```
ristian name was Gabriel, and on working days he was a young man of sound judgment, easy motions, proper dress, and g
                                                                                                                                                                                   eneral good character. On Sundays he was a man of misty vi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ews, rather given to p
poning, and hampered by his best clothes and umbrella: upon the whole, one who felt himself to occupy morally that vast
                                                                                                                                                                            middle space of Laodicean neutrality which lay between the Comm
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      union people of the pa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             rish
and the drunken section,--that is, he went to church, but yawned privately by the time the congregation reached the Nic
                                                                                                                                                            ne creed, and thought of what there would be for dinner when he meant to be list
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ening to the sermon. O
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           r, to
state his character as it stood i _n the scale of public opinion, when his friends and critics were in tantrums, he was c
                                                                                                                                              onsidered rather a bad man; when they were pleased, he was rather a good man; when they
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      were neither, he was a m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           an wh
                                      pepper-and-salt mixture. Since he lived six times as many working-days as Su
                                                                                                                                              ndays, Oak's appearance in his old clothes was most peculiarly his own--the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    mental picture formed by
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     his neighb
                                          ways dressed in that way. He wore a low-crowned felt hat, spread out at t
                                                                                                                                             he base by tight jamming upon the head for security in high winds, and a coal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 er extremities b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   like Dr. Johnson's: his low
eing encased in ordinary leat
                                               her leggings and boots emphatically large, affording to each foot
                                                                                                                                             a roomy apartment so constructed that any wearer might stand in a river all d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ay long and know nothing of d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               amp--their maker
                                                     who endeavoured to compensate for any weakness in his
                                                                                                                                            cut by unstinted dimension and solidity. Mr. Oak carried about him, by way o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   f watch, what may be called a small sil
being a conscientious man
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ver clock: in othe
                                                          o shape and intention, and a small clock as to si
                                                                                                                                          ze. This instrument being several years older than Oak's grandfather, had the
r words, it was a watch as t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   peculiarity of going either too fast or
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            not at all. The small
                                                                    ionally slipped round on the pivot,
                                                                                                                                         and thus, though the minutes were told with precision, nobody could be quit
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  e certain of the hour they belonge
er of its hands, too, occas
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    d to. The stopping pecu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  defects by constant
                                                                               emedied by thu
                                                                                                                                       mps and shakes, and he escaped any evil consequences from the other two
liarity of his watch Oak r
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  comparisons with and
                                                                                                                                     n and stars, and by pressing his face close to the glass of his neighbours'
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 windows, till he coul
observations of the su
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 d discern the hour marked
                                                                                                                                   mekeepers within. It may be mentioned that Oak's fob
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   reason of its somewhat high
by the green-faced
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 fficult of access, by
                                                                                                                                d of his trousers (which also lay at a remote height under h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     watch was as a necessity p
                                aistban
                                                                                                                                                                                                                               is waistcoat), the
                                                                                                                            dy to one side, compressing the mouth and face to a mere mass
ulled out by t
                              hrowing the bo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                             of ruddy flesh on acc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ount of the e
                                                                                                                        the watch by its chain, like a bucket from a well. But some thoughtful pe
ertion req
                            uired, and drawing up
                          ng across one of his fields on a c
                                                                                                                  ertain December morning--sunny and exceedingly mild--might have regarded Gabri
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        el Oak in other aspects than the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        se. In hi
                                                                                                         and curves of youth had tarried on to manhood: there even remained in his remoter crannies some relics of the boy. His height and breadt
                        s face one might notice that many of the hues
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              h would have bee
                     n sufficient to make his presence imposing, had they been exhibited with due consideration. But there is a way some men have, rural and urba n alike, for which the mind is more responsible than flesh and sinew: it is a w
                 ay of curtailing their dimensions by their manner of showing them. And from a quiet modesty that would have become a vestal, which seemed c ontinually to impress upon him that he had no great claim on the world's room
               Oak walked unassumingly and with a faintly perceptible bend, yet distinct from a bowing of the shoulders. This may be said to be a defect in an in dividual if he depends for his valuation more upon his appearance than upon h
          is capacity to wear well, which Oak did not. He had just reached the time of life at which "young" is ceasing to be the prefix of "man" in speaking of on e. He was at the brightest period of masculine growth, for his intellect and his e
   motions were clearly separated: he had passed the time during which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, an
                                                                                                                                                                        d he had not yet arrived at the stage wherein they become united again, in the
character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor. The field he was in this morning sloped to a ridge c
                                                                                                                                                                       alled Norcombe Hill. Through a spur of this hill ran the highway between Emm
inster and Chalk-Newton. Casually glancing over the hedge, Oak saw coming down the incline before him an ornamental spring waggon, painted yellow and
                                                                                                                                                                       gaily marked, drawn by two horses, a waggoner walking alongside bearing a
                                                                                                                                                                       Gabriel had not beheld the sight for more than half a minute, when the vehi
whip perpendicularly. The waggon was laden with household goods and window plants, and on the apex of the whole sat a woman, young and attractive.
