

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 soom-where—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

CHAPTER I

A TALL youth carrying a parcel of books under his arm was hurrying along Market Place, Manchester. Beside him were covered flower stalls bordering the pavement, in front of him the domed mass of the Manchester Exchange, and on all sides he had to push his way through a crowd of talking, chaffering, hurrying humanity. Presently he stopped at the door of a restaurant bearing the idyllic and altogether remarkable name—there it was in gilt letters over the door—of the 'Fruit and Flowers Parlour.' On the side post of the door a bill of fare was posted, which the young man looked up and down with careful eyes. It contained a strange medley of items in all tongues—

Marrow pie
Haricots à la Lune de Miel
Vol-au-Vent à la bonne Santé
Tomato fritters
Cheese "Ficements"
Salad saladoruth

And at the bottom of the *menu* was printed in bold red characters, 'No meat, no disease. *Ergo*, no meat, no sin. Fellow-citizens, leave your carnal foods, and try a more excellent way. I.E. Push the door and walk in. The Fruit and Flowers Parlour invites everybody and overcharges nobody.'

The youth did not trouble, however, to read the notice. He knew it and the 'Parlour' behind it by heart. But he moved away, pondering the *menu* with a smile.

In his amused abstraction—at the root of which lay the appetite of eighteen—he suddenly ran into a passer-by, who stumbled against a shop window with an exclamation of pain. The youth's attention was attracted and he stopped awkwardly.

'People of your height, young man, should look before them,' said the victim, rubbing what seemed to be a deformed leg, while his lips paled a little.

'Mr. Ancrum,' cried the other, amazed.

'Davy!'

The two looked at each other. Then Mr. Ancrum gripped the lad's arm.

'Help me along, Davy. It's only a bruise. It'll go off. Where are you going?'

'Up Piccadilly way with a parcel,' said Davy, looking askance

at his companion's nether man. 'Did I knock your bad leg, sir?'

'Oh no, nothing—never mind. Well now, Davy, this is queer—decidedly queer. Four years!—and we run against each other in Market Street at last. Tell me the truth, Davy—have you long ago given me up as a man who could make promises to a lad in difficulties and forget 'em as soon as he was out of sight? Say it out, my boy.'

David flushed and looked down at his companion with some embarrassment. Their old relation of minister and pupil had left a deep mark behind it. Moreover, in the presence of that face of Mr. Ancrum's, a long, thin, slightly twisted face, with the stamp somehow of a tragic sincerity on the eyes and mouth, it was difficult to think as slighting of his old friend as he had done for a good while past, apparently with excellent reason.

'I supposed there was something the matter,' he blurted out at last.

'Well, never mind, Davy,' said the other, smiling sadly. 'We can't talk here in this din. But now I've got you, I keep you. Where are you?'

'I'm in Half Street, sir—Purcell's, the bookseller.'

'Don't know him. I never go into a shop. I have no money. Are you apprentice there?'

'Well, there was no binding. I'm assistant. I do a lot of business one way and another, buying and selling both.'

'How long have you been in Manchester?'

'Four years, sir.'

The minister looked amazed.

'And I have been here, off and on, for the last three. How have we missed each other all that time? I made inquiries at Clough End, when—ah, well, no matter; but it was too late. You had decamped, no one could tell me anything.'

David walked on beside his companion, silent and awkward. The explanation seemed a lame one. Mr. Ancrum had left Clough End in May, promising to look out for a place for the lad at once, and to let him know. Six whole months elapsed between that promise and David's own departure. Yes, it was lame; but it was so long ago, and so many things had happened since, that it did not signify. Only he did not somehow feel much effusion in meeting his old friend and playfellow again.

'Getting on, Davy?' said Ancrum presently, looking the lad up and down.

David made a movement of the shoulders which the minister noticed. It was both more free and more graceful than ordinary English gesture. It reawakened in Ancrum at once that impression of something alien and unusual which both David and his sister had often produced in him while they were still children.

'I don't know,' said the boy slowly; and then, after a hesitation or two, fell silent.

'Well, look here,' said Ancrum, stopping short; 'this won't do for talk, as I said before; but I must know all about you, and I must tell you what I can about myself. I lodge in Mortimer Road, you know, up Fallowfield way. You can get there by tram in twenty minutes; when will you come and see me? To-night?'

The lad thought a moment.

'Would Wednesday night do, sir? I—I believe I'm going to the music to-night.'

'What, to the "Elijah," in the Free Trade Hall? Appoint me a place to meet—we'll go together—and you shall come home to supper with me afterwards.'

David flushed and looked straight before him.

'I promised to take two young ladies,' he said, after a moment, abruptly.

'Oh!' said Mr. Ancrum, laughing. 'I apologise. Well, Wednesday night, then.—Don't you forget, Davy—half-past seven? Done. *Fourteen*, Mortimer Road. Good-bye.'

And the minister turned and retraced his steps towards Market Place. He walked slowly, like one much preoccupied, and might have run into fresh risks but for the instinctive perception of most passers-by that he was not a person to be hustled. Suddenly he laughed out—thinking of David and his 'young ladies,' and comparing the lad's admission with his former attitude towards 'gells.' Well, time had but wrought its natural work. What a brilliant noticeable creature altogether—how unlike the ordinary run of north-country lads! But that he had been from the beginning—the strain of some nimbler blood had always shown itself.

Meanwhile, David made his way up Piccadilly—did some humourist divert himself, in days gone by, with dropping a shower of London names on Manchester streets?—and deposited his parcel. Then the great clock of the Exchange struck twelve, and the Cathedral followed close upon it, the sounds swaying and vibrating above the crowds hurrying through Market Street. It was a damp October day. Above, the sky was hidden by a dark canopy of cloud and smoke; the Cathedral on its hill rose iron-black above the black streets and river; black mud encrusted all the streets, and bespattered those that walked in them. Nothing more dreary than the smoke-grimed buildings on either hand, than the hideous railway station across the bridge, or the mud-sprinkled hoardings covered with flaring advertisements, which led up to the bridge, could be well imagined. Manchester was at its darkest and grimmest.

