Barr Amelia E.

# The Paper Cap. A Story of Love and Labor

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# Amelia E. Barr
# The Paper Cap / A Story of Love and Labor

## TO SAMUEL GOMPERS

THE WORKER'S FRIEND THIS STORY OF LABOR'S FORTY YEARS' STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

This is the Gospel of Labor,
Ring it, ye bells of the Kirk,
The Lord of Love came down from above
To live with the people who work.

*Henry Van Dyke*

The headdress of nationalities, and of public and private societies, has been in all ages a remarkable point of interest. Religion, Poetry, Politics, superstitions, and so forth, have all found expression by the way they dressed or covered their heads. Priests, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, traders, professions of all kinds are known by some peculiar covering of the head which they assume. None of these symbols are without interest, and most of them typify the character or intents of their wearers.

The Paper Cap has added to its evident story a certain amount of mystery, favorable in so far as it permits us to exercise our ingenuity in devising a probable reason for its selection as the symbol of Labor. A very industrious search has not yet positively revealed it. No public or private collection of old prints of the seventeenth century that I have seen or heard from has any representation of an English working man wearing a Paper Cap. There is nothing of the kind in any *Hone's* four large volumes of curious matters; nor does *Notes and Queries* mention it. Not until the agitation and the political disturbance attending the Reform Bill, is it seen or mentioned. Then it may be found in the rude woodcuts and chap books of the time while in every town and village it soon became as familiar as the men who wore it.

Now, if the working man was looking for a symbol, there are many reasons why the Paper Cap would appeal to him. It is square, straight, upright; it has no brim. It permits the wearer to have full sight for whatever he is doing. It adds five inches or more to his height. It is cool, light and clean, and it is made of a small square of brown paper, and costs nothing. Every man makes his own paper cap, generally while he smokes his first morning pipe. It was also capable of assuming all the expressions of more pretentious head coverings – worn straight over the brows, it imparted a steady, business-like appearance. Tilted to one side, it showed the wearer to be interested in his own appearance. If it was pushed backward he was worried or uncertain about his work. On the heads of large masterful men it had a very "hands off" look. Employers readily understood its language.

I do not remember ever seeing anyone but working men wear a Paper Cap and they generally wore it with an "air" no pretender could assume. In the days of the Reform Bill a large company of Paper-Capped men were a company to be respected.

The man whose clever fingers first folded into such admirable shape a piece of brown paper seems to be unknown. I was once told he was a Guiseley man, again he was located at Burnley, or Idle. No one pretended to know his name. It was perhaps some tired weaver or carpenter whose head was throbbing in the sultry room and who feared to expose it to the full draught from some open window near his loom or bench. No other affiliation ever assumed or copied this cap in any way and for a century it has stood bravely out as the symbol of Labor; and has been respected and recognized as the badge of a courageous and intelligent class.

Now, if we do not positively know the facts about a certain matter, we can consider the circumstances surrounding it and deduct from them a likelihood of the truth; and I cannot avoid a strong belief that the Paper Cap was invented early in the agitation for the Reform Bill of A. D. 1832 and very likely directly after the immense public meeting at New Hall, where thousands of English working men took bareheaded and with a Puritan solemnity, a solemn oath to stand by the Reform Bill until it was passed. It was not fully passed until 1884, and during that interval the Paper Cap was everywhere in evidence. Might it not be the symbol of that oath and a quiet recognition of brotherhood and comradeship in the wearing of it?

It is certain that after this date, 1884, its use gradually declined, yet it is very far from being abandoned. In Nova Scotia and Canada it is still common, and we all know how slowly any personal or household habit dies in England. I am very sure that if I went to-morrow to any weaving town in the West Riding, I would see plenty of Paper Caps round the great centers of Industry. Last week only, I received half-a-dozen from a large building firm in Bradford.

As a symbol of a sacred obligation between men, it is fitting and unique. It has never been imitated or copied, and if the habit of making a clean one every day is observed, then whatever it promises will be kept clean and clear in the memory. Long live the Paper Cap!

My theory that the Paper Cap is associated with the Reform Bill, may, or may not be correct, but the union seems to be a very natural one – the Bill deserved the friendship and long adherence of the Cap, and the Cap deserved the freedom and strength of the Bill.

# CHAPTER I – THE SQUIRE OF ANNIS

"The turning point in life arrives for all of us.
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent."

NEARLY ninety years ago, there was among the hills and wolds of the West Riding of Yorkshire a lovely village called Annis. It had grown slowly around the lords of the manor of Annis and consisted at the beginning of the nineteenth century of men and women whose time was employed in spinning and weaving. The looms were among their household treasures. They had a special apartment in every home, and were worthily and cheerfully worked by their owners. There were no mills in Annis then, and no masters, and no Trade Unions. They made their own work-hours and the Leeds Cloth Hall settled the worth of their work.

Squire Antony Annis owned the greater part of the village. The pretty white stone cottages, each in its own finely cared-for garden, were, generally speaking, parts of his estate and he took a fatherly, masterly care of them. It was the squire who bought their work, and who had to settle with the Leeds Cloth Hall. It was the squire who found the wool for the women to spin and who supplied the men with the necessary yarns.

He lived close to them. His own ancient Hall stood on a high hill just outside the village! – a many-gabled building that had existed for nearly three hundred years. On this same hilly plateau was the church of Annis, still more ancient, and also the Rectory, a handsome residence that had once been a monastery. Both were in fine preservation and both were influential in the village life, though the ancient church looked down with grave disapproval on the big plain Wesleyan Chapel that had stolen from it the lawful allegiance it had claimed for nearly five centuries. Yet its melodious chimes still called at all canonical hours to worship, and its grand old clock struck in clarion tones the hours of their labor and their rest.

They were handsome men in this locality, strong and powerful, with a passion for horses and racing that not even Methodism could control. Their women were worthy of them, tall and fine-looking, with splendid coloring, abundant hair, and not unfrequently eyes like their Lancashire neighbors; gray and large, with long dark lashes, and that "look" in them which the English language has not yet been able to find a word for. They were busy wives, they spun the wool for their husbands' looms and they reared large families of good sons and daughters.

The majority of the people were Methodists – after their kind. The shepherds on the mountains around took as naturally to Methodism as a babe to its mother's milk. They lived with their flocks of Merino sheep half their lives in the night and its aërial mysteries. The doctrine of "Assurance" was their own spiritual confidence, and John Wesley's Communion with the other world they certified by their own experience. As to the weavers, they approved of a religion that was between God and themselves only. They had a kind of feudal respect for Squire Annis. He made their pleasant independent lives possible and they would take a word or two of advice or reproof from him; and also the squire knew what it was to take a glass of strong ale when he had been to a race and seen the horse he had backed, win it – but the curate! The curate knew nothing about horses.

If they saw the curate approaching them they got out of his way; if they saw the squire coming they waited for him. He might call them idle lads, but he would walk to their looms with them and frankly admire the excellence of their work, and perhaps say: "I wonder at a fine lad like thee leaving a bit of work like that. If I could do it I would keep at it daylight through."

And the weaver would look him bravely in the face and answer – “Not thou, squire! It wouldn’t be a bit like thee. I see thee on t’ grandstand, at ivery race I go to. I like a race mysen, it is a varry democratic meeting.”

Then the squire would give the child at the spinning wheel a shilling and go off with a laugh. He knew that in any verbal contest with Jimmy Riggs, he would not be the victor.

Also if the squire met any mother of the village he would touch his hat and listen to what she wished to say. And if one of her lads was in trouble for “catching a rabbit on the common” – though he suspected the animal was far more likely from his own woods – he always promised to help him and he always did so.

“Our women have such compelling eyes,” he would remark in excuse, “and when they would look at you through a mist of tears a man that can say ‘no’ to them isn’t much of a man.”

Naturally proud, the squire was nevertheless broadly affable. He could not resist the lifted paper cap of the humblest man and his lofty stature and dignified carriage won everyone’s notice. His face was handsome, and generally wore a kind thoughtful expression, constantly breaking into broad smiles. And all these advantages were seconded and emphasized by his scrupulous dress, always fit and proper for every occasion.

He was riding slowly through the village one morning when he met a neighbor with whom he had once been on intimate friendly terms. It was John Thomas Bradley, who had just built a large mill within three miles of Annis village and under the protecting power of the government had filled it with the latest power-looms and spinning jennies.

“Good morning, Annis!” he said cheerfully. “How dost tha do?”

“I do none the better for thy late doings. I can tell thee that!”

“Is tha meaning my new building?”

“Is tha ashamed to speak its proper name? It’s a factory, call it that. And I wouldn’t wonder, if tha hes been all through Annis, trying to get some o’ my men to help thee run it.”

“Nay, then. I wouldn’t hev a man that hes been in thy employ, unless it were maybe Jonathan Hartley. They are all petted and spoiled to death.”

“Ask Jonathan to come to thy machine shop. He wouldn’t listen to thee.”

“Well, then, I wouldn’t listen to his Chartist talk. I would want to cut the tongue out o’ his head. I would that! O Annis, we two hev been friends for forty years, and our fathers were hand and glove before us.”

“I know, Bradley, I know! But now thou art putting bricks and iron before old friendship and before all humanity; for our workers are men, first-rate men, too – and thou knows it.”

“Suppose they are, what by that?”

“Just this; thou can’t drive men by machines of iron tethered to steam! It is an awful mastership, that it is! It is the drive of the devil. The slaves we are going to set free in the West Indies are better off, far better off than factory slaves. They hed at any rate human masters, that like as not, hev a heart somewhere about them. Machines hev no heart, and no sympathy and no weakness of any make. They are regular, untiring, inexorable, and – ”

“They do more work and better work than men can do.”

“Mebbe they do, and so men to keep up wi’ them, hev to work longer, and harder, and wi’ constantly increasing peril o’ their lives. Yes, for the iron master, the man must work, work, work, till he falls dead at its iron feet. It is a cruel bad do! A bad do! Bradley, how can thou fashion to do such things? Oh, it isn’t fair and right, and thou knows it!”

“Well, Annis, thou may come to see things a good deal different and tha knows well I can’t quarrel wi’ thee. Does ta think I can iver forget March 21, 1823, when thou saved me and mine, from ruin?”

"Let that pass, Bradley. It went into God's memory – into God's memory only. Good morning to thee!" And the men parted with a feeling of kindness between them, though neither were able to put it into words.

Still the interview made the squire unhappy and he instantly thought of going home and telling his wife about it. "I can talk the fret away with Annie," he thought, and he turned Annisward.

At this time Madam Annis was sitting in the morning sunshine, with her finest set of English laces in her hand. She was going carefully over them, lifting a stitch here and there, but frequently letting them fall to her lap while she rested her eyes upon the wealth of spring flowers in the garden which at this point came close up to the windows.

Madam Annis was fifty years old but still a beautiful woman, full of life, and of all life's sweetest and bravest sympathies. She wore an Indian calico – for Manchester's printed calicoes were then far from the perfection they have since arrived at – and its bizarre pattern, and wonderfully brilliant colors, suited well her fine proportions and regal manner. A small black silk apron with lace pockets and trimmings of lace, and black silk bows of ribbon – a silver chatelaine, and a little lace cap with scarlet ribbons on it, were the most noticeable items of her dress though it would hardly do to omit the scarlet morocco slippers, sandaled and trimmed with scarlet ribbon and a small silver buckle on the instep.