cle was brought to a standstill just beneath his eyes. "The tailboard of the waggon is gone, Miss," said the waggoner. "Then I heard it fall," said the girl, ount for when we were coming up the hill." "I'll run back." "Do," she answered. The sensible horses stood--perfectly still, and the waggoner's steps
                                                                                                                                                                    in a soft, though not particularly low voice. "I heard a noise I could not acc
                                                                                                                                                                    sank fainter and fainter in the distance. The girl on the summit of the lo
ad sat motionless, surrounded by tables and chairs with t
                                                                  heir legs upwards, backed by an oak settle, and ornamented in front by pots of ger
                                                                                                                                                                aniums, myrtles, and cactuses, together with a caged canary--all prob
                                                                       was also a cat in a willow basket, from the partly-opened lid of which she
                                                                                                                                                              gazed with half-closed eyes, and affectionately surveyed the small
ably from the windows of the house just vacated. There
birds around. The handsome girl waited for some time
                                                                             idly in her place, and the only sound heard in the stillness was th
                                                                                                                                                            e hopping of the canary up and down the perches of its priso
n. Then she looked attentively downwards. It was no
                                                                                  t at the bird, nor at the cat; it was at an oblong packag
                                                                                                                                                          e tied in paper, and lying between them. She turned
her head to learn if the waggoner were coming. He
                                                                                          was not yet in sight; and her eyes crept
                                                                                                                                                       back to the package, her thoughts see
ming to run upon what was inside it. At length sh
                                                               e d
                                                                                                   rew the article into he
                                                                                                                                                    lap, and untied the paper coveri
       small swing looking-glass was disclos
                                                             ed, in which
                                                                                                                                               she proceeded to survey herse
              tively. She parted her lips and s
                                                           miled. It was a fine mor
                                                                                                                                       ning, and the sun lighted up to a
crimson
                      acket she wore, and p
                                                         ainted a soft lustre upon her bright
                                                                                                                                                                                           iums, and cactus
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         es packe
                                                       were fresh and green, and at such a leafless season they invested the whole concern of horses, waggo
d around he
                                                                                                                                                                                    n, furniture, and g
                                                 harm. What possessed her to indulge in such a performance in the sight of the sparrows, blackbirds, and
peculiar vernal c
                                                                                                                                                                                 unperceived far
were alone its spect
                                            ators,--whether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art,--nobody knows; it ended
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   al smile. She blushed at herself, and seeing her reflection blus
                                                                                                                                                                            certainly in a re
h, blushed the more. The change from the customary spot and necessary occasion of such an act--from the dressing hour in a bedroom to a time
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  of doors--lent to the idle deed a novelty it did not intrinsically posse
                                                                                                                                                                        of travelling out
ss. The picture was a delicate one. Woman's prescriptive infirmity had stalked into the sunlight, which had clothed it in the freshness of an ori
                                                                                                                                                                       nality. A cynica
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 I inference was irresistible by Gabriel Oak as he regarded the scene, g
                                                                                                                                                                 pat her hair, or pr
  enerous though he fain would have been. There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass. She did not adjust her hat, or
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ess a dimple into shape, or do one thing to signify that any such intentio
      n had been her motive in taking up the glass. She simply observed
                                                                                                                                                              e feminine kind, he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               r thoughts seeming to glide into far-off though likely dramas in which men
                                                                                                herself as a fair product of Nature in th
          would play a part--vistas of probable triumphs--the smi
                                                                                                                                                           ing of a phase sugg
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              esting that hearts were imagined as lost and won. Still, this was but conjectu
              re, and the whole series of actions was so idly
                                                                                                                                                       put forth as to make it
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              rash to assert that intention had any part in them at all. The waggoner's steps
                     were heard returning. She put the
                                                                                                                                                   glass in the paper, and th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            e whole again into its place. When the waggon had passed on, Gabriel withdrew
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          into the road, followed the vehicle to the turnpike-gate some way beyond the botto
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ed for the payment of toll. About twenty steps still remained between him and the g
                                                            when he heard a dispute. It was a difference concerning twopence between the persons with the waggon
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         and the man at the toll-bar. "Mis'ess's niece is upon the top of the things, and she sa
ate,
                                                      enough that I've offered ye, you great miser, and she won't pay any more." These were the waggoner's words
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          Very well; then mis'ess's niece can't pass," said the turnpike-keeper, closing the ga
ys that's
te. Oak looked
                                                 from one to the other of the disputants, and fell into a reverie. There was something in the tone of two pence remains
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ably insignificant. Threepence had a definite value as money--it was an appreciable inf
                                       wages, and, as such, a higgling matter; but twopence--"Here," he said, stepping forward and handing twopence to the g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        young woman pass." He looked up at her then; she heard his words,
                                                                                                                                                                                atek
and looked down. Gabriel's features adhered throughout their form so exactly to the middle line between the beauty of St. John and the unliness of Judas
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ot, as represente d in a window of the church he attended, that not a single lineament of
                                                                                                                                                                              scari
ould be selected and called worthy either of distinction or notoriety. The red-jacketed and dark-haired maiden seemed to think so too, for she carelessly
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  d over him, a nd to Id her man to drive on. She might have looked her thanks to Gabriel o
                                                                                                                                                                            glance
n a minute scale, but she did not speak them; more probably she felt none, for in gaining her a passage he had lost her her point, and we know how ome maid," he said to Oak. "But she has her faults," said Gabriel. "True, farmer." "And the greatest of them is--well, what it is always." "Beating
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                take a favour of that kind. The gatekeeper surveyed the retreating vehicle. "That's a hands down? ay, 'tis so." "O no." "What, then?" Gabriel, perhaps a little piqued by the comely trave
                                                                                                                                                                          women
                                                                                                                                                                         people
ller's indifference, glanced back to where he had witnessed her perform
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     CHAPTER II NIGHT--THE FLOCK--AN INTERIOR--ANOTHER INTERIOR It was nearly mid
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           from the north over the hill whereo
night on the eve of St. Thomas's, the shortest day in the year. A
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    n Oak had wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ng wind wandered
yellow waggon and its occupant in the sunshine of a few
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           from lonely Toller
                                                                                                                                                                    days earl
    ch suggest to a passer-by that he is in the pres
                                                                                          ence of a sha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    a featureless
                                                                                                                                                                pe approac
                                                                                                                                                                                                                hing the indestructible as ne
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                arly a s any to be found o n e arth. It was
                                                                                                                                                                                                              he globe which may remain un d istu rb ed on some great day of confusion, when far grander heights and
         chalk and soil--an ordinary specimen
                                                                                 of those smoothly-outlined prot
                                                                                                                                                            uberances of t
                                                                           down. The hill was covered on its northern side b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          upper verge form ed a line over the crest, fringing its arched curv
dizzy
                  granite precipices topple
                                                                                                                                                                                                            caying plantation of beeches, w ho se
                       he sky, like a m
                                                                                     -night these trees sheltered the southern slope from the keenest blasts, whic
                                                                                                                                                                                                          h smote the wood and floundered thr oug hit with a sound a s of grumbling, or gushed over its crowning bo
      e against t
                                                                                                  ned moan. The dry leaves in the ditch simmered and boile
