

Trevena John

By Violence



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INTRODUCTION

For eight years or more, since I first became acquainted with the novels and tales of John Trevena it has been my firm conviction that only Thomas Hardy and George Moore among contemporary novelists rival his art at its best. Like Meredith, he has written for twenty years in obscurity, and like Meredith also he has been content with a small discriminating audience. I suppose that in 1950 our grandchildren will be electing college courses on his literary method, but meanwhile it would be more gratifying if there were even a slight public response to the quality of his individual talent.

Trevena's novels are the expression of a passionate feeling for Nature, regarded as the sum of human personality and experience, in all its moods, – benign and malign, as man is benign and malign, and faithful to life in the stone as well as the flower. What a gallery of memorable characters they are, Mary and Peter Tavy, Brightly, Cuthbert Orton, Jasper Ramrige, Anthonie and Petronel, William and Yellow Leaf, Captain Drake and dark Pendoggat, Ann Code, Cyril Rossingall, and a hundred others, passionate and gentle, with wind and water and earth and

sky for a chorus, and the shifting pageantry of Nature as a stage.

His fourteen volumes reveal a gift for characterization equalled by none of the contemporary English realists, and a Shakespearian humor elsewhere gone from our day. In *Furze the Cruel*, *Bracken*, *Wintering Hay*, and *Sleeping Waters*, to name no others, John Trevena has written novels of Dartmoor that will take their rightful place in the great English line, when the honest carpentering of Phillpotts that now overshadows them is totally forgotten.

The feeling has spread among Trevena's few critical American admirers who have written about him, that he is fundamentally morbid and one-sided. On the contrary, I know of few novelists who are more recklessly and irresistibly gay, in whom sheer fun bubbles over so spontaneously and wholeheartedly. To ignore life's harshness is simply to ignore life. Trevena's many-sidedness will be apparent only when there is a definitive edition of his work. His habit of confining a novel to a single mood or passion of nature, together with the fact that Americans have only had an opportunity to read those novels by him which deal with nature's most cruel moods, have done the reputation of Trevena a grave injustice.

By Violence and *Matrimony* are Trevena's most beautiful short tales, and I hardly know which is the finer revelation of poetic grace and gentle vision. Their message is conveyed so quietly that they may be read for their sensuous beauty only, and yet convey a rare pleasure. If their feeling is veiled and somewhat aloof from

the common ways of men, there is none the less a fine human sympathy concealed in them, and a golden radiance indissolubly woven into their pages.

If Nature's power is inevitable in these stories, it is also kind, and I like to think that from *By Violence* as a text a new reading of earth may be deciphered. Trevena has written the books of furze and heather and granite and bracken, which outlast time on the hills of Dartmoor. But this tale hints at a fifth force which survives all the others. Some day, when the wind is strong, John Trevena will write the book of "The Rain-drop," which is the gentlest of all elements, and yet outlasts the stone.

Edward J. O'Brien

South Yarmouth, Mass.

February 26, 1918

BY VIOLENCE

"Dear Sir, —

"The wooden enemies are out.

"Yours obediently,

"Oliver Vorse."

Simon Searell read this short message as he tramped the streets of Stonehouse, which were full of fog, from the sea on one side and the river on the other. Vorse was an uneducated man; the mysticism of flowers was nothing to him, the time of spring was merely a change of season, and the most spiritual of blooms were only "wooden enemies." Searell frowned a little, not at the lack of education, which was rather a peace to be desired, but at the harshness of the words, and went on, wondering if the wood-anemones were to be his friends, or little cups of poison.

He climbed streets of poor houses, their unhappy windows curtained with mist, and came out near a small church made of iron, a cheap and gaudy thing, almost as squalid on the outside as the houses. The backslider looked at it with a shudder. It was his no longer; he had given it up; he was forgetting those toy-like altars, the cheap brass candlesticks, the artificial flowers, and all the images. They were wooden and stone enemies to him now. He was going deeper to find the throbbing heart of religion, putting aside dolls and tapers and the sham of sentimentality.

Solitude and mysticism were to be his stars through the night, and he trusted, with their aid, to reach the dawn. He turned from the church, stopped at a house, and that was squalid too, knocked, then wiped his boots, as if certain of being admitted.

"Father Damon?" he asked shortly. Searell's voice was sweet, he had helped people "home," as they called it, with his tongue, not with his soul, just as a sweet-toned organ calls for tears with the beauty of its sounds, though the instrument itself is dead.

"Yes, your reverence," the housekeeper answered, as shortly; and Searell walked up the foggy stairs murmuring to himself, "The wind-flowers are out, and I am free."

Father Damon stood in a little square room hideously papered. He was small, dark, heavy-featured, peasant-like; and Searell saw at a glance that his successor was as dull in many ways as Oliver Vorse. All that he knew had been forced upon him almost violently; he had not gone forth gathering for himself, he dared not, his mind had been tilled by careful teachers, kept under restraint, all his side-growths pruned away, in order that orthodoxy might develop in one large unlovely head. When the order went forth to kneel, he knelt, and when it was time to lift his eyes to Heaven, he lifted them. It was a life of prison, and he could never smell the woodland through the fog of incense.

"He knows nothing," muttered Searell. "He thinks it is daylight where he stands."

"I come to give you information about the mission," he said aloud, and then began; but the telling took some time. How

troublesome, how paltry, the details; and Father Damon was so dull. Everything had to be repeated, explained so carefully; and was it worth the words? The successor was very earnest, but not enthusiastic, that had been crushed out of him; and Searell grew impatient at the wooden figure, with its simple face and child-like questions. He spoke faster, almost angrily, desiring to get away and smell the earth; and his eyes wandered about the room, which was so unlovely, not bare, but filled with those things that make for the nakedness of life. There was wanting something to galvanise that sluggish Damon into passion, to destroy the machinery, turn him into a strong animal with dilating nostrils. One little touch would have done it. A portrait of a pretty woman upon the mantelshelf would have gone far; but there was nothing except pictures of mythical saints.

"You are retiring. You seem strong and well," said Damon, when he had obtained all the information that was required.

Searell was in a hurry to be gone, as the sleeper struggles to awake from a bad dream; but that voice and its stagnant repose aroused him.

"I am old, I am sixty," he said. "I am beginning again, trying to find what the Church has not shown me."

"What is that?"

"Light."

Damon stared with the eyes of horror, and put out his peasant-like hands as if to force away some weight that pressed against him; but he said nothing.

"I will not depart in the odour of hypocrisy. Listen," said Searell. "I am far from saying that the Church does not lead towards a kind of light; but it has not led me. And this do I say, that in the world at large all religion is a failure; and I am going to find mine in the solitudes."

"The truth is in the Church. It is your fault if you have missed it," said Damon, in a hollow voice, hoping that the other, for the sake of his soul, was mad.

"It is there for some, the minority. You will never realize how small that minority is. We cannot hasten the dawn with juggling. True religion is a thing of innocence, not a matter of spells and charms; and it is in the innocence of Nature that I will search for it. I believe it exists there, underneath the outward cruelty, and I shall find it among the flowers. The flower alone does not struggle with violence, it sheds no blood; the weed smothers, and the bindweed chokes; but without some fault upon the surface, perfection might be obtained, which cannot be. Look into the flower, and you will find a condition which is not approached by man or other animals. There is a purity which brings tears into your eyes. Eliminate violence, and you have innocence; obtain innocence, and you see the light. At the beginning of things we are told that the world was destroyed by water because the earth was filled with violence. At the beginning of the new era we learn that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. Will you say the Church does not rule by violence, by threats, suppressions, rubrics, and by vows?"

"I cannot understand you," said Damon.

"Will you understand when I say that the God of life is to be found among the flowers?"

The other shook his head and looked frightened. Free speech was not allowed, and, if it had been, he would not have known how to use it. He walked between rubrics, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; and the living lily was a thing for funeral wreaths. For the altars, artificial flowers were good enough, as they did not require renewing, and they looked real to the congregation, and how they were regarded elsewhere did not concern him; and whether they had been made by sweated labour did not concern him, because he was not allowed to think, and he himself was artificial, neither man nor animal, but a side-growth of supernaturalism.

"Let me go on now I have begun," said Searell. "I am leaving here, and my words will not live after me. I am a man who has tested life, who has been through every experience, and I have discovered that what morality calls bad is often good, and that which we call virtue sometimes springs from vice. The purest water runs upon mud, only you must not rake it up. In my youth I served as a soldier, and upon leaving the army I sought the Church, partly to find a rest, chiefly, perhaps, because my mind was mystical. But nothing was revealed, and nothing could be, for the mystic must be free; and the priest is a soul in prison, and the book of his captivity is always before him. Here he must join his hands; there he must lift his eyes to Heaven, prostrate

himself, kiss the altar, until the time comes when he feels alone, cut off from the Creator of his dreams by these mechanics, horribly alone among images; and he seems to hear a voice asking sorrowfully, 'What is this rule you are following? Who told you to do this? Go out upon the hills and into the woods, for I am there.' But he cannot move, for the time has come to join his hands again, and the revelation passes unseen, because he has to keep his eyes shut. It is written so, and he must obey."

"I cannot answer you," muttered Damon; and it was true, for these words took him outside the well-worn groove and dropped him useless.

