

which fell to their lot in Combe Hadley. A certain degree of want and hardship fell to the share of all, while too many of them knew what brutal treatment and bitter words meant after the Saturday evening visits of their husbands to the Brown Cow.

Widow Baynham was getting old, and dependent for her support on her son Harry. He was about eighteen, and, on the whole, careful of his mother's comfort. All the elder children had gone out into the world in search of work, or service, except two, who had married and settled in the village; so that the old home was now shared by Harry and his mother alone. Harry was not an agricultural labourer, but a mason, and, as such, ranked a little higher in the social scale than most of his companions. But he was utterly ignorant and uneducated. With great trouble he could put together a few letters, but the labour was more than the pleasure; consequently he seldom opened a book, except to gaze and wonder at the pictures; and never, a paper. Very few of these latter, however, found their way to Combe Hadley; there was no school in the parish, and the religious ministrations were confined to one short service, each Sabbath afternoon, in the little church—a service which most of the audience yawned through, as a matter of duty. Having said thus much by way of introduction, you will readily understand how benighted a place Combe Hadley was, and how it came to pass that Harry Baynham was an ignorant, uneducated, rough youth.

Harry strolled leisurely across the green, hands in pockets, and came up with the crowd. Mr. Howard had just concluded his short prayer by the time he arrived—purposely short, so as not to drive any of his listeners away—and commenced to read. With clear ringing tones he read out a chapter from the sacred story, laying peculiar stress upon the invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" for from these words he intended to deliver a short address. The Combe Hadley people listened in decorous silence to the reading