing which now stood between him and the black gulf of the night. He ate his porridge and then he got up.

'I mun goo, Margaret.'

He would fain have thanked her, but the words choked in his throat.

'Ay, soa yo mun, Davy,' said the little body briskly. 'If theer's an onpleasant thing to do it's best doon quickly—yo mun go back and do your duty. Coom and see us when yo're passin again. An say good-bye to 'Lias. He's that wick this mornin—ain't yo, 'Lias?'

And with a tender cheerfulness she ran across to 'Lias and told him Davy was going.

'Good-bye, Davy, my lad, good-bye,' murmured the old man, as he felt the boy's strong fingers touching his. 'Have yo been readin owt, Davy, since we saw yo? It's a long time, Davy.'

'No, nowt of ony account,' said David, looking away.

'Ay, but yo mun keep it up. Coom when yo like; I've not mony books, but yo know yo can have 'em aw. I want noan o' them now, do I, Marg'ret? But I want for nowt—nowt. Dyin 's long, but it's varra—varra peaceful. Margaret!'

And withdrawing his hand from Davy, 'Lias laid it in his wife's with a long, long sigh. David left them so. He stole out unperceived by either of them.

When he got outside he stood for a moment under the sheltering sycamores and laid his cheek against the door. The action contained all he could not say.

Then he sped along towards the farm. The sun was rising through the autumn mists, striking on the gold of the chestnuts, the red of the cherry trees. There were spaces of intense blue among the rolling clouds, and between the storm past and the storm to come the whole moorland world was lavishly, garishly bright.

He paused at the top of the pasture-fields to look at the farm. Smoke was already rising from the chimney. Then Aunt Hannah was up, and he must mind himself. He crept on under walls, till he got to the back of the farmyard. Then he slipped in, ran into the stable, and got an old coat of his left there the day before. There was a copy of a Methodist paper lying near it. He took it up and tore it across with passion. But his rage was not so much with the paper. It was his own worthless, unstable, miserable self he would have rent if he could. The wreck of ideal hopes, the defacement of that fair image of itself which every healthy youth bears about with it, could not have been more pitifully expressed.

Then he looked round to see if there was anything else that he could honestly take. Yes—an ash stick he had cut himself a week or two ago. Nothing else—and there was Tibby moving and beginning to bark in the cowhouse.

He ran across the road, and from a safe shelter in the fields on the farther side he again looked back to the farm. There was Louie's room, the blind still down. He thought of his blow of the night before—of his promises to her. Aye, she would fret over his going—he knew that—in her own wild way. She would think he had been a beast to her. So he had—so he had! There surged up in his mind inarticulate phrases of remorse, of self-excuse, as though he were talking to her.

Some day he would come back and claim her. But when? His buoyant self-dependence was all gone. It had nothing to do with his present departure. That came simply from the fact that

it was *impossible* for him to go on living in Kinder any longer—he did not stop to analyse the whys and wherefores.

But suddenly a nervous horror of seeing anyone he knew, now that the morning was advancing, startled him from his hiding-place. He ran up towards the Scout again, so as to make a long circuit round the Wigsons' farm. As he distinguished the walls of it a shiver of passion ran through the young body. Then he struck off straight across the moors towards Glossop.

One moment he stood on the top of Mardale Moor. On one side of him was the Kinder valley, Needham Farm still showing among its trees; the white cataract of the Downfall cleaving the dark wall of the Scout, and calling to the runaway in that voice of storm he knew so well; the Mermaid's Pool gleaming like an eye in the moorland. On the other side were hollow after hollow, town beyond town, each with its cap of morning smoke. There was New Mills, there was Stockport, there in the far distance was Manchester.

The boy stood a moment poised between the two worlds, his ash-stick in his hand, the old coat wound round his arm. Then at a bound he cleared a low stone wall beside him and ran down the Glossop road.

Twelve hours later Reuben Grieve climbed the long hill to the farm. His wrinkled face was happier than it had been for months, and his thoughts were so pleasantly occupied that he entirely failed to perceive, for instance, the behaviour of an acquaintance, who stopped and started as he met him at the entrance of the Kinder lane, made as though he would have spoken, and, thinking better of it, walked on. Reuben—the mendacious Reuben—had done very well with his summer stock—very well indeed. And part of his earnings was now safely housed in the hands of an old chapel friend, to whom he had confided them under pledge of secrecy. But he took a curious, excited pleasure in the thought of the 'poor mouth' he was going to make to Hannah. He was growing reckless in his passion for restitution—always provided, however, that he was not called upon to brave his wife openly. A few more such irregular savings, and, if an opening turned up for David, he could pay the money and pack off the lad before Hannah could look round. He could never do it under her opposition, but he thought he could do it and take the consequences—he *thought* he could.

He opened his own gate. There on the house doorstep stood Hannah, whiter and grimmer than ever.

'Reuben Grieve,' she said quickly, 'your nevvy's run away. An if yo doan't coom and keep your good-for-nothin niece in her place, and make udder foak keep a civil tongue i' their head to your wife, I'll leave your house this neet, as sure as I wor born a Martin!'

Reuben stumbled into the house. There was a wild rush

downstairs, and Louie fell upon him, David's blow showing ghastly plain in her white quivering face.

'Whar's Davy?' she said. 'Yo've got him!—he's hid soomwhere—yo know whar he is! I'll not stay here if yo conno find him! It wor *her* fault'—and she threw out a shaking hand towards her aunt—'she druv him out last neet—an Dawsons took him in—an iverybody's cryin shame on her! And if yo doan't mak her find him—she knows where he is—I'll not stay in this hole!—I'll kill her!—I'll burn th' house!—I'll—'

The child stopped—panting, choked—beside herself.

Hannah made a threatening step, but at her gesture Reuben sprang up, and seizing her by both wrists he looked at her from a height, as a judge looks. Never had those dull eyes met her so before.

'Woman!' he cried fiercely. 'Woman! what ha yo doon wi Sandy's son?'

BOOK II

YOUTH