"If I found the man who could, I would follow him," came the answer, and the white-headed priest passed a hand across his eyes, as if trying to brush the fog away. "I have been longing to escape for years. The iron of the little mission-church has eaten into my soul. I ought to have resigned? Why so, when I performed all my duties? Without means I could not have faced the world, for the mystic is not a practical man, and these hands," he said, frowning, "they are hands to be despised, for they have done nothing. No, do not answer me, you cannot, you are bound. I am free. A year ago I was left money – "

"A curse."

"If you will, a curse to buy a pathway to my Heaven. There was a place I pined for, up on the heights of Dartmoor, a valley among mountains. I have bought it. They call it Pixyland."

"Paganism," cried the peasant-priest hoarsely, and crossed

himself.

"Purity," said Searell, in his sweet voice. "Pure air, pure hills, pure loneliness. It is a place of rocks, of heather and large-rooted ferns, and it is very steep, terrace rising upon terrace to the heights. At the bottom of the valley are trees; here also is a wild path and a wild stream broken upon the rocks, and becoming whole again at the foot of a glen. For centuries the place has been haunted in men's imagination, and they have avoided it because it is a garden of – angels. I am going now to make it bloom, I am going to grasp that solitude and weave with it a mantle of light. I am going to walk on my pixy-path and watch the shadows creeping up and down my pixy-glen; and the growth will come, the growth of knowledge, and of consciousness; and there I may meet my Gardener, driven out of the world by violence, out of the Church by violence, revealing Himself, not tortured, cross-laden, and frowning, and not awful, but as the smiling Guardian of the flowers."

There was hardly a sound in the cold room, stiff with the antique pictures of quaint saints, dark with that dull peasant born to be ruled; and yet Searell was going out with a haunted face, passing like a phantom from the house of poverty, and the wet board with Mass notices, and the waste of ground heaped up with rubbish. There was a pear-tree leaning from the waste, a tree which the builders had forgotten, and from the tree hung a broken branch, and at the end of that branch, beneath the buds of spring, were two black leaves neglected by the winter, side by

side, struggling with one another; for there was wind down the street which made them struggle; but neither dropped, and they fought on silently while the wind lasted.

"Violence even in dead things," Searell murmured; and, reaching up his hand, he quieted those two restless leaves for ever.

II

Oliver Vorse was lying among the wood-anemones, and he was drunk. He would have looked like a monster had his condition been rare; but it was common, therefore Vorse was not abnormal, only a fool. He did not know where he was, in the pixy-path upon the wind-flowers, crushing so many with his sodden carcase, while the pure pixy-water trickled underneath. He had come the wrong way at the turning of the path; instead of ascending to the house, which was the way of difficulty, he had stepped downwards choosing the path of ease, as men will, even when sober. The state of his body was nothing, as nobody would see him except Sibley, his wife. The master was expected tomorrow, and then he would have to pretend to be a man.

The moon was young, a cradle of silver, and the stars were wrapped in sleep-compelling clouds; and all the light that there was seemed to come from the anemones which Vorse was defiling. The little white things were lanterns, retaining light, but not giving it forth, and a stickle of water shone like a shield. There was such a wonderful purity in Nature apart from the man. Everything seemed to bear the mark of beauty and holiness except him. It was out of the world in that fairy garden hanging between the cities and the clouds, and the vices of the world were out of place; and yet there was no barrier which they could not leap across.

A light appeared thick and heavy, putting out the eyes of the flowers. It wobbled down the natural terraces, weather-hewn from granite, and with it came a voice suggesting more violence, harsh and angry, not a voice of the clouds, but of the street-corner, where faces are thin and fierce, and the paving-stones seem cruel. Sibley was searching for her husband, not because she loved him, nor requiring his company for any reason except the selfish one that the loneliness above frightened her, and her small spirit quailed before the heaving moorland. Any sort of a brute was better than the God of the mountains. She stumbled over an obstacle, lowered the lantern, but it was a mass of granite carved cynically by centuries of rain into the semblance of a tombstone. Again she stumbled, and now it was the trunk of a tree, phosphorescent with rottenness. A third time she stumbled, and so found her master with the rottenness of the fallen tree, without the strength of the granite.

She kicked him, struck him with the greasy lantern, and swore.

"Get up, dirty swine. Get up, will ye? Mind what the master told yew? and he'm coming in the morning."

Oliver only growled and snored. This was his form of mysticism, and it was a kind of happiness. If master had dreams, why not he? Master could dream at one end of creation, he at the other. There was plenty of time. Sibley was only twenty-four, Oliver not much older. When life is young the end of it is a myth, and passion is the god.

There was another light down the pixy-path, very steady and soft. Had it been blue it might have been a thing of the bog, looking for the body it had thrown away, but it was white, and it flickered hardly at all, for the night was smothered up and the winds were slumbering. It came up the path with a kind of gliding rather terrible and there was not a sound around it. The master was approaching in the night. Having completed the last duty sooner than he had anticipated, he acted on the impulse. There was time to escape, so why wait for the morning? And there would be the glamour of passing through the dark towards clouds and mistland. The preparations of a man in earnest take no time. He must put a taper in his pocket, the last relic of the church he was leaving, as the night would be heavy upon the pathway, and he must walk there and see the wood-anemones in flower and feel the peace settling upon his eyelids. There was no time to be lost, for he was old, and still a child, with everything to learn.

Sibley saw the figure, and screamed, supposing it to be a spirit doing penance for past sins with the lighted candle; while her husband heaved and called for drink.

Searell stood upon the path. The wind-flowers were out, but their heads were hanging in shame; there was no spiritual life in them, they were already dead like the two black leaves upon the pear tree, and the destroyed of life was that heap of flesh upon them. He had come away from the world to forget its violence, and here it was upon his mystic pathway. He had come to find his God upon the flowers, and had found a drunken man instead.

He was calm, to Sibley he looked divine, as he placed the candle in the niche of a gaping boulder, and she wondered at his restraint. He was a god, for he had made her, had saved her from street life, and might still save Oliver if he could bear with him. They were not of his religion, they were only devil-worshippers, and yet he had stooped down and dragged them almost by violence from the rubbish-pit.

"Forgive 'en this once, master," she cried. "I'll see he don't fall again. Us didn't look vor ye till the morning, and Oliver went down, and this be how he comed back."

There was a flat rock above the pixy-water, and here Searell seated himself, saying, "Do not speak. Your voice is harsh."

For some moments the only sounds were the deep breathing of Vorse and the tinkling of the stream. The flame of the candle did not flicker, and Sibley remained as motionless, her hands clasped before her, looking down. Then Searell spoke:

"I walked along a street, and at a dark end of it a man and woman were fighting. They were young and fierce. As I came near, the man threw the woman down and thumped her in the back, I separated them by violence. They respected my profession, and did not greatly resent my interference. So there was good in them, but, like young beasts, they had run wild, and no man had tamed them. You know of whom I am speaking?"

"Yes, master, I reckon," she whispered.

"At that time they were living together, although unmarried. I told them I should be requiring a couple to attend to me and my

home, and I promised to engage them if they would be legally wedded. But conditions were imposed. One of them has been broken tonight."

"It won't ever happen again, master."

"I have myself to think of. There must be selfishness," said Searell. "There is no escaping from it. If one condition is broken, another may be. You remember the other?"

"Yes, master – no children."

The words sounded harsh, in that fairy place, and they seemed to agree rather with the breathing of the drunken man than with the ringing of the stream.

"Perhaps I am hard, but I have my peace of mind to consider. A child's cry, a child's mischievous ways, would destroy it. There is no room in my house for children, and this is not the place for them. I have a search to make," he murmured. "The scream of infants would lead me far astray. You will remember?"

"Us ha' no other home, master."

"You will remember?"

"Yes, master."

"I will forget what has happened tonight," said Searell, bending from the rock, dipping his hand into the pixy-water. "Let this be a time of regeneration for us all. Do you respect a ceremony?"

"Yes, master, I reckon," she said again, though she could not understand him.

"We will lead a new life," he said, with a smile which was

visible in the light of candle and lantern.

Sibley stepped forward as Oliver lifted himself with heavy movements, and muttered a half-conscious "Ask your pardon, master."

Searell brought up a little of the bright water, and sprinkled the woman, then the man, without any other sign, and with the words in his soft mystic voice, "I receive you into the new life."

Then he picked up the taper and went, leaving the man and woman afraid of him.

III

After a year in Pixyland, what was there? A garden, a place of almost unearthly beauty, and through it the master moved slowly, clad no longer in the clothes of religion, nor even in the garments of respectability; his coat sack-like, its pockets bulging with bulbs and tubers, and his hair was in white ringlets, and his hands were often in the warm earth, grubbing out furze-roots. The terrestrial paradise had been attained; down the steep slopes poured a cascade of colour, the pixy-path was alight all night with white, out of the pixy-water rose golden osmundas and the ghostly spiræa; and Searell's face was also ghostly, it was hungry, and the eyes were dull. It was not the face of the priest who had built up the mission, for that had been eager. It was not the face of the mystic who had walked up the path by candlelight, for that had been happy. It was not the face of the spiritualist who feels he is conquering the atmosphere, nor that of a dreamer. It was the face of one who was sad.