But as David Grieve walked back along Market Street his heart danced within him. Neither mud nor darkness, neither the squalor of the streets, nor the penetrating damp of the air, affected him at all. The crowd, the rush of life about him, the gas in the shops, the wares on which it shone, the endless faces passing him, the sense of hurry, of business, of quick living—

he saw and felt nothing else; and to these his youth was all atune.

Arrived in Market Place again he made his way with alacrity to the 'Parlour.' For it was dinner time; he had a free half-hour, and nine times out of ten he spent it at the 'Parlour.'

He walked in, put his hat on its accustomed peg, took his seat at a table near the door, and looked round for some one. The low widespreading room was well filled, mostly with clerks and shopmen; the gas was lit because of the darkness outside, and showed off the gay panels on the walls filled with fruit and flower subjects, for which Adrian O'Connor Lomax, commonly called 'Daddy,' the owner of the restaurant, had given a commission to some students at the Mechanics' Institute, and whereof he was inordinately proud. At the end of the room near the counter was a table occupied by about half a dozen young men, all laughing and talking noisily, and beside them—shouting, gesticulating, making dashes, now for one, now for another—was a figure, which David at once set himself to watch, his chin balanced on his hand, his eyes dancing. It was the thin tall figure of an oldish man in a long frock-coat, which opened in front over a gaily flowered silk waistcoat. On the bald crown of his head he wore a black skull-cap, below which certain grotesque and scanty tails of fair hair, carefully brushed, fell to his shoulders. His face was long and sharply pointed, and the surface of it bronzed and wrinkled by long exposure, out of all likeness to human skin. The eyes were weirdly prominent and blue; the gestures had the deliberate extravagance of an actor; and the whole man recalled a wizard of pantomime.

David had hardly time to amuse himself with the 'chaffing' of Daddy, which was going on, and which went on habitually at the Parlour from morning till night, when Daddy perceived a new-comer.

He turned round sharp upon his heels, surveyed the room with the frown of a general.

'Ah!' he said with a theatrical air, as he made out the lad at the further table. 'Gentlemen, I let you off for the present,' and waving his hand to them with an indulgent self-importance, which provoked a roar of laughter, he turned and walked down the restaurant, with a quick swaying gait, to where David sat.

David made room for him in a smiling silence. Lomax sat down, and the two looked at each other.

'Davy,' said Daddy severely, 'why weren't you here yesterday?'

'When did you begin opening on Sundays, Daddy?' said the youth, attacking a portion of marrow pie, which had just been laid before him, his gay curious eyes still wandering over Daddy's costume, which was to-day completed by a large dahlia in the buttonhole, as grotesque as the rest.

'Ah bedad, but I'm losing my memory entirely;—and you

know it, you varmint. Well then, it was Saturday you weren't here.'

'You're about right there. I was let off early, and got a walk out Ramsbottom way with a fellow. I hadn't stretched my legs for two months, and—I'll confess to you, Daddy—that when we got down from the moor, I was—overtaken—as the pious people say—by a mutton chop.'

The lad looked up at him laughing. Daddy surveyed him with chagrin.

'I knew you were a worthless lukewarm sort of a creature. Flesh-eating 's as bad as drink for them that have got it in 'em. It'll come out. Well, go your ways! You'll never be Prime Minister.'

'Don't distress yourself, Daddy. As long as marrow pies are good, I shall eat 'em—you may count on that. What's that cheese affair down there?' and he pointed towards the last item but one in the bill of fare. Instead of answering, the old man turned on his seat, and called to one of the waitresses near. In a second David had a 'Cheese 'Ticement' before him, at which he peered curiously. Daddy watched him, not without some signs of nervousness.

'Daddy,' said David, calmly looking up, 'when I last saw this article it was called "Welsh rabbit."'

'Davy, you've no soul for fine distinctions,' said the other hastily. 'Change the subject. How have my dear brother-in-law and you been hitting it off lately?'

David went on with his 'Ticement,' the corners of his mouth twitching, for a minute or so, then he raised his head and slowly shook it, looking Daddy in the face.

'We shall bear up when we say good-bye, Daddy, and I don't think that crisis is far off. It would have come long ago, only I do happen to know a provoking deal more about books than any assistant he ever had before. Last week I picked him up a copy of "Bells and Pomegranates" for one and nine, and he sold it next day for two pound sixteen. There's business for you, Daddy. That put off our breach at least a fortnight, but unless I discover a first folio of Shakespeare for sixpence between now and then, I don't see what's to postpone the agony after that—and if I did I should probably speculate in it myself. No, Daddy, it's coming to the point, as the tiger said when he reached the last joint of the cow's tail. And it's your fault.'

'My fault, Davy,' said Lomax, half tremulous, half delighted, drawing a chair close up to the table that he might lose nothing of the youth's confidences. 'What d'ye mean by that, ye spalpeen?'

'Well, wasn't it you took me to the Hall of Science, Daddy, and couldn't keep a quiet tongue in your head about it afterwards? Wasn't it you lent me the "Secularist," which got me into the worst rumpus of the season? Oh, Daddy, you're a bad un!'

And in the midst of the superfluity of nods and winks that followed David called for his bill.

The action recalled Daddy to his own affairs, and he looked on complacently while David paid.

'Pon my word, Davy, I can hardly yet believe in my own genius. Where else, my boy, in this cotton-spinning hole, would you find a dinner like that for sixpence? Am I a benefactor to the species, sir, or am I not?'

'Looks like it, Daddy, by the help of Miss Dora.'

'Aye, aye,' said the old man testily,—'I'll not deny that Dora's useful to the business. But the *inspiration*, Davy, 's all mine. You want genius, my boy, to make a tomfool of yourself like this,' and he looked himself proudly up and down. 'Twenty customers a week come here for nothing in the world but to see what new rigs Daddy may be up to. The invention—the happy ideas, man, I throw into one day of this place would stock twenty ordinary businesses.'

'All the same, Daddy, I've tasted Welsh rabbit before,' said David drily, putting on his hat.