                                                                                                                                                                                                               d in the same breezes, a tong ue of air occasionally ferreting out a few, and sending them spinning acros
       ughs in a weake
                                                                                                           roup or two of the latest in date amongst th
              grass. A g
                                                                                                                                                                                                               e dead multitude had remain ed till t his very mid-winter time on the twigs which bore them and in falling
rattled a
                                                                                                                     ainst the trunks with s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              half-wooded half-naked hill, and the vague still horizon that its summit indist
                                                                                                                                                                                                               as a m ysterious sheet of fat homless shade--the sounds from which suggested that what it concealed bore
                                                                                                                                                                                                        resemblan ce to features here. The thin grasses, more or less coating the hill, were touched by the wind in breezes
                            some reduc ed
           of differi
                                                                                                                                                                                                              iffering natures--one rubbing the blades heavily, another raking them piercingly, another brushing them like
                               ng power s, and alm
a soft b
          room. The ins
                                                                                                                                                                                            of hu mankin d was to stand and listen, and learn how the trees on the right and the trees on the left wailed or chaunted to e
ach other in
                                                        r antipho
                                                                                                                                                                                                             choir; how hedges and other shapes to leeward then caught the note, lowering it to the tenderest sob; and he
                  the regu
                                                                                                                                                                                                      be heard no more. The sky was clear--remarkably clear--and the twinkling of all the stars seemed to be but throbs of
w the hurrying g
                               ust then plu
                                                          nged into t
                                                                                                                                                                                            was directly in the wind's eye, and since evening the Bear had swung round it outwardly to the east, till he was now at a right
   one bo
                                dy, timed by a c
                                                              ommo
                                                                       n pul
                                                                                                                                                                                   --of tener read of than seen in England--was really perceptible here. The sovereign brilliancy of Sirius pierced the eye with a steely gl
                angle with the m
                                   eridian. A dif
                                                                       ference of co
                                                                                                                                                                                 and Betelgueux shone with a fiery red. To persons standing alone on a hill during a clear midnight such as this, the roll of the world east
                   tter, the star c
                                                     alled Capella
                                                                               was vel
ward
                                    Imost a p
                                                       alpable mov
                                                                                                                                                                       sen sation may be caused by the panoramic glide of the stars past earthly objects, which is perceptible in a few minutes of stillness, or by the bett
                                                                       at a hill aff
                                                                                                                                                                      the solitude; but whatever be its origin, the impression of riding along is vivid and abiding. The poetry of motion is a phrase much in use, and to en
er out
                                  look upon spa
                                                                                         ords, or b
                                                               ce th
                                                                                                                                                              stand on a hill at a small hour of the night, and, having first expanded with a sense of difference from the mass of civilised mankind, who are dreamwrapt a
oy the epi
                                      c form of th
                                                                           at gratific
                                                                                            ation it is ne
                                                                                                                                               ong a nd quietly watch your stately progress through the stars. After such a nocturnal reconnoitre it is hard to get back to earth, and to believe that the consciousness o
                                                          ful of all
                                                                                such
                                                                                                proceedin
 n
                                                                                                                                                m a tiny human frame. Suddenly an unexpected series of sounds began to be heard in this place up against the sky. They had a clearness which was to be found nowhe
         s uch
                                                          majestic spe
                                                                                                      is d
                                                                                                             erived
re in the win
                                                               d. and a se
                                                                                                 hich w
                                                                                                              as to be f
                                                                                                                                     und nowhere in nature. They were the notes of Farmer Oak's flute. The tune was not floating unhindered into the open air: it seemed muffled in some way, and was altogether too common the common of the open air: it seemed muffled in some way, and was altogether too common of the open air.
                                                                                    quence w
                                                                                                                                         m the direction of a small dark object under the plantation hedge--a shepherd's hut--now presenting an outline to which an uninitiated person might have been puzzled to attac
urta il ed in po
                                                                            er to spr
                                                                                                   high or w
                                                                                                                  ide. It c ame fro
                                                                            g or use. The
h eit
        her mean
                                                                                                                                                 was that of a small Noah's Ark on a small Ararat, allowing the traditionary outlines and general form of the Ark which are followed by toy-makers--and by these means a
re est ab li she di
                                                                               men's imagin
                                                                                                                                                       t, because earliest impressions--to pass as an approximate pattern. The hut stood on little wheels, which raised its floor about a foot from the ground. Such shep
                                                                                                 ations among the
                                                                                                                                                             son comes on, to shelter the shepherd in his enforced nightly attendance. It was only latterly that people had begun to call Gabriel "Farmer" Oak. During the of industry and chronic good spirits to lease the small sheep-farm of which Norcombe Hill was a portion, and stock it with two hundred sheep. Previo
                                                                                             ged into the fields whe
herds' hu ts ar e
                                                                                          this time he had been enabled b
  twelv emonth preceding
                                                                                                                               y sustained
                                                                                                                                               effort
usly he had been a ba iliff fo
                                                                                                                                                                         ildhood assisted his father in tending the flocks of large proprietors, till old Gabriel sank to rest. This venture, unaided and alone, into the paths
                                                                             short time, and earlier still a shepherd only,
                                                                                                                                                          itical junctur
                                                                                                                                                                              e with Gabriel Oak, and he recognised his position clearly. The first movement in his new progress was the lambing of his ewes, and sheep
of farming as
                ma ste ran
                                                                        ot as man, with an advance of sheep not yet pai
                                                                                                                                               as a cr
                                   f rom his
                                                                       youth, he wisely refrained from deputing the task
                                                                                                                                                                                          a hireling or a novice. The wind continued to beat about the corners of the hut, but the flute-playing ceased. A rectangular space
having be en his speciality
                                                                                                                                    ling them
                                                                                                                                               at this se
                                                                                                                                                            ason to
                                                                      ut, and in the opening the outline of Farmer Oak's fig
                                                                                                                                                                                             hand, and closing the door behind him, came forward and busied himself about this nook of the field for nearly twenty minute
of light a ppe ar ed in the side of the h
                                                                                                                                ure. He carri
                                                                                                                                                 ed a lanter
                                                                                                                                                                           n in his
                                                                                                                                                                                                  him as he stood before or behind it. Oak's motions, though they had a quiet-energy, were slow, and their deliberateness ns in and about the flock had elements of grace. Yet, although if occasion demanded he could do or think a thing w
                      el ant er nligh
                                                                      t appearing and disappearing here and there, and brig
                                                                                                                                    hteni
                                                                                                                                                      ng hi
                                                                                                                                                                            r darkening
