

"To be sure thou art! Varry well, then, when will ta come o t' mill? There's a deal for thee to get at thy finger-ends. I'd like thee to know t' business from A to Z."

"I was not thinking of the mill, father."

"Oh! Thou wasn't thinking of t' mill. What was ta thinking of, then?"

"I was thinking of the law."

"Thou was thinking of the law, was ta? Think away, my lad. But for a' thy thinking thou art bound to take thy part in Market Bevin Mill."

"I am not yet bound to any thing—or to any one, for that matter. I have made up my mind to be a lawyer. I hate the sight of the looms, and the men in their blue pinafores, and the slatternly, down-at-heel women. I must do some better work than that."

"I hope ta may!—I hope to goodness thou may! But I don't think thou will iver do as good work as I hev done. Come, Joe; come, my lad! Do thy duty by t' business, and we will varry soon hev t' biggest mill and the highest chimney i' Wharfedale."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, father."

"Why-a! I hev been thinking o' takin' thee into t' mill iver since I laid the first stone of it, Joe. I hev thought for thee and worked for thee iver since thou wert born. Thou must go to t' mill, or it will be t' worse for thee. Mind that, my lad; for I am in downright earnest."

"So am I, sir."

The threat had decided Joe. The proposal had found him in a contradictory, self-willed temper, and the half-menace was just the thing he would not stand. In the moment, without thought, without any real inclination, he had said he would be a lawyer, and now he was determined to stand to the statement, whatever the result might be.

Both men became steadily more and more positive and angry. Amos had risen and taken his favourite position on the hearth-rug. Joe, reclining in a large chair, looked quite away from his irate father. One would have supposed that all his interests were connected with the lilacs and laburnums blowing at the open window.

"I sall make thee one more offer," said Amos, at length; "if thou refuses it I sall niver, niver more consider thee to hev part or lot in my mill. Next Monday come to t' mill. I'll give thee £500 a year, and if all is as it should be, at the end of three years I'll give thee a sixth interest. Then thou can marry and make a man o' thysen."

"You intend to be very good to me, father."

"I do that, Joe. Think well, my lad, afore thou speaks. Thou knows well that I'll niver go back on any word-I say,"

"If I feel obliged to refuse your offer, father, then—"

"Then, I will give thee £5,000. Thou can mak' or mar with it, as suits thy fancy. That is a' I have to say."

"I will take the £5,000, father."