'I scorn your remark, sir. It argues a poorly furnished mind. Show me anything new in this used-up world, eh? but for the name and the dishing up—Well, good-bye, Davy, and good luck to you!'

David made his way across Hanging Ditch to a little row of houses bearing the baldly appropriate name of Half Street. It ran along the eastern side of the Cathedral close. First came the houses, small, irregular, with old beams and projections here and there, then a paved footway, then the railings round the close. In full view of the windows of the street rose the sixteenth-century church which plays as best it can the part of Cathedral to Manchester. Round it stretched a black and desolate space paved with tombstones. Not a blade of grass broke the melancholy of those begrimed and time-worn slabs. The rain lay among them in pools, squalid buildings overlooked them, and the church, with its manifest inadequacy to a fine site and a great city, did but little towards overcoming the mean and harsh impression made—on such a day especially—by its surroundings.

David opened the door of a shop about halfway up the row. A bell rang sharply, and as he shut the outer door behind him, another at the back of the shop opened hastily, and a young girl came in.

'Mr. Grieve, father's gone out to Eceles to see some books a gentleman wants him to buy. If Mr. Stephens comes, you're to tell him father's found him two or three more out of the list he sent. You know where all his books are put together, if he wants to see them, father says.'

'Yes, thank you, Miss Purcell, I do. No other message?'

'No.' The speaker lingered. 'What time do we start for the music to-night? But you'll be down to tea?'

'Certainly, if you and Miss Dora don't want it to yourselves.' The speaker smiled. He was leaning on the counter, while the girl stood behind it.

'Oh dear, no!' said Miss Purcell with a half-pettish gesture. 'I don't know what to talk to Dora about now. She thinks of nothing but St. Damian's and her work. It's worse than father. And, of course, I know she hasn't much opinion of *me*. Indeed, she's always telling me so—well, not exactly—but she lets me guess fast enough.'

The speaker put up two small hands to straighten some of the elaborate curls and twists with which her pretty head was crowned. There was a little consciousness in the action. The thought of her cousin had evidently brought with it the thought of some of those things of which the stern Dora disapproved.

David looked at the brown hair and the slim fingers as he was meant to look at them. Yet in his smiling good humour there was not a trace of bashfulness or diffidence. He was perfectly at his ease, with something of a proud self-reliant consciousness in every movement; nothing in his manner could have reminded a spectator of the traditional apprentice making timid love to his master's daughter.

'I've seen you stand up to her though,' he said laughing. 'It's like all pious people. Doesn't it strike you as odd that they should never be content with being pious for themselves?'

He looked at her with bright sarcastic eyes.

'Oh, I know what you mean!' she said with an instant change of tone; 'I didn't mean anything of the sort. I think it's shocking of you to go to that place on Sundays—so there, Mr. Grieve.'

She threw herself back defiantly against the books which walled the shop, her arms folded before her. The attitude showed the long throat, the rounded bust, and the slender waist compressed with some evident rigour into a close-fitting brown dress. That Miss Purcell thought a great deal of the fashion of her hair, the style of her bodices, and the size of her waist was clear; that she was conscious of thinking about them to good purpose was also plain. But on the whole the impression of artificiality, of something over-studied and over-done which the first sight of her generally awakened, was soon, as a rule, lost in another more attractive—in one of light, tripping youth, perfectly satisfied with itself and with the world.

'I don't think you know much about the place,' he said quietly, still smiling.

She flushed, her foolish little sense of natural superiority to 'the assistant' outraged again, as it had been outraged already a hundred times since she and David Grieve had met.

'I know quite as much as anybody need know—any respectable person—' she maintained angrily. 'It's a low, disgraceful place—and they talk wicked nonsense. Everyone says so. It

doesn't matter a bit where Uncle Lomax goes—he's mad—but it is a shame he should lead other people astray.'

She was much pleased with her own harangue, and stood there frowning on him, her sharp little chin in the air, one foot beating the ground.

'Well, yes, really,' said David in a reflective tone; 'one would think Miss Dora had her hands full at home, without—'

He looked up, significantly, smiling. Lucy Purcell was enraged with him—with his hypocritical sympathy as to her uncle's misdoings—his avoidance of his own crime.

'It's not uncle at all, it's you!' she cried, with more logic than appeared. 'I tell you, Mr. Grieve, father won't stand it.'

The young man drew himself up from the counter.

'No,' he said with great equanimity, 'I suppose not.'

And taking up a parcel of books from the counter he turned away. Lucy, flurried and pouting, called after him.

'Mr. Grieve!'

'Yes.'

'I—I didn't mean it. I *hope* you won't go. I know father's hard. He's hard enough with me.'

And she raised her hands to her flushed face. David was terribly afraid she was going to cry. Several times since the orphan girl of seventeen had arrived from school three months before to take her place in her father's house, had she been on the point of confiding her domestic woes to David Grieve. But though under the terms of his agreement with her father, which included one meal in the back parlour, the assistant and she were often thrown together, he had till now instinctively held her aloof. His extraordinary good looks and masterful energetic ways had made an impression on her schoolgirl mind from the beginning. But for him she had no magnetism whatever. The little self-conceited creature knew it, or partially knew it, and smarted under it.

Now, he was just beginning an awkward sentence, when there was a sound at the outer door. With another look at him, half shy, half appealing, Lucy fled. Conscious of a distinct feeling of relief, David went to attend to the customer.

CHAPTER II

THE customer was soon content and went out again into the rain. David mounted a winding iron stair which connected the downstairs shop with an upper room in which a large proportion of the books were stored. It was a long, low, rambling place made by throwing together all the little bits of rooms on the first floor of the old house. One corner of it had a special attraction for David. It was the corner where, ranged partly on the floor, partly on the shelves which ran under the windows,

lay the collection of books that Purcell had been making for his customer, Mr. Stephens.

Out of that collection Purcell's assistant had extracted a very varied entertainment. In the first place it had amused him to watch the laborious pains and anxiety with which his pious employer had gathered together the very sceptical works of which Mr. Stephens was in want, showing a knowledge of contents, and editions, and out-of-the-way profanities, under the stimulus of a paying customer, which drew many a sudden laugh from David when he was left to think of it in private.