Suddenly she heard rapid footsteps descending the great stairway, and in the same moment she erected her position, and looked with kind but steady eyes at the door. It opened with a swift noiseless motion and a girl of eighteen years entered; a girl tall and slender, with masses of bright brown hair, a beautiful mouth and star-like eyes.

"Mother," she said, "how am I to go to London this spring?"

"I am not yet in thy father's intentions about the journey, Katherine. He promised to take thee when he went up to the House. If he forswears his promise, why then, child, I know not. Ask him when he is going."

"I did so this morning and he said I must excuse him at present."

"Then he will take thee, later."

"That's a bit different, mother; and it isn't what he promised me. It is my wish to go now."

"There is no way for thee to go now. Let London wait for its proper time."

"Alura Percival, and Lady Capel, and Agatha Wickham, are already on their way there. Captain Chandos told me so an hour ago."

"Indeed! Has he learned how to speak the truth?"

"Like other people, he speaks as much of it as is profitable to him. If father is not going just yet cannot you go, dear mother? You know Jane will expect us to keep our promise."

"Jane knows enough of the times to understand why people are now often prevented from keeping their promises. Is Jane going much out?"

"A great deal and she says Lord Leyland wishes her to keep open house for the rest of the season. Of course, I ought to be with her."

"I see no 'ought' in the matter."

"She is my sister and can introduce me to noblemen and distinguished people. She desires me to come at once. I have just had a letter from her. And what about my frocks, mother? If father is not ready to go you could go with me, dear mother! That would be just as well, perhaps better!" And she said these flattering words from the very summit of her splendid eyes.

"There are people here in Annis who are wanting bread and – "

"It is their own fault, mother, and you know it. The Annis weavers are a lot of stubborn old fogies."

"They have only taken this world as they found it. Isn't that right?"

"No. It is all wrong. Every generation ought to make it better. You said that to father last night, I heard you."

"I doan't always talk to thy father as I do to thee. It wouldn't be a bit suitable. Whatever were thou talking to Captain Chandos for – if he is a captain – I doubt it."

"His uncle bought him a commission in The Scotch Greys. His mother is Scotch. I suppose he has as much right there, as the rest of the Hanover fools."

"And if thou are going to indulge thyself in describing people in the army and the court thou wilt get thy father into trouble."

"I saw father talking to Squire Bradley for a long time this morning."

"In what mood? I hope they were not – quarreling."

"They were disputing rather earnestly, father looked troubled, and so did Bradley."

"They were talking of the perishing poor and the dreadful state of. England no doubt. It's enough to trouble anybody, I'm sure of that."

"So it is, but then father has a bad way of making things look worse than they are. And he isn't friendly with Bradley now. That seems wrong, mother, after being friends all their live-long lives."

"It is wrong. It is a bit of silent treason to each other. It is that! And how did thou happen to see them talking this morning?"

"They met on the village green. I think Bradley spoke first."

"I'll warrant it. Bradley is varry good-natured, and he thought a deal o' thy father. How did thou happen to be on the green so early in the day?"

"I was sitting with Faith Foster, and her parlor window faces the Green."

"Faith Foster! And pray what took thee to her house?"

"I was helping her to sew for a lot of Annis babies that are nearly naked, and perishing with cold."

"That was a varry queer thing for thee to do."

"I thought so myself even while I was doing it – but Faith works as she likes with everyone. You can't say 'No' to anything she wants."

"Such nonsense! I'm fairly astonished at thee."

"Have you ever seen Faith, mother?"

"Not I! It is none o' my place to visit a Methodist preacher's daughter."

"Everybody visits her – rich and poor. If you once meet her she can bring you back to her as often as she wishes."

"Such women are very dangerous people to know. I'd give her a wide border. Keep thyself to thyself."

"I am going to London. Maybe, mother, I ought to tell you that our Dick is in love with Faith Foster. I am sure he is. I do not see how he can help it."

"Dick and his father will hev that matter to settle, and there is enough on hand at present – what with mills, and steam, and working men, not to speak of rebellion, and hunger, and sore poverty. Dick's love affairs can wait awhile. He hes been in love with one and twenty perfect beauties already. Some of them were suitable fine girls, of good family, and Lucy Todd and Amy Schofield hed a bit of money of their awn. Father and I would hev been satisfied with either o' them, but Dick shied off from both and went silly about that French governess that was teaching the Saville girls."

"I do not think Dick will shy off from Faith Foster. I am sure that he has never yet dared to say a word of love to her."

"Dared! What nonsense! Dick wasn't born in Yorkshire to take a dare from any man or woman living."

"Well, mother, I have made you wise about Faith Foster. A word is all you want."

"I the girl pretty?"

"Pretty She is adorable."

"You mean that she is a fine looking girl?"

"I mean that she is a little angel. You think of violets if she comes where you are. Her presence is above a charm and every door flies open to her. She is very small. Mary Saville, speaking after her French governess, calls her *petite*. She is, however, beautifully fashioned and has heavenly blue, deep eyes."

"Tell me nothing more about her. I should never get along with such a daughter-in-law. How could thou imagine it?"

"Now, mother, I have told you all my news, what have you to say to me about London?"

"I will speak to thy father some time to-day. I shall hev to choose both a proper way and a proper time; thou knows that. Get thy frocks ready and I will see what can be done."

"If father will not take me, I shall write to Aunt Josepha."

"Thou will do nothing of that kind. Thy Aunt Josepha is a very peculiar woman. We heard from the Wilsons that she hed fairly joined the radicals and was heart and soul with the Cobden set. In her rough, broad way she said to Mrs. Wilson, that steam and iron and red brick had come to take possession of England and that men and women who could not see that were blind fools and that a pinch of hunger would do them good. She even scolded father in her letter two weeks ago, and father her *eldest brother*. Think of that! I was shocked, and father felt it far more than I can tell thee. *Why!*– he wouldn't hev a mouthful of lunch, and that day we were heving hare soup; and him so fond of hare soup."

"I remember. Did father answer that letter?"

"I should think he did. He told Josepha Temple a little of her duty; he reminded her, in clear strong words, that he stood in the place of her father, and the head of the Annis family, and that he had a right to her respect and sympathy."

"What did Aunt Josepha say to that?"

"She wrote a laughable, foolish letter back and said: 'As she was two years older than Antony Annis she could not frame her mouth to 'father' him, but that she was, and always would be, his loving sister.' You see Josepha Temple was the eldest child of the late squire, your father came two years after her."

"Did you know that Dick had been staying with her for a week?"

"Yes. Dick wrote us while there. Father is troubled about it. He says Dick will come home with a factory on his brain."

"You must stand by Dick, mother. We are getting so pinched for money you know, and Lydia Wilson told me that everyone was saying: 'Father was paying the men's shortage out of his estate.' They were sorry for father, and I don't like people being sorry for him."

"And pray what has Lydia Wilson to do with thy father's money and business? Thou ought to have asked her that question. Whether thou understands thy father or not, whatever he does ought to be right in thy eyes. Men don't like explaining their affairs to anyone; especially to women, and I doan't believe they iver tell the bottom facts, even to themselves."

"Mother, if things come to the worst, would it do for me to ask Jane for money?"

"I wonder at thee. Jane niver gives or lends anything to anybody, but to Jane."

"She says she is going to entertain many great people this winter and she wishes me to meet them so I think she might help me to make a good appearance."

"I wouldn't wonder if she asked thy father to pay her for introducing thee into the titled set. She writes about them and talks about them and I dare warrant dreams about them."

"Oh, mother!"

"Does she ever forget that she has managed to become Lady Leyland? She thinks that two syllables before her name makes her better than her own family. *Chut!* Katherine! Leyland is only the third of the line. It was an official favor, too – what merit there is in it has not yet been discovered. We have lived in this old house three hundred years, and three hundred before that in old Britain."

"Old Britain?"

"To be sure – in Glamorganshire, I believe. Ask thy father. He knows his genealogy by heart. I see him coming. Go and meet him."

"Yes, mother, but I think I will write a short note to Aunt Josepha. I will not name business, nor money, nor even my desire to make a visit to London."

"Write such a letter if thou wishes but take the result – whatever it is – in a good humor. Remember that thy aunt's temper, and her words also, are entirely without frill."

"That, of course. It is the Annis temper."

"It is the English temper."

"Well, mother, things seem to be ordered in a very unhappy fashion but I suppose we might as well take to them at once. Indeed, we shall be compelled to do it, if so be, it pleases them above."

"Just so," answered Madam. "But, Katherine, The Hands of Compulsion generally turn out to be The Hands of Compassion."

Katherine smiled happily, the door opened, and the next moment she gave the smile in a kiss to her father, as he clasped her fondly in his arms, crying, "Eh, my joy! I am glad to see thee!" Then the two women made that charming fuss over his "tired look," which is so consoling to men fresh from the slings and arrows of an outrageous world that will not do as they want it to do.

In his family life the squire still retained many old-fashioned customs, and his dinner at one o'clock was a settled ceremony. This day, in the very middle of it, Katherine said, "I saw you, father, this morning when you were talking to Mr. Bradley on the Green – about ten o'clock."

"And I saw thee trailing through the low meadows with Bradley's son."

"Yes, he came home last night."

"And went out t' varry next morning, to meet thee in t' low meadow."

"If you say, he happened to meet me in the low meadow, it would be better."

"Whativer hed the lad to do in my meadow so early in the morning?"

"Do you call half-past ten early, dad?"

"I call it too early for thee to be traipsing through t' wet grass with Henry Bradley."

"Let us keep to facts, dear father. The grass was quite dry – too dry. Joel was wishing for rain; he said, 'Master so pampered his cattle, that they perfectly thought scorn of half-cured grass.'"

"Thou art trying to slip by my question and I'm not going to let thee do it. What was John Henry Bradley doing wi' thee in the low meadow this morning?"

"He brought me a letter from my brother Dick. Dick and Harry have been in London together, and they stayed four days with Aunt Josepha. They liked her very much. They took her to the opera and the play and she snubbed O'Connell and some other famous men and told them to let her alone, that she had two innocent lads in her care – and so on. You know."

"Was he making love to thee?"

"You should not ask me a question of that kind, dad."

"Thou need not tell me, what I should, or should not do. I hed learned all that, before thou wer born. And I'll tell thee plainly that I will not hev any lovemaking between thee and Harry Bradley."

"Very well, father. If you are going to the stable will you tell someone to have my saddle horse at the door in half-an-hour?"

"To be sure, I will. If tha wants a ride and will go to Yoden Bridge, I'll go with thee."

"I would like that but I promised to help Faith Foster, who is making clothing for the naked, shivering babies in Annis village. When Oddy's little girl died a week ago, there wasn't a night-gown in the house to bury it in. Its mother tore a breadth out of her one petticoat and folded her baby in it."

"Oh, Katherine Annis! Surely that tale is not true!" cried Madam.

"Alas, it is too true! The baby's one little gown was not fit even for the grave."

