

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-girliness. Like the lover in the Elizabethan sonnet, 'She had been vexed, if vexed she had not been!'

CHAPTER III

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Hole? What's wrong, Davy?'

'My master gave me the sack Monday.'

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

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

'Plans for a new place, I suppose?'

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

'How old are you, Davy?'

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

The minister pursed up his lips and whistled a little.

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

old friend,—though I dare say you don't think me much of a fellow. Out with it! Pay me anyway for all those ships I made you long ago.'

And he held out his blanched hand, little more now than skin and bone. David put his own into it awkwardly enough. At this period of his life he was not demonstrative.

The story he had to tell was, to Ancrum's thinking, a remarkable one. He had come into Manchester on an October evening with five shillings and threepence in his pocket. From a point on the south-western border of the city he took a 'bus for Deansgate and Victoria Street. As he was sitting on the top, feeding his eyes on the lights and the crowd of the streets, but wholly ignorant where to go and what first step to take, he fell into talk with a decent working-man and his wife sitting beside him. The result of the talk was that they offered him shelter at fourpence a night. He dismounted with them at Blackfriars Bridge, and they made their way across the river to a street in Salford, where he lodged with them for a week. During that week he lived on oatmeal and an occasional baked potato, paying his hostess eighteenpence additional for the use of her fire, and the right to sit in her kitchen when he was not tramping about in search of work. By the end of the week he had found a post as errand-boy at a large cheap bookseller's and stationer's in Deansgate, at eight shillings a week, his good looks, manner, and education evidently helping him largely, as Mr. Ancrum could perceive through the boy's very matter-of-fact account of himself. He then made an agreement for bed, use of fire, and kitchen, with his new friends at four shillings a week, and by the end of six months he was receiving a wage of fourteen shillings as salesman and had saved close on five pounds.

'Well, now, come, how did you manage that, Davy?' said Mr. Ancrum, interrupting. 'Don't run on in that fashion. Details are the only interesting things in life, and details I'll have. You must have found it a precious tight fit to save that five pounds.'

Whereupon David, his eye kindling, ran out Benjamin Franklin and the 'Vegetarian News,' his constant friends from the first day of his acquaintance with the famous autobiography till now, in spite of such occasional lapses into carnal feeding as he had confessed to Daddy. In a few minutes Ancrum found himself buried in 'details' as to 'flesh-forming' and 'bone-forming' foods, as to nitrogen and albumen, as to the saving qualities of fruit, and Heaven knows what besides. Long before the enthusiast had spent his breath or his details, the minister cried 'Enough!'

'Young materialist,' he said growling, 'what do you mean at your age by thinking so much about your body?'

'It wasn't my body, sir,' said David, simply, 'it was just business. If I had got ill, I couldn't have worked; if I had lived like other chaps, I couldn't have saved. So I had to know

something about it, and it wasn't bad fun. After a bit I got the people I lodged with to eat a lot of the things I eat—and that was cheaper for me of course. The odd thing about vegetarianism is that you come not to care a rap what you eat. Your taste goes somehow. So long as you're nourished and can do your work, that's all you want.'

The minister sat studying his visitor a minute or two in silence, though the eyes under the care-worn brow were bright and restless. Any defiance of the miserable body was in itself delightful to a man who had all but slain himself many times over in the soul's service. He, too, had been living on a crust for months, denying himself first this, then that ingredient of what should have been an invalid's diet. But it had been for cause—for the poor—for self-mortification. There was something just a little jarring to the ascetic in this contact with a self-denial of the purely rationalistic type, so easy—so cheerful—put forward without the smallest suspicion of merit, as a mere business measure.