Searell had discovered, though he would not own it to himself, that lonely happiness is impossible. What was a discovery if no friend could be told of it? What was the loveliness of his garden when there was no one to share it with? What would Heaven itself be if he was there alone? There must be sympathy, and without it life is lost.

Intellect was losing its edge. He almost forgot what he had

come there for. Instead of ascending towards more light he was falling into grosser darkness. He did not even dream; he was sluggish, and oblivion was over him; which must happen when a man cuts himself free from the hearts and brains of others. His cry was no longer the triumphant one of strength and self-confidence. It was the cry "Why hast Thou forgotten me?" as he walked heavily, and the weight of his own presence oppressed him; and then he would mutter aloud, "Come and see my garden. I must show you the flowers," though there was nobody to hear. That was all: he was a gardener; he wanted to show his flowers, shrubs, ferns, he wanted to delight some one with his bogplants, he longed to see admiration dawning upon a human face, love for the beautiful kindling in human eyes; and so he came to crave for human life, human words and beauty, human sympathy, even human sin and shame and violence rather than the innocence and purity and gentleness of God among the flowers.

"Master, where be I to plant this?" "Master, will ye pay these bills?" Such were the almost brutal questions around him.

He had asked for solitude; and now he longed for passion, earthly love.

It was winter, when the nights were wild and the evenings intolerable; and during one of them the sound of a quarrel reached his ears. Oliver and Sibley had not been satisfactory. If they had abstained from the vices, they had not learnt to love one another; and, as Searell listened then, he saw the violent streets and that boy and girl tussle in the dirt. He went down, and

at the foot of the stairs heard the woman's angry voice, "Yew ha' ruined me"; and then the growl of Oliver, "Shut your noise. Master be moving over." Through the doorway Searell saw them, like beasts half-tamed, longing to break into their natural habits, but dreading the master's whip. Were they worse than they had been? Was it the effect of solitude upon them? Sibley had no small amusements such as women desire. Oliver had no love for his home life. It seemed to Searell that indifference was settling upon them all. He advanced into the kitchen, stood between them as he had done before, looked at the man, and noticed something new, a kind of eagerness, which he tried to suppress; then at the woman, and here too was a difference, a softer face and eyes half-ashamed. Perhaps, then, they could love, and a word from him might kindle the spark into flame.

"I interferred between you once before. It was for your good."

"No, master," said Sibley.

"I think so," he said, startled by her independence and rudeness.

"It would ha' been better if yew had passed by and let we bide," she went on; and when Oliver growled his "Shut your noise," it was with less anger than usual.

"Us could ha' done what us had a mind to then," she said.

"This be a prison."

"We are all in prison, if you can understand me. The walls are all round, and we cannot get over them."

"'Tis best vor volk to live as 'em be meant to," said Sibley.

And again Searell was amazed. How had this woman obtained the power and the courage to answer him? And to beat him, for he was beaten. He had no words to reply to that simple philosophy, and to the woman who appealed from his decision. He had played the God with them, had brought them out of chaos, and had given them his commandments; and he was no God, but a weak man; and they were not his children.

He went back to his books, there were no flowers except Christmas-roses and snowdrops, shivering things of winter, and tried to dream. Nothing came. It seemed to him there was less mysticism in his mistland than in the dirty streets of Stonehouse; and, while he mused, that world came knocking at his mind, calling in the dialect of Sibley, "'Tis best vor volk to live as 'em be meant to." His own body, his sluggishness and unhappiness, convicted him of error; but, if he was wrong, what of all religion which tells of a God of mysticism, and of his own in particular, which, at that very season of the year, rejoiced at the birth of a Child-creator by mysticism not through Love? And at his mind was hot, red-blooded passion, a crude and awful thing, love for those things which make men horrible, love for dirt and the roots, not for bud and bloom; and a contempt and hatred for cold morality and the spells muttered by candlelight; and the message of the flowers was this: "Through the agency of others, through the eyes of those who are loved and loving, not by the confinement of self, souls find the dawn."

"Mrs. Vorse," said Searell one day, the yellow aconites were

out, the first colour of the year, and he was going to look at them, "you have changed."

Sibley had her back towards him, engaged in cleaning, and she was wearing, as she always did, the enveloping apron of the country, which hung from her shoulders and surrounded her body like a sack. He could not see the flush upon her face.

"Your voice is softer. You sing at your work. You are happy."

"I hain't, master," she whispered. "I feels, master, I wants to be happy, but I be frightened."

"Of the loneliness?"

"Not that, master. I can't tell ye, but I be frightened."

"You and your husband get along better. You are quieter. I have not heard you quarrel for some time."

"There's good in Oliver," she said.

"I thought so," he murmured. "But I have not been able to bring it out."

He went to see the aconites, but they were cold, and made him shiver. It was warm innocence he wanted, not the purity which numbed; and, down below, the slopes were naked, the path rustled with dead oakleaves, and the pixy-water was in flood. The violence of the world was there, and nothing could drive it out.

"Is your wife well, Oliver?" he asked. "I heard a sound in your room early this morning. It seemed to me she was ill."

Vorse was uprooting bracken, which is hard labour, and he made no pause when his master spoke.

"I ha' never knowed she better," he answered.

"She frets less. There is a womanliness about her now which is pleasant. You, also, have very much improved. You speak to her gently. You do not drink now?"

"Her made me give it up."

"Had I nothing to do with it?"

"No, master," said Oliver bluntly. "I couldn't ha' given it up vor yew. I did try, but I couldn't, I promised to give it up vor Sibley."

"When?"

"Months ago. Her told me something, and 'twur then I promised to give it up vor Sibley."

"What did she tell you?"

"Her had received a message from God."

These were strange words from the mouth of Oliver Vorse.

"Her took 'em from yew, master," he added apologetically.

Searell moved aside, gazing at the black snakelike fern-roots. Then he lifted up his eyes in torment. His creatures finding in the garden what he had missed, taking his God away from him! the dull Sibley his superior, reaping the harvest that he had sown! the dull Oliver reforming for her, and not for him! And he had nothing, he was alone, as much alone in his garden as in the mission-church, obeying the printed rubrics and hearing the call, "Who told you to do this? Go out and find Me, for I am in the solitudes."

"You are educating yourselves," he suggested, turning back. "You and Sibley are improving your minds by learning. I have

done that much for you."

Oliver said nothing, his head was down, and his hands grubbed at the great roots. There was no answer to make.

It was evening, the time of restlessness, and Searell came downstairs; his study was above, and he came down only to change his rooms, to get into another atmosphere, that he might find rest for his mind. The kitchen door was open. Oliver was seated in a low chair, and Sibley was upon his knees, her arms around his neck, her head upon his shoulder. Both were motionless as if asleep.

Searell went away. This time he could not interfere, and the noise of the wind became to him the cry of the wild world. "Men must be violent," it cried. "Men were made for passion," it cried; "and with the strength of the body, rather than by the gropings of the mind, they shall clear the mists from their eyes, and by means of the act of creation find Creator."

IV

A perfect evening is often the prelude to a stormy night. It was such an evening in spring again, when the wind-flowers were out, and an old man riding off the moor paused beside Searell's boundary-wall to prophesy a tempest. This was a white old man with queer blue eyes, and he too was a mystic under the spell of solitude; but, unlike Searell, he had his ties, without which no man can be happy. By day he roamed, and at evening, by the fireside, told the children small and great his own weird tales of Dartmoor. There were no restless evenings for him. Searell shook his head almost angrily. He lived upon the face of the moor, wrapped himself in its secrets, yet he could not foretell its weather. The passing cloud had no message, the river with its changing cry told him nothing. He went into the house.

"Where is your wife?" he said to Oliver.

"Her bain't well, master." The man was nervous, and his eyes were large.

"Who is that woman in the kitchen?"

"I had to get she up to do the cooking."

"You have neglected your work today."

"I be cruel sorry, master."

"What is the matter with your wife? Yesterday I heard her singing."

"Nothing serious, master"; but the man was listening all the

time, as if dreading to hear a call, a cry of pain, or the voice of life coming along the moor.

The old man was right. So soon as night began, the Dartmoor tempest broke; there was no rain, nor thunder, but a dry and mighty wind which made the rocks shake; and through the storm came a weird light defying the wind to blow it out, that light which does not enter the lowlands, but lives upon mountains; and Searell stood at his high writing desk, and sought out legends of the wind.

If there were sounds in the house he could not hear them. Deep in mysticism, he read on of the winged clouds which brought the tempests, and of their symbols, the rock-shattering worm, the stone of wisdom which tears open the secrets of life, the rosy flower which restores the dead, the house-breaking hand of glory; and the eagle symbol of lightning, and the rushing raven returning to Odin. And he read of the voices in the wind, while boulders were grinding along the river-bed; of Hulda in the forest singing for baby-souls; of the Elf maidens alluring youths astray; of Thoth staggering into oblivion with brave men's spirits; of Hermes with his winged talaria, playing the lyre and shutting fast all the myriad eyes of the stars. And something more he read about the storm-wind. It was not always taking away, it was giving; it was a bringer of new life, coming in spring as a young god with golden hair, breaking the spell of winter, bringing a magic pipe to make folk dance.

"At one time it lulls into a mystic sleep, at another it restores

to new life," said Searell, speaking loudly and strongly, partly to reassure himself, because the tumult was frightening. "What is this wind bringing to me, more of the mystic sleep, or the new life?"

