

Red Hill above Daleham was a sandstone bluff that sprang up near three hundred feet abruptly from the sea, and, save at low tides, deep water always ran beneath. Upon its head a rough tressure of wind-worn pine trees circled the grey ruins of Stapledon manor-house, and inland therefrom extended the fishermen's gardens and stretched two roads. One of these ways led to Daleham Church and the country; the other was that up which Parson Yates and his company now climbed from the village.

"Here will we stand," said the good man, "and should anything in the nature of a superhuman visitation occur, you must light your candle, Richard Trout, and you, Noah Collins, after I have lifted my voice the first time, must strike upon the bell thrice — for each Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity. And see no wax falls from the candle on to my book, boy."

They drew up outside the belt of fir and all endured half an hour of misery, for the snow, though slight, persisted and the air and earth were bitter cold. Presently, however, the snow thinned to scattered flakes, then stopped; a star stole out and touched the white carpet with silver. Then came the beat of the church clock telling ten, and, as if in answer, a sigh ran through the woods, and gloomy figures moved beneath the trees.