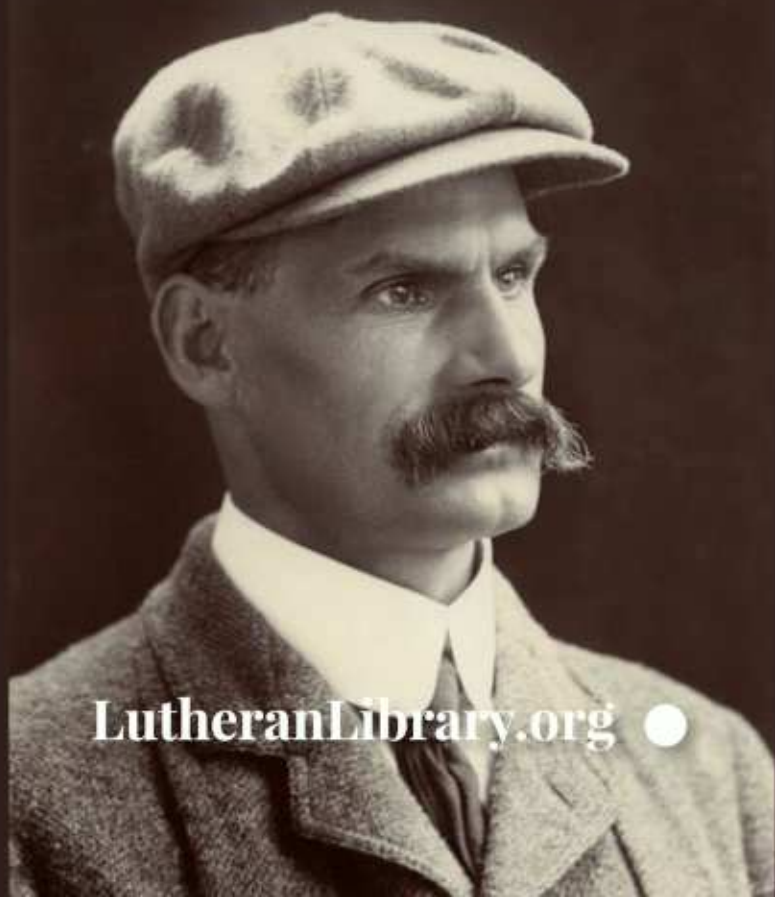


Joseph Hocking

Caleb's Conquest



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CALEB'S CONQUEST

Caleb, the sixteen-year-old son of a small farmer, ran away on his father's death and engaged himself as a farm labourer. What he discovers in the next few years makes a typical Hocking Cornish adventure romance.

CALEB'S CONQUEST

JOSEPH HOCKING

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CALEB'S CONQUEST

CHAPTER I

EARLY in the February of the year 1920, a shambling-looking youth made his way across the dreary moors which lie between the town of Bodmin and the village of Altarnum. He was not a prepossessing-looking youth. It was true there was nothing repugnant about his features and he did not look unintelligent ; but there was a furtive gleam in his eyes which made one think of a dog whose master had been cruel to him. He was very pale, too, and his skin suggested the fact that he had been ill-fed.

He had been walking since early morning, and as the short winter's day was now drawing to a close, it was no wonder that he looked wellnigh exhausted. During the earlier part of the day he had been seen trudging along the straight road across the Goss Moors, and he had looked longingly towards the train which traversed the country between Newquay and Par. But he had not turned aside from the road which he had evidently marked out for himself. When he had come opposite Roche Rock, and saw not only this historic landmark, but the huge heaps of *débris* from the clay works near, he had seemed to hesitate. Then looking at a crumpled piece of newspaper which he had taken from his pocket, he had, after reading it, turned resolutely in the direction of the capital of Cornwall.

No one spoke to him ; indeed, as he was passing through the village of Bolventor and three youths who had been watching him looked at him inquiringly as if on the point

of speech, the unfriendly look in his eyes repelled them, and they remained silent.

Nevertheless, the youth stopped. "Do you know where Polruan is?" he asked.

"Polruan? Never 'eerd of it," replied one of the youths.

"It's over there somewhere," the traveller said doubtfully, pointing in an easterly direction. "Mr. John Tremayne d'live there."

"Oh, that's Linkinhorne way," volunteered one of the youths, "and a good many miles off. Ted'n much of a road either," he added, "and 'twill be dark soon."

The youth sighed, and looked doubtfully at the dark, lowering sky.

"Be 'ee goin' there?"

"If I can"; and then without another word, he trudged on, and soon after turned aside from the main road.

The evening was bitterly cold, and, while it was not raining, the cold, damp winds from the moors cut him like a knife.

Presently he again reached the uplands, and saw a track evidently leading either to some farm-house or small village.

All around him was a wild, wide stretch of moors. Daylight was going fast, but even yet the outline of the country was plainly to be seen. But the boy paid no heed. He only wanted to make sure that he was going in the direction of the place where he hoped to obtain not only food and lodgings—but work.

So eager was he to reach his journey's end that he did not know he was being watched and followed. Yet so it was. Close to him were a man and a child. The former, although well advanced in years, seemed hale and strong. To a passer-by he would have appeared to be at least seventy years of age. His hair, which had been allowed to grow long and almost covered his neck and shoulders, was quite white. So was his beard which fell in heavy masses down his chest. But his eyes were keen and bright, and although they were shadowed by thick, bushy eyebrows, they not only gave a suggestion of strength

and virility, but they spoke of long association with this wild country.

His movements were almost like those of a young man. The track on which he walked was rough and ill made, yet he made his way without difficulty.

The child, too, who walked by his side was evidently acquainted with the moors, and she moved with that grace and freedom so often found among those who live a free, untrammelled, open-air life. In many ways her appearance was striking. Her eyes were large and black and brilliant, while her hair was also black and grew in thick, curling masses over a well-shaped head.

The couple were well known in the district, and were spoken of by the scattered population of the moors as "Old Adam" and "Young Eve." What their surname was no one seemed to know. The old man had become possessed of a small farm in the heart of the moors some years before, and together they lived in this lonely region.