He paced up and down the room, which shook as if with earthquake; and hidden from him by a partition of lath and plaster was the staring horror of a dream, one small lamp, turned down, giving the half-light which suggests terror more than darkness, and on the bed a woman moaning, and against the wall a weak man groaning. Let them rave and scream, no sound of theirs could have pierced that lath and plaster, for the god of violence was fighting on their side.

"There be only one way."

That was how Oliver had been muttering the last hour.

"No, no," she sobbed.

"What can us do? Master be hard, he bides by his word. He ha' been good to we in all else, but this be our ruin."

"No, no." She could not hear him, but she knew what he was saying.

"Back on them streets again. No home to cover we, no food. Us ha' lived easy too long to stand it. 'Twould end in the river. Better to lose the one than our two selves."

"No, no," her lips made the words, but not the sounds.

"'Tis only a matter o' two minutes," he cried fiercely. "Then us be free again." He left the wall, crossed to the bed, bent down, cried into her ear, "It be awful outside. The watter be roaring

down under. Us mun live, woman."

Sibley lifted herself with a face of death, and screamed as if it had been the last effort of her life, screamed again and again; but what was that in the wind? Not even a whisper; while Searell read on of the Sons of Kalew, and the miracle of their harps which changed winter into summer and death into life.

Oliver Vorse was staggering downstairs weeping; and outside the wind caught him, dragged him hither and thither like a straw, stuffing his mouth with vapour, and flung him against bellowing walls and into shrieking bushes; and still he protected what he held by instinct, and when he fell upon the steep descent he let his body be bruised and his face torn by that same instinct which makes the timid beast a savage thing.

It took no time... He was back in the ghastly lamplight, staring at a ghastly face which was the reflection of his own; and the master was still in his musing, and knew nothing.

"Let me die, I'd sooner," Sibley muttered simply; but Oliver could not hear. He was leaning against the wall again; then he went on his knees, and then he turned his back upon the bed. That face, the black hair, a blood-stain visible, they frightened him. He passed into a kind of agony; he was so cold and his body was dry, and there was a lightness in his limbs.

"The watter wur roaring – roaring. There warn't no wind, not there. It wur sheltered down under, and them little white flowers scarce shook."

He turned his head and saw those staring eyes.

"Bain't what yew thinks," he howled. "There wur moss, plenty on't. I made a bed beside the rocks. It bain't cold, not very; but the watter be rising – rising – rising."

So was the tempest. It would be nearing its end, and would drop as suddenly as it had arisen; and Searell was smiling as he read of the beasts of the forest weeping as they listened to the song-wind of Gunadhya.

"I can't go out. Might see it crawling up-along, trying to come back, little white thing in the dark."

Oliver could see Sibley was speaking, making with her agonized mouth the shape of words, "Go out." He could not, dared not, had not even the courage to open the door and look down the dimly lighted horror of the stairs. They were in the last stage of weakness, the one morally, the other physically; and the almighty strength of the wind gave them nothing except the security of its tumult.

"It'll be over," he shuddered. "The watter wur coming up all white. I couldn't bide there – there wur drops o' summat on my face, and 'twur so helpless, and it looked up. Blue, warn't 'em blue, woman?"

Sibley could not have heard, but, with all those instincts quivering, she recognized the word upon his lips and tried to nod.

"Innocent. Hadn't done nought. Would ha' kep we good, made we man and wife. I'll go down. I'd go down if I dared – the little chin wur agin my cheek. I'll never face the dark. I'd see it move, and the little drowning bubbles on the watter. Be it over now?"

He glared at Sibley as if she could answer; and she stared back, asking, pleading, imploring him to play the man and face the night again; but he grovelled against the wall and shuddered, damp with an awful sweat, and the weird light upon the mountain-tops went out, because other clouds were coming up, having travelled far since evening, and the darkness became real as the roarings of the dry wind decreased. It was getting on towards midnight, and those mighty winds were tired.

"Go!" came a sudden scream; and Searell heard the echo of it and started. The cry seemed to have its origin in the storm. He closed his book, listened, heard nothing more except the coherent bellowing, and then he answered, "I will." Certainly the word had sounded, and as certainly he was alone. The Vorses would have been asleep for hours.

"I will walk along the path. It is sheltered down there," he murmured. "This may be the night appointed, the time of revelation, the time of young life. This is the mad music of the spring, the shattering of the chains of winter. The growth follows. It is the birth-night."

He wrapped a coat around him and went. During those few minutes the wind had much decreased; in another hour it would be calm and clear; and then the awful stillness of the sunrise and the perpetual wonder of the daylight.

There was again a kind of light, for the raven-clouds had gone by and the swan-clouds were crossing; and the wind was now the magic piper who drives away care, and with his merry music

sets Nature capering. Searell was on the pixy-path and the wind-flowers were jigging; it was ghostly, but a dance, not a solemn marching as in autumn, when the leaves fall processionally downwards. It was recessional spring, when the leaves awoke, as it were, from their moon-loved sleep, preserved in unfading youth and beauty by that sleep, and leapt back at the piper's music to the branches, kissing their ancient oaks with the fervour of young love. Every flower had a moist eye and a sweet heart; and the pixy-water rang for festival.

One turn Searell made, seeing nothing, because his eyes struggled with the mist; another, and he stopped. There was a wonder, a miracle, a revelation among his wind-flowers, upon the edge of the rising water, a sleeping silent wonder which made him thrill.

"It has no bodily existence. When I come back it will be gone."

It was still there, and now the water was almost level with the bed of moss, and some of the flowers were struggling to keep their pale heads above; and it was silent, this child of the morning, lying upon its back in the moss, numbed, perhaps, though the night was not cold, and there was a beauty upon the small face, not the beauty which makes for violence, but that which gives peace, the beauty of innocence; and there was also upon it that perfect weakness, and the submission of weakness which is one of the strongest things created. And it seemed to be growing there like the wind-flowers, as fragile, but as hardy, and among them; for white anemones had been blown across each eye and across

the mouth, and they gleamed from each ear, and the chin was another edged with pink, and all of them seemed to be jealous of the child.

"And it comes into the world by violence," Searell murmured.

Even then he hardly knew what had happened. He could not think, for his mind was full of the wonder, and commonplace ideas would not enter. He picked up the child reverently; there was no motion, no sound, no opening of blue eyes; had there been a shrill scream, the spell might have been broken – the contact was dreadful to him. He was tending a sacred mystery, elevating a sacrament newly consecrated, something which a few hours ago had been leaping like a spark in the place of his dreams, and had been flung as lightning upon his path to strike his heart open. Here was the answer of the flowers. To men the Creator was as a child, for the child is the only thing all-powerful and the only thing all-pure.

About the house Searell seemed to hear the sound of groaning like the moan of the dying wind, and there were movements once or twice as of a wounded body.

A dusty prie-dieu stood in the corner of the study. This he placed near the fire, a cushion upon it, and then the child; and lighted a candle upon each side. He stood with his arms folded, the Omega of life worshipping the Alpha of it, until all things seemed to be new and strange, as upon a resurrection morning, and he awoke from the sleep of death and felt the spring. The winter was over and past, the time of the opening of flowers had

come, and the voice of creation stirred upon the garden; and the change had been wrought by violence.

It was necessary to speak and find sympathy. He hated the solitude because no one shared it with him; he had grown to hate the wonderful garden because there was no one to wonder at it with him; he hated himself because no one cared for him. "Oliver!" he called, breaking the horrible quietness, forgetful of the time. "Sibley!"

Movements followed, again like wounded bodies, and Searell remembered that the woman was ill and he had done nothing for her. He went to the door; it opened, and Vorse was cowering against the wall, his hand upon his eyes. Searell hardly noticed the horrid smoking of the lamplight, the eyes upon that bed, the guilty, frightened man. Still full of himself, he cried:

"Come and see what I have found."

"I couldn't do it, master," moaned Oliver. "I took it down, but the eyes opened. 'Don't ye hurt me,' it said. I be just come. Bain't time vor me to go."

Still Searell would not understand.

"Come," he said impatiently. "She was upon my path, among my flowers."

Then life stirred again upon the bed, and Sibley drew herself up with ravenous eyes and muttered:

"Alive – alive!"

Soon the room was like a chapel. The smoky lamp had been extinguished, the prie-dieu stood beside the bed, the candles cast

a warm, soft light; and outside upon the moor was peace. Even the merry piper had become weary and had put all things to sleep till daybreak; while Oliver Vorse upon his knees confessed the sin which had been forced upon him.

"Us dared not keep she. Sibley dared, but not me. If a child wur born, us must go, yew said. I couldn't face it, but her would ha' faced it. Us be ready to go now," he said boldly. "I ha' these hands. I'll fight. I ha' the maiden to fight vor."

"Her lives. Her moves on my bosom," cried Sibley. "Look at 'em, master. Did ye ever see the like?"

"What made you kinder, Sibley, more attentive to me, soft and tender?"

"'Twur the child coming, master."

"What made you sober, Oliver, fond of your wife? What was it stopped the quarelling?"

"I minded the little child, master."

There was something tender in their illiterate speech.

"You cast her away. The sin is mine, so is the atonement. And she is mine."

"She'm mine, master," murmured Sibley.