In the next place the books themselves had been a perpetual feast to him for weeks, enjoyed all the more keenly because of the secrecy in which it had to be devoured. The little gathering represented with fair completeness the chief books of the French 'philosophers,' both in the original French, and in those English translations of which so plentiful a crop made its appearance during the fifty years before and after 1800. There, for instance, lay the seventy volumes of Voltaire. Close by was an imperfect copy of the Encyclopædia, which Mr. Stephens was getting cheap; on the other side a motley gathering of Diderot and Rousseau; while Holbach's 'System of Nature,' and Helvétius 'On the Mind,' held their rightful place among the rest.

Through these books, then, which had now been on the premises for some time—Mr. Stephens being a person of uncertain domicile, and unable as yet to find them a home—David had been freely ranging. Whenever Purcell was out of the way and customers were slack, he invariably found his way to this spot in the upper room. There, with his elbows on the top of the bookcase which ran under the window, and a book in front of him—or generally two, the original French and a translation—he had read Voltaire's tales, a great deal of the Encyclopædia, a certain amount of Diderot, for whom he cherished a passionate admiration, and a much smaller smattering of Rousseau. At the present moment he was grappling with the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' and the 'Système de la Nature,' fortified in both cases by English versions.

The gloom of the afternoon deepened, and the increasing rain had thinned the streets so much that during a couple of hours David had but three summonses from below to attend to. For the rest of the time he was buried in the second volume of the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' now skipping freely, now chewing and digesting, his eyes fixed vacantly on the darkening church outside. Above all, the article on *Contradictions* had absorbed and delighted him. There are few tones in themselves so fascinating to the nascent literary sense as this mock humility tone of Voltaire's. And in David's case all that passionate sense of a broken bubble and a scattered dream, which had haunted him so long after he left Kinder, had entered into and helped forward his infatuation with his new masters. They brought him an indescribable sense of freedom—omniscience almost.

For instance :-

'We must carefully distinguish in all writings, and especially in the sacred books, between real and apparent contradictions. Venturous critics have supposed a contradiction existed in that passage of Scripture which narrates how Moses changed all the waters of Egypt into blood, and how immediately afterwards the magicians of Pharaoh did the same thing, the book of Exodus allowing no interval at all between the miracle of Moses and the magical operation of the enchanters. Certainly it seems at first sight impossible that these magicians should change into blood what was already blood; but this difficulty may be avoided by supposing that Moses had allowed the waters to reassume their proper nature, in order to give time to Pharaoh to recover himself. This supposition is all the more plausible, seeing that the text, if it does not favour it expressly, is not opposed to it.

'The same sceptics ask how when all the horses had been killed by the hail in the sixth plague Pharaoh could pursue the Jews with cavalry. But this contradiction is not even apparent, because the hail, which killed all the horses in the fields, could not fall upon those which were in the stables.'

And so on through a long series of paragraphs, leading at last to matters specially dear to the wit of Voltaire, the contradictions between St. Luke and St. Matthew—in the story of the census of Quirinus, of the Magi, of the massacre of the Innocents, and what not—and culminating in this innocent conclusion:—

'After all it is enough that God should have deigned to reveal to us the principal mysteries of the faith, and that He should have instituted a Church in the course of time to explain them. All these contradictions, so often and so bitterly brought up against the Gospels, are amply noticed by the wisest commentators; far from harming each other, one explains another; they lend each other a mutual support, both in the concordance and in the harmony of the four Gospels.'

David threw back his head with a laugh which came from the very depths of him. Then, suddenly, he was conscious of the church standing sombrely without, spectator as it seemed of his thoughts and of his mirth. Instantly his youth met the challenge by a rise of passionate scorn! What! a hundred years since Voltaire, and mankind still went on believing in all these follies and fables, in the ten plagues, in Balaam's ass, in the walls of Jericho, in miraculous births, and Magi, and prophetic stars!—in everything that the mockery of the eighteenth century had slain a thousand times over. Ah, well!—Voltaire knew as well as anybody that superstition is perennial, insatiable—a disease and weakness of the human mind which seems to be inherent and ineradicable. And there rose in the boy's memory lines he had opened upon that morning in a small Elizabethan folio he

had been cataloguing with much pains as a rarity—lines which had stuck in his mind—

Vast superstition! glorious style of weakness,
Sprung from the deep disquiet of man's passion
To dissolution and despair of Nature!—

He flung them out at the dark mass of building opposite, as though he were his namesake flinging at Goliath. Only a few months before that great church had changed masters—had passed from the hands of an aristocratic and inaccessible bishop of the old school into those of a man rich in all modern ideas and capacities, full of energy and enthusiasm, a scholar and administrator both. And *he* believed all those absurdities, David wanted to know? Impossible! No honest man could, thought the lad defiantly, with the rising colour of crude and vehement feeling, when his attention had been once challenged, and he had developed mind enough to know what the challenge meant.

Except, perhaps, Uncle Reuben and Dora Lomax, and people like that. He stood thinking and staring out of window, one idea leading to another. The thought of Reuben brought with it a certain softening of mood—the softening of memory and old association. Yes, he would like to see Uncle Reuben again—explain to him, perhaps, that old story—so old, so distant!—of his running away. Well, he *would* see him again, as soon as he got a place of his own, which couldn't be long now, whether Purcell gave him the sack or not. Instinctively, he felt for that inner pocket, which held his purse and his savings-bank book. Yes, he was near freedom now, whatever happened!

Then it occurred to him that it was unlucky he should have stumbled across Mr. Anerum just at this particular juncture. The minister, of course, had friends at Clough End still. And he, David, didn't want Louie down upon him just yet—not just yet—for a month or two.

Then the smile which had begun to play about the mouth suddenly broadened into a merry triumph. When Louie knew all about him and his contrivances these last four years, wouldn't she be mad! If she were to appear at this moment, he could tell her that she wore a pink dress at the 'wake' last week,—when she was at chapel last,—what young men were supposed to be courting her since the summer, and a number of other interesting particulars—

'Mr. Grieve! Tea!'

