

You cannot take the amphora with you when you die. At least see that my son——"

"Go your ways an' trouble me no more!" she cried, and Malherb flashed into a passion.

"As to that, if this hole is your home, I'm like to trouble you not a little, you cross-grained hag. See there—where the heart of the storm is bursting now, at the other side of this great marsh—there you'll presently find a granite house lifting itself four-square to the winds. I also have chosen the Moor for a home. May that knowledge bring you to better wisdom."

The old woman was deeply interested by this intelligence.

"What! You be coming? Then you haven't flourished down country after all, but must climb up here an' begin again. You're mad! An' 'tis a wicked thing to steal the Moor acre by acre as you an' the likes of you be doing now. An' Duchy always ready with its cursed greedy paws stretched out to take your money."

"I shall be a Moor-man, too, and enjoy rights of Venville," he said, more to himself than to the woman.

"'Tis a wicked thing and flat robbery," she repeated. "All the countryside be raw under it; but for what count the rights of the poor? All the best of the Moor—all the best strolls for grazing, where the grass be greenest—all the lew spots—all stolen away one after t'other an' barred against the lawful commoners; an' not a hand lifted. That hill be where my cows do graze an' roam. Now you'll drive 'em from their proper lairs, an' they'll have to bide on the coarse grass, an' I'll be stinted of milk, as is my poor livelihood."

"You'll still have enough to fill the amphora," said Maurice Malherb; then he turned to the boy.

"Bring you my horse, lad. The storm is past. I can get on to Tor Royal now."

"An' tell Tyrwhitt what I tell you," said Lovey, "that him an' the rest be no better'n a pack of thieves an' cadgers. 'Tis a hanging matter if us steals the goose from the common; but nobody says nought when the upper people steal the common from the goose. There'll come a day of reckoning for Duchy yet—an' Tyrwhitt too!"

She stood and watched him mount, with her bent head thrust out of the door, like a gigantic fowl looking out of a pen.

Malherb made no answer, but turned to the boy.