                                                                                                                                           nied th
                                                                      ation. Fitness being the basis of beauty, nobody could have de
                                                                                                                                                                             swings and tu
                        ell with hi s occup
                                                                                                                                                            at his steady
                                                                      he men of towns who are more to the manner born, his specia
                                                                                                                                                 I power, morally, physic
                                                                                                                                                                                                               ally, was static, owing little or nothing to momentum as a rule. A close examination of the ground hereabout
       ith as mercurial a dash as can t
       even by the wan star light only, r
                                                                       evealed how a portion of what would have been casually called a wild slope had been appropr iate
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ak for his great purpose this winter. Detached hurdles thatched with straw were stuck into the ground at
                                                                                                                                                                                                 Farmer O
                                                                       nder which the whitish forms of his meek ewes moved and rustled. The ring of the sheep-bel I, whi chihad been s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ng his absence, recommenced, in tones that had more mellowness than clearness, owing to an incre
      various scattered point s, ami d an d u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                            orn lamb, consisting of four legs large enough for a full-grown sheep, united by a seemingly inc
      asi ng grow
                        th of surroun ding wo
                                                                        ol. This continued till Oak withdrew again from the flock. He returned to the hut, bringing in
                                                                                                                                                                                   his arms a ne
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           The little speck of life he placed on a wisp of hav before the small stove, where a can of mil
                                                                       rane about half the substance of the legs collectively, which constituted the animal's entire
                         ide rable
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   dle suspen
                                                                     ering. Oak extinguished the lantern by blowing into it and then pinching the snuff, the cot be
                                                                                                                                                                         ing lighted
                                                                                                                                                                                                   by
                                                                                                                                                                                                         a can
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ded by a twisted wire. A rather hard couch, formed of a few corn sacks thrown care
                                                               ssly down, covered half the floor of this little habitation, and here the young man stretched hims
                                                                                                                                                                             elf alon g, loose
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               vat, and closed his eyes. In about the time a person unaccustomed to bodily la
                                                                                                                                                                                                                is woollen cra
                                                       ur would have decided upon which side to lie, Farmer Oak was asleep. The inside of the hut, as it now
                                                                                                                                                                                       present
    bo
                                                                                                                                                                                                              ed itself. was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                and alluring, and the scarlet handful of fire in addition to the candle, reflectin
                                                genial colour upon whatever it could reach, flung associations of enjoyment even over utensils and tools.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                             the shee p-
 gi ts own
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        crook, and along a shelf at one side were ranged bottles and canister
                                         preparations pertaining to ovine surgery and physic; spirits of wine, turpentine, tar, magnesia, ginger, and cast
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           r shelf across the corner stood bread, bacon, cheese, and a cup fo
s of the simple
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          chief. On a t
                                   which was supplied from a flagon beneath. Beside the provisions lay the flute, whose notes had lately been called
                                                                                                                                                                                             forth by the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               edious hour. The house was ventilated by two round holes, like
  r ale or ci der
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        lonely watch er to beguile a t
th
                                 ts of a ship's cabin, with wood slides. The lamb, revived by the warmth began to bleat, and the sound entered Gab
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       th an instant
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ing, as expected sounds will. Passing from the profound
             el igh
                                                                                                                                                                                                              brain
                                                                                                                                                                                          ars and
                                ost alert wakefulness with the same ease that had accompanied the reverse operation, he looked at his watch, 1
   st s leep
                                                                                                                                                                                                     that the hour-
              to t he m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       again, put o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         n his hat, took the lamb in his arms, and carried it int
                                                                                                                                                                               ound
 o the darkne ss. Af ter pl
                                    acing the little creature with its mother, he stood and carefully examined the sky, to ascertain the time o
                                                                                                                                                                                              f night from the altitu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       des of the st
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ars. The Dog-star
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 and Aldebaran, pointing to the restless Pleiad
                                        e Southern sky, and between them hung Orion, which gorgeous constellation never burnt more
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ape. Castor and Pollux with their quiet s
     were half
                    -way up th
                                                                                                                                                                         vividly than no
                                                                                                                                                                                             w. as it soared forth
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     above the ri
    ne were a
                                              the meridian: the barren and gloomy Square of Pegasus was creeping round to the nort
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         he pl
                  mos
                                on
                                                                                                                                                                      h-west; far away th
                                                                                                                                                                                                      rough t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            antation Veg
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        a spark
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             led like a lamp suspended amid th
  e le afless tr
                                                  assiopeia's chair stood daintily poised on the uppermost boughs. "One o'clock," said G
                               and C
                                                                                                                                                                    abriel. Being a ma
                                                                                                                                                                                         n not witho
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   quent co nsciousness t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         hat
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                as some charm in this life he le
                                                        oking at the sky as a useful instrument, and regarded it in an appreciative spirit, as
                                                                                                                                                                                         superlatively be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      speaking loneliness of the
  d. he stood sti
                                 r lo
                                                                                                                                                                                  art
                                                                                                                                                                                                              autiful. F
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  or a mome
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   nt he see
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               med impres
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                sed with the
  scene, or rathe
                                th ec
                                                                   omplete abstraction from all its compass of the sights and sounds of m
                                                                                                                                                                                      shapes, interf
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               oubles, and io
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ys were all as if
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             they were not, and
                                                                                                                                                         n. Huma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ces. t
 ere see me d t
                                                                        ded hemisphere of the globe no sentient being save himself; he co
                                                                                                                                                 uld fa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 etched afar. Oa
                                                                                                                                                                the mall gone r
                                                                                                                                                                                      ound to
                                                                                                                                                                                                     the s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                unny si
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 de. Occupied
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   thus, with eyes str
                  pe rceived that w hat
                                                                       he had previously taken to be a star low down behind the outskirts of the pla
                                                                                                                                                               ntation was in rea
  grad uall y
                                                                                                                                                                                               lity no s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   uch th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    n artificial
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ing.