"I found her among my flowers, the reward of my searching. She is the answer," he said. "Let her be to you the daughter of love, and to me the daughter of violence. Oliver," he cried, turning, "bring up water from the pixy-stream. As the sun rises I will baptise – my child."

"Yew'm fond o' she, master?"

"She is mine," he said, with the old impatience.

"And we, master?"

"I am old and you are young," said Searell. "But we are all beginning life, we know nothing. We will try to find another and a better pathway."

He went back to his rooms to rest, but not to sleep, for there was something burning inside him like a coal from the altar; and a new light crept upon the moor, giving it form, changing it from black to purple. It was the dawn.

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

Tavy river rises on Cranmere, flows down Tavy Cleave, divides the parish of Mary Tavy from that of Peter Tavy, passes Tavy Mount, and leaves Dartmoor at Tavystock, or Tavistock as it is now spelt. Each Dartmoor river confers its name, or a portion of it, upon certain features of its own district. The Okements meet at Okehampton, and one of them has Oke Tor, which has been corrupted into Ock and even Hock. Even the tiny Lyd has its Lydford. Each river also has its particular characteristic. The East Okement is the river of ferns, the Teign the river of woods, the Taw the river of noise, the Dart the river of silence, and the Tavy is the river of rocks. Tavy Cleave from the top of Ger Tor, presents a grand and solemn spectacle of rock masses piled one upon the other; it is a valley of rocks, relieved only by the foaming little river.

Mary Tavy is a straggling village of unredeemed ugliness, wild and bare. It lies exposed on the side of the moor and is swept by every wind, for not a bush or even a bramble will be found upon the rounded hills adjoining. Once the place was a mining centre of some importance. The black moor has been torn into pits and covered with mounds by the tin-streamers in early days, and more recently by the copper-miners. All around Mary Tavy appear the dismal ruins of these mines, or wheals as they are called. Peter Tavy, across the river, is not so dreary, but is equally exposed.

This region during the winter is one of the most inhospitable spots to be found in England.

In Peter Tavy there lived, until quite recently, an elderly man, who might have posed as the most incompetent creature in the West Country. It is hardly necessary to say he did not do so, on the contrary, he posed as a many-sided genius. He occupied a hideous little tin house, which would have been condemned at a glance in those parts of the country where building by-laws are in existence. At one time and another he had borrowed the dregs of paint-pots, and had endeavoured to decorate the exterior. As a result, one portion was black, another white, and another blue. Over the door a board appeared setting forth the accomplishments of Peter Tavy, as he may here be called. According to his own showing he was a clock-maker; he was a photographer; he was a Dartmoor guide; he was a dealer in antiquities; he was a Reeve attached to the Manor of Lydford; and he was a purveyor of manure. This board was in its way a masterpiece of fiction. Once upon a time a resident, anxious to put Peter's powers to the test, sent him an old kitchen-clock to repair. He examined and gave it as his opinion that the undertaking would require time. When a year had passed the owner of the clock requested Peter to report progress. He replied that the work was getting on, but "'Twas a slow business and 'twould take another six months to make a job of it." At the end of that period the clock was removed, almost by force, and it was then discovered that Peter had sold most of the interior

mechanism to a singularly innocent tourist as Druidical remains unearthed by him in one of the shafts of Wheal Betsy.

As a photographer he carried his impudence still further. Some one had given him an old camera and a few plates. He began at once to inveigle visitors – chiefly elderly ladies, "half-dafty maidens" he impolitely called them – down Tavy Cleave, where he would pose them on rocks and pretend to photograph them with plates which had already been exposed more than once. "If I doan't get a picture first time, I goes on till I do," he explained. Once, when Peter announced "'twas a fine picture this time," a gentleman of the party reminded him he had omitted to remove the cap from the lens. Peter was not to be caught that way: "I took 'en," he said, "I took 'en, but yew was yawning."

As a guide upon the moor Peter was an equal failure. He ought to have known Dartmoor after living upon it all his life; the truth was, he would have lost his way upon the road to Tavistock had he strayed from it a moment. Visitors, lured by the notice-board, had approached him from time to time with the request to be guided to Cranmere. Peter would take them along Tavy Cleave for a mile, then assure them a storm was coming up and it would be necessary to seek shelter as soon as possible, hurry them back, and demand half-a-guinea in return for his services. Peter had never been to Cranmere Pool, and had no idea how to get there. Sometimes a party would insist upon proceeding, in spite of the guide's warning, and in such cases the bewildered Peter would have to be shown the way home by his victims. He would demand

the half-guinea all the same.

As a dealer in antiquities nothing came amiss. Broken pipes, bits of crockery, old mining-tools, any rubbish rotting or rusting upon the peat were gathered and classified as Druidical remains. No one knew where Peter had picked up the word Druidical; but it was certain he picked up their supposed remains on the piece of black moor which surrounded his house. Sometimes, it was said, he found a tourist foolish enough to purchase a selection of this rubbish.

What he meant by describing himself as an official receiving pay from the Duchy of Cornwall nobody ever knew. As a Reeve (another word he had picked up somewhere) of the Manor of Lydford he believed himself to be intimately connected with the lord of that manor, who is the Prince of Wales. He knew that august personage was interested somehow in three feathers. The public-house in the neighbourhood called *The Plume of Feathers* had something to do with it he was sure, though he had never seen "goosey's feathers same as they on the sign-board." Once he thought seriously of erecting three feathers above his own door, and for that purpose captured a neighbor's goose and plucked three large quills from one of its wings, accompanying his action with the bland request, "Now bide still, goosey-gander, do' ye." He could not make his three goose-quills graceful and drooping, like those upon the sign-board, and that was probably why Peter refrained from doing the Lord of Dartmoor the compliment of assuming his crest.'

The village of Peter Tavy, like most spots upon Dartmoor, has its summer visitors; and these were sure, sooner or later, to make the acquaintance of Peter Tavy the man. They thought him a harmless idiot, and he reciprocated. One summer a journalist came upon the moor for his health and, desiring to combine business with pleasure, he wrote a descriptive sketch of Peter, and this was published in due course in a paper which by a curious accident reached Peter himself. The man was furious. He went about the two villages with the paper in his hand, his scanty hair bristling, his watery eyes bulging, his mouth twisted into a very ugly shape. It was a good thing the journalist had departed, for just then Peter was angry and vindictive enough for anything. Presently he met his clergyman; he made towards him, held out the paper, and, regardless of grammar, cried out, "That's me."

"He does not mention you by name," said the clergyman.

"He says the man in the iron house wi' notice-board atop. He's got down the notice-board as 'tis," spluttered Peter. "He says a ginger-headed man – that's me; face like a rabbit – that's me."

It was as a purveyor of manure that Peter found his level, if not a living. Probably he received financial assistance from his sister, who lived across the river at Mary Tavy. She had been formerly a lady's maid in Torquay; after more than thirty years' service her mistress had died, and had bequeathed to her a modest income, and on this she lived comfortably in retirement, crossing Tavy Cleave occasionally to visit her eccentric brother. She, too, was said to be eccentric, but that was only because she was fond

of getting full value for a halfpenny. Mary Tavy was a spinster, and Peter Tavy was a bachelor. On those occasions when some ne'er-do-well attempted to annex Mary and her income, the good woman's eccentricity had revealed itself very strongly; and as for Peter, his own sister would remark, "Women never could abide he."

The Tavies always passed Christmas together. One year Peter would go across and stop with Mary for three days; the next, Mary would come across and stop with Peter for three days. Their rule on this matter was fixed; the visit never extended beyond three days, and Peter would not have dreamed of going across to Mary if it were the turn of Mary to come across to him.

Peter had a little cart and a pony to draw it. How he came by the pony nobody knew, but as it was never identified no hard questions were asked. Every year a few Dartmoor ponies are missed when the drift takes place; and at the same time certain individuals take to owning shaggy little steeds which have no past history. When a brand has been skilfully removed, one Dartmoor pony is very much like a score of others. To drive Peter into a corner over his title to the pony which pulled his shameful little cart – it was hardly better than a packing-case on wheels – would have been impossible. He had hinted that it was a present from the Prince of Wales as a slight return for services rendered; and as no one else in the Tavy district was in the habit of communicating with the lord of the manor, his statement could not easily be refuted.

With this pony and unlicensed cart Peter would convey people from time to time to the station at Mary Tavy, making a charge of eighteen pence, which was not exorbitant considering the dangers and difficulties of the road. For conveying his sister from her home to his at Christmas he made a charge of one shilling, when she expostulated, as she always did, and quoted the proverb "Charity begins at home," Peter invariably replied with another proverb, "Business is business."

Few will have forgotten the winter of 1881, when snow fell for over a week, and every road was lost and every cleave choked. Snow was lurking in sheltered nooks upon the tops of Ger Tor and the High Willhays range as late as the following May. Snow upon Dartmoor does not always mean snow elsewhere. It is possible sometimes to stand knee-deep upon the high moor and look down upon a stretch of country without a flake upon it, and so on to the sugared and frosted hills of Exmoor; but no part of the country escaped the great fall of 1881. Every one on the moor can tell of some incident in connection with that Christmas. At the two Tavies they tell how Peter tried to drive Mary from his village to hers, how he failed in the attempt, and how both of them remained good business people to the end.

