

blow. He retorted upon an enemy in kind, and small grievances that grew into great ones dwarfed his sense of right, poisoned his life, and reduced all earthly interests to one tragical and sinister determination. This was a fixed purpose to revenge his wrongs. In person he was tall and of a powerful frame. Infant mortality ran high a hundred years ago, and any lad of Dartmoor who survived the ordeal of childhood generally developed into a man of sound constitution and great physical hardihood.

One sorrow, indeed, was never absent from John Newcombe's horizon: he had no son; and when, in course of time, his only daughter should succeed him, Dagger Farm must know another name than Newcombe, unless Eve married her cousin.

Such a match was the father's desire, yet Noah Newcombe, the young blacksmith and farrier of Postbridge, though he satisfied the parents, by no means contented the girl. Noah, while a man of great strength and a giant in stature, was built of rough earth; but the blood of her mother—an "in-country" woman—claimed gentle fountains, and the maiden, Eve, showed her heritage. She developed an imaginative temperament. She loved the river like a living thing: she roamed its banks in pretty idleness: the flowers and the trees were her companions, and filled her life with a sort of happiness that proved sufficient