Old Adam had a somewhat peculiar reputation. He was spoken of by the lonely dwellers in that region as "a wise man." Some said he had communion with the unseen world, and knew secrets unknown to the ordinary people. It was believed that he could cure adders' stings by means of charms, as well as cure people who were suffering from diseases, concerning which, the two doctors who came from Bodmin on the one hand and Launceston on the other, were entirely ignorant.

Presently they reached a spot which, as far as could be judged, was far removed from human habitation, and nothing could be seen but rocky tors, lonely stretches of moor and deep ravines. Indeed, but for the track on which they walked it might seem that no human being ever set foot there.

The boy stumbled and fell; evidently his strength was well-nigh gone.

The old man and the child rushed to his side, and by the dim light of the moon which now and then shone from between the clouds examined his features. "Poor boy!" said the child. "He isn't dead, is he, Grandad?"

The old man shook his head. "No," he said. "He'll soon revive again."

"Shall we take him home, Grandad?"

The old man again examined his face as if in doubt. "No," he said. "He will be all right in a minute or two."

"But can't we help him in any way?"

"No. He would resent all efforts of help; he is one who will make his own way. There, life is coming back to him! Let us get away!" He seized the child's hand as he spoke, and dragged her away behind a huge rock which stood near.

A minute later the boy rose to his feet and made his way along the lonely track.

The old man and the child did not follow him any farther. Instead they watched him till he was nearly out of sight, after which they made their way to the lonely little farmstead where they lived.

"Why didn't you take him home and give him food?" again urged the child at length.

But the old man did not reply. His eyes were fixed on a distant peak, and the only word which he uttered was one which he repeated three times:

"Destiny! Destiny! Destiny!"

Meanwhile the boy continued on his way. "I hope I shall be able to hold out," he said to himself presently. "I feel awfully queer and ill. I wonder if I am on the right road?" and he looked around him like one uncertain.

"Yes, this must be right," he continued, changing the bundle he was carrying from one hand to the other. "The people at the public-house at the top of the hill told me this was the way, and I can't be mistaken. Ah, that's better!"

This exclamation was drawn forth by the fact that although the day was now gone, there was, at that moment, a break in the clouds through which the moon was plainly visible.

Nearly an hour later he found himself in a more pleasant part of the country. Instead of wild moorland was agricultural land where tall trees grew, and where narrow lanes took the place of hedgeless tracks.

"I caan't go much farther," he muttered. "I am nearly done up. I wonder if that's it? I'll go there anyhow."

This reflection was called forth by the sight of a twinkling light which he saw in the near distance, and, with renewed energy, he made his way towards it. A little later he found himself at the door of a farm-house.

"Is this Polruan?" he asked of a buxom servant maid who answered his knock.

"No, ted'n. Polruan is more'n two miles away."

"Don't Mr. John Tremayne live here?"

"No, 'ee don't, so you'd better be off."

Tramps were seldom seen in the neighbourhood, but the maid had, by the dim light of the candle she held in her hand, seen his face, and was afraid.

"Which is the way there?"

"You caan't miss it," she replied. "You must go back to the parish road, and then follow it till you come to the first turnin' on the left; that will lead 'ee straight to the Polruan gates."

The youth looked at her beseechingly, and then turned as if to follow her instructions. But he did not move a step; instead his body swayed to and fro as if he had no control over himself, and a moment later he had fallen at her feet in a dead faint.

"Good lor'!" cried the maid. "He must be dead! Maaster! Missus! Come 'ere a minute, will 'ee; quick!"

A second later she had left the motionless form of the youth on the doorstep, and had rushed into the house. Making her way to what was called the front kitchen, she frantically told the man and woman, who might be the owners of the house, and who with two others were seated at a table which was laden with plain, homely fare, what she had seen and heard. "He's dead! His eyes be closed! He frightened me, and I ordered'n off! Oa, do 'ee come and see fer yourself!" she ejaculated hysterically.

"Now then, Charlotte, don't be a fool," the man, who was sitting at the head of the table, remonstrated. "Tell us plainly what is the matter."

"I've told 'ee plain," screamed the girl. "There is a chap at the back door, and 'ee's dead!"

Giving a quick glance at the other occupants of the supper table, the farmer rose and went through the back kitchen towards the door to which the youth had gone.

"Mother," he shouted, "come 'ere a minute, will 'ee? Charlotte's right."

"What! A dead man!" cried the woman who was evidently his wife, and who had followed him to the door.

"No, I don't think 'ee's dead. Here, Gad, come and give me a 'elpin' hand. Looks as though he's fainted," he added. "Now then, Gracie, you keep away, my dear. You caan't do nothin', and this is no place for you." The latter remark was made to a pretty little girl of perhaps twelve years old, who, childlike, had followed the woman who was her mother.

But the child Gracie continued to look with terror-stricken eyes towards the doorway where the youth lay.

"Come on, Gad," continued the farmer, as he looked towards a middle-aged man who had also followed him. "Let us take'n to the back kitchen fire. I'll carry his head and you carry his feet."

A minute later the youth reclined inert and unconscious in an armchair before an open fireplace, where the woman had hastily thrown some wood, which was now bursting into flame.

"Ever seed'n afore, Gad?"—and the farmer looked towards the man, who was evidently a servant, as if for information.

Gad shook his head.

"He don't look like a tramp," remarked the woman. "For that matter, 'ee's only a boy. There, 'ee's openin' his eyes."

The woman spoke truly. The youth, who by this time was recovering consciousness, looked around him in a dazed kind of way.

"I am sorry," he muttered presently. "I thought this was Polruan. That's why I spoke to the maid at the door. Then I got all giddy like, and afterwards everything became black. I think I can go on now," he added.

"No you can't," ejaculated the woman. "Sam, he's fainted from hunger. Look, he's hardly got any flesh on his bones! Who are you, and what are you called?"

But the youth did not reply. He seemed to have lapsed into a comatose condition.

"Come now, caan't 'ee speak?" said the farmer. "Tell us who you are and where you came from."

"Of course he can't speak, and you must be a fool to ask him," said the woman irritably. "The poor boy's faint from cold and hunger, that's what 'ee is. Gracie, bring a cup of tea from the front kitchen, and I will give it to him."

The child, who had been watching eagerly, hurried to obey her mother's behest, and a few seconds later returned with a cup of steaming hot tea. Some minutes later the youth, who had partaken of the tea, as well as having eaten some of the viands which the woman pressed upon him, seemed better.