The Squire sat down and covered his face with his hands and when Katherine left the room he looked up pitifully at his wife. And she stooped and kissed him and as she did so comforted him with

broken words of affection and assurances that it was not his fault – “thou hast pinched us all a bit to keep the cottage looms busy,” she said, “thou couldn’t do more than that, could thou, Antony?”

“I thought I was doing right. Is there any other way?”

“Thou could build – like the rest.”

He did not answer the remark but stood up hurriedly, saying, “I must go and order Katherine’s mount and she will expect me to put her up. After that I may go to Yoden Bridge.”

Madam sighed and turned hopelessly away. “When will he listen to reason?” she whispered, but there was no answer.

# CHAPTER II – THE PROSPECT OF LONDON LIFE

"Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and knowing dare maintain."

"The blind mole casts
Copp'd hills toward heaven, to tell the earth is throng'd
By man's oppression and the poor worm doth die for't."

IT is during the hungry years of the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century that the great body of Englishmen and Englishwomen reveal themselves most nobly and clearly in their national character. They were years of hunger and strife but it is good to see with what ceaseless, persistent bravery they fought for their ideals year after year, generation after generation, never losing hope or courage but steadily working and waiting for the passage of that great Reform Bill, which would open the door for their recognition at least as members of the body politic.

Yet this Reform Bill terrified the aristocracy and great land holders and they were sure that its passage would sweep away both the monarchy and the House of Lords. What else could be looked for if the franchise was given to the laborer and the mechanic? The Bill had been well received by the House of Commons, but rejected by the House of Lords on the twentieth day of the previous October; and the condition of the country was truly alarming.

Madam Annis reminded her daughter of this fact but Katherine was not to be frightened. "Your father," she said, "has just told us about the riot and outrages at Derby and the burning of Nottingham Castle by a frantic mob and the press says – 'the people in London are restless and full of passion.' Still more to be wondered at is the letter which Thomas Attwood, the great banker, has just sent to the Duke of Wellington. In this letter he dared to threaten the government, to tell them he would march on London with a hundred thousand men, in order to inquire why the Reform Bill was hindered and delayed. This morning's paper comments on this threat and says, The Duke of Wellington is not afraid of this visit, but would rather it was not paid.' All the way up to London there is rioting. It is not a fit journey for thee to take. Mind what I say."

"Oh, mother, only think! I might have been in the Ladies' Gallery, in the House. I might have heard Mr. Macaulay's answer to the Lord's denial, with his grand question to the Commons, 'Ought we to abandon the Reform Bill because the Lords have rejected it? No! We must respect the lawful privileges of their House, but we ought also to assert our own.' No wonder the Commons cheered, and cheered, and cheered him. Oh, how gladly I would have helped them!"

"You are going too far and too fast, Katherine."

"Father ought to have been in the House on the third of February and it is now the seventh of March: Is that right?"

"A great many landed men will not go to this session. The Reform Bill, re-written by Lord Russell, is to come up again and father does not want to vote either for, or against it."

"Why?"

"He hes his reasons. I doan't know that his reasons are any business of thine."

"Harry Bradley was explaining things to me this morning, and I am for the Reform Bill. I am sure the people are right."

"I wouldn't say as much on thy opinion. Wisdom wasn't born wi' thee and I doan't expect she will die wi' thee. I think if thou went to London this spring thou would make more enemies than thou could manage. Father is following my advice in staying home, and London isn't a fit place for a young

girl like thee and the way there is full of rioters. Thy father is a landed man and he doesn't believe in giving every weaver and hedger and ditcher a voice in the government of England."

"Harry Bradley says, some of their leaders and speakers are very clever eloquent men."

"I wouldn't talk nonsense after Harry Bradley. Who's Harry Bradley?"

"He is my friend, mother. We have been friends nearly twenty years."

"Not you! It is not yet eighteen years since thou showed thy face in this world."

"I was speaking generally, mother."

"Eh, but there's something wrong in that way! A lot o' bother can come out of it. I wouldn't mind anything Harry Bradley says, thy father won't hev any nonsense about him. I can tell thee that!"

"Father is so set in his own way. No one suits him lately. We met Captain Chandos last Monday, and he would hardly notice him."

"Well, then, there are plenty of folk no one can suit, and varry often they can't suit themselves."

"Oh, I don't care about Chandos, mother; but I feel angry when Harry is slighted. You see, mother, I might come to marry Harry Bradley."

"I do hope thou won't be so far left to thysen, as that would mean."

"Then you would be wise to let me go to London. A girl must have a lover, or she feels out in the cold, and Harry is the best specimen of a man round about Annis."

"All right. Let me tell thee that I hev noticed that the girls who never throw a line into the sea of marriage, do a deal better than them that are allays fishing."

"Perhaps so, but then there is the pleasure of throwing the line."

"And perhaps the pleasure of being caught by some varry undesireable fisherman for tha needn't think that women are the only fishers. The men go reg'lar about that business and they will soon find out that thou hes a bit o' money o' thy awn and are well worth catching. See if they doan't."

"Mother, I want to go to London and see the passing of the great Reform Bill. I am in love with those brave men Earl Grey and Lord Russell and Mr. Macaulay, who dared to speak up for the poor, before all England."

"I rather think they are all married men, Katherine, and marrying for love is an unwise and generally an unprofitable bit of business."

"Business and Love have nothing to do with each other."

"Eh, but they hev!"

"I shall marry for love."

"Well, then, marry for love, but love wisely."

"Money is only one thing, mother."

"To be sure, but it is a raythe important thing."

"You might persuade father that he had better take me to London out of Harry's way. Dear mammy, do this for your little girl, won't you? You can always get round father in some way or other."

"I will ask thy father again but I shall take no roundabout way. Straightforrard is the best. And I am above a bit astonished at thee, a Yorkshire lass, thinking of any crooked road to what thou wants! If tha can't get thy way openly and fairly make up thy mind any other way isn't worth while, for it will be full of ups and downs, and lonely bits, and stony bits, and all sorts and kinds of botherations. Keep these words in thy mind."

"I will."

"Then I'll ask thy father again, to take thee with him to London – if he goes himsen – if he does not go at all, then – "

"I must find out some other way, and really the most straightforward way would be to marry Harry Bradley, and go to London with him as a wedding trip."

"Thou must stop talking nonsense or else it will stop my talking one word for thy wish."

"I was just joking, mother."

"Always keep everything straight between thysen and thy mother. The first deception between me and thee opens the gates of Danger."

"I will never forget that, mother. And if I should go away I ask you to take my place with Faith Foster, who is making clothing for the poor in the village."

"Well, Katherine, what with one thing and what with another, I doan't know what tha wants. Does tha know thysen?"

"Well, I think it would look better if the Hall should trouble itself a little about the suffering in the village. Faith Foster is the only person doing anything. I was helping her, but – "

"I should think thou would have told thysen that it was varry forrard in a young person putting herself in my place without even a word to me on the matter. She ought to hev come and told me what was needed and offered her help to me. Thy father is Lord of the Manor of Annis, and it is his business to see the naked clothed. I wonder at thee letting any one take my place and then asking me to help and do service for them. That is a bit beyond civility, I think."

"It was very thoughtless. I am sorry I did it. I was so touched by Faith's description of the hunger and nakedness in Abram Oddy's family, that I thought of nothing but how to relieve it."

"Well, well! It is all right, someway or other. I see father coming towards the house. I wonder what he is wanting."

"And he is walking so rapidly and looks so happy, something must have pleased him. I will go away, mother. This may be a good hour for our request."

"Why *our?*"

Katherine had disappeared. She left the room by one door as the squire entered by the other. Madam rose to meet him but before she could speak the squire had kissed her and was saying in glad eager tones, "I hev hurried a bit, my Joy, to tell thee that both thysen and Katherine can go wi' me to London. I had a lump of good fortune this afternoon. Mark Clitheroe sent me the thousand pounds he owed, when he broke up five years ago. He told me he wouldn't die till he had paid it; and I believed him. The money came to-day and it came with a letter that does us both credit."

"However has Clitheroe made a thousand pounds to spare since his smash-up? Thou said, it wer a varry complete ruin."

"It was all of that, yet he tells me, he will be able to pay the last farthing he owes to anyone, during this year some time."

"It caps me! How hes he made the money?"

"Why, Annie, his father built a factory for him and filled it with the finest power-looms and he says he hes been doing a grand business. Old Clitheroe hed allays told him he was wasting time and good brass in hand weaving but Mark would hev his awn way, and somehow his awn way took him to ruin in three years. I was his main creditor. Well, well! I am both astonished and pleased, I am that! Now get thysen and Katherine ready for London."

"I doan't really want to go, Antony."

"But I cannot do without thee. Thou wilt hev to go, and there is Katherine, too! Ten to one, she will need a bit of looking after."

"When art thou going to start?"

"Not for a month. I must see to the sowing of the land – the land feeds us. I thought, though, it would be right to give thee the bit o' change and pleasure to think about and talk about."

"Where does thou intend to stay while in London?"

"I am thinking of the Clarendon Hotel for thee and mysen. I suppose Katherine can be comfortable and welcome at her sister's."

"Certainly she can. Jane isn't anything but kind at heart. It is just her *you-shallness* that makes her one-sided to live with. But Katherine can hold her own side, without help, she can that! And if thou art bound for London, then London is the place where my heart will be and we will go together."

"Thou art a good wife to me, Annie."

"Well, then, I promised thee to be a good wife, and I'm Yorkshire enough to keep a promise – good or bad. I am glad thou art going to the Clarendon. It is a pleasant house but thy sister Josepha is a bit overbearing, isn't she, Antony?"

"She does not overbear me. I am her eldest brother. I make her remember that. Howiver, I shall hev to listen to such a lot o' strong language in the House that I must hev only thee about me when I can get away from committees, and divisions, taking of votes, and the like."

By this time the squire had filled his pipe, and seated himself in his favorite corner on that side of the hearth, that had no draughts whichever way the wind blew. Then Madam said: "I'll leave thee a few minutes, Antony. I am going to tell Katherine that thou art going to take her to London."

"Varry well. I'll give thee five minutes, then thou must come back here, for I hev something important to tell thee."

"Katherine will want to come back here with me. She will be impatient to thank thee for thy goodness and to coax some sovereigns in advance for a new dress and the few traveling things women need when they are on the road."

"Then thou hed better advise her to wait until supper time. When the day's work is all done I can stand a bit of cuddling and petting and I doan't mind waring a few sovereigns for things necessary. Of course, I know the little wench will be happy and full o' what she is going to see, and to do, and to hear. Yet, Annie, I hev some important thoughts in my mind now and I want thy help in coming to their settlement."

"Antony Annis! I *am* astonished at thee, I am that! When did thou ever need or take advice about thy awn business? Thou hes sense for all that can be put up against thy opinion, without asking advice from man or woman – 'specially woman."

"That may be so, Annie, perhaps it *is* so, but thou art different. Thou art like mysen and it's only prudent and kind to talk changes over together. For thou hes to share the good or the bad o' them, so it is only right thou should hev time to prepare for whatever they promise. Sit thee down beside me. Now, then, this is what happened just as soon as I hed gotten my money – and I can assure thee, that a thousand pounds in a man's pocket is a big set up – I felt all my six feet four inches and a bit more, too – well, as I was going past the Green to hev a talk wi' Jonathan Hartley, I saw Mr. Foster come to his door and stand there. As he was bare-headed, I knew he was waiting to speak to me. I hev liked the man's face and ways iver since he came to the village, and when he offered his hand and asked me to come in I couldn't resist the kindness and goodness of it."

