

their father went on before with the spade under his arm, Robert with him, walking sturdily with the iron lever on his shoulder. It was a clear moonlight night. When they came to the quarry, they removed some surface earth and rubbish, and, having laid bare a stratum of rock likely to split into slabs, they began to use the pick. They marked a surface of solid stone five feet long and twenty inches wide, or thereabout. They made a series of incisions along the line, about five inches apart, into which they set the iron wedges. After tapping them gently, to make their points lay hold, Mr. Peel, who was the steadiest hand at the large hammer, swung it round his head, and gave each of the wedges a blow in turn, until the block was rent from the mass, as desired. The points of the pick and lever were then inserted in the rent. The crowbars, unfortunately, were found to be short and powerless. The father and two of the sons laid all their weight and strength on the long pinch; another worked the pick as a lever, and poised the block outward and upward. Jonathan had a small hard stone ready, and Anne another a little larger. The smallest was dropped, as directed, into the opening. Then they let go with the levers, and took a deeper hold, the small hard stone keeping the block from subsiding to its place. Having got a deeper hold, they gave their united weight and strength to the leverage again, and the opening being wider, Anne dropped in the larger of the hard stones. Again they let the block rest, and, getting a still deeper hold, they poised it upward and outward farther, and Jonathan, having got a larger hard stone, dropped it in. By two other holds and rests, conducted in like manner, they overturned the block, two and twenty inches thick, or thereabout, to its side. On examining it all round, and detecting no break nor flaw, they estimated that, could they split it into four equal slabs of five and a half inches thick, they would have as many stone tables as were required. To split the block into four slabs, it was necessary to make three rows of incisions with the pick, into which to introduce the wedges. This was done, and the slabs being split, were dressed a little at the ends and sides. Turning one of them on edge, they placed the hand-barrow on edge beside it, and brought barrow and stone down, the stone uppermost, as desired. Turning it crossways, that its ends should project to the sides, and enable one at each end to attach his sustaining strength, Robert and Edmund were allotted to that duty. Their father and William, as the stronger of the four, took their places between the shafts—the father behind, William before. They got it out of the quarry by the exercise of sheer strength. But to get it over the steps going out of the waste into the plantation, required skill and caution as well

as strength. It was both difficult and dangerous. Nor were they clear of danger going down the path which led athwart the slope. Their feet had a tendency to slip, and the stone naturally slid to the lowest side; but the youth who had charge of that end kept it up manfully. Without hurt or mishap, they got it to the kitchen door. So, in due time, they got the other three; but, before they were done, the perspiration was dripping from all the four. They sat down to rest and wipe their warm faces, and found the time was an hour past midnight.

There was not space for them all to work in the small back room at laying the slabs. The father and the two elder sons laid them at the proper height for working upon with printing blocks, as described by Harry Garland. In that room they remain at this day as then laid down. In that room the visitor still sees those slabs of stone upon which the Peels made their first essays in printing calicoes—upon which they took the first step towards that wonderful fortune of wealth and fame which then lay before them unknown.

Though the hour was late, young Robert Peel was too full of ideas about designs for the blocks he intended to carve for printing, to go to sleep. He went out to the moor in the moonlight, to gather a handful of bilberry leaves, or other foliage, which might be copied. (The first thing printed at Peel Fold was a parsley leaf.) Going to the moor, the youth had to pass near the house of James Hargreaves. He saw a light in the window. Seeing a shadow moving, he halted for a moment, and that moment revealed enough to detain him half an hour. He was surprised, not alone to see the weaver up at that hour, but to see his singular, his inexplicable employment. To comprehend what that was, let us return to Garland's departure from Peel Fold, as told before.

When Harry had crossed the waste, he met James Hargreaves carrying two pails of water for domestic use, and asked him to go down the hill, and drink a "gill of ale" at the Horse. James considered a minute, set down his pails, twisted his body, rolled one shoulder forward, the other back, chipped the stones of the road with his iron-shod clogs, and confessed that he had no objection to a gill of ale at the Horse, were it not that he had Jenny's gruel to make. But, again, there was Nan Pilkington who would make the gruel. Also, there was Charlotte Marsden at the Horse, who was always at her wheel, and Alice, her sister, who also was a spinner when not waiting on the customers; perhaps they might have west ready which nobody had bespoke. The balance of reasons for and against going to the Horse was thus found to be in favor of going. So, taking in the water, and directing Nan Pilkington's attention to Jenny's gruel,