

bank, with a bright edge of garden dividing them from the rural traffic that went by. Round them stood fields, rather treeless, but thick in crops, for the service of which the barton stood as stable-yard and granary, an off-shoot from a larger farm.

The light lay still inarticulate and blanched on the child's mind, brought to renew its sense of local colour in that simple place. His body had still some tremors of its recent illness, and his brain took fright easily at darkness or unexpected sounds; loneliness, on the other hand, began already to be one of his pleasures. All the more quickly did he receive the inspirations of the small rural world, which in a few days contained nothing that was stranger to him than the safe open spaces where he might be alone, yet within sound of Mrs Harbour's chiding call. Within a fortnight he vegetated into a true cottager.

No doubt his small doings in the few weeks he was there had a plain prosaic exterior; but this ring of fields and farm and garden became for Tristram an enchanted spot; memory made him look back on it as the nest where he first fledged, the holy ground on which, so it seemed to him then, he had stood and watched the tree of life brimming with fire yet not consumed.

Unknown to himself the boy was renewing the associations of a still earlier visit, discovering a mysterious familiarity in things he had seen while yet in the first toddling stage of infancy, and again forgotten.

No chronicle can take in a whole life, and follow it without gaps and omissions; there is a blind spot in the eye of each one of us: only by that incompleteness do we see anything. Autobiographers leave whole tracts of themselves undiscovered; nor could Tristram in after years have given more than a maimed account