"Thou went into the preacher's house?"

"I surely did, and I am glad of it. I think a deal o' good may come from the visit."

"Did thou see his daughter?"

"I did and I tell thee she is summat to see."

"Then she is really beautiful?"

"Yes, and more than that. She was sitting sewing in a plain, small parlor but she seemed to be sitting in a circle of wonderful peace. All round her the air looked clearer than in the rest of the room and something sweet and still and heavenly happy came into my soul. Then she told me all about the misery in the cottages and said it had now got beyond individual help and she was sure if thou knew it, and the curate knew it, some proper general relief could be carried out. She had began, she said, 'with the chapel people,' but even they were now beyond her care; and she hoped thou would organize some society and guide all with thy long and intimate knowledge of the people."

"What did thou say to this?"

"I said I knew thou would do iverything that it was possible to do. And I promised that thou would send her word when to come and talk the ways and means over with thee and a few others."

"That was right."

"I knew it would be right wi' thee."

"Katherine says that our Dick is in love wi' the preacher's daughter."

"I wouldn't wonder, and if a man hedn't already got the only perfect woman in the world for his awn you could not blame him. No, you could not blame him!"

"Thou must hev stayed awhile there for it is swinging close to five o'clock."

"Ay, but I wasn't at the preacher's long. I went from his house to Jonathan Hartley's, and I smoked a pipe with him, and we hed a long talk on the situation of our weavers. Many o' them are speaking of giving-in, and going to Bradley's factory, and I felt badly, and I said to Jonathan, 'I suppose thou is thinking of t' same thing.' And he looked at me, Annie, and I was hot wi' shame, and I was going to tell him so, but he looked at me again, and said:

"'Nay, nay, squire, thou didn't mean them words, and we'll say nothing about them'; so we nodded to each other, and I wouldn't be sure whether or not we wer' not both nearer tears than we'd show. Anyway, he went on as if nothing had happened, telling me about the failing spirit of the workers and saying a deal to excuse them. 'Ezra Dixon's eldest and youngest child died yesterday and they are gathering a bit of money among the chapel folk to bury them.' Then I said: 'Wait a minute, Jonathan,' and I took out of my purse a five pound note and made him go with it to the mother and so put her heart at ease on that score. You know our poor think a parish funeral a pitiful disgrace."

"Well, Antony, if that was what kept thee, thou wert well kept. Faith Foster is right. I ought to be told of such sorrow."

"To be sure we both ought to know, but tha sees, Annie, my dearie, we hev been so much better off than the rest of weaving villages that the workers hev not suffered as long and as much as others. But what's the use of making excuses? I am going to a big meeting of weavers on Saturday night. It is to be held in t' Methodist Chapel."

"Antony! Whatever art thou saying? What will the curate say? What will all thy old friends say?"

"Annie, I hev got to a place where I don't care a button what they say. I hev some privileges, I hope, and taking my awn way is one o' them. The curate hes been asked to lend his sanction to the meeting, and the men are betting as to whether he'll do so or not. If I was a betting man I would say 'No'!"

"Why?"

"His bishop. The bishops to a man were against the Reform Bill. Only one is said to have signed for it. That is not sure."

"Then do you blame him?"

"Nay, I'm sorry for any man, that hesn't the gumption to please his awn conscience, and take his awn way. However, his career is in the bishop's hand, and he's varry much in love with Lucy Landborde."

"Lucy Landborde! That handsome girl! How can he fashion himself to make up to Lucy?"

"She thinks he is dying of love for her, so she pities him. Women are a soft lot!"

"It is mebbe a good thing for men that women are a soft lot. Go on with thy story. It's fair wonderful."

"Mr. Foster will preside, and they'll ask the curate to record proceedings. St. George Norris and Squire Charington and the Vicar of Harrowgate will be on the platform, I hear. The vicar is going to marry Geraldine Norris next week to a captain in the Guards."

"I declare, Antony, thou finds out iverything going on."

"To be sure. That is part o' my business as Lord of the Manor. Well tha sees now, that it is going to be a big meeting, especially when they add to it a Member of Parliament, a Magistrate, and a Yorkshire Squire."

"Who art thou talking about now?"

"Mysen! Antony Annis! Member of Parliament, Squire of Annis and Deeping Wold, and Magistrate of the same district."

"Upon my word, I had forgotten I was such a big lady. And I am to go to London with thee. I am as set up about that as a child would be. I think I ought to go and tell Katherine."

"Mebbe it would be the kind thing. Sharing a pleasure doubles it;" and as the squire uttered the words, Katherine rather impetuously opened the parlor door.

"O daddy!" she cried as she pulled a chair to his side. "What are you talking about? I know it is about London; are you going to take me there with you? Say yes. Say it surely."

"Give me a kiss and I will take both thee and thy mother there with me."

"How soon, daddy? How soon?"

"As soon as possible. We must look after the poor and the land and then we can go with a good heart."

"Let us talk it all over. Where are you going to stay?"

"Nay, my dear lass. I am talking to thy mother now and she is on a different level to thee. Run away to thy room and make up thy mind about thy new dress and the other little tricks thou wants."

"Such as a necklace and a full set of amber combs for my hair."

"Nay, nay! I hev no money for jewelry, while little childer and women all round us are wanting bread. Thou wouldn't suit it and it wouldn't be lucky to thee. Run away now, I'll talk all thou wants to-morrow."

"Verry well, dear daddy. Thy word is enough to build on. I can sit quiet and arrange my London plans, for a promise from thee is as sure as the thing itself."

Then the squire laughed and took a letter out of his pocketbook. "It is good for a thousand pounds, honey," he said, "and that is a bit of security for my promise, isn't it?"

"Not a penny's worth. Thy promise needs no security. It stands alone as it ought to do."

She rose as she spoke and the squire rose and opened the door for her and then stood and watched her mount the darkening stairway. At the first reach, she turned and bent her lovely face and form towards him. The joyful anticipations in her heart transfigured her. She was radiant. Her face shone and smiled; her white throat, and her white shoulders, and her exquisite arms, and her firm quick feet seemed to have some new sense given them. You would have said that her body thought and that her very voice had a caress in it as she bridged the space between them with a "Thank you, dear, dear daddy! You are the very kindest father in all the world!"

"And thou art his pet and his darling!" With these words he went back to his wife. "She is justtip-on-top," he said. "There's no girl I know like her. She sits in the sunlight of my heart. Why, Annie, she ought to make a better marriage than Jane, and Jane did middling well."

"Would thou think Harry Bradley a good match?"

"I wouldn't put him even in a passing thought with Katherine. Harry Bradley, indeed! I am fairly astonished at thee naming the middle class fellow!"

"Katherine thinks him all a man should be."

"She will change her mind in London."

"I doubt that."

"Thou lets her hev opinions and ideas of her awn. Thou shouldn't do it. Jane will alter that. Jane will tell her how to rate men and women. Jane is varry clever."

"Jane is no match for Katherine. Dost thou think Antony Annis will be?"

"I wouldn't doubt it."

"Then don't try conclusions with her about Harry Bradley, and happen then thou may keep thy illusion. Katherine's fault is a grave one, though it often looks like a virtue."

"I doan't see what thou means. Faults are faults, and virtues are virtues. I hev niver seen a fault of any kind in her, unless it be wanting more guineas than I can spare her just now, but that is the original sin o' women as far as I can make out. Whativer is this fault that can look like a virtue?"

"She overdoes everything. She says too little, or too much; she does too little, or too much; she gives too little, or too much. In everything she exceeds. If she likes anyone, she is unreasonable about them; if she dislikes them, she is unjust."

"I doan't call that much of a fault – if thou knew anything about farming thou would make little of it. Thou would know that it is the richest land that hes the most weeds in its crop. The plow and the harrow will clear it of weeds and the experience of life will teach Katherine to be less generous with both her feelings and her opinions. Let her overdo, it is a fault that will cure itself."

"And in the meantime it makes her too positive and insisting. She thinks she is right and she wants others to be right. She is even a bit forceable – "

"And I can tell thee that women as well as men need some force of character, if they mean to do anything with their lives. *Why-a!* Force is in daily life all that powder is to shot. If our weavers' wives hed more force in their characters, they wouldn't watch their children dying of hunger upon their knees and their hearths, they would make their stubborn men go to any kind of a loom. They wouldn't be bothering themselves about any Bill in Parliament, they would be crying out for bread for their children. We must see about the women and children to-morrow or we shall not be ready for Faith Foster's visit."

"To be sure, but we need not think of it to-night. I'm heart weary, Antony. Nobody can give sympathy long unless they turn kind words into kind actions."

"Then just call Katherine and order a bit of supper in. And I'd like a tankard of home-brewed, and a slice or two of cold mutton. My word, but the mutton bred in our rich meadows is worth eating! Such a fine color, so tender and juicy and full of rich red gravy."

"I think thou would be better without the tankard. Our ale is four years old, and tha knows what it is at that age. It will give thee a rattling headache. The cask on now is very strong."

"To be sure it is. A man could look a lion in the face after a couple of glasses of it."

"I advise thee to take a glass of water, with thy mutton to-night."

"No, I won't. I'll hev a glass of sherry wine, and thou can be my butler. And tell Katherine not to talk about London to-night. I hevn't got my intentions ready. I'd be making promises it would not be right to keep. Tha knows – !"

"Yes, I know."

Katherine had not yet been promoted to a seat at the late supper table, and only came to it when specially asked. So Madam found her ungowned, and with loosened hair, in a dressing-sacque of blue flannel. She was writing a letter to a school friend, but she understood her mother's visit and asked with a smile —

"Am I to come to supper, mother? Oh, I am so glad."

"Then, dearie, do not speak of London, nor the poor children, nor the selfish weavers."

"Not selfish, mother. They believe they are fighting for their rights. You know that."

"I doan't know it. I doan't believe it. Their wives and children ought to be more to them than their awn way which is what they really want. Doan't say a word about them."

"I will not. I am going to tell father about the Arkroyds, who owned Scar Top House so long."

"Father will like to hear anything good about Colonel Arkroyd. He is the last of a fine Yorkshire family. Who told thee anything about him?"

"Before I came to my room I went to give Polly some sugar I had in my pocket for her, and I met Britton, who had just come from the stable. He turned and went with me and he was full of the story and so I had to listen to it."

"Well, then, we will listen to it when thou comes down. Father is hungry, so don't keep him waiting, or he will be put out of his way."

"I will be down in five minutes, and father is never cross with me."

Indeed, when Madam went back to the parlor, a servant was bringing in the cold mutton and Madam had the bottle of sherry in her hand. A few minutes later Katherine had joined her parents, and they were sitting cozily round a small table, set in the very warmth and light of the hearthstone. Then Madam, fearing some unlucky word or allusion, said as quickly as possible —

"Whatever was it thou heard about Colonel Ark-royd, Katherine?"