It was Mary's turn to visit Peter that year, and she arrived upon Christmas Eve, quaintly but warmly dressed, a small boy carrying her basket, which contained the articles that she deemed necessary for her visit, together with a bottle of spiced wine, some cream cakes, and a plum-pudding as big as her head.

The boy said a good many uncomplimentary things about that pudding as they climbed up from the Tavy, comparing it to the Giant's Pebble higher up the cleave. When Mary raised her black-mittened hand and threatened him with chastisement, the urchin lifted out the pudding in its cloth, set it at her feet, and told her to carry it herself, as it was "enough to pinch a strong man dragging that great thing up the cleave"; so Mary had to finish the journey hugging the pudding like a baby. She was walking to save herself sixpence. Peter had offered to come for her with his pony and cart, the charge to be one shilling, payable as follows – sixpence when she got into the cart and sixpence when she got out; but Mary had told him that she could get a boy to carry her basket for half that amount; when he protested she reminded him that business was business.

A light sprinkle of snow had fallen, just enough to dust over the rocks and furze-bushes; but it was very cold, the clouds were low and wood-like, and there was in the air that feel of snow which animals can nearly always detect, and men who live on the moors can sometimes.

Peter and Mary spent the evening in simple style. Peter sat on one side of the fire, Mary on the other; sometimes Peter stirred to get fresh turves for the fire; sometimes Mary got up to heap the little table with good cheer and place it midway between the old-fashioned chairs. They both smoked, they both took snuff, they both drank spiced wine. Towards evening they talked of old times and became merry. Then they talked of old people and

grew sentimental, dropping tears into their hot wine. Peter got up and kissed Mary, but Mary did not care for Peter's caresses and told him so, whereupon Peter advised her to "get along home then." Mary declared she would, but changed her mind when she thought of the gloomy cleave and the Tavy in winter flood; so they went on smoking, taking snuff, and drinking spiced wine.

The next day was fine, and Peter and Mary went to chapel. Mary gave her brother a penny to put into the plate, but he put it into his pocket instead; he was always a man of business. She also gave him a bright new florin as a Christmas present. He had made her understand, when the coin was safe in his possession, that he should still demand a shilling for driving her home, and over that point they wrangled for some time. In the evening, when Peter had fallen asleep over the fire, Mary repented of her kindness and sought to regain the florin; but Peter had it hidden away safely in his boot.

When the time came for Mary to start homewards it was snowing fast, and she did not like the prospect. Although it was not much after three o'clock, the outlook was exceedingly dark; there was an unpleasant silence upon the moor, and the snowflakes were larger and falling thickly. But the pony was harnessed to the unsteady conveyance, and Peter was waiting; before Mary could utter a word of protest, he had bundled her in and they were off.

"'Twould have paid me better to bide home," said Mary.

"Do'ye sit quiet," Peter growled. Then he added, "Where's the

shillun?"

"There now, doan't ye worry about the shillun," said Mary; "I'll give it ye when I'm safe and sound to home wi' no bones broke."

"Shillun be poor pay vor driving this weather," said her business-like brother.

Now and again a light appeared from one of the cottages. The pony struggled on with its head down, while the silence seemed to grow more unearthly, and the darkness increased, and the snow became a solid descending mass. The road between the two Tavies is not easy in winter under favorable conditions, and on that night it was to become practically impassable. When the last light of Peter Tavy the village had vanished, Peter Tavy the man had about as much idea where he was as if he had just dropped out of the moon.

"Where be'st going?" shrieked Mary, as the cart swerved violently to the right.

"Taking a short cut," explained Peter.

"Dear life!" gasped Mary, "he'm pixy-led."

"I b'ain't," said Peter; "I be driving straight vor Mary Tavy."

Had he said straight for the edge of Tavy Cleave he would have spoken the truth. The pony knew perfectly well that they were off the road, and the sensible beast would have returned to the right way had it not been for Peter, who kept pulling its head towards the cleave. Left to itself the pony would have returned to Peter Tavy, having quite enough sense to know that it was impossible

to reach the sister village on such a night. Its master, with his fatal knack of blundering, tugged at the reins with one hand and plied the whip with the other. The snow was like a wall on every side; the clouds seemed to be dissolving upon them; suddenly the silence was broken by the roaring of the Tavy below.

"Us be going to kingdom come," shrieked Mary.

"Us b'ain't," said Peter; "us be going to Mary Tavy."

The pony stopped. Peter used his whip, and the next instant the snow appeared to rush towards them, open, and swallow them up. They had struck a boulder and gone over the cleave. The body of the cart was in one spot, its wheels were in another; and wallowing in the sea and snow were Peter and Mary and the pony. The animal was the first to regain its feet, and made off at once, with the broken harness trailing behind. Mary was the next to rise, plastered over with snow from head to foot; but she was soon down again, because her legs refused to support her. Presently she heard her brother's voice. He was invisible, because he had been thrown several feet lower, and had landed among rocks somewhat bruised and sprained; had it not been for the soft snow he would probably have been killed.

"I be broke to bits," he wailed.

"So be I," cried Mary; "So be the cart."

"Be the cart broke?" said Peter; and when Mary had replied it was only fit for firewood (it had not been fit for much else before the accident), he went on, "'Twill cost ye a lot o' money to buy me a new one."

"Buy ye a new one? The man be dafty!" screamed Mary.

"'Twas taking yew home what broke it," Peter explained.

"Call this taking me home?" Mary shouted.

"I done my best," said Peter; "'twas your weight what sent it over. There'll be the cart, and the harness and the doctor's bill, 'twill cost ye a heap o' money."

"Dear life, hear the man talk!" said Mary, appealing to the snow which was piled upon her ample form.

"Mayhap there'll be funeral expenses," said Peter lugubriously; "I be hurt dreadful."

"Yew won't want the cart then," his sister muttered; "and I'll have the pony."

"Where be the pony?" Peter demanded.

"Gone home likely; got more sense than we," said Mary. "Why doan't ye get up, Peter?"

"Get up wi' my two legs broke!" Peter replied in disgust.

"Dear life, man, get up!" Mary went on, with real alarm. "If us doan't get up soon us'll be stone dead carpses when us gets home."

"I'll try, Mary, I'll try," said Peter.

"Come up here, Peter; there be a sheltered spot over agin them rocks," said Mary.

"There be a sheltered spot down here," Peter answered; "'tis easier vor yew to roll down than vor me to climb up."

When the question had been argued, Mary went down; that is to say, she groped and grovelled through the snow, half-rolling,

half-sliding, until she reached the shelter to which Peter had dragged himself. It was a small cleft, a chimney, mountaineers would have called it, in the centre of a rock-mass which made a small tor on the side of the cleave. Normally, this chimney acted as a drain for the rock-basin above, but it was then frozen up and dry. Peter was right at the back, huddled up as he could never have been had any bones been broken. When Mary appeared he dragged her in; she was almost too stout to pass inside, but as he placed her she made an excellent protection for him against the storm. Mary realised this, and suggested they should change places; but Peter pointed out that in his shattered condition any movement might prove fatal.

Presently Mary began to cry, realizing the gravity of their position. The snow was descending more thickly than ever, drifting up the side of the cleave and choking the entrance to their cleft. Fortunately the night was not very cold, and they were both warmly clad, while the snow which was threatening to bury them was itself a protection. Help could not possibly reach them while the night lasted; no one would know what had befallen them, and they were unable to walk. When Mary began to cry Peter abused her, until his thoughts also began to trouble him.

"Think they'll put what's on my notice-board on my tombstone?" he inquired.

"Now doan't ye talk about tombstoanes, doan't ye now," implored Mary tearfully.

"Business is business," said Peter. "I told 'em to give me a great

big tombstone, and to put upon him, *Peter Tavy, Clock-maker, Photographer, Dealer in Antiquities, Dartmoor Guide, Reeve of the Manor of Lydford, Purveyor of Manure, and et cetera.*"

"Doan't ye worry about it; they'll put it all down," said Mary.

"Us'll be buried together, same afternoon, half-past two likely," Peter went on.

"Doan't ye talk about funerals and tombstoanes," Mary implored. "Talk about spicy wine, and goosey fair, and them wooden horses that go round and round, and hurdy-gurdy music; talk about they, Peter."

"It ain't the time," said Peter bitterly.

A long dreary period of silence followed. Peter Tavy the village and Mary Tavy its sister were completely snowed up; and in the cleave of the river which divided the parishes Peter Tavy the man was snowed up with Mary Tavy his sister. They were miserably cold and drowsy. The snow was piled up in front of the chimney like a wall; there was hardly room for Mary to move, and Peter kept on groaning. At length he roused himself to remark: "Yew owes me a shillun."

"What would I owe ye a shillun vor?" said Mary sharply, wide-awake immediately at any suggestion of parting with money.

"Vor the drive," said Peter.

"I was to give ye a shillun vor taking me home, not vor breaking me bones and leaving me to perish in Tavy Cleave," said Mary. "Yew ain't earned the shillun, and I doan't see how yew'm going to."

"Yew owes me a shillun," repeated her brother doggedly. "I done my best to tak' ye home, and there was naught in your agreement wi' me about accidents. I never contracted to tak' ye home neither."

"Yew never promised to starve me wi' ice and snow on Tavy Cleave neither," replied Mary.