David resumed his story. By the end of another six months it appeared that he had grown tired of his original shop, with its vast masses of school stationery and cheap new books. As might have been expected from his childish antecedents, he had been soon laid hold of by the old bookstalls, had read at them on his way from work, had spent on them all that he could persuade himself to spare from his hoard, and in a year from the time he entered Manchester, thanks to wits, reading, and chance friendships, was already a budding bibliophile. Slates and primers became suddenly odious to a person aware of the existence of Aldines and Elzevirs, and bitten with the passion, then just let loose on the book-buying world, for first editions of the famous books of the century. Whenever that sum in the savings bank should have reached a certain height, he would become a second-hand bookseller with a stall. Till then he must save more and learn his trade. So at the end of his first year he left his employers, and by the help of excellent recommendations from them got the post of assistant in Purcell's shop in Half Street, at a rise of two shillings, afterwards converted into four shillings a week.

'And I've been there three years—very near,' said David, straightening himself with a little nervous gesture peculiar to him. 'If you'd been anywhere about, sir, you'd have wondered how I could have stayed so long. But I wanted to learn the trade and I've learnt it—no thanks to old Purcell.'

'What was wrong with him?'

'Mostly brains!' said the lad, with a scornful but not unattractive conceit. 'He was a hard master to live with—that don't matter. But he is a fool! I don't mean to say he don't know a lot about some things—but he thinks he knows everything—and he don't. And he'll not let anyone tell him—not he! Once, if you'll believe it, he got the Aldine Virgil of 1501, for twenty-five shillings—came from a gentleman out Eccles way—a fellow sell-

ing his father's library and didn't know bad from good,—real fine tall copy,—binding poor,—but a *stunner* take it altogether—worth twenty pounds to Quaritch or Ellis, any day. Well, all I could do, he let a man have it for five shillings profit next day, just to spite me, I believe, because I told him it was a good thing. Then he got sick about that, I believe, though he never let out, and the next time he found anything that looked good,—giminy!—but he put it on. Now you know, sir'—Mr. Ancrum smiled at the confidential eagerness of the expert—'you know, sir, it's not many of those Venice or Florence Dantes that are worth anything. If you get the first edition of Landino's 'Commentary,' or the other man's, Imola's, isn't it—'

The minister lifted his eyebrows—the Italian came out pat, and, so far as he knew, right—

'Well, of course, *they're* worth money—always fetch their price. But the later editions are no good at all—nobody but a gentleman-collector, very green, you know, sir'—the twinkle in the boy's eye showed how much his subject was setting him at his ease—'would be bothered with them. Well, if he didn't get hold of an edition of 1540 or so—worth about eight shillings, and dear at that—and send it up to one of the London men as a good thing. He makes me pack it and send it and *register* it—you might have thought it was the Mazarin Bible, bar size. And then, of course, next day, down comes the book again flying, double quick. I kept out of his way, post-time! But I'd have given something to see the letter he got.'

And David, rising, put his hands in his pockets, and stood before the fire chuckling with irrepressible amusement.

'Well, then you know there's the first editions of Rousseau—not a bit rare, as rare goes—lucky if you get thirty shillings for the "Contrat Social," or the "Nouvelle Héloïse," even good copies—'

Again the host's eyebrows lifted. The French names ran remarkably; there was not the least boggling over them. But he said nothing, and David rattled on, describing, with a gusto which never failed, one of Purcell's book-selling enormities after another. It was evident that he despised his master with a passionate contempt. It was evident also that Purcell had shown a mean and unreasoning jealousy of his assistant. The English tradesman inherits a domineering tradition towards his subordinates, and in Purcell's case, as we know, the instincts of an egotistical piety had reinforced those of the employer. Yet Mr. Ancrum felt some sympathy with Purcell.

'Well, Davy,' he said at last, 'so you were too 'cute for your man, that's plain. But I don't suppose he put it on that ground when he gave you the sack?'

And he looked up, with a little dry smile.

'No!' cried David, abruptly. 'No! not he. If you go and ask *him* he'll tell you he sent me off because I would go to the Secularist meetings at the Hall of Science, and air myself as an

atheist; that's his way of putting it. And it was doing him harm with his religious customers! As if I was going to let him dictate where I went on Sundays!

'Of course not,' said Ancrum, with a twist of his oddly shaped mouth. 'Even the very youngest of us might sometimes be the better for advice; but, hang it, let's be free—free to "make fools of ourselves," as a wise man hath it. Well, Davy, no offence,' for his guest had flushed suddenly. 'So you go to the Hall of Science? Did you hear Holyoake and Bradlaugh there the other night? You like that kind of thing?'