"Ay! Ay! Colonel Arkroyd! Who has anything to say about him?" asked the squire. "One of the finest men alive to-day."

"I heard a strange thing about his old house, an hour ago."

"But he sold Scar Top House, and went to live in Kendal. A man from Bradford bought it, eh?"

"Yes, a man with a factory and six hundred looms, they say. Father, have you noticed how crowded our rookery is with the birds' nests this spring?"

"I doan't know that I hev noticed the number of the nests, but nobody can help hearing their noisy chattering all over Annis."

"Do you remember the rookery at Scar Top?"

"Yes. I often hed a friendly threep with Ark-royd about it. He would insist, that his rookery hed the largest congregation. I let him think so – he's twenty years older than I am – and I did hear that the Bradford man had bought the place because of the rookery."

"So he did. And now, father, every bird has left it. There was not one nest built there this spring. Not one!"

"I never heard the like. Whoever told thee such a story?"

"The whole village knows it. One morning very early every rook in Scar Top went away. They went altogether, just before daybreak. They went to Saville Court and settled in a long row of elm trees in the home meadow. They are building there now and the Bradford man – "

"Give him his name. It is John Denby. He was born in Annis – in my manor – and he worked for the colonel, near twenty years."

"Very well. John Denby and Colonel Arkroyd have quarreled about the birds, and there is likely to be a law suit over them."

"Upon my word! That will be a varry interesting quarrel. What could make birds act in such a queer way? I niver knew them to do such a thing before."

"Well, father, rooks are very aristocratic birds. Denby could not get a *caw* out of the whole flock. They would not notice Denby, and they used to talk to Arkroyd, whenever he came out of the house. Denby used to work for Colonel Arkroyd, and the rooks knew it. They did not consider him a gentleman, and they would not accept his hospitality."

"That is going a bit too far, Katherine."

"Oh, no! Old Britton told me so, and the Yorkshire bird does not live who has not told Britton all about itself. He said further, that rooks are very vain and particularly so about their feathers. He declared they would go far out of their way in order to face the wind and so prevent ruffling their feathers."

"Rooks are at least a very human bird," said Madam; "our rooks make quite a distinction between thee and myself. I can easily notice it. The male birds are in a flutter when thou walks through the rookery, they moderate their satisfaction when I pay them a call and it is the female birds who do the honors then."

"That reminds me, mother, that Britton told me rooks intermarried generation after generation, and that if a rook brought home a strange bride, he was forced to build in a tree the community selected, at some distance from the rookery. If he did not do this, his nest was relentlessly torn down."

"Well, my Joy, I am glad to learn so much from thee. How do the rooks treat thee?"

"With but moderate notice, father, unless I am at Britton's side. Then they 'caw' respectfully, as I take my way through their colony. Britton taught me to lift my hat now and then, as father does." The squire laughed, and was a bit confused. "Nay, nay!" he said. "Britton hes been making up that story, though I vow, I would rayther take off my hat to gentlemanly rooks than to some humans I know; I would that! There is one thing I can tell thee about rooks, Britton seems to have forgot; they can't make a bit of sunshine for themselves. If t' weather is rainy, no bird in the world is more miserable. They sit with puffed out feathers in uncontrollable melancholy, and they hevn't a caw for anybody. Yet I hev a great respect for rooks."

"And I hev a great liking for rook pies," said Madam. "There is not a pie in all the records of cookery, to come near it. *Par excellence* is its name. I shall miss my rook pies, if we go away this summer."

"But we shall have something better in their place, dear mother."

"Who can tell? In the meantime, sleep will be the best thing for all. To-morrow is a new day. Sleep will make us ready for it."

# CHAPTER III – THE REALIZATION OF TROUBLE

"Beneath this starry arch,
Naught resteth, or is still;
And all things have their march,
As if by one great will.
Move on! Move all!
Hark to the footfall!
On, on! forever!"

THE next morning Katherine came to her mother full of enthusiasm. She had some letters in her hand and she said: "I have written these letters all alike, mother, and they are ready to send away, if you will give me the names of the ladies you wish them to go to."

"How many letters hast thou written?"

"Seven. I can write as many as you wish."

"Thou hes written too many already."

"Too many!"

"Yes, tha must not forget, that this famine and distress is over all Yorkshire – over all England. Every town and village hes its awn sick and starving, and hes all it can do to look after them. Thy father told me last night he hed been giving to all the villages round us for a year back but until Mr. Foster told him yesterday he hed no idea that there was any serious trouble in Annis. Tha knows, dearie, that Yorkshire and Lancashire folk won't beg. No, not if they die for want of begging. The preacher found out their need first and he told father at once. Then Jonathan Hartley admitted they were all suffering and that something must be done to help. That is the reason for the meeting this afternoon."

"Oh, dear me!"

"Jonathan hes been preparing for it for a week but he did not tell father until yesterday. I will give thee the names of four ladies that may assist in the way of sending food – there is Mrs. Benson, the doctor's wife – her husband is giving his time to the sick and if she hedn't a bit of money of her awn, Benson's family would be badly off, I fear. She may hev the heart to *do* as well as to pinch and suffer, but if she hesn't, we can't find her to blame. Send her an invitation. Send another to Mistress Craven. Colonel Craven is with his regiment somewhere, but she is wealthy, and for anything I know, good-hearted. Give her an opportunity. Lady Brierley can be counted on in some way or other and perhaps Mrs. Courtney. I can think of no others because everyone is likely to be looking for assistance just as we are. What day hev you named for the meeting?"

"Monday. Is that too soon?"

"About a week too soon. None of these ladies will treat the invitation as a desirable one. They doubtless hev many engagements already made. Say, next Saturday. It is not reasonable to expect them to drop iverything else and hurry to Annis, to sew for the hungry and naked."

"O mother! Little children! Who would not hurry to them with food and clothing?"

"Hes thou been with Faith Foster to see any children hungry and naked?"

"No, mother; but I do not need to *see* in order to *feel*. And I have certainly noticed how few children are on the street lately."

"Well, Katherine, girls of eighteen shouldn't need to *see* in order to feel. Thank God for thy fresh young feelings and keep them fresh as long as thou can. It will be a pity when thou begins to reason about them. Send letters to Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Craven, Lady Brierley, and Mrs. Courtney, and then we shall see what comes from them. After all, we are mere mortals!"

"But you are friendly with all these four ladies?"

"Good friends to come and go upon. By rights they ought to stand by Annis – but 'ought' stands for nothing."

"Why *ought*, mother?"

"Thy father hes done ivery one o' them a good turn of one kind or the other but it isn't his way to speak of the same. Now send off thy letters and let things slide until we see what road they are going to take. I'm afraid I'll hev to put mysen about more than I like to in this matter."

"That goes without saying but you don't mind it, do you, mother?"

"Well, your father took me on a sudden. I hedn't time to think before I spoke and when my heart gets busy, good-by to my head."

"Mrs. Courtney has not been here for a long time."

"She is a good deal away but I saw her in London last year every now and then. She is a careless woman; she goes it blind about everything, and yet she wants to be at the bottom of all county affairs."

"Mother, could we not do a little shopping today?"

"At the fag end of the week? What are you talking about? Certainly not. Besides, thy father is worried about the meeting this afternoon. He says more may come of it than we can dream of."

"How is that?"

"Why, Katherine, it might end in a factory here, or it might end in the weavers heving to leave Annis and go elsewhere."

"Cannot they get work of some other kind, in, or near by Annis?"

"Nay, tha surely knows, that a weaver hes to keep his fingers soft, and his hands supple. Hard manual work would spoil his hands forever for the loom, and our men are born weavers. They doan't fashion to any other work, and to be sure England hes to hev her weavers."

"Mother, would it not be far better to have a factory? Lately, when I have taken a walk with father he always goes to the wold and looks all round considering just like a man who was wondering about a site for a building. It would be a good thing for us, mother, would it not?"

"It seems so, but father does not want it. He says it will turn Annis into a rough village, full of strangers, with bad ways, and also that it will spoil the whole country-side with its smoke and dirt."

"But if it makes money?"

"Money isn't iverything."

"The want of it is dreadful."

"Thy father got a thousand pounds this morning. If he does not put most of it into a factory, he will put it into bread, which will be eaten to-day and wanted again to-morrow. That would make short work of a thousand pounds."

"Have you reminded father of that?"

"I doan't need to. Father seems an easy-going man but he thinks of iverything; and when he *hes* to act no one strikes the iron quicker and harder. If thou saw him in London, if thou heard him in the House, brow-beating the Whigs and standing up for Peel and Wellington and others, thou would wonder however thou dared to tease, and contradict, and coax him in Annis. Thou would that! Now I am going to the lower summer house for an hour. Send away thy letters, and let me alone a bit."

"I know. I saw father going down the garden. He is going to the summer house also; he intends to tell you, mother, what he is going to say to-night. He always reads, or recites his speeches to you. I have heard him sometimes."

"Then thou ought to be ashamed to speak of it! I am astonished at thy want of honor! If by chance, thou found out some reserved way of thy father it should have been held by thee as a sacred, inviolable secret. Not even to me, should thou have dared to speak of it. I am sorry, indeed, to hev to teach thee this point of childhood's honor. I thought it would be natural to the daughter of Antony and Annie Annis!"

"Mother! Forgive me! I am ashamed and sorry and oh, do not, for my sake, tell father! My dear, dear father! You have made it look like mocking him – I never thought how shameful it could look – oh, I never thought about it! I never spoke of it before! I never did!"

"Well, then, see thou never again listens to what was not intended for thee to hear. It would be a pretty state of things, if thy father hed to go somewhere out of the way of listeners to get a bit of private talk with me."

"Mother, don't be so cruel to me."

"Was thou trying to compliment me or was thou scorning a bit about thy father's ways? If thou thought I would feel complimented by being set above him that thought was as far wrong as it could possibly get."

"Mother! Mother! You will break my heart! You never before spoke this way to me —*Oh, dear! Oh, dear!*"

For a few minutes Madam let her weep, then she bent over the crouching, sobbing girl, and said, "There now! There now!"

"I am so sorry! So sorry!"

"Well, dearie, sorrow is good for sin. It is the only thing sorrow is good for. Dry thy eyes, and we will niver name the miserable subject again."

"Was it really a sin, mother?"

"Hes thou forgotten the fifth commandment? That little laugh at thy father's saying his speeches to me first was more than a bit scornful. It was far enough from the commandment 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' It wasn't honoring either of us."

"I can never forgive myself."

"Nay! nay! Give me a kiss and go and look after thy letters; also tell Yates dinner must be on the table at one o'clock no matter what his watch says." Then Katherine walked silently away and Madam went to the lower summer house, and the dinner was on the table at one o'clock. It was an exceedingly quiet meal, and immediately after it, the squire's horse was brought to the door.

"So thou art going to ride, Antony!" said Mistress Annis, and the squire answered, "Ay, I hev a purpose in riding, Annie."

"Thou art quite right," was the reply, for she thought she divined his purpose and the shadow of a smile passed between them. Then he looked at his watch, mounted his horse and rode swiftly away. His wife watched him out of sight and, as she turned into the house, she told herself with a proud and happy smile, "He is the best and the handsomest man in the West Riding, and the horse suits him! He rides to perfection! God bless him!"