                                                                             emselves utterly alone at night where company is desirable a nd expect
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            se more trvi
 ght, al most cl
                  ose at h and. To
                                                                                                                                                             ed makes some
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            arful: but
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          y far t
                                                                                                                                                                                            people
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ng b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ility, inducti
o the ne rves is
                                                                             me mysterious companionship when intuition, sensation, me
                                                                                                                                                              nalogy
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       mony, probab
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               on--every k
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ind of evidence
e log ician's list--
                     have uni
                                                                         persuade consciousness that it is quite in isolation. Farmer Oa
                                                                                                                                                                              ent towar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ds the plantatio
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  n and pu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 shed through
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      its lower bo
                                                                                         e reminded him that a shed oc cupied a p lace
                                                                                                                                                                           e site being
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     a cutting into the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      slope of the
    dy side. A d
                                  ss under
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      so that a
                                  of was aln
its
    back part t
                            ro
                                                                       ost
                                                                                              level with the ground. In front
                                                                                                                                      it was
                                                                                                                                                formed of b
                                                                                                                                                                        oard nailed
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      to posts a nd cover
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    eservative
                                                                                              of and side spread streaks and
                                                                                                                                 dots of
    hroug h c
                                   vice s in the
                                                                       ro
                                                                                                                                            light, a com
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ich made the radian
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ce that had
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          attracted him. Oak
                                                                                         leaning down upon the roof and putti
                                   hind, w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     e, he could see into the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ior clearly. The place conta
   epp e
            d u
   ed tw
                                                                                 ows. By the side of the latter a steaming bran-mash stood in a bucket. One of the w
                                                                                                                                                                                                    omen was past middle age. Her compan
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ion was apparently young and grad
                                   n a
   ful: h
                         oul
                                                                     no decided opinion upon her looks, her position being almost beneath his eye, so that he s
                                                                                                                                                                                              aw her in a bird's-eye view, as Milton's
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        Satan first saw Paradise. She wore no
                                                                                               ge cloak, which was carelessly flung over her head as a coveri
   bonn
                  hat.
                                                                  loped herself in a lar
                                                                                                                                                                                            ng. "There, now we'll go ho me," said th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     e elder of the two, resting her knuckles up
                                                               ings-on as a whole.
                                                                                                  do hope Daisy will fetch round again now. I have never been
on
           r hips, and looking at their go
                                                                                                                                                                                            more frightened in my life, but I don't mi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   nd breaking my rest if she recovers." The
                                                                                                  clined to fall together on the smallest provocation of silence, y
                                                                                                                                                                                            ned without parting her lips to a ny incon
oung woman, whose eyelids were appar
                                                           ently in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   venient extent, whereupon Gabriel caught th
e infection and slightly yawned in symp
                                                         athy.
                                                                                                 "I wish we were rich enough to pay a man to do these things," sh
                                                                                                                                                                                         e said. "As we are not, we must do them ours
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  elves," said the other; "for you must help me
if you stay." "Well, my hat is gone, how
                                                                                             inu ed the younger. "It went over the hedge, I think. The idea of such
                                                                                                                                                                                     a s light wind catching it." The cow standing erect w
                                                      ever,
                                                                         cont
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 as of the Devon breed, and was encased in a
                                                                       y unif
a l
tight warm hide of rich Indian red, as ab
                                                                                                   orm from eyes to tail as if the animal had been dipped in a dye of the
                                                    solutel
                                                                                                                                                                                                              colour, her long back bei
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ng mathematically level. The other was spotte
                                                                                                  ittle calf about a day old, looking idiotically at the two women, which
d, grey and white. Beside her Oak n o w
                                                 noticed
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 owed that it had not long been accustomed to
                                                                                                n turning to the lantern, which it apparently mistook for the moon, inheri
the phenomenon of eye
                                              t. and ofte
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ted instinct having as yet had little time for co
                             n by exper
                                            ience. Betw
                                                                                             een the sheep and the cows Lucina had been busy on Norcombe Hill lately.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 I think we had better send for some oatmeal
                                                                                           elder woman; "there's no more bran." "Yes, aunt; and I'll ride over for it as soon
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 s it is light." "But there's no side-sadd
                                          said the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                serve her features, but this pros
                                                                                          the other: trust me." Oak, upon hearing these remarks, became more curious to ob-
                                       can ride
                                                                                       m by the hooding effect of the cloak, and by his aerial position, he felt himself drawin
                                   being de
                                                       nied hi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                upon his fancy for their detail
                               making eve
                                                                                       zontal and clear inspections we colour and mould according to the wants within us whate
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ver our eyes bring in. Had G
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         abriel
                                                    n h ori
                             been able from the f
                                                                                      t to get a distinct view of her countenance, his estimate of it as very handsome or slightly so
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        would have been as
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    his sou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         requ
                                                                                    s ready supplied with one. Having for some time known the want of a satisfactory form to fill an
                        ired a divinity at the moment or wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          increasing void within
                                                                               s t scope for his fancy, he painted her a beauty. By one of those whimsical coincidences in which Na
                     position moreover affording the wid
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ike a busy mother, se ems to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        spare a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              w waggon, myrtl
                                                                            nd make her children smile, the girl now dropped the cloak, and forth tumbled ropes of black hair over a r
               moment from her unremitting labours to t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     t. Oak knew
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             s the heroine of th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    e yello
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ore th an a nebula. G
                                                                                     who owed him twopence. They placed the calf beside its mother again, took up the lantern, and we
           es, and looking-glass: prosily, as the woman
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      out, the light sinking down the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              it was n o m
       abriel Oak returned to his flock. CHAPTER III
                                                                                      A GIRL ON HORSEBACK--CONVERSATION The sluggish day began to break. Even its position terre
