

## FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

‘That improvement will come wi’ time,’ said Jan, twirling his eye.

Then Oak laughed, and Bathsheba smiled (for she never laughed readily now), and their friends turned to go.

‘Yes; I suppose that’s the size o’t,’ said Joseph Poorgrass with a cheerful sigh as they moved away; ‘and I wish him joy o’ her; though I were once or twice upon saying to-day with holy Hosea, in my scripture manner, which is my second nature, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” But since ’tis as ’tis, why, it might have been worse, and I feel my thanks accordingly.’

THE END