It was a point with the squire to be rigidly punctual. He was never either too soon, or too late. He knew that one fault was as bad as the other, though he considered the early mistake as the worst. It began to strike two as he reached the door of the Methodist Chapel, and saw Jonathan Hartley waiting there for him; and they walked at once to a rude platform that had been prepared for the speakers. There were several gentlemen standing there in a group, and the Chapel was crowded with anxious hungry-looking men.

It was the first time that Squire Annis had ever stepped inside a Methodist Chapel. The thought was like the crack of a whip in his conscience but at that moment he would not listen to any claim or reproof; for either through liking or disliking, he was sensitive at once to Bradley's tall, burly predominance; and could not have said, whether it was pleasant or unpleasant to him. However, the moment he appeared, there was loud handclapping, and cries of "Squire Annis! Squire Annis! Put him in the chair! He's our man!"

Then into the squire's heart his good angel put a good thought, and he walked to the front of the platform and said, "My men, and my friends, I'll do something better for you. I'll put the Reverend Samuel Foster in the chair. God's servant stands above all others, and Mr. Foster knows all about your poverty and affliction. I am a bit ashamed to say, I do not." This personal accusation was cut

short by cries of “No! No! No! Thou hes done a great deal,” and then a cheer, that had in it all the Yorkshire spirit, though not its strength. The men were actually weak with hunger.

Mr. Foster took the chair to which the squire led him without any affectations of demur, and he was gladly welcomed. Indeed there were few things that would have pleased the audience more. They were nearly all Methodists, and their preacher alone had searched out their misery, and helped them to bear it with patience and with hope. He now stretched out his hands to them and said – “Friends, just give us four lines, and we will go at once to business”; and in a sweet, ringing voice, he began Newman’s exquisite hymn —

“Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him whate’er betide,
Thoul’t find Him in the evil days,
An all sufficient Strength and Guide.”

The words came fresh and wet with tears from every heart, and it was a five minutes’ interlude of that complete surrender, which God loves and accepts.

After a moment of intense silence, the preacher said, “We are met to-day to try and find out if hand-loom weaving must go, or if both hand-loom weaving and power-loom weaving have a chance for the weaver in them. There are many hand-loom weavers here present. They know all its good points and all points wherein it fails but they do not know either the good or bad points of power-loom weaving, and Mr. John Thomas Bradley has come to tell you something about this tremendous rival of your household loom. I will now introduce Mr. John.” He got no further in his introduction, for Bradley stepped forward, and with a buoyant good-nature said, “No need, sir, of any fine mastering or mistering between the Annis lads and mysen. We hev thrashed each ither at football, and chated each ither in all kinds of swapping odds too often, to hev forgotten what names were given us at our christening. There’s Israel Swale, he hes a bigger mill than I hev now-a-days, but he’s owing me three pence half-penny and eleven marbles, yet whenever I ask him for my brass and my marbles he says – ‘I’ll pay thee, John Thomas, when we play our next game.’ Now listen, lads, next Whitsunday holidays I’ll ask him to come and see me, and I’ll propose before a house full of company – and all ready for a bit of fun – that we hev our game of marbles in the bowling alley, and I’ll get Jonathan Hartley to give you all an invitation to come and see fair play between us. Will you come?”

Noisy laughing acceptances followed and one big Guisely weaver said, “He’d come too, and see that Israel played a straight game for once in his life.”

“I’m obliged to thee, Guisely,” answered Bradley, “I hope thou’lt come. Now then, lads, I hev to speak to you about business, and if you think what I say is right, go and do what I say, do it boldly; and if you aren’t sure, then let it alone: – till you are driven to it. I am told that varry few of the men here present iver saw a power loom. And yet you mostly think ill o’ it. That isn’t a bit Yorkshire. You treat a man as you find him, you ought to do the same to a machine, that is almost a man in intelligence – that is the most perfect bit of beauty and contrivance that man iver made since man himsen was fitted wi’ fingers and thumbs by the Great Machinist of heaven and earth.”

“What is it fashioned like, Bradley?”

“It is an exceedingly compact machine and takes up little room. It is easily worked and it performs every weaving operation with neatness and perfection. It makes one hundred and seventy picks a minute or six pieces of goods in a week – you know it was full work and hard work to make one piece a week with the home loom, even for a strong man. It is made mostly of shining metal, and it is a perfect darling. *Why-a!* the lads and lassies in Bradley mill call their looms after their sweethearts, or husbands, or wives, and I wouldn’t wonder if they said many a sweet or snappy word to the looms that would niver be ventured on with the real Bessie or the real Joe.

"Think of your old cumbersome wooden looms, so hard and heavy and dreary to work, that it wasn't fit or right to put a woman down to one. Then go and try a power loom, and when you hev done a day's work on it, praise God and be thankful! I tell you God saw the millions coming whom Yorkshire and Lancashire would hev to clothe, and He gave His servant the grave, gentle, middle-aged preacher Edmund Cartwright, the model of a loom fit for God's working men and women to use. I tell you men the power loom is one of God's latest Gospels. We are spelling yet, with some difficulty, its first good news, but the whole world will yet thank God for the power loom!"

Here the preacher on the platform said a fervent "Thank God!" But the audience was not yet sure enough for what they were to thank God, and the few echoes to the preacher's invitation were strangely uncertain for a Yorkshire congregation. A few of the Annis weavers compromised on a solemn "Amen!" All, however, noticed that the squire remained silent, and they were "not going" – as Lot Clarke said afterwards – "to push themsens before t' squire."

Then Jonathan Hartley stepped into the interval, and addressing Bradley said, "Tha calls this wonderful loom a power-loom. I'll warrant the power comes from a steam engine."

"Thou art right, Jonathan. I wish tha could see the wonderful engine at Dalby's Mill in Pine Hollow. The marvelous creature stands in its big stone stable like a huge image of Destiny. It is never still, but never restless, nothing rough; calm and steady like the waves of the full sea at Scarboro'. It is the nervous center, the life, I might say, of all going on in that big building above it. It moves all the machinery, it gives life to the devil,[1] and speeds every shuttle in every loom."

"It isn't looms and engines we are worrying about, Bradley," said a man pallid and fretful with hunger. "It is flesh and blood, that can't stand hunger much longer. It's our lile lads and lasses, and the babies at the mother's breast, where there isn't a drop o' milk for their thin, white lips! O God! And you talk o' looms and engines" – and the man sat down with a sob, unable to say another word.

Squire Annis could hardly sit still, but the preacher looked at him and he obeyed the silent wish, as in the meantime Jonathan Hartley had asked Bradley a question, to partly answer the request made.

"If you want to know about the workers, all their rooms are large and cheerful, with plenty of fresh air in them. The weaving rooms are as light and airy as a bird cage. The looms are mostly managed by women, from seventeen to thirty, wi' a sprinkling o' married men and women. A solid trade principle governs t' weaving room – so much work, for so much money – but I hev girls of eighteen in my mill, who are fit and able to thread the shuttles, and manage two looms, keeping up the pieces to mark, without oversight or help."

Here he was interrupted by a man with long hair parted in the middle of the forehead, and dressed in a suit of fashionable cut, but cheap tailoring. "I hev come to this meeting," he cried out, "to ask your parliamentary representative if he intends to vote for the Reform Bill, and to urge the better education of the lower classes."

"Who bid thee come to this meeting?" asked Jonathan Hartley. "Thou has no business here. Not thou. And we weren't born in Yorkshire to be fooled by thee."

"I was told by friends of the people, that your member would likely vote against Reform."

"Put him out! Put him out!" resounded from every quarter of the building, and for the first time since the meeting opened, there was a touch of enthusiasm. Then the squire stepped with great dignity to the front of the platform.

"Young men," he said with an air of reproof, "this is not a political meeting. It is not even a public meeting. It is a gathering of friends to consider how best to relieve the poverty and idleness for which our weavers are not to blame – and we do not wish to be interrupted."

"The blame is all wi' you rich landowners," he answered; "ivery one o' you stand by a government that robs the poor man and protects the rich. I am a representative of the Bradford Socialists."

[1] The devil, a machine containing a revolving cylinder armed with knives or spikes for tearing, cutting, or opening raw materials.

"Git out! Git out! Will tha? If tha doesn't, I'll fling thee out like any other rubbish;" and as the man made no attempt to obey the command given, Hartley took him by the shoulder, and in spite of his protestations – received with general jeers and contempt – put him outside the chapel.

Squire Annis heartily approved the word, act and manner of Hartley's little speech. The temperature of his blood rose to fighting heat, and he wanted to shout with the men in the body of the chapel. Yet his countenance was calm and placid, for Antony Annis was *Master at Home*, and could instantly silence or subdue whatever his Inner Man prompted that was improper or inconvenient.

He thought, however, that it was now a fit time-for him to withdraw, and he was going to say the few words he had so well considered, when a very old man rose, and leaning on his staff, called out, "Squire Annis, my friend, I want thee to let me speak five minutes. It will varry likely be t' last time I'll hev the chance to say a word to so many lads altogether in this life." And the squire smiled pleasantly as he replied, "Speak, Matthew, we shall all be glad to listen to you."

"Ill be ninety-five years old next month, Squire, and I hev been busy wi' spinning and weaving eighty-eight o' them. I was winding bobbins when I was seven years old, and I was carding, or combing, or working among wool until I was twenty. Then I got married, and bought from t' squire, on easy terms, my cottage and garden plot, and I kept a pig and some chickens, and a hutch full o' rabbits, which I fed on the waste vegetables from my garden. I also had three or four bee skeps, that gave us honey for our bread, with a few pounds over to sell; t' squire allays bought the overbit, and so I was well paid for a pretty bed of flowers round about the house. I was early at my loom, but when I was tired I went into my garden, and I smoked a pipe and talked to the bees, who knew me well enough, ivery one o' them. If it was raining, I went into t' kitchen, and smoked and hed a chat wi' Polly about our awn concerns. I hev had four handsome lassies, and four good, steady lads. Two o' the lads went to America, to a place called Lowell, but they are now well-to-do men, wi' big families. My daughters live near me, and they keep my cottage as bright as their mother kept it for over fifty years. I worked more or less till I was ninety years old, and then Squire Annis persuaded me to stop my loom, and just potter about among my bees and flowers. Now then, lads, thousands hev done for years and years as much, even more than I hev done and I hev never met but varry few Home-loom weavers who were dissatisfied. They all o' them made their awn hours and if there was a good race anywhere near-by they shut off and went to it. Then they did extra work the next day to put their 'piece' straight for Saturday. If their 'piece' was right, the rest was nobody's business."

"Well, Matthew," said the squire, "for many a year you seldom missed a race."

"Not if t' horses were good, and well matched. I knew the names then of a' the racers that wer' worth going to see. I love a fine horse yet. I do that! And the Yorkshire roar when the victor came to mark! You could hear it a mile away! O squire, I can hear it yet!

"Well, lads, I hev hed a happy, busy life, and I hev been a good Methodist iver sin' I was converted, when I was twelve years old. And I bear testimony this day to the goodness and the faithfulness of God. He hes niver broken a promise He made me. Niver one!