"I didn't promise nothing. I meant to tak' ye home, reasonable wear and tear excepted; this here is reasonable wear and tear. Yew promised to give me a shillun."

"When yew put me down," added Mary.

"Yew wur put down," said Peter.

"Not to my door."

"That warn't my fault," said Peter. "Twas your worriting what done it; if yew hadn't worried I'd have put ye out to Mary Tavy. Yew worried and upset the cart, and now we'm dying."

"I b'ain't dying," said Mary stoutly.

"I be," said Peter drearily. "I be all cold and nohow inside. I be a going to die; I'd like to die wi' that shillun in my pocket."

"Doan't ye go on about it, Peter. If yew'm dying yew'll soon be in a place where yew won't want shilluns."

"While I be here I want 'en," said Peter. "Yew'll be fearful sorry when yew see me lying a cold corpse wi'out a shillun in my pocket."

"Give over, can't ye," cried Mary. "You'll be giving me the creepies. If yew wur to turn carpsy I wouldn't bide wi' ye."

There was no reply. Silence fell again, and the only sound

was the moaning of the wind and the roaring of the Tavy; the snow went on falling and drifting. Another hour passed, and then Mary shook off her drowsiness, and called timidly, "Peter." There was no answer; she could see nothing; her fear returned and she shuddered. "Peter," she called again; there was still no reply. Mary pressed her stout figure forward and reached out fearfully; she heard a groan. "Ah, doan't ye die," she implored; "wait till us gets out o' this. What's the matter, Peter?"

"Yew owes me a shillun," whispered a voice.

"I doan't owe it, Peter, I doan't," cried Mary. "If yew had drove me across the river I'd have paid ye, I would; but us be still in the parish of Peter Tavy – "

She was interrupted by another and a deeper groan. "Be yew that bad?" she asked earnestly.

"I be like an old clock past mending," Peter answered. "My mainspring be broke; I be about to depart this life, December the twenty-seventh, eighteen hundred and eighty-one, aged fifty-eight, in hopes of being thoroughly cleaned and repaired and set a going in the world to come."

"Can't I do anything vor ye, Peter?" asked Mary gently.

"Yew can give me the shillun yew owes me," replied Peter.

"'Tis hard of ye to want a shillun if yew'm dying."

"Business is business," Peter moaned.

Fumbling in the little black bag she carried beneath her skirt, Mary produced a coin and held it out, saying sadly: "Here 'tis, Peter; I doan't want to give it to ye, but if 'twill make yew die

happy, I must."

With singular agility Peter reached out his hand, and after groping a little in the darkness secured the precious coin. He felt it, he bit it, and he asked with suspicion: "How I be to know 'tis a shillun? He tastes like a halfpenny."

"I know 'tis a shillun; I ain't got no coppers," Mary answered.

Peter's groans ceased from that moment; he pocketed the coin and chuckled.

"I be a lot better," he said; "my legs b'ain't quite broke, I reckon, and I ain't so cold inside, neither."

Mary's reply was too eccentric to mention.

So soon as it was day a party of villagers set out from Peter Tavy well supplied with blankets and stimulants; Peter and Mary were not the only ones missing that fateful morning. The pony had returned to its stable the evening before, and had been seen by the local constable trailing its broken harness past the beer-house. An attempt had been made to find the couple then, but their tracks were completely hidden. Snow was still descending as the relief party waded through the drifts upon the edge of the cleave. The moor had disappeared during the night, and a strange region of white mountains had risen in its stead. The searchers worked their way on, with a hopeless feeling that they were only wasting their time, when they thought they heard a whistle. They stopped and argued the matter like the three jolly huntsmen; one said it was a man, another said it was a bird, and another it was the wind. They were all wrong; it was a woman. Out of the centre

of a huge white mass down the cleave appeared a black scarf tied to the end of an umbrella.

Peter and Mary were rescued, not without difficulty, because the snow was four feet in depth on the side of the cleave, and were conveyed in due course to their respective villages. Being a hardy couple they were little the worse for their adventure, although Peter posed as an invalid to the end of his days, and sought parish relief in consequence; that was simply a matter of business.

So soon as the roads became passable and he was able to walk, Peter tramped across to Mary Tavy, to pay his sister a friendly, and a business, visit. "There be ten shilluns yew owes vor breaking my cart and harness," he explained. "When be yew a going to pay?"

"Never," replied Mary decidedly.

"Then I'll tak' ye into court," said Peter.

THE CHRISTENING OF THE FIFTEEN PRINCESSES A MODERN FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time there was a village called Lew, and it was perched on the top of a hill 999 feet, 11 inches high. That is the way fairy-tales have to begin; they insist upon going back into the remote past; but unfortunately the village of Lew has come down to our own days, and so has the big hill on which it stands. If we start over again with, "Once upon a time there was a man of Lew who had fifteen daughters," we are confronted by exactly the same difficulty; for the man is still alive, and the fifteen daughters look as if they never would, nor could, belong to the period when little pixy maids were to be seen any night running round and round the furze-bushes. The only way out of the difficulty is to be courageous, to tell the truth, and say: At the top of a hill 999 feet, 11 inches high – some say it is 1,000 feet, but that is not true – stands the village of Lew, where dwells a man named Heathman, who has fifteen daughters and not a single son; and the daughters are all princesses, although it is not easy to say why; but as they are pretty, and this is a fairy-tale, they must be.

The little village lies within a kind of ring-fence of ash and sycamores, which shelter the cob houses from the furious gales

which boom and bluster over the Dartmoor tors. The wind is always sighing and moaning. It is cool upon the hottest day in August, and probably that is why Lew imports weak-chested people in some quantity. A regular business is done with big, smoky Bristol. Lew says to Bristol in its own language, "Us ha' butiful air up over in Demshur, and us ha' a proper plenty o' cream and butter and suchlike, but us ain't got much golden money. If yew sends us sickly volk, they can buy our cream and butter, and us will send 'em back strong." Bristol sees the force of this argument, and packs up and sends off its weak-chested folk, who reason, quite sensibly, "What's the use of being ill when we can go to the top of Lew hill and get well?" There is a tariff, of course, for Lew does not believe in free imports. The weak-chested folk must buy cream and butter and suchlike in vast quantities, or they would be promptly deported under the local Aliens Act. As a matter of fact, they buy Lew produce without any grumbling; they do even more than they are wanted to, and are actually spoiling Lew – where tips are unknown and a man will do an extraordinary lot of work for two shillings – by raising the prices. They get absurdly grateful, these visitors, who enter Lew weak and thin, and are exported brown and fat and sleek, like porpoises.

It is the importation of so much foreign raw material that has built up the fortunes of the fairy family called Heathman. His Majesty, the father – hereinafter called King Heathman – was village cobbler before he came to the throne. After his

accession he procured a horse and cart, and conveyed people to and from the distant station. He also annexed several acres of grass territory, by a process of peaceful penetration, and went in for cows and dairy produce. These two businesses developed so wonderfully that he dropped the cobbling, at which it must be owned he was always rather a poor hand. The weak-chested imports have to be brought up from the station ill, and taken back well; and while they are on the top of Lew hill they pass the time consuming cream, butter, milk, and eggs, which are provided by King Heathman, and delivered morning and evening by the golden-haired princesses. Their Majesties of the Palace – two cottages of red cob knocked into one – are busy people, and have no time for boasting; nor do they appear to think they have done anything out of the way in bringing up fifteen model princesses, not one of whom has ever given her parents an hour's anxiety. Sickness, some one will suggest; but that is a ridiculous idea, for the residents of Lew are never ill, and they live just as long as they like. Mrs. Heathman – hereinafter called Queen Heathman – looks the picture of health and strength, and only last Revel Week was footing it merrily after a long day's work, and dancing one or two anæmic young maids from foreign lands like Plymouth to a standstill. Old Grandfather Heathman, His Majesty's father, who is so much addicted to Lew that he won't die, had the impertinence to be dancing too. He must be nearly a hundred, though he neither knows nor cares about his age, and will merely state in the course of conversation that he intends to

live out the present century, because he is so fond of the place. Old Grandfather Heathman is probably the only man now living in England who has witnessed a fatal duel, which was fought some time in the dark ages between the son of the then rector of Lew and a young doctor, a lady being of course the cause. The unfortunate young doctor, who very likely had never handled a sword before, was quickly killed by his opponent, who was an army officer. A stone still marks the spot, but it has become so overgrown with brambles that only Grandfather Heathman knows where to look for it.

The crown princess is just twenty-three. The girls are nicely dressed, well educated, and speak and behave like little angels. If Romney were alive, he would want to paint them all. They are so pretty, these fifteen princesses of Lew. Each has a slender figure, wild-rose complexion, shy eyes, and fair hair. But it must not be imagined they are dancing princesses. One plays the American organ (which was alluded to with less respect as the harmonium twenty years ago) in the church; another is pupil-teacher; another manages the Sunday-school. They milk the cows and attend to the dairy work. All of them love animals; each has her dog, or cat, or bird, generally with her in work or in play. When you meet a pretty, well-dressed girl in Lew, you will not – unless you are the latest importation – ask her name. You will say, "And what is your number?" She will blush delightfully, lower her shy eyes, put her hands behind her back, and tell you.