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      trially is one of the elements of a new
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              interest, an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    d for no p
                                                                                           night had occurred there Oak went again into the plantation. Lingering and musing here, he hea
      articular reason save that the incident of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       d the steps of a horse at the foot of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               hill, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              SO
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  on th
                                                                                            a girl on its back, ascending by the path leading past the cattle-shed. She was the young woman
      ere appeared in view an auburn pony with
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          of the night before. Gabriel inst
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               tly thou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ght of the ha
                                                                                                 wind; possibly she had come to look for it. He hastily scanned the ditch and after walking ab
      t she had mentioned as having lost in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         out ten yards al
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ong it found th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           e ha
   ong the leaves. Gabriel took it in his hand a
                                                                                                   nd returned to his hut. Here he ensconced himself, and peeped through the loophole in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               rider's approa
ch. She came up and looked around--then on t
                                                                                                     he other side of the hedge. Gabriel was about to advance and restore the missing article wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     en an unexpected p erformance induced
                                                                                                        e path, after passing the cowshed, bisected the plantation. It was not a bridle-path--merely
him to suspend the action for the present. Th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    a pedestrian's track, and the boughs sprea
                                                                                                          ven feet above the ground, which made it impossible to ride erect beneath them. The girl,
d horizontally at a height not greater than se
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  who wore no riding-habit, looked around for a m
                                                                                                              nity was out of view, then dexterously dropped backwards flat upon the pony's back, h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                er head over its tail, her feet against its shoulders.
         as if to assure herself that all huma
                                                                                                                    into this position was that of a kingfisher--its noiselessness that of a hawk. Gab
          her eyes to the sky. The rapidity of her glide
                                                                                                                                                                                                                riel's ey es had scarcely been able to follow her. T
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          the level boughs. The
     e tall lank pony seemed used
                                                                                                                                       to such doings, and ambled along unconcerned. Thus she passe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  performer seemed quit
  e at home anywhere between
                                                                                                                                             a horse's head and its tail, and the necessity for this abno
                                                                                                                                                                                                                rmal attitude having ceased with the passage of the plan
n, she began to adopt another
                                                                                                                                                , even more obviously convenient than the first. She h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ad no side-saddle, and it was very apparent thaat a firm seat upon the see mooth l
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        nd satisfying herself that nobody was in sig
eather beneath her was unatt
                                                                                                                                                  ainable sideways. Springing to her accustomed pe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    cular like a bowed sapling, a
                                                                                                                                                    manner demanded by the saddle, though hardly
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      expected of the woman, and trott ed off in the direction of Tewnell Mill. Oak was amuse
she seated h
d, perhaps a
                                                                                                                                                      ed, and hanging up the hat in his hut, went ag
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ain among his ewes. An hour passed, the girl returned, properly seated now, with a bag
                                                                                                                                                       aring the cattle-shed she was met by a boy br
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         nging a milking-pail, who held the reins of the pony whilst she slid off.
d away
          the horse, leavin
                                                                                                                                                                  ail with the young woman. Soon soft
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           irts alternating with loud spirts came in regular succession from w
                                                                                                                                                                          milking a cow. Gabriel took t
         the shed, the obv
                                                                           ds of a person
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         he lost hat in his hand, and waited beside the path she would follow in leaving the hi
      II. She came, the p
                                      ail in one hand, hand
                                                                         ing against her
                                                                                                                                                                                knee. The left arm was e
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          xtended as a balance, enough of it being shown bare to make Oak wish that the eve
    nt had happened in
                                      the summer, when the whole would have bee
                                                                                                                                                                                 aled. There was a brigh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           t air and manner about her now, by which she seemed to imply that the desirabilit
 y of her existence co
                                      uld not be questioned; and this rather saucy
                                                                                                                                                           ption f
                                                                                                                                                                                 ailed in being offensive
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          because a beholder felt it to be, upon the whole
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                , true. Like exceptional emphas
                                      nius, that which would have made mediocrity ridicul ous was a
is in the tone of a ge
                                                                                                                                                          n additio
                                                                                                                                                                              n to recognised power. It
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          was with some surprise that she saw Gabriel's fac e rising like the moon behind t
he hedge. The adjust
                                     me nt of the farmer's hazy conceptions of her charms to the p
                                                                                                                                                           ortrait of herself she now presented him wi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            th was less a diminution than a difference. The st
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    arting-point selected by the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             omparison with these, she could have been not above the height to be chosen be
judgment was her he
                                             She seemed tall, but the pail was a small one, and the hedge di
                                                                                                                            minutiv
                                                                                                                                                           e; hence, making allowance for error by c
y women as best. All
                                               res of consequence were severe and regular. It may have been
                                                                                                                                                         y persons who go about the shires with
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              eyes for beauty, that in Englishwoman a classically-formed face is seldom foun
                                                   e of the same pattern, the highly-finished features being ge
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               graceful and proportionate figure of eight heads usually goes off into random
d to be united with a
                                   figur
                                                                                                                                                       large for the remainder of the frame; that
facial curves. With
                                  out thr
                                                       owing a Nymphean tissue over a milkmaid, let it be s
                                                                                                                                   aid that here criticism checked itself as out of place, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                looked at her proportions with a long consciousness of pleasure. From the co
                                                                                                                                   ulders; but since her infancy nobody had ever seen th
ntours of her figure
                                  in its up
                                                            per part, she must have had a beautiful neck and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                em. Had she been put into a low dress she would have run and thrust her hea
                                                              hy girl by any means; it was merely her instinct to dr aw t
d into a bush. Yet
                             she was not a s
                                                                                                                                 he line dividing the seen from the unseen higher tha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                n they do it in towns. That the girl's thoughts hovered about her face and for
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   re pronounced, dignity if a little less. Rays of male vision seem to have a
m as soon as she caught Oak's eyes connin
                                                              g the same page was natural, and almost certain. The self-consciousness shown would have been vanity if a little mo
                                                              ts; she brushed hers with her hand, as if Gabriel had been irritating its pink surface by actual touch, and the free air of
ickling effect upon virgin faces in rural distric
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        er previous movements was reduced at the same time to a chastened
                                                               d, the maid not at all. "I found a hat," said Oak. "It is mine," said she, and, from a sense of proportion, kept down to a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        small smile an inclination to laugh distinctly: "it flew away last night.