"Thousands of Home-loom spinners can live, and have lived, as I did and they know all about t' life. I know nothing about power-loom weaving. I dare say a man can make good or bad o' it, just as he feels inclined; but I will say, it brings men down to a level God Almighty niver intended. It is like this – when a man works in his awn home, and makes his awn hours, all the world, if he be good and honest, calls him *A Man*; when he works in a factory he's nobbut '*one o' the hands*.'"

At these words Matthew sat down amid a little subdued inexpressible mixture of tense feeling and the squire said – "In three weeks or less, men, I am going to London, and I give you my word, that I shall always be found on the side of Reform and Free Trade. When I return you will surely have made up your minds and formed some sort of decision; then I will try and forward your plans to my last shilling." With these words he bowed to the gentlemen on the platform, and the audience before him, and went rapidly away. His servant was at the Chapel door with his horse; he sprang into the saddle, and before anyone could interrupt his exit, he was beyond detention.

A great disturbance was in his soul. He could not define it. The condition of his people, the changing character of his workers and weavers, the very village seemed altered, and then the presence of Bradley! He had found it impossible to satisfy both his offense with the man and his still vital affection for him. He had often told himself that “Bradley was dead and buried as far as he was concerned”; but some affections are buried alive, and have a distressing habit of being restless in their coffins. It was with the feeling of a fugitive flying for a place of rest that he went home. But, oh, how refreshing was his wife’s welcome! What comfort in her happy smile! What music in her tender words! He leaped to the ground like a young man and, clasping her hand, went gratefully with her to his own fireside.

# CHAPTER IV – LONDON AND AUNT JOSEPHA

"Still in Immortal Youth we dream of Love."

London – "Together let us beat this ample field
Try what the open and the covert yield."

KATHERINE'S letters bore little fruit. Lady Brierley sent fifty pounds to buy food, but said "she was going to Bourmouth for the spring months, being unable to bear the winds of the Yorkshire wolds at that time." Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Courtney were on their way to London, and Mrs. Benson said her own large family required every hour of her time, especially as she was now only able to keep one servant. So the village troubles were confided to the charge of Faith Foster and her father. The squire put a liberal sum of money with the preacher, and its application was left entirely to his judgment.

Nor did Annis now feel himself able to delay his journey until April. He was urged constantly by the leaders of the Reform Bill to hasten his visit to the House. Letters from Lord Russell, Sir James Grahame and Lord Grey told him that among the landlords of the West Riding his example would have a great influence, and that at this "important crisis they looked with anxiety, yet certainty, for his support."

He could not withhold it. After his enlightenment by Mr. Foster, he hardly needed any further appeal. His heart and his conscience gave him no rest, and in ten days he had made suitable arrangements, both for the care of his estate, and the relief of the village. In this business he had been greatly hurried and pressed, and the Hall was also full of unrest and confusion, for all Madam's domestic treasures were to pack away and to put in strict and competent care. For, then, there really were women who enjoyed household rackets and homes turned up and over from top to bottom. It was their relief from the hysteria of monotony and the temper that usually attends monotony. They knew nothing of the constant changes and pleasures of the women of today – of little chatty lunches and theater parties; of their endless societies and games, and clubs of every description; of fantastic dressing and undressing from every age and nation; beside the appropriation of all the habits and pursuits and pleasures of men that seemed good in their eyes, or their imaginations.

So to the woman of one hundred years ago – and of much less time – a thorough house-cleaning, or a putting away of things for a visit or a journey was an exciting event. There was even a kind of pleasure in the discomfort and disorder it caused. The unhappy looks of the men of the house were rather agreeable to them. For a few days they had legitimate authority to make everyone miserable, and in doing so experienced a very actual nervous relief.

Madam Annis was in some measure influenced by similar conditions, for it takes a strong and powerfully constituted woman to resist the spirit and influence of the time and locality in which she lives. So the Hall was full of unrest, and the peaceful routine of life was all broken up. Ladies' hide-covered trunks – such little baby trunks to those of the present day – and leather bags and portmanteaus littered the halls; and the very furniture had the neglected plaintive look of whatever is to be left behind.

At length, however, on the twenty-third of March, all was ready for the journey, and the squire was impatient to begin it. He was also continually worrying about his son. "Whereiver is Dick, I wonder? He ought to be here helping us, ought he not, mother?" he asked Madam reproachfully, as if he held her responsible for Dick's absence and Madam answered sharply – "Indeed, Antony, thou ought to know best. Thou told Dick to stay in London and watch the ways of that wearisome Reform Bill and send thee daily word about its carryings on. The lad can't be in two places at once, can he?"

"I hed forgotten mysen, Annie. How near art thou and Katherine ready to start?"

"Katherine and I are now waiting on your will and readiness."

"Nay, then, Annie, if ta hes got to thy London English already, I'll be quiet, I will."

"I doan't like thee to be unjust to Dick. He is doing, and doing well, just what thou told him to do. I should think thou couldn't ask more than that – if thou was in thy right mind."

"Dick is the best lad in Yorkshire, he is all that! Doan't thee care if I seem a bit cross, Annie. I've been that worrited all morning as niver was. Doan't mind it!"

"I doan't, not in the least, Antony."

"Well, then, can thou start to-morrow morning?"

"I can start, with an hour's notice, any time."

"I wouldn't be too good, Annie. I'm not worth it."

"Thou art worth all I can do for thee."

"Varry good, dearie! Then we'll start at seven to-morrow morning. We will drive to Leeds, and then tak t' mail-coach for London there. If t' roads don't happen to be varry bad we may hev time enough in Leeds to go to the Queen's Hotel and hev a plate o' soup and a chop. I hev a bit o' business at the bank there but it won't keep me ten minutes. I hope we may hev a fairish journey, but the preacher tells me the whole country is in a varry alarming condition."

"Antony, I am a little tired of the preacher's alarm bell. He is always prophesying evil. Doan't thee let him get too much influence over thee. Before thou knows what thou art doing thou wilt be going to a class meeting. What does the curate say? He has been fifty miles south, if not more."

"He told me the roads were full of hungry, angry men, who were varry disrespectful to any of the Quality they met."

Here Katherine entered the room. "Mother dear," she said in an excited voice, "mother dear! My new traveling dress came home a little while ago, and I have put it on, to let you admire it. Is it not pretty? Is it not stylish? Is it not everything a girl would like? O Daddy! I didn't see you."

"I couldn't expect thee to see me when tha hed a new dress on. I'll tell thee, howiver, I doan't like it as well as I liked thy last suit."

"The little shepherd plaid? Oh, that has become quite common! This is the thing now. What do you say, mother?"

"I think it is all right. Put it on in the morning. We leave at seven o'clock."

"Oh, delightful! I am so glad! Life is all in a mess here and I hate a tossed-up house."

At this point the Reverend Mr. Yates entered. He had called to bid the squire and his family good-bye, but the ladies quickly left the room. They knew some apology was due the curate for placing the money intended for relieving the suffering in the village in the preacher's care, and at his disposal. But the curate was reasonable, and readily acknowledged that "nearly all needing help were members of Mr. Foster's church, and would naturally take relief better from him than from a stranger."

The journey as far as Leeds was a very sad one, for the squire stopped frequently to speak to groups of despairing, desperate men and women: – "Hev courage, friends!" he said cheerfully to a gathering of about forty or more on the Green of a large village, only fourteen miles south of Annis. "Hev courage a little longer! I am Antony Annis, and I am on my way to London, with many more gentlemen, to see that the Reform Bill goes through the Lords, this time. If it does not then it will be the duty of Englishmen to know the reason why. God knows you hev borne up bravely. Try it a bit longer."

"Squire," said a big fellow, white with hunger, "Squire, I hevn't touched food of any kind for forty hours. You count hours when you are hungry, squire."

"We're all o' us," said his companion, "faint and clemmed. We hevn't strength to be men any longer. Look at me! I'm wanting to cry like a bairn."

"I'm ready to fight, squire," added a man standing near by; "I hev a bit o' manhood yet, and I'd fight for my rights, I would that! – if I nobbnd hed a slice or two o' bread."

At the same time a young woman, little more than a child, came tottering forward, and stood at the side of Mistress Annis. She had a little baby in her arms, she did not speak, she only looked in the elder woman's face then cast her eyes down upon the child. It was tugging at an empty breast with little sharp cries of hungry impatience. Then she said, "I hev no milk for him! The lile lad is sucking my blood!" Her voice was weak and trembling, but she had no tears left.

Madam covered her face, she was weeping, and the next moment Katherine emptied her mother's purse into the starving woman's hand. She took it with a great cry, lifting her face to heaven – "Oh God, it is money! Oh God, it is milk and bread!" Then looking at Katherine she said, "Thou hes saved two lives. God sent thee to do it" – and with the words, she found a sudden strength to run with her child to a shop across the street, where bread and milk were sold.

"It's little Dinas Sykes," said a man whose voice was weak with hunger. "Eh! but I'm glad, God hes hed mercy on her!" and all watched Dinas running for milk and bread with a grateful sympathy. The squire was profoundly touched, his heart melted within him, and he said to the little company with the voice of a companion, not of a master, "Men, how many of you are present?"

"About forty-four men – and a few half grown lads. They need food worse than men do – they suffer more – poor lile fellows!"

"And you all hev women at home? Wives and daughters?"

"Ay, squire, and mothers, too! Old and gray and hungry – some varry patient, and just dying on their feet, some so weak they are crying like t' childer of two or four years old. My God! Squire, t' men's suffering isn't worth counting, against that of t' women and children."

"Friends, I hev no words to put against your suffering and a ten pound note will be better than all the words I could give you. It will at least get all of you a loaf of bread and a bit of beef and a mug of ale. Who shall I give it to?"

"Ben Shuttleworth," was the unanimous answer, and Ben stepped forward. He was a noble-looking old man just a little crippled by long usage of the hand loom. "Squire Annis," he said, "I'll gladly take the gift God hes sent us by thy hands and I'll divide it equally, penny for penny, and may God bless thee and prosper thy journey! We're none of us men used to saying 'thank'ee' to any man but we say it to thee. Yes, we say it to thee."

Kindred scenes occurred in every village and they did not reach Leeds in time for the mail coach they intended to take. The squire was not troubled at the delay. He said, "he hed a bit of his awn business to look after, and he was sure Katherine hed forgotten one or two varry necessary things, that she could buy in Leeds."

Katherine acknowledged that she had forgotten her thimble and her hand glass, and said she had "been worrying about her back hair, which she could not dress without one."

Madam was tired and glad to rest. "But Antony," she said, "Dick will meet this coach and when we do not come by it, he will have wonders and worries about us."

"Not he! Dick knows something about women, and also, I told him we might sleep a night or two at some town on the way, if you were tired."

The next day they began the journey again, half-purposing to stop and rest at some half-way town. The squire said Dick understood them. He would be on hand if they loitered a week. And Madam was satisfied; she thought it likely Dick had instructions fitting his father's uncertainty.

Yet though the coach prevented actual contact with the miserable famine sufferers, it could not prevent them witnessing the silent misery sitting on every door step, and looking with such longing eyes for help from God or man. Upon the whole it was a journey to break a pitiful heart, and the squire and his family were glad when the coach drew up with the rattle of wheels and the blowing of the guard's horn at its old stand of Charing Cross.