"Will you tell me where I am, and who you are?" he asked.

"My name is Trethewy," replied the man, "and this place is—well, it's my farm. It's called Spring Farm. Now then, tell me what's your name?"

"Caleb," was the reply.

"Yes, but Caleb what?"

"Besowsa."

"Where did you come from?"

"Would it matter if I didn't tell you?" was his reply.

"Anyhow, what are you doing here?"

For answer Caleb Besowsa put his hand in his pocket and took out the piece of newspaper he had examined more than once during his journey. "This was it," he said, pointing to an advertisement.

WANTED. A good, strong farm hand to live in. Must be accustomed to all kinds of farm work. Good references essential. Apply Mr. John Tremayne, Polruan Farm, St. Bidad.

Then, as if the advertiser wished to make the situation more attractive, the following words were added: "Good wages, and a good home for suitable applicant."

"Why this paper is a fortnight old," cried the man, "and John Tremayne has had a new servant living in his house for more than a week."

Caleb Besowsa looked at him with a bewildered expression on his face. "Do you mean that my chance is gone?" he asked anxiously.

"Why, of course it is. Besides, if John Tremayne hadn't fixed upon a servant, you wouldn't do."

"Why not?"

"Because you are too small, and too weak," replied the farmer.

Caleb did not reply, but looked helplessly around him.

"But surely," went on Trethewy, "you didn't come here to answer an old advertisement like that? Didn't your people *tell* you 'twould be useless?"

"I haven't got any people."

"Haven't got any people! Who's your father and mother?"

"Haven't got any. Mother died years ago."

"But what about your father?"

"He was buried the day before yesterday."

"What was he called?"

"Same as me. Caleb Besowsa."

"Where did he live?"

"Would you mind if I don't tell you?" and there was a kind of haunted look in Caleb's eyes as he spoke.

"Why don't you want to tell?"

To this there was no reply, and the boy looked furtively from one to the other as if afraid.

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"You can't be!" exclaimed Trethewy. "Why I have known many a boy of twelve who looked bigger and stronger than you!"

"That's my age, anyhow."

"What did your father do when he was alive?"

"He had a farm."

"A farm! How big was it?"

"Forty acres."

"And who lived with you?" This time it was Mrs. Trethewy who spoke.

"No one. I lived alone with my father."

The woman looked at him attentively; noticed his pale face and almost fleshless limbs. "Was—was he kind to you?" she asked.

"Yes,—except when he was drunk," and the last words came out with a kind of gasp.

"Tell me about him."

The boy was silent.

"Was he often drunk?"

"As often as he could." The words were spoken in a shame-faced fashion. Then he added as if in explanation: "That's where the trouble was."

"Where what trouble was?" asked Mrs. Trethewy.

"He got behind with his rent. He got behind with everything, and at last the landlord threatened to sell him up."

"What happened then?"

"He got drunk again."

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Trethewy. "And what did you do then?"

"Father was buried the day before yesterday. Do you mind if I don't tell you any more about it?"

"Why don't you want to tell us any more about it?" asked the farmer.

"'Cos when father was buried I made up my mind to go away where he wasn't known. I have always been looked upon as old drunken Caleb Besowsa's brat, and I wanted to begin afresh."

"And did 'ee live far from here?"

"A long way," replied Caleb, and there was a far-away look in his eyes. "I started afore daylight this mornin', and I've been walkin' ever since."

"And what made 'ee think of comin' here?"

"That," and he nodded towards the crumpled piece of newspaper. "I picked it up in the road on the day father died, and I thought it would suit me."

"But as I told 'ee, John Tremayne 'ave got a new servant boy. What be 'ee goin' to do now?"

The lad looked around him helplessly. "Don't know, I'm sure," he replied.

"But you must sleep somewhere. 'Ave 'ee got any money?"

Caleb shook his head. "Can I sleep in one of your outhouses?" he asked. "I'd be off first thing in the morning."

"Father, father, he mustn't do that! It would be cruel, and he'd die of the cold."

It was the child Gracie who spoke. She had been standing close by during the conversation, and had listened in silence, but with evident excitement, to what was being said.

"But 'ee must sleep somewhere," repeated the farmer.

"Where can a' go?"

"Let him stay here," cried the child. "Let him work on our farm. It would be cruel to send him away."

The farmer looked at the child affectionately, and seemed to be thinking about her suggestion.

"What do 'ee knaw 'bout farm work?" he said at length, turning towards Caleb again.

"Everything," replied the boy.

"Can 'ee manage horses? Can 'ee plough? Can 'ee milk cows, feed pigs, and all that sort of thing?"

"Yes, I can." There was a touch of eagerness in his voice now. "I've done everything on our farm for years."

"Years! Why, you look only a cheeld now, and you be as weak as a rat!"

"No I bean't, and I stayed away from school 'cos the farm was goin' to wrack and ruin. Everything that's been done for years I've done, and I'd have made the place pay, too, if father hadn't got drunk and done foolish things. The school attendance officer kicked up a row," he added, "and threatened to put father in prison. But there, it is no use talkin', and father is dead now. I only passed the fourth standard," he added, "and I've forgotten nearly all I ever learnt. It wasn't so bad when father was sober. I had plenty to eat then, and he didn't leather me."

The farmer again looked at the boy critically. "'Ave 'ee had much to ait *lately*?" he asked.

The boy did not reply, but Mrs. Trethewy burst out impulsively: "He's been starved, Sam, that's what's the matter with 'ee. Do what Gracie says, give him a job and let him stay here."

The farmer looked towards Gad interrogatively.

"We could do with another 'and on the place," was Gad's answer to the farmer's look. "It will soon be teelin' time, and we shall be shorthanded."

"But 'ee's so small and weak," objected the farmer.

"Feed'n up," urged Gad. "Laive'n git a bit of flesh on his bones, and 'ee'll pay for his keep. When I was sixteen I ded'n 'ave 'nough to ait, and I was just like 'ee is. There wad'n 'nough to ait in our 'ouse. As I've told 'ee scores o' times, father had an ambition to 'ave twelve sons like Jacob in the Bible. 'Ee had several of us, and 'ee called us the same way as Jacob called his sons. But 'ee ded'n go so far as Jacob did. There was only one after me, and 'ee is called Asher. As you d'know, Asher comed after Gad in the Bible."