phase of itself. Yet it was the man who blushe
                                                                  was surprised. "How did you know?" she said. "I was here." "You are Farmer Oak, are you not?" "That or thereabou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ts. I'm lately come to this place." "A large farm?" she inquired, casti
<sup>i</sup>'One o'clock this morning?" "Well--it was." She
                                                                  ch was black in the shaded hollows of its mass; but it being now an hour past sunris
ng her eyes round, and swinging back her hair, whi
                                                                                                                                                             e the rays touched its prom
own. "No; not large. About a hundred." (In speakin
                                                                  g of farms the word "acres" is omitted by the natives, by analogy to such old expr
                                                                                                                                                                                                            "I wanted my hat this m
                                                                     Yes you had." "How do you know?" "I saw you." "Where?" she inquired, a mi
orning," she went on. "I had to ride to Tewnell Mill."
                                                                                                                                                                  sgiving bringing every mu
                                                                                                                                                                                                   scle of her lineaments and frame to a standstill.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 et his colloquist's eyes. A perception caused
                                                                 I," said Farmer Oak, with an aspect excessively knowing with regard to some
                                                                                                                                                                   matter in his mind, as he gazed at a remote point in the direction named, and then turned back to me
e--going through the plantation, and all down the hil
him to withdraw his own eyes from hers as suddenly
                                                                as if he had been caught in a theft. Recollection of the strange antics s
                                                                                                                                                                   had indulged in when passing through the trees was succeeded in the girl by a nettled palpitation, a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  nd that by a hot face. It was a time to see a w
oman redden who was not given to reddening as a rul
                                                            e; not a point in the milkmaid but was of the deepest rose-colour. From t
                                                                                                                                                                   Maiden's Blush, through all varieties of the Provence down to the Crimson Tuscany, the countenant
                                                                                                                                                 he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ce of Oak's acquaintance quickly gradu
ated; whereupon he, in considerateness, turned away his head. The sympathetic man still looked the other way, and wondered wh
                                                                                                                                                                   she would recover coolness sufficient to justify him in facing her again. He heard what seem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                e the flitting of a dead leaf upo
                                                                                                                                                 en
                                                                                                                                                                   e mornings and evenings passed. The young woman came regularly to milk the healt
n the breeze, and looked. She had gone away. With an air between that of Tragedy and Comedy Gabriel returned to his work. Fi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        hy cow or to att
e, but never allowed her vision to stray in thé direction of Oak's person. His want of tact had déeply offended her--not by see
                                                                                                                                                                                                     by letting her know that he had seen it. For
                                                                                                                                                                  ing what he could not help, but
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  as without law there is no
eyes there is no indecorum; and she appeared to feel that Gabriel's espial had made her an indecorous woman without he
                                                                                                                                                                 r own connivance. It was food fo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                r great regret with him; it
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          was also a contretemps which touched
a latent heat he had experienced in that direction. The acquaintanceship might, however, have ended in a slow forgetting
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                end of the same week. One afternoon it began to fre
                                                                                                                                                                  but for an incident which occurred
nd the frost increased with evening, which drew on like a stealthy tightening of bonds. It was a time when in cottages t
                                                                                                                                                                   breath of the sleepers freezes to the she
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ets; when round the drawing-room fire of a thick-walled mansion the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ar, Oak kept his usual watch upon the cowshed. At last he felt cold, and shaking an
sitters' backs are cold, even whilst their faces are all aglow. Many a small bird went to bed supperless that night am
                                                                                                                                                                   g the bare boughs. As the milking-hour drew n
extra quantity of bedding round the yearling ewes he entered the hut and heaped more fuel upon the stove. The wi
                                                                                                                                                                  in at the bottom of the door, and to prevent it O
                                                                                                                                         nd came
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         k laid a sack there and wheeled the cot round a little more to the south. Then the wind spo
uted in at a ventilating hole--of which there was one on each side of the hut. Gabriel had always known that when
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        be kept open--that chosen being always on the side away from the wind. Closing the slide t
                                                                                                                                                                 s lighted and the door closed one of these must
o windward, he turned to open the other; on second thoughts the farmer considered that he would first sit down I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        f the hut was a little raised. He sat down. His head began to ache in an unwonted manner, a
                                                                                                                                                                 closed for a minute or two, till the temperature o
nd, fancying himself weary by reason of the broken rests of the preceding nights, Oak decided to get up, open the sli
                                                                                                                                                                 ow himself to fall asleep. He fell asleep, howeve
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        r, without having performed the necessary preliminary. How long he remain
nscious Gabriel never knew. During the first stages of his return to perception peculiar deeds seemed to be in course of enactment. His dog
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ebody was pulling him about, hands were loosening
                                                                                                                                                                was howling, his head was aching fearfully--som
eckerchief. On opening his eyes he found that evening had sunk to dusk in a strange manner of unexpectedness. The young girl with the re
                                                                                                                                                             markably pleasant lips and white teeth he matter?" said Oak, vacantly. She seem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           onish
ingly more--his head was upon her lap, his face and neck were disagreeably wet, and her fingers were unbuttoning his collar. "Whatever is t
perience mirth, but of too insignificant a kind to start enjoyment. "Nothing now," she answered, "since you are not dead. It is a wonder you w
                                                                                                                                                      ere not suffocated in this hut of yours." "Ah, th
el. "I gave ten pounds for that hut. But I'll sell it, and sit under thatched hurdles as they did in old times, and curl up to sleep in a lock of straw! It played me nearly the same trick the other day!