His face changed. Reluctantly shutting his book and putting it into its place, he took his way to the staircase.

As David opened the swing door leading to the Purcells' parlour at the back of the shop he heard Miss Purcell saying in a mournful voice, 'It's no good, Dora; not a haporth of good. Father won't let me. I might as well have gone to prison as come home.'

The assistant emerged into the bright gaslight of the little room as she spoke. There was another girl sitting beside Lucy, who got up with a shy manner and shook hands with him.

'Will you take your tea, Mr. Grieve?' said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, handing it to him, and then throwing herself vehemently back in her hostess's chair, behind the tea-tray. She let her hands hang over the arms of it—the picture of discontent. The gaslight showed her the possessor of bright brown eyes, under fine brows slenderly but clearly marked, of a pink and white skin slightly freckled, of a small nose quite passable, but no ways remarkable, of a dainty little chin, and a thin-lipped mouth, slightly raised at one corner, and opening readily over some irregular but very white teeth. Except for the eyes and eyebrows the features could claim nothing much in the way of beauty. Yet at this moment of seventeen—thanks to her clear colours, her small thinness, and the beautiful hair so richly piled about her delicate head—Lucy Purcell was undeniably a pretty girl, and since her arrival in Manchester she had been much more blissfully certain of the fact than she had ever succeeded in being while she was still under the repressive roof of Miss Pym's boarding-school for young ladies, Pestalozzi House, Blackburn.

David sat down, perceiving that something had gone very wrong, but not caring to inquire into it. His whole interest in the Purcell household was, in fact, dying out. He would not be concerned with it much longer.

So that, instead of investigating Miss Purcell's griefs, he asked her cousin whether it had not come on to rain. The girl opposite replied in a quiet, musical voice. She was plainly dressed in a black hat and jacket; but the hat had a little bunch of cowslips to light it up, and the jacket was of an ordinary fashionable cut. There was nothing particularly noticeable about the face at first sight, except its soft fairness and the gentle steadfastness of the eyes. The movements were timid, the speech often hesitating. Yet the impression which, on a first meeting, this timidity was apt to leave on a spectator was very seldom a lasting one. David's idea of Miss Lomax, for instance, had radically changed during the three months since he had made acquaintance with her.

Rain, it appeared, *had* begun, and there must be umbrellas and waterproofs for the evening's excursion. As the two others were settling at what time David Grieve and Lucy should call for Dora in Market Place, Lucy woke up from a dream, and broke in upon them.

'And, Dora, you know, I *could* have worn that dress with the narrow ribbons I showed you last week. It's all there—upstairs—in the cupboard—not a crease in it!'

Dora could not help laughing, and the laugh sent a charming light into her grey, veiled eyes. The tone was so inexpressibly doleful, the manner so childish. David smiled too, and his eyes and Dora's met in a sort of friendly understanding—the first

time, perhaps, they had so met. Then they both turned themselves to the task of consolation. The assistant inquired what was the matter.

'I wanted her to go with me to the dance at the Mechanics' Institute next week,' said Dora. 'Mrs. Alderman Head would have taken us both. It's very nice and respectable. I didn't think uncle would mind. But Lucy's sure he will.'

'Sure! Of course I'm sure,' said Lucy sharply. 'I've heard him talk about dancing in a way to make anybody sick. If he only knew all the dancing we had at Pestalozzi House!'

'Does he think all dancing wrong?' inquired David.

'Yes—unless it's David dancing before the Ark, or some such nonsense,' replied Lucy, with the same petulant gloom.

David laughed out. Then he fell into a brown study, one hand playing with his tea-cup, an irrepressible smile still curving about his mouth. Dora, observing him across the table, could not but remember other assistants of Uncle Purcell whom she had seen sitting in that same place, and the airs which Miss Purcell in her rare holidays had given herself towards those earlier young men. And now, this young man, whenever Purcell himself was out of the way, was master of the place. Anyone could see that, so long as he was there, Lucy was sensitively conscious of him in all that she said or did.

She did not long endure his half-mocking silence now.

'You see, Dora,' she began again, with an angry glance towards him, 'father's worse than ever just now. He's been so aggravated.'

'Yes,' said Dora timidly. She perfectly understood what was meant, but she shrank from pursuing the subject. But David looked up.

'I should be very sorry, I'm sure, Miss Purcell, to get in your way at all, or cause you any unpleasantness, if that's what you mean. I don't think you'll be annoyed with me long.'

He spoke with a boyish exaggerated dignity. It became him, however, for his fine and subtle physique somehow supported and endorsed it.

Both the girls started. Lucy looked suddenly as miserable as she had before looked angry. But in her confused state of feeling she renewed her attack.

'I don't understand anything about it,' she said, with plaintive incoherence. 'Only I can't *think* why people should always be making disturbances. Dora! Doesn't *everybody* you know think it wicked to go to the Hall of Science?'

She drew herself up peremptorily. David resumed the half smiling, half meditative attitude which had provoked her before. Dora looked from one to the other, a pure bright colour rising in her cheek.

'I don't know anything about that,' she said in a low voice. 'I don't think that would matter, Lucy. But, oh, I do wish father wouldn't go—and Mr. Grieve wouldn't go.'

Her voice and hand shook. Lucy looked triumphantly at David. Instinctively she realised that, especially of late, David had come to feel more respectfully towards Dora than she had ever succeeded in making him feel towards herself. In the beginning of their acquaintance he had often launched into argument with Dora about religious matters, especially about the Ritualistic practices in which she delighted. The lad, overflowing with his Voltaire and d'Holbach, had not been able to forbear, and had apparently taken a mischievous pleasure in shocking a bigot—as he had originally conceived Lucy Purcell's cousin to be. The discussion, indeed, had not gone very far. The girl's horror and his own sense of his position and its difficulties had checked them in the germ. Moreover, as has been said, his conception of Dora had gradually changed on further acquaintance. As for her, she had now for a long time avoided arguing with him, which made her outburst on the present occasion the more noticeable.

He looked up quickly.

