

THE FARM OF THE DAGGER

CHAPTER I

DAGGER FARM TO-DAY

THERE is a road, of almost Roman straightness, that cuts the central wastes of Dartmoor, and connects the town of Tavistock with the village of Moretonhampstead, twenty miles distant. About midway this track leaps down over the broad brow of Merripit Hill, plunges into the hamlet of Postbridge, and crosses the eastern arm of Dart. A few yards below the passage there shall still be seen, spanning the river, an ancient and famous bridge of the sort known as cyclopean. It is dry-built with enormous masses of granite, and may be considered of a handsome but not fabulous antiquity. In the eighteenth century, and perhaps earlier, our forefathers' pack horses passed that way.

Now, turning from the high road and pursuing the river southward, there shall presently appear upon the hillside above it a ruined dwelling-place. This habitation is well sheltered beneath the tremendous shoulder of Bellaford Tor, where that mountain rises