'I like to hear it,' said the lad, stoutly, meeting his old teacher's look, half nervously, half defiantly. 'It's a great deal more lively than what you hear at most churches, sir. And why shouldn't one hear everything?'

This was not precisely the tone which the same culprit had adopted towards Dora Lomax. The Voltairian suddenly felt himself to be making excuses—shabby excuses—in the presence of somebody connected, however distantly, with *l'infâme*. He drew himself up with an angry shake of his whole powerful frame.

'Oh, why not?' said Ancrum, with a shrug, 'if life's long enough'—and he absently lifted and let fall a book which lay on the table beside him; it was Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius'—'if life's long enough, and—happy enough! Well, so you've been learning French, I can hear. Teaching yourself?'

'No; there's an old Frenchman, old Barbier—do you know him, sir? He gives lessons at a shilling an hour. Very few people go to him now; they want younger men. And there's lot's of them about. But old Barbier knows more about books than any of them, I'll be bound.'

'Has he introduced you to French novels? I never read any; but they're bad, of course—must be. In all those things I'm a Britisher and believe what the Britishers say.'

'We're just at the end of "Manon Lescaut,"' said David, doggedly. 'And partly with him, partly by myself, I've read a bit of Rousseau—and a good lot of Diderot,—and Voltaire.'

David threw an emphasis into the last name, which was meant to atone to himself for the cowardice of a few minutes before. The old boyish feeling towards Mr. Ancrum, which had revived in him when he entered the room, had gradually disappeared again. He bore the minister no real grudge for having forgotten him, but he wished it to be clearly understood that the last fragments of the Christian Brethren yoke had dropped from his neck.

'Ah! don't know anything about them,' said Ancrum, slowly; 'but then, as you know, I'm a very ignorant person. Well, now, was it Voltaire took you to the secularists, or the secularists to Voltaire?'

David laughed, but did not give a reply immediately.

'Well, never mind,' said the minister. 'All Christians are

fools, of course—that's understood.—Is that all you have been learning these four years?

'I work at Latin every morning,' said David, very red, and on his dignity. 'I've begun Greek, and I go to the science classes, mathematics and chemistry, at the Mechanics' Institute.' Mr. Ancrum's face softened.

'Why, I'll be bound you have to go to work pretty early, Davy?'

'Seven o'clock, sir, I take the shutters down. But I get an hour and a half first, and three hours in the evening. This winter I've got through the "Æneid," and Horace's "Epistles" and "Ars Poetica." Do you remember, sir?—and the lad's voice grew sharp once more, tightening as it were under the pressure of eagerness and ambition from beneath—'do you remember that Scaliger read the "Iliad" in twenty days, and was a finished Greek scholar in two years? Why can't one do that now?'

'Why shouldn't you?' said Mr. Ancrum, looking up at him.

'Who helps you in your Greek?'

'No one; I get translations.'

'Well, now, look here, Davy. I'm an ignorant person, as I told you, but I learnt some Latin and Greek at Manchester New College. Come to me in the evenings, and I'll help you with your Greek, unless you've got beyond me. Where are you?'

The budding Scaliger reported himself. He had read the 'Anabasis,' some Herodotus, three plays of Euripides, and was now making some desperate efforts on Æschylus and Sophocles. Any Plato? David made a face. He had read two or three dialogues in English; didn't want to go on, didn't care about him. Ah! Ancrum supposed not.

'Twelve hours' shop,' said the minister reflecting, 'more or less,—two hours' work before shop,—three hours or so after shop; that's what you may call driving it hard. You couldn't do it, Richard Ancrum,' and he shook his head with a whimsical melancholy. 'But you were always a poor starveling. Youth that *is* youth's tough. Don't tell me, sir,' and he looked up sharply, 'that you don't amuse yourself. I wouldn't believe it. There never was a man built like you yet that didn't amuse himself.'