The magic of London was already around them, and the first face they saw was the handsome beaming face of Dick Annis. He nodded and smiled to his father, who was sitting – where he had sat most of the journey – at the side of the driver. Dick would have liked to help him to the street,

but he knew that his father needed no help and would likely be vexed at any offer of it, but Dick's mother and sister came out of the coach in his arms, and the lad kissed them and called them all the fond names he could think of. Noticing at the same time his father's clever descent, he put out his left hand to him, for he had his mother guarded with his right arm. "You did that jump, dad, better than I could have done it. Are you tired?"

"We are all tired to death, Dick. Hev you a cab here?"

"To be sure, I have! Your rooms at the Clarendon are in order, and there will be a good dinner waiting when you are ready for it."

In something less than an hour they were all ready for a good dinner; their faces had been washed, Katherine's hair smoothed and Madam's cap properly adjusted. The squire was standing on the hearthrug in high spirits. The sight of his son, the touch of the town, the pleasant light and comfort of his surroundings, the prospect of dinner, made him forget for a few minutes the suffering he had passed through, until his son asked, "And did you have a pleasant journey, father?"

"A journey, Dick, to break a man's heart. It hes turned me from a Tory into a Radical. This government must feed the people or – we will kick them back – "

"Dear father, we will talk of that subject by ourselves. It isn't fit for two tired women, now is it?"

"Mebbe not; but I hev seen and I hev heard these last two or three days, Dick, what I can niver forget. Things hev got to be altered. They hev that, or – "

"We will talk that over after mother and Kitty have gone to sleep. We won't worry them to-night. I have ordered mother's favorite Cabinet pudding for her, and some raspberry cream for Kitty. It wouldn't be right to talk of unhappy things with good things in our mouths, now would it?"

"They are coming. I can hear Kitty's laugh, when I can hear nothing else. Ring the bell, Dick, we can hev dinner now."

There were a few pleasant moments spent in choosing their seats, and as soon as they were taken, a dish of those small delicious oysters for which England has been famous since the days of the Roman Emperors were placed before them. "I had some scalloped for mother and Kitty," Dick said. "Men can eat them raw, alive if they choose, but women – Oh no! It isn't womanlike! Mother and Kitty wouldn't do it! Not they!"

"And what else hes ta got for us, Dick?" asked the squire. "I'm mortal hungry."

The last word shocked him anew. He wished he had not said it. What made him do it? Hungry! He had never been really hungry in all his life; and those pallid men and women, with that look of suffering on their faces, and in their dry, anxious eyes, how could he ever forget them?

He was suddenly silent, and Katherine said: "Father is tired. He would drive so much. I wonder the coachman let him."

"Father paid for the privilege of doing the driver's work for him. I have no doubt of that, my dears," said Madam. "Well, Dick, when did you see Jane?"

"Do you not observe, mother, that I am in evening dress? Jane has a dance and supper to-night. Members from the government side will be dropping in there after midnight, for refreshment. Both Houses are in all-night sittings now."

"How does Leyland vote?"

"He is tremendously royal and loyal. You will have to mind your p's and q's with him now, father."

"Not I! I take my awn way. Leyland's way and mine are far apart. How is your Aunt Josepha?"

"She is all right. She is never anything else but all right. Certainly she is vexed that Katherine is not to stay with her. Jane has been making a little brag about it, I suppose."

"Katherine could stay part of the time with her," said the squire.

"She had better be with Jane. Aunt will ask O'Connell to her dinners, and others whom Katherine would not like."

"Why does she do it? She knows better."

"I suspect we all know better than we do. She says, 'O'Connell keeps the dinner table lively.' So he does. The men quarrel all the time they eat and the women really admire them for it. They say '*Oh!*' at a very strong word, but they would love to see them really fighting. Women affect tenderness and fearfulness; they are actually cruel creatures. Aunt says, 'that was what her dear departed told her, and she had no doubt he had had experiences.' Jane sent her love to all of you, and she purposes coming for Katherine about two o'clock to-morrow."

"Oh!" said Madam, in a rather indifferent way, "Katherine and I can find plenty to do, and to see, in London. Jane told me recently, she had a new carriage."

"One of the finest turn-outs Long Acre could offer her. The team is good also. Leyland is a judge of horses, and he has chosen a new livery with his new honors – gray with silver trimmings. It looks handsome and stylish."

"And will spoil quickly," said Madam. "Jane asked me about the livery, and I told her to avoid light colors."

"Then you should have told her to choose light colors. Jane lives and votes with the opposition." In pleasant domestic conversation the hours slipped happily away, but after the ladies had retired, Dick did not stay long. The squire was really weary, though he "*pooh-poohed*" the idea. "A drive from Leeds to London, with a rest between, what is that to tire a man?" he asked, adding, "I hev trotted a Norfolk cob the distance easy in less time, and I could do it again, if I wanted to."

"Of course you could, father. Oh, I wish to ask you if you know anything of the M.P. from Appleby?"

"A little."

"What can you say about him?"

"He made a masterly speech last session, in favor of Peel's ministry. I liked it then. I hevn't one good word for it now."

"He is a very fine looking man. I suppose he is wealthy. He lives in good style here."

"I know nothing about his money. The De Burgs are a fine family – among the oldest in England – Cumberland, I believe, down Furness way. Why art thou bothering thysen about him?"

"He is one of Jane's favorites. He goes to Ley-land's house a deal. I was thinking of Katherine."

"What about Katherine? What about Katherine?" the squire asked sharply.

"You know Katherine is beautiful, and this De Burg is very handsome – in his way."

"What way?"

"Well, the De Burgs are of Norman descent and Stephen De Burg shows it. He has indeed the large, gray eyes of our own North Country, but his hair is black – very black – and his complexion is swarthy. However, he is tall and well-built, and remarkably graceful in speech and action – quite the young man to steal a girl's heart away."

"Hes he stolen any girl's heart from thee?"

"Not he, indeed! I am Annis enough to keep what I win; but I was wondering if our little Kitty was a match for Stephen De Burg."

"Tha needn't worry thysen about Kitty Annis. I'll warrant her a match for any man. Her mother says she hes a fancy for Harry Bradley, but I – "

"Harry is a fine fellow."

"Nobody said he wasn't a fine fellow, and there is not any need for thee to interrupt thy father in order to tell him that! Harry Bradley, indeed! I wouldn't spoil any plan of De Burg's to please or help Harry Bradley! Not I! Now I hope tha understands that! To-morrow thou can tell me about thy last goddess, and if she be worthy to sit after thy mother in Annis Court, I'll help thee to get wedded to her gladly. For I'm getting anxious, Dick, about my grandsons and their sisters. I'd like to see them that are to come after me."

Then Dick went away with a laugh, but as the father and son stood a moment hand-clasped, their resemblance was fitting and beautiful; and no one noticing this fact could wonder at the Englishman's intense affection and anxious care for the preservation of his family type.

The squire then put out the candles and covered the fire just as he would have done at Annis and while he did so he pondered what Dick had told him and resolved to say nothing at all about it. "Then," he reflected, "I shall get Katherine's real opinions about De Burg. Women are so queer, they won't iver tell you the truth about men unless they believe you don't care what they think: – and I won't tell Annie either. Annie would take to warning and watching, and, for anything I know, advising her to be faithful and true to her first love. Such simplicity! Such nonsense!"

Then he went to his room and found Mistress Annis sitting with her feet on the fender, sipping a glass of wine negus, and as she dipped her little strips of dry toast into it, she said, "I am so glad to see thee, Antony. I am too excited to sleep and I wanted a few words with thee and thee only. For three days I hev missed our quiet talks with each other. I heard Dick laughing; what about?"

"I told him I was getting varry anxious about my grandsons, eh?"

Then both laughed and the squire stooped and kissed his wife and in that moment he sat down by her side and frankly told her all he had heard about De Burg. They talked about it for half-an-hour and then the squire went calmly off to sleep without one qualm of conscience for his broken resolution. In fact he assured himself that "he had done right. Katherine's mother was Katherine's proper guardian and he was only doing his duty in giving her points that might help her to do her duty." That reflection was a comfortable one on which to sleep and he took all the rest it gave him.

Madam lay awake worrying about Katherine's wardrobe. After hearing of her sister's growing social importance she felt that it should have been attended to before they left Yorkshire. For in those days there were no such things as ready-made suits, and any dress or costume lacking had to be selected from the web, the goods bought, the dressmaker interviewed, and after several other visits for the purpose of "trying-on" the gown might be ready for use. These things troubled Madam. Katherine felt more confidence in her present belongings. "I have half a dozen white frocks with me, mother," she said, "and nothing could be prettier or richer than my two Dacca muslins. The goods are fine as spider webs, the embroidery on them is nearly priceless, and they are becoming every year more and more scarce. I have different colored silk skirts to wear under them, and sashes and beads, and bows, with which to adorn them."

There was a little happy pause, then Katherine said, "Let us go and see Aunt Josepha. I have not seen her for six years. I was counting the time as I lay in bed this morning. I was about twelve years old."

"That is a good idea. We can shop better after we hev hed a talk with her."

"There, mother! You had two Yorkshireisms in that sentence. Father would laugh at you."

"Niver mind, when my heart talks, my tongue talks as my heart does, and Yorkshire is my heart's native tongue. When I talk to thee my tongue easily slips into Yorkshire."

Then a carriage was summoned, and Madam An-nis and her daughter went to call on Madam Josepha Temple. They had to ride into the city and through St. James Park to a once very fashionable little street leading from the park to the river. Madam Temple could have put a fortune in her pocket for a strip of this land bordering the river, but no money could induce her to sell it. Even the city's offer had been refused.

"Had not Admiral Temple," she asked, "found land enough for England, and fought for land enough for England, for his widow to be allowed to keep in peace the strip of land at the foot of the garden he planted and where he had also erected a Watergate so beautiful that it had become one of the sights of London?" And her claim had been politely allowed and she had been assured that it would be respected.

The house itself was not remarkable outwardly. It was only one of those square brick mansions introduced in the Georgian era, full of large square rooms and wide corridors and, in Madam Temple's

case, of numerous cupboards and closets; for in her directions to the Admiral she had said with emphasis:

"Admiral, you may as well live in a canvas tent without a convenience of any kind as in a house without closets for your dresses and mantuas; and cupboards for your china and other things you must have under lock and key:" and the Admiral had seen to the closet and cupboard subject with such strict attention that even his widow sometimes grew testy over their number.

Whatever faults the house might have, the furnishing had been done with great judgment. It was solid and magnificent and only the best tapestries and carpets found a place there. To Madam Temple had been left the choice of silver, china, linen and damask, and the wisdom and good taste of her selection had a kind of official approbation. Artists and silversmiths asked her to permit them to copy the shapes of her old silver and she possessed many pieces of Wedgwood's finest china of which only a very small number had been made ere the mold was broken.

After the house was finished the Admiral lived but five years and Madam never allowed anything to be changed or renewed. If told that anything was fading or wearing, she replied – "I am fading also, just wearing away. They will last my time." However the house yet had an air of comfortable antique grandeur and it was a favorite place of resort to all who had had the good fortune to win the favor of the Admiral's widow.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.