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      Gabriel, by way of empha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           sis, brought do
the floor. "It was not exactly the fault of the hut," she observed in a tone which showed her to be that novelty among women--one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   onvev it. "You should. I think, have
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   considered, and not h
sh as to leave the slides closed." "Yes I suppose I should," said Oak, absently. He was endeavouring to catch and appreciate the sensation of being thus with her, his head upon her dress, before the event passed on into the heap of bygone things. He wished she knew his impression
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ns; but he would
as soon have thought of carrying an odour in a net as of attempting to convey the intangibilities of his feeling in the coarse meshes of language. So he remained silent. She made him sit up, and then Oak began wiping his face and shaking himself like a Samson. "How can I thank
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ee?" he said at las
t, gratefully, some of the natural rusty red having returned to his face. "Oh, never mind that," said the girl, smiling, and allowing her smile to hold good for Gabriel's next remark, whatever that might prove to be. "How did you find me?" "I heard your dog howling and scratching a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              t the door
of the hut when I came to the milking (it was so lucky, Daisy's milking is almost over for the season, and I shall not come here after this week or the next). The dog saw me, and jumped over to me, and laid hold of my skirt. I came across and looked round the hut the very fir
st thing to see if the slides were closed. My uncle has a hut like this one, and I have heard him tell his shepherd not to go to sleep without leaving a slide open. I opened the door, and there you were like dead. I threw the milk over you, as there was no water, for
getting it was warm, and no use." "I wonder if I should have died?" Gabriel said, in a low voice, which was rather meant to travel back to himself than to her. "Oh no!" the girl replied. She seemed to prefer a less tragic probability; to have saved a ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 n from death i
nvolved talk that should harmonise with the dignity of such a deed--and she shunned it. "I believe you saved my life, Miss--I don't know your name. I know your aunt's, but not yours." "I would just as soon not tell it--rather not. There is no hould, as you probably will never have much to do with me." "Still, I should like to know." "You can inquire at my aunt's--she will tell you." "My name is Gabriel Oak." "And mine isn't. You seem fond of yours in speaking it s
You see, it is the only one I shall ever have, and I must make the most of it." "I always think mine sounds odd and disagreeable." "I should think you might soon get a new one." "Mercy!--how man
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            reason either why I s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    o decisively, Gabriel Oak."
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           y opinions you keep about you cond
erning other people, Gabriel Oak." "Well, Miss--excuse the words--I thought you would like them. But I can't match you, I know, in mapping out my mind upon my tongue. I never was very cl
our hand." She hesitated, somewhat disconcerted at Oak's old-fashioned earnest conclusion to a dialogue lightly carried on. "Very well," she said, and gave him her hand, compressing her
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    y insidé. But I thank you. Come, give me y
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            mpassivity. He held it but an instant, and in his fea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    lips to a demure i
r of being too demonstrative, swerved to the opposite extreme, touching her fingers with the lightness of a small-hearted person. "I am sorry," he said the instant after. "What for?" "Letting your hand go so quick." "You may have it again if you like; th nger this time--indeed, curiously long. "How soft it is--being winter time, too--not chapped or rough or anything!" he said. "There--that's long enough," said she, though without pulling it away. "But I suppose you are thinking you would like to kiss it? ch thing," said Gabriel, simply; "but I will--" "That you won't!" She snatched back her hand. Gabriel felt himself guilty of another want of tact. "Now find out my name," she said, teasingly; and withdrew. CHAPTER IV GABRIEL'S RESOLVE--THE VIS
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ere it is." She gave him her hand again. Oak held it lo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          You may if you want to." "I wasn't thinking of any su
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        IT--THE MISTAKE The o
y superiority in women that is tolerable to the rival sex is, as a rule, that of the unconscious kind; but a superiority which recognizes itself may sometimes please by suggesting possibilities of capture to the subordinated man. This well-favoure
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      d and comely
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         girl soo
n made appreciable inroads upon the emotional constitution of young Farmer Oak. Love, being an extremely exacting usurer (a sense of exorbitant profit, spiritually, by an exchange of hearts, being at the bottom of pure passions, as that o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 orbitant profit, bodily or mate
rially, is at the bottom of those of lower atmosphere), every morning Oak's feelings were as sensitive as the money-market in calculations upon his chances. His dog waited for his meals in a way so like that in which Oak waited for the g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            irl's presence, that the farmer was
quite struck with the resemblance, felt it lowering, and would not look at the dog. However, he continued to watch through the hedge for her regular coming, and thus his sentiments towards her were deepened without any correspo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          nding effect being produced upon her
self. Oak had nothing finished and ready to say as yet, and not being able to frame love phrases which end where they begin; passionate tales-- -- Full of sound and fury -- Signifying nothing-- he said no word at all. By making inq
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         uiries he found that the girl's name wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        o more. Gabriel had reached a pitch of
s Bathsheba Everdene, and that the cow would go dry in about seven days. He dreaded the eighth day. At last the eighth day came. The cow had ceased to give milk for that year, and Bathsheba Everdene came up the hill n
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existence he never could have anticipated a short time before. He liked saying "Bathsheba" as a private enjoyment instead of whistling; turned over his taste to black hair, though he had sworn by

smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were within an unimp

was a boy, isolated himself till the spa

brown ever since he

is countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun. His C

Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy CHAPTER I DESCRIPTION OF FARMER OAK--AN INCIDENT When Farmer Oak

ortant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon h