

the blows without a tremor. A groan, as if coming from a soul in fearful torment, reached my ears. I raised the latch and entered. A worm-eaten bedstead stood in the opposite corner, and an age-stained quilt moved as I crossed the room.

I shall never forget the face that looked at me from beneath the folds of that cover. I scarcely knew whether I gazed upon man or beast. Age had ravaged the features, as it had destroyed the church across the way. Hair grew in clumps from dirt-filled crevices, and lay over the face in tangled masses.

"Who are you, and where am I?" I asked in a loud voice. A strange sound came from the bed, and the hair over the mouth moved. The creature, whether man or woman I couldn't tell, was evidently trying to speak. I spoke again. This time the response was more distinct.

"England," was the word I heard.

"If I'm in England, who are you; what are you? Why is this village in decay? Why are the only people I meet, old, deaf and blind? Where are the others? Why is the only sign of life in the village, in the blacksmith's shop?"

I could not wait for answers. The atmosphere of the place was driving me mad. If this strange