

nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called "North'ard." So had his way of life. He invited no comer to step across his door sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheelwright's. He sought no man or woman save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with the necessities; and it was soon clear to the Raveloe lasses that he would never urge one of them to accept him against her will—quite as if he had heard them declare that they would never marry a dead man come to life again. This view of Marner's personality was not without another ground than his pale face and unexampled eyes; for Jem Rodney, the molecatcher, averred that one evening as he was returning homeward he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done; and that on coming up to him he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched the bag as if they'd been made of iron; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you may say, in the winking of an eye, and said, "Good-night," and walked off. All this Jem swore he had seen, more by token that it was the very day he had been molecatching on Squire Cass's land down by the old saw-pit. Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body for two months and more, while she had been under the