

women the labourers' lot had been harder than Dartmoor winters; but for them the life of the master himself must have sunk into a mere, sordid matter of business, lacking all principles but expediency. Religion he had none; yet, until the present, pursued honest courses with most scrupulous rigour. But this the man had done because honesty was the best policy in his experience. Already matters were falling out that shook him in his opinion. His dearest enemy—a neighbouring farmer—prospered amazingly, though all the country-side knew him for a notorious rogue.

This man was called Roger Honeywell, and he owned one of the ancient Dartmoor tenement farms. Of these not a few exist: they lie scattered upon the waste, and are independent of Duchy jurisdiction. Vitifer Farm—a spot cultivated from remote periods—was more happily situated than the homestead of Mr. Newcombe. It enjoyed greater facilities, and a pack-horse road—of good quality for those days—extended between it and the adjacent village of Widecombe, the metropolis of that region. This road passed over East Dart, some distance below Dagger Farm, upon a clapper bridge, of which the ruins may still be seen.

Of late Mr. Honeywell, from merely passive dislike, had awakened his neighbour Newcombe into furious