

He was the eldest of the two sons. Robert was nineteen and he was twenty-two. It was three years now since his father had gone mad that fatal night; and not one day since then, had he been free from care and anxiety. Robert was a wild lad, perverse and wilful; and all his efforts to induce him to take to steady work and avoid his loose companions had been unavailable. Howard had to work hard, very hard, to support his mother and his brother. And then the wearying care and terror with which he watched the curse of lunacy, which had fell upon his father, coming also unto his mother, whom he loved so well!

It was a life that fell heavily and cruelly upon him, unnaturally so; for he was one to whom quiet and peace were very dear, and to have been able to sit contentedly among the books that lined his little room, poring in them, and writing forth his idyllic fanciful imaginings would have been sweet indeed. But then, that could not be; life held grimmer things for him.

The houses that lined the street became less frequent, after a while, and alternated with open fields on one side, and stretches of sea-beach on the left side, and soon they ceased altogether and he moved rapidly along a road that ran close to the water, and patches of woods took the place of the houses. In the north, to his back, Halifax lay. On the Dartmouth shore opposite a few far spaced lights shone, and he could see the lighthouse beacons seaward. The harbour water held a wan light and lay calm and still, lapping very gently on the beach. A track of starlight, more beautiful and more rare than moonlight, stretched across the water from a