'Miss Lomax, how do you suppose one makes up one's mind—either about religion or anything else? Isn't it by hearing both sides?'

'Oh, no—no!' she said, shrinking. 'Religion isn't like anything else. It's by—by growing up into it—by thinking about it—and doing what the Church tells you. You come to *know* it's true.'

That the Magi and Balaam's ass are true! What folly! But somehow even his youthful ardour could not say it, so full of pure and tremulous pain was the gaze fixed upon him. And, indeed, he had no time for any answer, for she had just spoken when the bell of the outer door sounded, and a step came rapidly through the shop.

'Father!' said Lucy, lifting the lid of the teapot in a great hurry. 'Oh, I wonder if the tea's good enough.'

She was stirring it anxiously with a spoon, when Purcell entered, a tall heavily built man, with black hair, a look of command, and a step which shook the little back room as he descended into it. He touched Dora's hand with a pompous politeness, and then subsided into his chair opposite Lucy, complaining about the weather, and demanding tea, which his daughter gave him with a timid haste, looking to see whether he were satisfied as he raised the first spoonful to his lips.

'Anything worth buying?' said David to his employer. He was leaning back in his chair, with his arm round the back of another. Again Dora was reminded by contrast of some of the nervous lads she had seen in that room before, scarcely daring to eat their tea under Purcell's eye, flying to cut him bread, or pass him the sugar.

'No,' said Purcell curtly.

'And a great price, I suppose?'

Purcell looked up. Apparently the ease of the young man's

tone and attitude put the finishing stroke to an inward process already far advanced.

'The price, I conceive, is *my* business,' he said, in his most overbearing manner. 'When you have to pay, it will be yours.'

David flushed, without, however, changing his position, and Lucy made a sudden commotion among the teacups.

'Father,' she said, with a hurried agitation which hardly allowed her to pick up the cup she had thrown over, 'Dora and I want to speak to you. You mustn't talk business at tea. Oh, I *know* you won't let me go; but I *should* like it, and Dora's come to ask. I shouldn't want a new dress, and it will be *most* respectable, everyone says; and I *did* learn dancing at school, though you didn't know it. Miss Georgina said it was stuff and nonsense, and I must—'

'What *is* she talking about?' said Purcell to Dora, with an angry glance at Lucy.

'I want to take her to a dance,' said Dora quietly, 'if you would let her come. There's one at the Mechanics' Institute next week, given by the Unicorn benefit society. Mrs. Alderman Head said I might go with her, and Lucy too if you'll let her come. I've got a ticket.'

'I'm much obliged to Mrs. Alderman Head,' said Purcell sarcastically. 'Lucy knows very well what I think of an unchristian and immodest amusement. Other people must decide according to their conscience. I judge nobody.'

At this point David got up, and disappeared into the shop.

'Oh yes, you do judge, uncle,' cried Dora, roused at last, and colouring. 'You're always judging. You call everything unchristian you don't like, whether its dancing, or—or—early celebration, or organ music, or altar-cloths. But you can't be always right—nobody can.'

Purcell surveyed her with a grim composure.

'If you suppose I make any pretence to be infallible, you are quite mistaken,' he said, with slow solemnity—no one in disclaiming Papistry could have been more the Pope—'I leave that to your priests at St. Damian's, Dora. But there *is* an infallible guide, both for you and for me, and that's the Holy Scriptures. If you can show me any place where the *Bible* approves of promiscuous dancing between young Christian men and women, or of a woman exposing her person for admiration's sake, or of such vain and idle talking as is produced by these entertainments, I will let Lucy go. But you can't. "Whose adorning let it not be—"

And he quoted the Petrine admonition with a harsh triumphant emphasis on every syllable, looking hard all the time at Dora, who had risen, and stood confronting him in a tremor of impatience and disagreement.

'Father Russell—' she began quickly, then changed her form of expression—'Mr. Russell says you can't settle things by just quoting a text. The Bible has to be explained, he says.'

Purcell's eyes flamed. He launched into a sarcastic harangue, delivered in a strong thick voice, on the subject of 'Sacerdotalism,' 'priestly arrogance,' 'lying traditions,' 'making the command of God of no effect,' and so forth. While his sermon rolled along, Dora stood nervously tying her bonnet strings, or buttoning her gloves. Her heart was full of a passionate scorn. Beside the bookseller's muscular figure and pugnacious head she saw with her mind's eye the spare forms and careworn faces of the young priests at St. Damian's. Outraged by this loud-voiced assurance, she called to mind the gentleness, the suavity, the delicate consideration for women which obtained among her friends.

'There's not a pin to choose,' Purcell wound up, brutally, 'between you and that young infidel in there,' and he jerked his thumb towards the shop. 'It all comes of pride. He's bursting with his own wisdom,—you will have the "Church" and won't have the Bible. What's the Church!—a pack of sinners, and a million sinners are no better than one.'

'Good-bye, Lucy,' said Dora, stooping to kiss her cousin, and not trusting herself to speak. 'Call for me at the quarter.'

Lucy hardly noticed her kiss, she sat with her elbows on the table, holding her little chin disconsolately, something very like tears in her eyes. In the first place, she was reflecting dolefully that it was all true—she was never to have any amusement like other girls—never to have any good of her life; she might as well be a nun at once. In the second, she was certain her father meant to send young Grieve away, and the prospect drew a still darker pall over a prospect dark enough in all conscience before.

Purcell opened the door for Dora more punctiliously than usual, and came back to the hearthrug still inflated as it were with his own eloquence. Meanwhile Lucy was washing up the tea things. The little servant had brought her a bowl of water and an apron, and Lucy was going gingerly through an operation she detested. Why shouldn't Mary Ann do it? What was the good of going to school and coming back with Claribel's songs and Blumenthal's *Deux Anges* lying on the top of your box,—with a social education, moreover, so advanced that the dancing-mistress had invariably made you waltz alone round the room for the edification and instruction of the assembled company,—if all you had to do at home was to dust and wash up, and die with envy of girls with reprobate fathers? As she pondered the question, Lucy began to handle the cups with a more and more unfriendly energy.