Gad would have gone on to give further information about his family, but the farmer, having heard his story many times before, interrupted him.

"Look here," he said, turning to Caleb, "you've got a bundle. What's in'n?"

"Enough to carry me on till I can get some wages, and then I'll buy new," replied the boy.

"Can 'ee fix'n up, mother?" asked the farmer, who had evidently made up his mind what to do.

"Of course I can," replied Mrs. Trethewy. "I can make up a little shakedown, and put it in that cubby place in the room where Gad d'sleep."

Less than two hours later Caleb Besowsa was asleep. Mrs. Trethewy had been as good as her word, and had placed a bed in the corner of Gad's room, under a stairway which led to a loft.

"Look here, Sam," she said, as she led her husband to the boy's bedside, and held a candle so that the light fell upon his sleeping form.

"'Ee ed'n such a bad-lookin' boy after all," remarked the farmer.

"No, but look here," and she pointed to Caleb's almost fleshless body. "Look at they bruises; look at they welts! 'Ee must 'ave been treated just awful."

"Good lor'!" ejaculated the farmer.

"Sam," said the woman solemnly, "the Lord have sent'n 'ere for a purpose, and we must do our duty. We must treat'n well and feed'n well, and the Lord will make it up to us."

"I wonder," replied her husband.

"Wonder what?" asked Mrs. Trethewy.

"How long it will be before 'ee will be fit to work," replied the farmer, and he slowly made his way downstairs towards the front kitchen.

CHAPTER II

ON the following morning Caleb Besowsa declared his readiness for work, and Sam Trethewy, the farmer, would, had he been left to himself, have taken advantage of the boy's willingness, but Mrs. Trethewy would not have it so.

"I be goin' to feed'n up for a week before 'ee d'do a stroke," she declared. "You may say what you like, Sam, but it would be cruel to send'n to work while 'ee is in that condition. He's hardly anything but skin and bones, and we should be had up for cruelty to children if we put him to work right away."

She had her way, too, and during the week that followed Caleb did little more than eat and sleep. Perhaps that is scarcely correct, however. He had a good many conversations with the child Gracie, who seemed to regard him as her special property.

"Did you say you had only passed the fourth standard?" she asked him.

"That's all," replied Caleb, "and I have forgotten nearly all I learnt."

"Well I never!" cried the child. "And you are sixteen?"

"Yes, I am sixteen."

"While I am only just turned twelve," she informed him, "and I have already passed the sixth standard."

"Ah, but you are clever," replied the boy.

"I expect I am," was her reply. "I'll teach you, if you like, and then if you work hard you may get up to where I am. I can do vulgar fractions and decimal fractions; and the school-master who was here a few days ago told father he would like to teach me Algebra and Euclid. I know a lot of history, too, and heaps about geography and that sort of thing."

The boy looked at her admiringly. "I can do reduction," he said, "but I have forgotten all about long division in money."

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Gracie. "I am beginning to learn French," she added boastfully.

"French! Good lor', you are wonderful!"

"Have you read any books?" she asked.

Caleb shook his head shamefacedly. "How could I get any books?" he asked. "I was never allowed any money."

"Didn't you have any prizes at Sunday School?"

"I never went to Sunday School."

"I've got lots," replied the girl proudly. "I'll lend you some of them if you like. I've got *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Life of President Garfield* as well as *The Life of President Lincoln*. They are rather dry, but I read them. Father says that when he was a boy he read some books by Samuel Smiles about Self Help, and that sort of thing; but I have never read them. I should think they were books for boys who want to get on, but I am a girl. I've got a lot of story books, too," she added. "Perhaps you would like to read them."

"I don't expect I shall have time," replied Caleb. "If your father's farm is like the one my father had I shall be kept hard at it when I begin to work. All the same, I should like to have those books about Self Help which

you say tells one how to get on. What did you say was the name of the man who wrote them?"

"Samuel Smiles," replied Gracie.

"Ah," said Caleb ruminatingly, but he did not ask her any more questions.

At the end of a week Sam Trethewy declared that Caleb was pounds heavier, and looked like a new boy. He also informed his wife that he must start to work on the following Monday morning.

"Give'n another week," pleaded Mrs. Trethewy. "'Ee ain't had time to pick up yet. Why, as you know, his bones were ready to break through his skin on the night 'ee came, and I'm sure 'ee's been starved for years."

"Gose on with 'ee," laughed the farmer. "His skin be too tough for that. Besides, I caan't afford to 'ave a great 'ungry boy loppin' around the place doin' nothin' but aitin' his 'ead off. I must get in the oats right away, too, and 'ee's strong enough to harvy (harrow) them in."

"You'll be brought up for cruelty to children," urged Mrs. Trethewy.

"Be darned to all such nonsense," replied her husband.

"For shame, Sam, and you a professor of religion, too! What'll people say when you d'go to class meetin' if they d'know that you was cruel to a poor, starvin' boy?"

"Look 'ere," exclaimed the farmer, "I bean't goin' to be ordered about by you, Selina; and that boy must start work on Monday morning, whatever is said at class meetin'. Besides, 'ee d'want to work."

For several months after that Caleb was kept hard at work. Moreover, he worked willingly, and the farmer had to admit to his wife that he was a very good boy.

"But doan't 'a ait!" he ejaculated. "I never seed a boy put away so much meat."

"Well, 'ee's growin'," exclaimed Mrs. Trethewy, "and it is natural for a growin' boy to ait well."

The farmer admitted the truth of this. "Growin'," he protested; "why, you can see'n growin'. I believe 'ee d'grow an inch every week."

Doubtless there was some truth in what Trethewy said.

By the time the summer had passed away and harvest was finished, Caleb would scarcely be recognized as the same boy who, in the previous February, trudged his way across the Bodmin Moors. Although anything but stout, he looked healthy and strong. He had grown several inches in height, too; and while he was not broad in proportion, he had, as the farmer declared, big bones and paid for feeding.

“ 'Ee's a grumpy beggar, though,” he was always careful to add; “ and I can never get'n to talk as to where 'ee did come from. I knaw no more now than when 'ee frightened Charlotte by fallin' down in a dead faint at our back door.”

