

own sons might be engaged in the brawl, and at the same time, desirous to interpose the authority of age to prevent the quarrel ending in a fight, a by no means unusual, though very unsatisfactory mode of adjusting differences of opinion. The cause of the uproar was a dispute respecting a leap which had just been made; one party asserting that the jumper had not fairly footed the mark, the other just as stoutly contending he had. The competitors had both obtained a local celebrity in this exercise, which was much practised. The younger jumper had been gradually gaining upon the other, who was several years his senior; but at length they were so nearly matched that no one could decide which was the better, sometimes one and then the other taking the lead. This circumstance had created a strong feeling of rivalry between the two young men; the elder naturally desiring to maintain his superiority, or rather, to regain it; and the younger equally desirous to outstrip his formidable competitor. Another circumstance, however, had tended to embitter this harmless competition, this was the discovery that they were rivals for the good graces of Sarah Bently, the reputed beauty of the village, if not of the whole parish. It was generally understood that Sarah was a little inclined to flirting, and was keeping both in suspense as to a decided preference. The old folks, especially her father, very much preferred the younger man, and had positively forbidden the elder's coming to the house. Both the young men belonged to the middle class of workers, and were in comfortable, but still, comparatively, humble circumstances; the one being a hatter, and the other a carpenter, though the latter lived with his mother upon the farm, and assisted the family during his spare hours. One of the old men, who had gone to see what there was amiss, suggested that the best mode of ending the dispute would be to have the scores effaced, or better still, select another place, and each to make one or more jumps. The elder, who was the hatter, and who had made the disputed jump, objected to this mode of settling the difficulty. "He had," he said, "made a fair jump, there were the markings as plain as any thing need be, and what could he do more, if he jumped all night; if Ronald thought he could do it, why not try, and if he could not, why not acknowledge at once, that he was beaten." Just then some one called out, "Make way, here comes the young 'Squire,' let him decide the matter." The crowd at once opened for this important individual, who rode rapidly upon a fine black horse, and who, as he reined up in the closing circle, was greeted with an amount of deference, which, towards one of his age, was almost painful to witness, and yet when the circumstances are understood and considered, not at all surprising. The young "Squire," as he was called, was about twenty-one years of age, rather tall and well-looking; he had been petted and spoiled by his mother, who was a weak-minded woman, but proud as *lucifer*, of her family pedigree, and who had, accordingly, educated her son to regard their tenantry, and in fact every one else, in subordinate positions, as little better than serfs, whose homage was his birth-right, even where there was no vassalage.

Wytycher Hall, the birth-place of the young squire, was one of