

High overhead dangled from a gibbet a thing that was a man and not a man, not only for its broken, twisted state, but by the reason of the droppings from it. The figure, headless, armless, was naked you might say, but bound in what might have been mud, some thick substance that hanged like black icicles from the dead, drooping feet.

"God forgive me!" cried Upcott. "What's this I see?" And he called on the Maker three times in a loathsome voice.

And a soldier, passing on the causey, answered him and said: "A warning to the people of Bideford. The man was a rebel and so are rebels served. Pass on, old hogshead. The devil will boil you in brandy, not in tar. That man was boiled in tar."

John imitated the stare he had seen and practised in the morning, looking down on the soldier from his vantage with an expression like a house-gable, and drove on. But the sight of that pitiable figure sent a gripe through his midriff and the pendant broken thing that had once been a man was before his eyes all the way. And his father, sagging down in the cart, muttered: "Buried in tar, boiled in tar. God deliver me!"

The father was snoring in the bottom of the tail-cart and the son weeping on the seat, weeping for that dying and desolate day, when they drove into Abbotsham as lights were being lit in windows and stars being lit on high.

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