There was an element of truth in this. Especially during the first few months of his stay at Spring Farm, Caleb was reserved and almost morose. He made no friends, and, as Mrs. Trethewy declared, “ kept 'isself to 'isself.” Gad, his fellow-servant, often wondered at this; and, being a garrulous individual, asked Caleb many questions. But Caleb answered scarcely any of them.

“ I doan't believe 'ee is any better than 'ee ought to be,” Gad ventured more than once. “ Ef 'ee ain't got nothing to keep back, why shouldn't a' tell more about 'isself? ” But to this he got no satisfactory reply.

Even to Gracie who seemed to regard him as her *protégé*, and who had more than once offered to give him the advantage of her superior education and teach him all she knew, Caleb was non-committal even to the point of silence. When summer had passed, however, and the autumn months had set in, he grew more communicative.

“ What were the names of the books you told me about, Gracie? ” he asked.

The child told him.

“ I'll read *The Life of President Garfield* and *President Lincoln* if you will lend them to me,” he informed her.

“ Of course I will,” she replied, and soon after they were placed in his hands.

“ By Gor! ” he exclaimed when he had finished reading them; “ they were both poor boys, and yet they both became Presidents of America! ”

"Yes, but they worked very hard," cried the child. "They educated themselves, and learnt practically all there was to learn."

"Yes," replied Caleb. "You can't do anything without learning a lot, can you?"

"Indeed you can't."

"Have you got they books by Samuel Smiles about Self Help and that sort of thing?" he asked her.

"No, I haven't."

"I think I'll get them."

"They cost a lot of money," Gracie told him. "Has father paid you your wages yet?"

"Some of it," replied Caleb, and then he lapsed into silence.

Next morning before going into the fields he waylaid the farmer and told him he should like to speak to him for a few minutes.

Trethewy looked at him in surprise. "What is it?" he asked.

"We never settled anything about wages," asseverated Caleb.

"I told 'ee I would see 'ow you got on," replied the farmer. "Bill Grigg, who got the place you wanted over at Polruan, d'get fifteen pound a year," he added; "and you was nothin' so strong or so big as 'ee when you comed."

"Yes, but I am now."

"I knaw, but who gived 'ee the meat to make 'ee strong? Who took 'ee in when you were faintin' and starvin'? You caan't expect to get as much as 'ee, can 'ee? You must 'ave some gratitude."

"Yes, I know I have eaten a lot, but I have worked a lot too. As far as I can see, I have done as much as Gad."

"But how much do you think I ought to pay you?" asked Trethewy. "Now, be reasonable, Caleb. If you had asked me on the night you came 'ow much I should pay you, you would 'ave took ten pound a year like a shot, wouldn't 'ee? Well now, I'll be generous and give 'ee twelve for the first year. That's a lot of money," he added.

“Twelve pound a year for a boy who was nothin' but skin and bone, with his lodge and meat throwed in.”

Caleb did not speak, but seemed to be ruminating.

Spring Farm was situated in a lonely district, which was thinly populated. Moreover, owing to the fact that he had been reserved and silent, he knew nothing of what other farm-boys were getting. He was utterly ignorant of trade unions, and knew nothing of the conditions of the labour market throughout the country. As a consequence, Sam Trethewy, who was anything but a generous man, found him an easy prey.

“That will mean that you will 'ave to pay me eight pound more before February,” he said. “Very well, we will let it go at that.”

“He's worth at least thirty pound a year,” chuckled the farmer as he watched Caleb going away to his work; “but I'll keep quiet as long as I can. 'Ted'n best that 'ee should know too much.”

That same evening after supper was over Caleb again approached Gracie. “Didn't you tell me you got those books you lent me as Sunday School prizes?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied the child. “There are always prizes at Christmas.”

On the following Sunday Caleb made his way to the nearest hamlet where there was a Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School, and became enrolled as a member of the senior Bible class. He gave no reason for coming; neither did he tell the teacher that he had never been to Sunday School before.

When Christmas came, so regular was his attendance at the school, and so many texts of Scripture had he learnt, that Caleb was informed that he could choose a book up to the value of one and twopence for a prize.

“Of course,” remarked Joshua Bennetto, the teacher, “you can have a dearer book if you want to, but you will have to pay the difference.”

Caleb was somewhat disappointed that the sum he had hoped to get was not larger, but he ordered Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* without hesitation.

Caleb spent the whole of the Sunday evening on which

he had received his prize reading *Self Help*, and on the following Saturday, by which time he had finished it, he announced his intention of walking to Liskeard, a town several miles away.

"What be 'ee goin' to Liskeard for?" asked Sam Trethewy.

"Going to look round a bit," replied the youth.

"Ah," grunted Trethewy, who did not like the idea of Caleb going to Liskeard. "I hope 'ee ain't got his eye on another place," he reflected. "'Ee've growed a lot since 'ee comed 'ere, and put flesh on his bones, so to spaik. Besides, 'ee d'look well in his new clothes, and could easy git double what I'm payin' him."

But Caleb appeared to have no intention of seeking another place. He turned neither to the right nor to the left after he had left Spring Farm, and having passed through Caradon Town and Pensilva, he hurried on towards Liskeard as though he were much excited. Arrived there he made his way straight to the Market House where he had been informed a certain bookseller in the town had a stall on market days, and where books could often be picked up at bargain prices.

"Have you seen this lot here?" asked the bookseller, a thin, cadaverous-looking man who prided himself upon being "an acceptable Primitive Methodist local preacher." "I bought them at a sale. *Lives of Great Engineers* by Samuel Smiles, and published by John Murray at ten and sixpence. There are others by the same author, too."

"What do you want for them?" asked Caleb. "Threepence each?"

"Half a crown each! And a bargain, too," replied the bookseller.

He was not a bad man, this "acceptable Primitive Methodist local preacher," and he made it known both in the pulpit and among his townsmen that he wouldn't do a dishonest thing for the world. But he was a struggling man with a large family, and as Caleb seemed a heavy-witted youth he determined, as he thought in his own heart, to make a good thing out of them.

"Look here," said Caleb. "I'll give 'ee two shillin' for that lot, but I shan't give 'ee no more."

The bookseller turned away with evident disgust. "Very well," he replied, "I shall look to someone who really knows what a good book is to pay a proper price for them."