'You'll break some of that china, Lucy!' said Purcell, at last disturbed in his thoughts. 'What's the matter with you?'

'Nothing!' said Lucy, taking, however, a saucer from the line as she spoke so viciously that the rest of them slipped with a clatter and only just escaped destruction.

'Mind what you're about,' cried Purcell angrily, fearing for the household stuff that had been in the establishment so much longer and was so much more at home there than Lucy.

'I know what it is,' he said, looking at her severely, while his great black presence seemed to fill the little room. 'You've lost your temper because I refused to let you go to the dance.'

Lucy was silent for a moment, trying to contain herself; then she broke out like a child, throwing down her apron, and feeling for her handkerchief.

'It's *too* bad—it's *too* bad—I'd rather be Mary Ann—*she's* got friends, and evenings out—and—and parties sometimes; and I see nobody, and go nowhere. What did you have me home for at all?'

And she sat down and dried her eyes piteously. She was in real distress, but she liked a scene, and Purcell knew her peculiarities. He surveyed her with a sort of sombre indulgence.

'You're a vain child of this world, Lucy. If I didn't keep a look-out on you, you'd soon go rejoicing down the broad way. What do you mean about amusements? There's the missionary tea to-morrow night, and the magic-lantern at the schools on Saturday.'

Lucy gave a little hysterical laugh.

'Well,' said Purcell loudly, 'there'll be plenty of young people there. What have you got to say against them?'

'A set of *frights* and *gawks*,' said Lucy, sitting bolt upright in a state of flat mutiny, and crushing her handkerchief on her knee between a pair of trembling hands. 'The way they do their hair, and the way they tie their ties, and the way they put a chair for you—it's enough to make one faint. At the Christmas treat there was one young man asked me to trim his shirt-cuffs for him with scissors he took out of his pocket. I told him I wasn't his nurse, and people who weren't dressed ought to stay at home. You should have seen how he and his sister glared at me afterwards. I don't care! None of the chapel people like me—I know they don't, and I don't want them to, and I wouldn't *marry* one of them.'

The gesture of Lucy's curly head was superb.

'It seems to me,' said Purcell sarcastically, 'that what you mostly learnt at Blackburn was envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. As to marrying, child, the less you think of it for the present the better, till you get more sense.'

But the eyes which studied her were not unkindly. Purcell liked this slim red and white creature who belonged to him, whose education had cost him hard money which it gave him pleasure to reckon up, and who promised now to provide him with a fresh field for the management and the coarse moral experiment which he loved. She would be restive at first, but he would soon break her in. The idea that under her folly and childishness she might possibly inherit some of his own tenacity never occurred to him.

'I can't imagine,' said Lucy inconsequently, with eyes once more swimming, 'why you can't let me do what Dora does! She's *much* better than I am. She's a saint, she is. She's

always going to church; she's always doing things for poor people; she never thinks about herself, or whether she's pretty, or— Why shouldn't I dance if she does?' Purcell laughed.

'Aye!' he said grimly, 'that's the Papistical way all over. So many services, so much fasting, so much money, so much knocking under to your priest, so much "church work"—and who cares a brass farthing what you do with the rest of your time? Do as I tell you, and dance away! But I tell you, Christianity wants a new heart!'

And the bookseller looked at his daughter with a frowning severity. Conversation of this kind was his recreation, his accomplishment, so to speak. He had been conducting a difficult negotiation all day of the diamond-cut-diamond order, and was tired out and disgusted by the amount of knowledge of books which even a gentleman may possess. But here was compensation. A warm hearthrug, an unwilling listener, and this sense of an incomparable soundness of view,—he wanted nothing more to revive him, unless, indeed, it were a larger audience.

As for Lucy, as she looked up at her father, even her childish intelligence rose to a sense of absurdity. As if Dora hadn't a new heart; as if Dora thought it was enough to go to church and give sixpences in the offertory!

But her father overawed her. She had been left motherless at ten years old, and brought up since away from home, except for holidays. At the bottom of her she was quite conscious that she knew nothing at all about this big contemptuous person, who ordered her about and preached to her, and never let himself be kissed and played with and coaxed as other girls' fathers did.

So she went on with her washing up in a crushed silence, very sorry for herself in a vague passionate way, the corners of her mouth drooping. Purcell too fell into a reverie, the lower jaw pushed forward, one hand playing with the watch-chain which adorned his black suit.

'Did you give Grieve that message?' he asked at last.

Lucy, still sulky, nodded in reply.

'What time did he come in from dinner?'

'On the stroke of the half-hour,' said Lucy quickly. 'I think he keeps time better than anybody you ever had, father.'

'Insolent young whelp!' said Purcell in a slow, deliberate voice. 'He was at that place again yesterday.'

'Yes, I know he was,' said Lucy, with evident agitation. 'I told him he ought to have been ashamed.'

'Oh, you talked to him, did you? What business had you to do that, I wonder? Well, what did he say?'

'He said—well, I don't know what he said. He don't seem to think it matters to anybody where he goes on Sunday!'

'Oh, indeed—don't he? I'll show him some cause to doubt the truth of that proposition,' said Purcell ponderously; 'or I'll know the reason why.'

Lucy looked unhappy, and said nothing for a minute or two. Then she began insistently, 'Well, *does* it matter to you?'

This deplorable question—viewed from the standpoint of a Baptist elder—passed unnoticed; for with the last words the shop-bell rang, and Purcell went off, transformed on the instant into the sharp, attentive tradesman.

Lucy sat wiping her cups mechanically for a little while. Then, when they were all done, and Mary Ann had been loftily commanded to put them away, she slipped upstairs to her own room, a little attic at the top of the house. Here she went to a deal press, which had been her mother's, opened it, and took out a dress which hung in a compartment by itself, enveloped in a holland wrapper, lest Manchester smuts should harm it. She undid the wrapper, and laid it on the bed. It was an embroidered white muslin, adorned with lace and full knots of narrow pink ribbon.

'What a trouble I had to get the ribbon just that width,' she thought to herself ruefully, 'and everybody said it was so uncommon. I might as well give it Dora. I don't believe I shall ever wear it. I don't know what'll become of me. I don't get any chances.'