When the first child was born the neighbours offered their

congratulations, and said, "Of course you will call her Annie." In this part of the country it is absolutely necessary to have a girl in the family of that name, and it is most unorthodox to call the first girl anything else. But King Heathman rebelled against custom. He did not care for the name Annie. He liked something daintier, something more unusual and fanciful. No doubt there is a vein of poetry somewhere in His Majesty's system. King Heathman stated plainly he would not have his daughter named Annie. He would go to the rector and ask him to supply a name. The good people of Lew were horrified at such heresy. They pointed out what a great risk he was running. It was quite possible he would not have another daughter, and thus his family would be branded with the disgrace of having no Annie. But King Heathman hardened his heart yet more, and tramped off to the rectory.

The rector of Lew is a scholar of the old type, an unconscious pedant who can hardly open his lips without quoting Latin or Greek, a type which before another twenty years have gone will be as extinct as the pixies. The rector of Lew is almost as much a curiosity of the past as Grandfather Heathman, only when people plant themselves on the top of the big hill 999 feet, 11 inches high, it never seems to occur to them that they are mortal. The rector solved the royal difficulty at once, and in the most natural way possible. "She is the first child. Let us call her either Prima or Una," he said. "Una is a pretty name."

"That 'tis, sir – that 'tis." For reasons of his own King

Heathman always prefers to use the dialect of his country.

"You will find the name in the *Faerie Queene* written by Spenser," the rector continued.

"Old John Spencer over to Treedown?" suggested His Majesty, who had not dabbled much in classics.

"No; Edmund Spenser, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth."

"Aw, yes, sir, I knows 'en," said King Heathman.

Of course he didn't, but perhaps he was referring to the queen. Every one in Lew knows Queen Elizabeth intimately, because there is a little old house in the village where she was fond of putting up for the night occasionally. This house is still furnished very much as it was in the sixteenth century, but whether the Maiden Lady ever saw or heard of Lew is another matter. It is certain, however, that Queen Elizabeth occupied most of her long reign travelling about the country in order that she might sleep in out-of-the-way manor-houses. Whenever you visit any old house in this neighbourhood it is only polite to say, "Queen Elizabeth slept here, of course?" And then you will be shown the room and the bed, and if you go on being polite you may very possibly see the sheets and blankets and pillow-slips also, with the pillow itself still marked with the impression of Queen Elizabeth's head.

Princess Heathman was duly christened Una, to the delight of her father, and the horror of the inhabitants. Every one breathed a sigh of relief when a second princess favoured Lew with her appearance. After all, the Heathmans would not be disgraced.

There would be an Annie in the family, though they hardly deserved it after letting the first chance slip. King Heathman remained as silent as the Sphinx, and about as mysterious. When the time came for the royal christening, the church was filled. The rector received a particularly plump bundle from Queen Heathman, and placed it snugly into the hollow of his arm. He dipped his hand into the font, and the whisper of "Annie" went about the church. The next moment they heard, "Secunda, I baptise thee..."

The next year Princess Tertia was christened, and then Princess Quarta. Even the rector admitted Quarta was rather an unusual name, but His Majesty revelled in it, and would hear of nothing else. Every one said Q was such an awkward initial; and they had to make the same remark next year when Princess Quinta was brought to the font. "Sounds like squint," said one of the grumblers; but not one would venture to suggest such a thing now. By this time the gossips of Lew had pretty well accommodated themselves to the idea that King Heathman was irreclaimable. Annie, Bessie, and Lucy were the orthodox village names for young ladies; and it was perfectly clear he would have none of them.

In quick succession princesses were hurried to the font, and the unromantic ears of the congregation were astonished by a list of beautiful names – Sexta, Septima, Octava, Nona of the wonderful eyes, and Decima of the sunny hair. But when the eleventh princess was brought to church a serious difficulty

arose. A perfect understanding existed between His Majesty and the court chaplain. The father had no idea what the name of his new daughter was to be when she was handed into the scholar's arms. The rector did not use the formula, "Name this child," but substituted the question, "What is her number?" or words to that effect. On this occasion, when the question was put, and King Heathman had answered, "Eleven, sir," the rector paused. Then he whispered, "Would you like Undecima?"

"Aw, sir, proper. Let's ha' 'en," was the eager answer.

The rector hesitated. Across his classical mind flashed the Latin numbers ahead. The twelfth princess would have to be christened Duodecima, and after that such names became impossible. So he whispered, "Undecima is too much like Decima. We must think of something else."

"As yew like, sir," said his accommodating Majesty, although in distinctly disappointed tones.

"Now there will be an Annie," murmured those villagers who were nearest the font and had overheard the discussion.

While the rector was deliberating his eyes fell among flowers, the church happening to be decorated for a festival, and bunches of the white cluster-rose known as the Seven Sisters being twined about the font; and he suggested that, if King Heathman was agreeable, a bevy of flower-named princesses would be a pleasing relief after the dull monotony of numbers.

"Twill do fine, sir," said King Heathman.

And that is how the Princess Rosa came to be christened.

But princesses went on filling the palace, and names were soon running short again. Rosa had been followed by Lilia, Viola, and Veronica. King Heathman was becoming fastidious. He had imbibed so much raw material of knowledge from the court chaplain that he was beginning to regard himself as a scholar of some importance. Then his royalty was increasing in Lew; and he always wore a hard hat, which, in this part of the country, is a sign, not exactly of majesty, but of stability and respectability. He still hankered after the numbers, and was looking forward to the birth of a twentieth princess who could be called Vicesima. The fifteenth princess had just made her appearance, and the father continued to disregard the petition of the neighbours praying him to call her Annie before it was too late. It happened one day that he cast his eyes upon two flowering shrubs which grew in pots, one at each side of the palace gates. King Heathman could not remember the name of these shrubs, though he had been told often enough, so he called Tertia, and asked her to enlighten him.

"The name is on the tip of my tongue, but I can't get it out," said Tertia. "I'll call Una."

Una is court encyclopædia. She appeared with her beautiful hair ruffled, for she had been deep in arithmetic when Tertia called her, trying to paper an imaginary room, having most impossible angles, with imaginary wall-paper at the ridiculous price of one penny three-farthings a yard.

"What be the name o' that plant?" asked His Majesty.

"That is a hydrangea," said Una, in a delightfully prim and

pedantic fashion; and then she slipped back to her wall-papering at a penny three-farthings a yard.

"What b'est going to call the new maiden?" shouted the blacksmith a few moments later over the palace gates.

"Hydrangea," answered King Heathman grimly. Then he went into the state apartments to break the news to his wife, leaving the blacksmith to have a fit upon the road, or to go on to his smithy and have it there.

For the first time Queen Heathman rebelled. She said it was ridiculous to give the child a name like that: she was surprised that the rector should have thought of it, and she – But at that point her husband interrupted with the famous remark of the White Knight to Alice "'Tis my own invention."

This gave Queen Heathman free licence to exercise her tongue. She talked botany for some time, and concluded with such words as: "You'll call the poor maids vegetables next. If us ha' another maiden you'll call her Broad Bean, I reckon, and the next Scarlet Runner."

"One Scarlet Runner be plenty, my dear," said her husband, with regal pleasantry.

"What do ye mean?"

"Bain't your tongue one, my dear?"

This was a libel, for Queen Heathman is remarkably silent – for a woman. She had to laugh at her husband's little Joke. They have always been a devoted couple, and this little tiff was in perfect good-humour. Finally, King Heathman went off to

the rectory, where he discovered the court chaplain and the Home Secretary chatting upon the lawn. Without any preamble he disclosed his difficulty, and proposed that the fifteenth princess should be named Hydrangea. There was no seconder. The motion was declared lost, and the subject was thrown open for discussion.

The Home Secretary suggested that the princess just born and her eleven successors should be given the names of the months; and when he rolled forth such stately titles as Januaria, Februaria, Martia, His Majesty trembled. However, it occurred to him there might not be sufficient princesses to exhaust the months, and he stated with much dignity of language that he should not like to have an incomplete set. Then the Christian virtues were suggested, Faith, Patience, Charity, Mercy, Hope; but King Heathman would have none of them, not because he despised the virtues, but because he considered that his daughters had them all.

Then the rector interposed in his quiet manner:

"The child shall be called Serena."

"What do 'en mean, sir?" asked King Heathman eagerly.

"It means free from care."

"That's it, sir – that's it," said His Majesty, expressing satisfaction in his usual way.

"It is an appropriate name," the rector went on. "It implies a perfectly happy condition. There may be dangers, but the girl shall not know of them. There may be difficulties, but they shall

not trouble her – at least, we will hope so," he added with a smile.

"Thank ye, sir," said King Heathman. "And what will be the next name?" he asked hopefully.

"The next?" said the rector, still in his classical musings. "Why, the next child shall be called Placida."

But for some reason or other the Princess Placida has never come to claim her name. Serena appears to be the last. She is still a toddler. Almost any day of the week you may see her, fat and jolly, and extremely free from care, staggering between Septima and Octava as they go a-milking. She is generally embracing a yellow and very ugly cat, in lieu of a doll. If you ask her name, she is just able to lisp, "I'se Swena."

The gossips of Lew have revenged themselves upon King Heathman. They refuse to call the baby Serena. They call her Annie.

And they are all living happily ever afterwards.