

the boy who gobbled his food or choked over the pudding-balls. Having satisfied herself on my first coming that my father was neither of the Quorum nor of Justice's kin, and, in fact, a mere rustic nobody, she had no more to say to me, but when she was not scolding her husband, addressed herself solely to one of the boys, who by virtue of an uncle who was a Canon, had his seat beside her. Insensibly, her husband, who at first, with an eye to my knowledge and his own deficiencies, had been more civil to me, took the same tone; and not only that, but, finding that I was to be trusted, he came less and less into school, until at last he would only appear for a few minutes in the day, and to carve when we had meat, and to see the lights extinguished at night. This without any added value for me; so that the better I served him—and for a year I managed his school for him—the less he favoured me, and at last thought a nod all the converse he owed me in the day.

Consigned to this solitary life by those above me, it was not likely that I should find compensation in the society of lads to whom I stood in an odious light, and of whom the oldest was no more than fourteen. For what was our life? Such hours as we did not spend in the drudgery of school, or in our beds, we passed in a yard on the dank side of the house, a grassless place, muddy in winter and dusty in summer, overshadowed by one skeleton tree; and wherein, since all violent games and sports were forbidden by the good lady's scruples (who belonged to the fanatical party) as savouring of Popery, we had perforce to occupy ourselves with bickerings and complaints and childish plays. Abutting on the garden of her house, this yard presented on its one open side a near prospect of water-butts, and drying clothes, so that to this day I profess that I hold it in greater horror than any other place or thing at that school.

It is true we walked out in the country at rare inter-