"All right," replied Caleb, "keep them, and if I happen to come round here next Christmas I'll look in again. Good night."

"How much money have you got?" asked the bookseller.

"Four shillin'," replied Caleb.

"Is that all?"

"My wages are not due till next February," was his answer.

"Take them," replied the bookseller, "and perhaps when you have read them and seen how valuable they really are, your conscience will lead you to pay me what they are really worth. What's your name?"

"That's my business," replied Caleb.

"Do you go to chapel?"

"Sometimes. Do you?"

"I am a local preacher among the Primitive Methodists," replied the bookseller.

"Is that why you tried to cheat me?" and the boy went away chuckling with a big parcel of books under his arm.

During the next few weeks Caleb read the whole of the books he had bought, but he gave no opinion as to what he thought of them. Indeed, except to Gracie, he seldom spoke to anyone. When February came, however, he had a long argument with Sam Trethewy on the question of wages, and although he did not ask nearly as much as he could have got elsewhere, he had evidently learnt to know his own value.

"I didn't think 'ee would be so stubborn," remarked the farmer to a neighbour with whom he was discussing the unreasonableness of the demands of working people. "Still, I got the best of'n. 'Ee is a curious chap, Caleb is," he added. "The only thing which kept him from

askin' as much as 'ee was worth was the fact that I took'n in when 'ee was 'omeless and starvin', and treated'n well. I expect I've got Selina to thank for that," he reflected afterwards.

Four years later Caleb had become Sam Trethewy's right-hand man, and although the farmer continued to pay him in a niggardly fashion, Caleb gave no hint of leaving. The truth was he had become interested in Spring Farm. He had advocated many improvements, and seemed desirous of seeing those improvements carried into effect. He saw, or thought he saw, means whereby the farm could be doubled in value; and although Trethewy did not promise to accept his suggestions, Caleb persisted in making them.

"Wha's the good of doin' what you d'say," objected the farmer. "My lease'll be up in a few years, and then Squire Luzmore'll take advantage of me."

"In what way?"

"Oh, I knaw 'ee's a great gentleman," replied Trethewy, "but 'ee d'always git the best of his tenants. If I d'make the place pay better 'ee'll only get it out of me by risin' the rent."

"Squire Luzmore?" queried Caleb.

"Yes, Sir John Luzmore. Rich as a Jew, 'ee is, and only has one little maid to leave all his money to. But 'ee's terrible 'ard on his tenants."

"Why don't you buy the freehold of your farm?" asked Caleb. "Then you'd be independent of your landlord."

"I wish I could," replied Sam, "but if I let on that I had enough money to do it, 'ee'd take it out of me."

"How could he take it out of you?"

"I doan't knaw how; but 'ee would. 'Ee's that sort of man."

"Where does Squire Luzmore live?"

"About four miles away on the other side of St. Bildad parish. Luzmore Hall it's called. Terrible grand place," he added.

That same evening Sam Trethewy drew Caleb aside.

"Look 'ere, Caleb," he said. "There's a little job I want you to do for me."

"Yes, what is it?"

"As you d'know," said the farmer confidentially, "we want a new barn 'ere badly; and although I 'ave spoken to Sir John Luzmore's steward, Mr. Beans, I can get nothin' from him. 'Ee's afraid of his life to ask Sir John for anything."

"Why don't you go and ask Sir John yourself?"

"'Cos 'ee'd charge *me* at least three times too much upon every penny 'ee'd lay out; but if you went, Caleb, I think you might make a good bargain. You are a clever chap," he added, "and 'ave read a lot of books. Then if you make it appear to Sir John that it would be to his advantage to put up a new barn he might see reason. Besides, perhaps you could make him attend to those improvements which you mentioned to me. You would know 'ow to deal with him. I don't."

"But I am nothing but a servant," objected Caleb.

"No, I d'know, but you're a good-lookin' chap and d'know 'ow to talk."

Caleb was rather pleased with the idea, and the next afternoon made his way towards Luzmore Hall.

"My word!" exclaimed the young man, as, standing upon the top of a hill, Luzmore Hall burst upon his gaze. "Isn't it grand!"

The exclamation was not unnatural, for not only was Luzmore Hall one of the finest specimens of Georgian architecture in the district, but it was situated amid a scene of unrivalled beauty. At the back of the Hall were fine wooded hills; while at its front stretched magnificent parklands through which coiled a sparkling river. The year was now in the early summer when everything appeared at its loveliest. Chestnut trees bloomed everywhere, while the green of the grass in the park was, beyond all description, beautiful.

He did not look long at the Hall, however; he remembered the interview that he hoped to have with Sir John Luzmore, and thought how best the farmer's wishes could be realized. A little later he was nearing the park gates.

He had come within perhaps fifty yards of the imposing-looking entrance of the house which lay perhaps half a mile away when he heard the hum of a motor-car in the near distance. Looking he saw a powerful Rolls-Royce coming towards him, perhaps a hundred yards away. The chauffeur was driving it at a leisurely pace, and, to all appearances, there was not a suggestion of danger anywhere. But as Caleb stood looking he saw, coming rapidly down a narrow lane between the woods, a girl riding on horseback. The horse on which she sat was a young, skittish creature, and as it burst into the road just at the time the car passed, it shied wildly, and caused the girl to let go not only the bridle reins but to lose her stirrups. Nothing serious would have happened, however, had not the chauffeur lost his head. Instead of putting his foot on the brake and stopping the car, he pressed the accelerator; and also unwisely caused the siren to give a loud shriek. The car gave a leap forward, grazing the side of the horse, which, frightened beyond measure, reared and plunged madly. What would have happened I do not pretend to say, had not Caleb, who had been eagerly watching, rushed to the horse's head and caught it just in time to save the girl from being trampled beneath its hoofs.

"You are not hurt, I hope, Miss?" Caleb managed to say, while the girl, who had been thrown from the horse, crept to the side of the road and sat by the hedge.

"No; thanks to you I believe I am all right," she said half-laughingly, half-angrily. "If that chauffeur hadn't been such a fool, nothing would have happened."

Caleb did not look at her again for some seconds. All his attention was needed in quietening the animal which, more frightened than hurt, still plunged and reared madly.

The driver of the car had, meanwhile, turned into the ditch opposite to that where the girl sat.

