

CHAPTER II

THE ENEMIES

IN the year 1813—about the time when Spain abated her foolish vanity, and Wellington became Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish forces, before the Battle of Vittoria—the third and last of the generations of Newcombe found himself fifty years old and master of Dagger Farm. Blanchard Newcombe slept with his fathers, and his son reigned in his stead.

John Newcombe was a hard-lipped, stern-featured man, with pale blue eyes and whiskers the colour of granite. His face indicated profound determination and a narrow outlook. It was strong with the strength of an animal rather than a man. He had a feline scowl and a feline ferocity of temper. He was tenacious and ungenerous, but for the most part just. A doggedness of purpose prospered him into the middle season of life, and then adversity fell upon him. A soul of easier and more tolerant pattern had survived the assault, but Newcombe answered blow for