David smiled, but said nothing.

'Billiards?'

'No, sir.'

'Betting?'

'No, sir. They cost money.'

'Niggardly dog! Drink?—no, I'll answer that for myself.'

The minister dropped his catechism, and sat nursing his lame leg and thinking. Suddenly he broke out with, 'How many young women are you in love with, David?'

David showed his white teeth.

'I only know two, sir. One's my master's daughter—she's rather a pretty girl, I think—'

'That'll do. You're not in love with her. Who's the other?'

'The other's Mr. Lomax's daughter,—Lomax of the Parlour,

that queer restaurant, sir, in Market Place. She—well, I don't know how to describe her. She's not good-looking—at least, I don't think so,' he added dubiously. 'She's very High Church, and fasts all Lent. I think she does Church embroidery.'

'And doesn't think any the better of you for attending the Hall of Science? Sensible girl! Still, when people mean to fall in love, they don't think twice of that sort of thing. I make a note of Lomax's daughter. Ah! enter supper. David, if you let any 'ism stand between you and that veal pie, I despair of your future.'

David, however, in the course of the meal, showed himself as superior to narrowness of view in the matter of food-stuffs as in other matters. The meal went merrily. Mr. Ancrum dropped his half-sarcastic tone, and food, warmth, and talk loosened the lad's fibres, and made him more and more human, handsome, and attractive. Soon his old friend knew all that he wanted to know,—the sum David had saved—thirty pounds in the savings-bank—the sort of stock he meant to set up, the shop he had taken—with a stall, of course—no beginner need hope to prosper without a stall. Customers must be delicately angled for at a safe distance—show yourself too much, and, like trout, they flashed away. See everything, force nothing. Let a book be turned over for nineteen days, the chances were that on the twentieth you would turn over the price. As to expecting the class of cheap customers to commit themselves by walking into a shop, it was simple madness. Of course, when you were 'established,' that was another matter.

By the help of a certain wealthy Unitarian, one Mr. Doyle, with whom he had made friends in Purcell's shop, and whom he had boldly asked for the use of his name as a reference, the lad had taken—so it appeared—a small house in Potter Street, a narrow but frequented street in the neighbourhood of Deansgate and all the great banks and insurance offices in King Street. His shop took up the ground floor. The two floors above were let, and the tenants would remain. But into the attics and the parlour kitchen behind the shop, he meant, ultimately, when he could afford it, to put himself and his sister. He could only get the house on a yearly tenancy, as it and the others near it were old, and would probably be rebuilt before long. But meanwhile the rent was all the lower because of the insecurity of tenure.

At the mention of the boy's sister, Ancrum looked up with a start.

'Ah, to be sure! What became of that poor child after you left? The Clough End friends who wrote to me of your disappearance had more pity for her, Davy, than they had for you.'

A sudden repulsion and reserve darkened the black eyes opposite.

'There was no helping it,' he said with hasty defiance. There was a moment's silence. Then a wish to explain himself rose in David.

'I couldn't have stayed, sir,' he said, with a curious half-reproachful accent. 'I told you about how it was before you left. And there were other things. I should have cut my own throat or some one else's if it had gone on. But I haven't forgotten Louie. You remember Tom Mullins at the foundry. He's written me every month. I paid him for it. I know all about Louie, and they don't know anything about me. They think I'm in America.'

His eyes lit again with the joy of contrivance.

'Is that kind, Davy?'

'Yes, sir—' and for the first time the minister heard in the boy's voice the tone of a man's judgment. 'I couldn't have Louie on me just yet. I was going to ask you, sir, not to tell the people at Clough End you've seen me. It would make it very hard. You know what Louie is—and she's all right. She's learnt a trade.'

'What trade?'

'Silk-weaving—from Margaret Dawson.'

'Poor soul—poor saint! There'd be more things than her trade to be learnt from Margaret Dawson if anyone had a mind to learn them. What of 'Lias?'

'Oh, he died, sir, a week after I left.' The lad's voice dropped. Then he added slowly, looking away, 'Tom said he was very quiet—he didn't suffer much—not at the end.'