"Can you bring the mare here?" asked the girl of Caleb a minute later.

Without a word he obeyed her command, and led the horse to where she sat.

"I fell more heavily than I thought," she said in a

tone almost apologetic. "Had I been prepared for such a thing I could have kept my seat easily, but that fool made it impossible. Will you get to know to whom the car belongs?" she added. "Perhaps, too, you will help me to mount again."

A few seconds later she had leapt to her horse's back.

"Will you complete your kindness by opening the gate?" she asked. "Perhaps, too, you will tell me who you are?"

"My name is Caleb Besowsa," he replied, "and I live with Mr. Trethewy at Spring Farm."

"Are you a farm-servant?" she asked.

Caleb was silent. For the first time a sense of shame possessed him. He did not want this girl to know his humble position.

"Caleb Besowsa," she repeated. "I'll tell my father, Sir John Luzmore, what you have done, and no doubt he will suitably reward you."

A minute later she was riding towards Luzmore Hall, without even giving a glance at the chauffeur.

"I wouldn't for it to have happened for the world," said the chauffeur, who by this time had got his car into the middle of the road. "It wasn't my fault either. Now was it?" and he looked at Caleb beseechingly.

"Who is she?" asked Caleb, who was watching the receding form of the girl.

"Sir John Luzmore's daughter. I shall get the sack, too, I'll bet I shall. My master, Mr. George Dingle, is ready to lick Sir John Luzmore's boots, and when he hears what's happened—— Good lor'!"

Five minutes later Caleb was trudging his way along the drive which led to Luzmore Hall.

"I never saw anyone so grand, so beautiful!" he exclaimed. "She looked just like an angel come down from heaven. But isn't she proud! That fool of a chauffeur wilted at her words just as a cut flower wilts in the hot sun."

He walked on another hundred yards, and then stopped in the middle of the drive. "A farmer's daughter!" he cried aloud. "A farmer's daughter! No, by God, no!"

A mad look shone from his eyes; his whole being trembled from head to foot. It might seem as though a new world had been spread before his gaze. "*That's* the girl I'm going to marry!" he cried aloud. "She thought of me only as a farm labourer, but I don't care! I'll get her. I'll break down every obstacle! I'll—I'll——"

He resumed his walk to the great house with the look of a maniac in his eyes.

Poor Caleb!

CHAPTER III

WHEN a few minutes later Caleb neared Luzmore Hall, and saw the vast proportions of the great house, he stopped for a few seconds as if in wonderment. He had never seen such a house before, and he almost felt afraid to go inside.

"Is Sir John Luzmore in?" he asked, as, standing at a servants' entrance a little later, a man in livery stood looking at him.

"I know Sir John is very busy," replied the man. "Will you tell me your name and business?"

"My name is Caleb Besowsa," he replied, "and I have come from Mr. Trethewy of Spring Farm. My business is private," he added.

"Please wait here," commanded the man superciliously. "I will find out if Sir John can see you." Whereupon he went away, leaving Caleb alone in the stone-flagged entrance.

The young man looked around him curiously. He appeared calmer by this time, but the feelings which had possessed him a few minutes before still remained with him. He felt his heart beating wildly, while his legs trembled beneath him. What he had seen, however, made him realize something of his madness. He had lived for four years as a servant at Mr. Sam Trethewy's house at Spring Farm, and comfortable as that house was in a

homely sort of way, it seemed to him but as a cattle-shed compared with the stately mansion in which he now stood. But that was not all. There seemed an impassable gulf between the owner of this place and himself.

“ Will you come this way, please ? ”

Caleb followed the servant along a thickly carpeted corridor until at length he found himself in a large room where a man he had never seen before sat before a business-like-looking desk.

Sir John Luzmore in no way suggested the typical country squire. Instead of being full of form and florid of face, he was tall and thin and looked somewhat pale and cadaverous. Indeed, his cheeks appeared bloodless, while his high cheek-bones and his somewhat large hooked nose suggested a corpse rather than a living man. But this was only at first sight. His bright flashing eyes spoke not only of virility but of pride ; while the smile which played around his lips suggested nothing of bonhomie, but something entirely different.

Sir John Luzmore was an aristocrat of aristocrats, and while he treated his equals with friendliness, even although that friendliness was tempered by reserve, he made people of the “ lower orders ” understand that no advantage must be taken of the courteous way in which he spoke to them.

“ Yes, what can I do for you ? ” he asked Caleb, as, rising to his feet on the young man's entrance, he looked inquiringly at him.

Caleb was, for a moment, silent. It was the first time he had been brought into contact with a man of Sir John's order. “ My name is Caleb Besowsa,” he said at length, “ and I have come to speak to you on behalf of Mr. Trethewy who is one of your tenants.”

“ Caleb Besowsa ? ” and there was a kindly look on the older man's face. “ Haven't I heard your name before ? ” he asked.

“ I think not, sir,” replied Caleb. “ I live more than four miles away, and I have never been to Luzmore Hall before.”

“ But surely,” and the baronet looked at him steadily,

“ your name was mentioned to me a few minutes ago ! Did you not render a service to my little daughter not an hour since ? ”

Caleb's face became a fiery red. He had not thought that this proud man would have been told of what had taken place.

“ You have come to tell me about it,” went on Sir John. “ I suppose, too,” and there was a harder tone in his voice as he concluded the sentence, “ you have come expecting some recognition——”

“ Please, sir ! ” interrupted Caleb.

“ My daughter told me she had promised you that I would suitably reward you for the service you rendered her. You have come about that, haven't you ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ But, but——” The baronet continued looking at the young man questioningly, as if to appraise him, as well as to understand the tone in which his visitor had spoken. “ You are a servant of Trethewy, one of my tenants, who lives at Spring Farm, aren't you ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Then I am right. My daughter tells me that she might have been seriously hurt had not you, with great presence of mind, caught her horse and held it till all danger was over. Is not that so ? ”

Caleb was silent.

“ By the way, do you know to whom the car belonged ? ”

“ To Mr. George Dingle, sir, I believe. At least that was what the chauffeur told me.”

“ Ah ! ” The baronet looked as though he were making a mental note of the information given him. “ And you have come expecting the reward which my daughter promised you ? ”

“ No, sir. I came for no reward. I never thought of such a thing.”