And shaking her head mournfully from side to side, she sat on beside the dress, in the light of her solitary candle, her hands clasped round her knee, the picture of girlish despair, so far as anything so daintily gowned, and shoed, and curled, could achieve it. She was thinking drearily of some people who were coming to supper, one of her father's brother elders at the chapel, Mr. Baruch Barton, and his daughter. Mr. Barton had a specialty for the prophet Zephaniah, and had been several times shocked because Lucy could not help him out with his quotations from that source. His daughter, a little pinched asthmatic creature, in a dress whereof every gore and seam was an affront to the art of dressmaking, was certainly thirty, probably more. And between thirty and the Psalmist's limit of existence, there is the very smallest appreciable difference, in the opinion of seventeen. What *could* she have to say to Emmy Barton? Lucy asked herself. She began yawning from sheer dulness, as she thought of her. If it were only time to go to bed!

Suddenly she heard a sound of raised voices in the upper shop on the floor below. What could it be? She started up. 'Mr. Grieve and father quarrelling!' She knew it must come to that!

She crept down the stairs with every precaution possible till she came to the door behind which the loud talk which had startled her was going on. Here she listened with all her ears, but at first to very little purpose. David was speaking, but so rapidly, and apparently so near to the other end of the room, that she could bear nothing. Then her father broke in, and by dint of straining very hard, she caught most of what he said before the whole colloquy came abruptly to an end. She heard

Purcell's heavy tread descending the little iron spiral staircase leading from the lower shop to the upper. She heard David moving about, as though he were gathering up books and papers, and then, with a loud childish sob which burst from her un-awares, she ran upstairs again to her own room.

'Oh, he's going, he's going!' she cried under her breath, as she stood before the glass winking to keep the tears back, and biting her handkerchief hard between her little white teeth. 'Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? It'll be always the same; just when anyone *might* like me, it all stops. And he won't care one little, little bit. He'll never think of me again. Oh, I do think somebody might care about me—might be sorry for me!'

And she locked her hands tight before her, and stared at the glass, while the tears forced their way. But all the time she was noticing how prettily she stood, how slim she was. And though she smarted, she would not for the world have been without her smart, her excitement, her foolish secret, which, for sheer lack of something to do and think about, had suddenly grown to such magnitude in her eyes. It was hard to cherish a hopeless passion for a handsome youth, without a halfpenny, who despised you, but it was infinitely better than to have nothing in your mind but Emmy Barton and the prophet Zephaniah. Nay, as she washed her hands and smoothed her dress and hair with trembling fingers, she became quite friendly with her pain—in a sense, even proud of it, and jealous for it. It was a sign of mature life—of something more than mere school-girlishness. Like the lover in the Elizabethan sonnet, 'She had been vexed, if vexed she had not been!'

CHAPTER III

'COME in, David,' said Mr. Ancrum, opening the door of his little sitting-room in Mortimer Street. 'You're rather late, but I don't wonder. Such a wind! I could hardly stand against it myself. But, then, I'm an atomy. What, no top-coat in such weather! What do you mean by that, sir? You're wet through. There, dry yourself.'

David, with a grin at Mr. Ancrum's unnecessary concern for him, deposited himself in the carpet chair which formed the minister's only lounge, and held out his legs and arms to the blaze. He was wet indeed, and bespattered with the blackest mud in the three kingdoms. But the battle with wind and rain had so brought into play all the physical force of him, had so brightened eye and cheek, and tossed the black hair into such a fine confusion, that, as he sat there bending over the glow of the fire, the crippled man opposite, sickly with long confinement and over-thinking, could not take his eyes from him. The storm with all its freshness, youth with all its reckless joy in itself,

seemed to have come in with the lad and transformed the little dingy room.

'What do you wear trash like that for in a temperature like this?' said the minister, touching his guest's thin and much-worn coat. 'Don't you know, David, that your health is money? Suppose you get lung trouble, who's to look after you?'

'It don't do me no harm, sir. I can't get into my last year's coat, and I couldn't afford a new one this winter.'

'What wages do you earn?' asked Ancrum. His manner was a curious mixture of melancholy gentleness and of that terse sharpness in practical things which the south country resents and the north country takes for granted.

'Eighteen shillings a week, since last November, sir.'

'That ought to be enough for a top-coat, you rascal, with only yourself to feed,' said Mr. Ancrum, stretching himself in his hard armchair, so as to let his lame leg with its heavy boot rest comfortably on the fender. David had noticed at first sight of him that his old playfellow had grown to look much older than in the Clough End days. His hair was nearly white, and lay in a large smooth wave across the broad brow. And in that brow there were deep furrows, and many a new and premature line in the hollow cheeks. Something withering and blighting seemed to have passed over the whole man since those Sunday school lessons in the Christian Brethren's upper room, which David still remembered so well. But the eyes with their irresistible intensity and force were the same. In them the minister's youth—he was not yet thirty-five—still spoke, as from a last stronghold in a failing realm. They had a strange look too, the look as of a secret life, not for the passer-by.

David smiled at Ancrum's last remark, and for a moment or two looked into the fire without speaking.

'Well, if I'd bought clothes or anything else this winter, I should be in a precious worse hole than I am,' he said reflectively.

'Hole? What's wrong, Davy?'

'My master gave me the sack Monday.'

'Humph!' said Ancrum, surveying him. 'Well, you don't look much cast down about it, I must say.'

'Well, you see, I'd laid my plans,' said the young man, an irrepressible gaiety and audacity in every feature. 'It isn't as though I were taken by surprise.'

'Plans for a new place, I suppose?'

'No; I have done with that. I am going to set up for myself. I know the trade, and I've got some money.'

'How old are you, Davy?'

'Just upon twenty,' said the lad, quietly.

The minister pursed up his lips and whistled a little.

'Well, that's bold,' he said. 'Somehow I like it, though by all the laws of prudence I ought to jump down your throat for announcing such a thing. But how did you get your money? and what have you been doing these four years? Come, I'm an