'Aye, the clouds lift at sunset,' said Mr. Ancrum in an altered tone; 'the air clears before the night!'

His head fell forward on his breast, and he sat drumming on the table. They had finished supper, the little, bustling landlady had cleared away, and Davy was thinking of going. Suddenly the minister sprang up and stood before the fire, looking down at his guest.

'Davy, do you want to know why I didn't write to you? I was ill first—very ill; then—I was in hell!'

David started. Into the thin, crooked face, with the seeking eyes, there had flashed an expression—sinister, indescribable, a sort of dumb rage. It changed the man altogether.

'I was in hell!' he repeated slowly. 'I know no more about it. Other people may tell you, perhaps, if you come across them—I can't. There were days at Clough End—always a certain number in the year—when this earth slipped away from me, and the fiends came about me, but this was months. They say I was overdone in the cotton famine years ago just before I came to Clough End. I got pneumonia after I left you that May—it doesn't matter. When I knew there was a sun again, I wrote to ask about you. You had left Kinder and gone—no one knew where.'

David sat nervously silent, not knowing what to say, his mind gradually filling with the sense of something tragic, irreparable. Mr. Ancrum, too, stood straight before him, as though turned to stone.

At last David got up and approached him. Had Ancrum been looking he must have been touched by the change in the lad's expression. The hard self-reliant force of the face had melted into feeling.

'Are you better now, sir? I knew you must have been ill,' he stammered.

Ancrum started as though just awakened.

'Ill? Yes, I was pretty bad,' he said briskly, and in his most ordinary tone, though with a long breath. 'But I'm as fit as anything now. Good night, Davy, good night. Come a walk with me some day? Sunday afternoon? Done. Here, write me your new address.'

The tall form and curly black head disappeared, the little lodging-house room, with its round rosewood table, its horsehair sofa, its chiffonnier, and its prints of 'Sport at Balmoral' and 'The Mother's Kiss,' had resumed the dingy formality of every day.

The minister sank into his seat and held his hands out over the blaze. He was in pain. All life was to him more or less a struggle with physical ill. But it was not so primarily that he conceived it. The physical ill was nothing except as representing a philosophical necessity.

That lad, with all his raw certainties—of himself, his knowledge, his Voltaire—the poor minister felt once or twice a piteous envy of him, as he sat on through the night hours. Life was ill-apportioned. The poor, the lonely, the feeble—it is they who want certainty, want hope most. And because they are lonely and feeble, because their brain tissues are diseased, and their life from no fault of their own unnatural, nature who has made them dooms them to despair and doubt. Is there any 'soul,' any 'personality' for the man who is afflicted and weakened with intermittent melancholia? Where is his identity, where his responsibility? And if there is none for him, how does the accident of health bestow them on his neighbour?

Questions of this sort had beset Richard Ancrum for years. On the little book-table to his right lay papers of Huxley's, of Clifford's, and several worn volumes of mental pathology. The brooding intellect was for ever raising the same problem, the same spectre world of universal doubt, in which God, conscience, faith, were words without a meaning.

But side by side with the restlessness of the intellect there had always gone the imperious and prevailing claim of temperament. Beside Huxley and Clifford, lay Newman's 'Sermons' and 'Apologia,' and a little High Church manual of self-examination. And on the wall above the book-table hung a memorandum-slate on which were a number of addresses and dates—the addresses of some forty boys whom the minister taught on Sunday in one of the Unitarian Sunday schools of Manchester, and visited in the week. The care and training of street arabs had been his

passion when he was still a student at Manchester New College. Then had come his moment of utterance—a thirst for preaching, for religious influence; though he could not bring himself to accept any particular shibboleth or take any kind of orders. He found something congenial for a time to a deep though struggling faith in the leadership of the Christian Brethren. Now, however, something had broken in him; he could preach no more. But he could go back to his old school; he could teach his boys on Sundays and week days; he could take them out country walks in spite of his lame limb; he could deny himself even the commonest necessities of life for their sake; he could watch over each of them with a fervour, a moral intensity which wore him out. In this, in some insignificant journalism for a religious paper, and in thinking, he spent his life.

There had been a dark page in his history. He had hardly left Manchester New College when he married suddenly a girl of some beauty, but with an undeveloped sensuous temperament. They were to live on a crust and give themselves to the service of man. His own dream was still fresh when she deserted him in the company of one of his oldest friends. He followed them, found them both in black depths of remorse, and took her back. But the strain of living together proved too much. She implored him to let her go and earn her living apart. She had been a teacher, and she proposed to return to her profession. He saw her established in Glasgow in the house of some good people who knew her history, and who got her a post in a small school. Then he returned to Manchester and threw himself with reckless ardour into the work of feeding the hungry, and nursing the dying, in the cotton famine. He emerged a broken man, physically and morally, liable thenceforward to recurrent crises of melancholia; but they were not frequent or severe enough to prevent his working. He was at the time entirely preoccupied with certain religious questions, and thankfully accepted the call to the little congregation at Clough End.

Since then he had visited his wife twice every year. He was extremely poor. His family, who had destined him for the Presbyterian ministry, were estranged from him; hardly anyone in Manchester knew him intimately; only in one house, far away in the Scotch lowlands, were there two people, who deeply loved and thoroughly understood him. There he went when his dark hours came upon him; and thence, after the terrible illness which overtook him on his leaving Clough End, he emerged again, shattered but indomitable, to take up the battle of life as he understood it.

He was not an able nor a literary man. His mind was a strange medley, and his mental sight far from clear. Of late the study of Newman had been a revelation to him. But he did not cease for that to read the books of scientific psychology which tortured him—the books which seemed to make of mind a function of matter, and man the slave of an immoral nature.

The only persistent and original gift in him—yet after all it is the gift which for ever divides the sheep from the goats—was that of a 'hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

CHAPTER IV

It was towards noon on a November day, and Dora Lomax sat working at her embroidery frame in the little sitting-room overlooking Market Place. The pale wintry sun touched her bent head, her deftly moving hand, and that device of the risen Christ circled in golden flame on which she was at work. The room in which she sat was old and low; the ceiling bulged here and there, the floor had unexpected slopes and declivities. The furniture was of the cheapest, the commonest odds and ends of a broker's shop, for the most part. There was the usual horsehair suite, the usual cheap sideboard, and dingy drugging of a large geometrical pattern. But amid these uninviting articles there were a few things which gave the room individuality—some old prints of places abroad, of different shapes and sizes, which partly disguised the blue and chocolate paper on the walls; some bits of foreign carving, Swiss and Italian; some eggs and shells and stuffed birds, some of these last from the Vosges, some from the Alps; a cageful of canaries, singing their best against the noise of Manchester; and, lastly, an old bookcase full of miscellaneous volumes, mostly large and worthless 'sets' of old magazines and encyclopædias, which represented the relics of Daddy's bookselling days.

The room smelt strongly of cooking, a mingled odour of boiling greens and frying onions and stored apples which never deserted it, and produced a constant slight sense of nausea in Dora, who, like most persons of sedentary occupation, was in matters of eating and digestion somewhat sensitive and delicate. From below, too, there seemed to spread upwards a general sense of bustle and disquiet. Doors banged, knives and plates rattled perpetually, the great swing-door into the street was for ever opening and shutting, each time shaking the old, frail house with its roughly built additions through and through, and there was a distant skurry of voices that never paused. The restaurant indeed was in full work, and Daddy's voice could be heard at intervals, shouting and chattering. Dora had been at work since half-past seven, marketing, giving orders, making up accounts, writing bills of fare, and otherwise organising the work of the day. Now she had left the work for an hour or two to her father and the stout Lancashire cook with her various handmaidens. Daddy's irritable pride liked to get her out of the way and make a lady of her as much as she would allow, and in her secret heart she often felt that her embroidery, for which she was well paid as a skilled and inventive hand, furnished a securer basis for their lives than this restaurant, which, in spite of its apparent success,