“ But——” And again Sir John looked at his visitor scrutinizingly. “ My daughter informs me of a promise she made to you that I would——”

“ I hope you will not offer to give me anything, sir.”

“ But why, in Heaven's name ? ”

“ Because I could not take it, sir.”

Whether had such a suggestion been made to Caleb a week before, indeed two hours before, he would have given this answer, I will not say ; but as he stood there facing the baronet he felt that no other reply was possible. Clothed as he was in the Sunday attire of a farm-servant, and far removed by birth and association from the man to whom he spoke, something had come into his life which had caused him to be born anew. Whatever might result from the mad vows he had taken, he felt that he would rather suffer unknown tortures than accept a reward.

“ Why are you here, then ? ”

Before Caleb had time to answer the question, the door opened, and the girl whom he had seen at the park gates rushed into the room.

“ Oh, Dad,” she cried, “ Peterson told me he was here, and I felt I must come. This,” she went on, looking at Caleb, “ is the man who caught Phœbe’s head and mastered her. You will give him something, won’t you ? ”

She had changed the riding breeches which she had worn when he had first seen her, and was now attired in indoor garb ; and Caleb thought that she looked younger than when on horseback. She was little more than a child, although she was over sixteen years of age. Nevertheless, the signs of approaching womanhood were upon her.

“ I am afraid I didn’t thank you properly,” she went on excitedly. “ I did not realize at the time the danger I was in ; but you were just splendid ! Thank you ever so much ! ”

She was just a pretty child, but to Caleb she looked something more than human. To him her eyes shone with a light such as he had never seen before, while the smile which wreathed her lips made her face divine.

But he did not speak. He felt that she was a creature from another world, and that for him to utter a word would be sacrilege. What wonder that he looked upon her as one living in a different world from himself, whose very presence radiated a charm which filled the room !

“ I told you that my father would suitably reward you,

didn't I?" she went on. "I suppose it was because of that you came?"

Her every word cut him like a knife, and he wished himself a thousand miles away. He was sorry, too, that she had spoken in this way, not so much for his own sake as for hers. There seemed an insult in her every word, and there was something in her suggestion that somehow detracted from what he had felt concerning her.

"I didn't come for that," he said, almost sullenly. "I never thought of such a thing."

"Why did you come, then?" and he thought he felt anger in her voice.

"That is just what I was asking him myself when you came in, my dear," said the baronet.

"For something entirely different," went on Caleb; "I have come because Mr. Sam Trethewy sent me, and my meeting with you had nothing to do with it at all."

He spoke as any farm-servant might speak; and yet not altogether so. Caleb had, during the last three years, read a number of books which placed him on a different level from the ordinary farm-servant. Samuel Smiles may be little read in these days; nevertheless, the message he gave to young men nearly a century ago was not without its effect on Caleb. He had no definite plans in life, and he did not see how he was to be anything but a farm-servant. Nevertheless, the books he had read had not only left a deposit in his mental life: they had aroused within him hopes and desires which were not common to youths in his position.

"Then you will not take anything for the service which you have rendered?" asked the baronet, a little uneasily.

"Please, I would rather you'd say no more about it," replied Caleb. "A chap must be a mean skunk if he would accept a reward for doing a little thing like that."

There was something not only in his words, but in the way he spoke them, which pleased the baronet. Of course, the fellow was only a farm-hand; nevertheless, there was something about him which differentiated him from the ordinary country yokel. Besides, although his clothes proclaimed him to be what he was, there was something in

his appearance which rather pleasantly appealed to the older man.

Caleb had risen to his feet at his daughter's entrance, and while anything but at ease amidst such surroundings, he was, nevertheless, a fine upstanding specimen of a young countryman.

"Of course, since you feel like that," said Sir John, "we will say no more about it; although I should not regard it as dishonourable on your part to accept a reward for the service you rendered my daughter."

"I should be ashamed to look you in the face if I did," and Caleb spoke as if he were angry.

"Why?" asked Sir John. Then, as if a sudden thought had just struck him, he went on: "You are not one of these socialist fellows who are carried away by madcap schemes, are you?"

"I know nothing about socialism," replied Caleb. "If you mean, am I one of those fellows who try to get as much as they can for doing as little as they can, I am not one of them."

"That's all right, then," and Sir John laughed as he spoke. "Perhaps, my dear," turning to his daughter, "since this man has come from Trethewy concerning some business which I have not yet heard, we had better be left alone while I hear what he has to say."

The girl hesitated some seconds and then left the room.

Turning to Caleb, the squire said: "Now then, what is this matter concerning which you want to speak to me?"

Caleb told him, and after giving his master's message went on to add some words of his own. "The barn is altogether insufficient, sir," he said, "and it is in such a tumbledown condition that it is hardly worth repairing."

As Sir John looked out of the window there was an expression of annoyance on his face.

"Why did Trethewy send you?" he asked.

"Perhaps he thought I could speak to you from a detached point of view," he replied.

The other made no reply to this, but it was evident

by the way he looked at Caleb that he made a mental note of it.

"I don't like it," went on the baronet at length. "Spring Farm is one of the best places on the estate and would pay for good farming. But Trethewy is a bungler! He doesn't know how to treat the land. He uses the wrong fields for the wrong crops, and he pays no attention to the suggestions which I have instructed Beans to send to him."

Caleb was silent.

"His place managed the right way would yield almost double what it now yields," he went on angrily; "and I hate the thought that one of my best farms should be in such hands."

Caleb, who remembered the discussions he had had with the farmer, and who also held the views which Sir John had just expressed, was, nevertheless, anxious to be successful in the mission upon which he had come.

"Mr. Trethewy is a trustworthy man, sir," he said stoutly, "and I am sure there is no tenant on your estate who works harder."

"Yes, yes," interjected the baronet impatiently. "I believe he's honest enough in his own way, but I hold to certain opinions about the way in which the farms on my estate should be worked. Why, think of Tellam's place! It is not nearly so good as Spring Farm, and yet he gets far more out of it. I have told Trethewy more than once that I am not satisfied, and that he is not making the best of my land."

"I think he would like to adopt the methods you have suggested, sir," replied Caleb; "but, as you know, it would mean considerable capital, and Mr. Trethewy says he finds it hard to pay his way even now."

"And no wonder!" cried the baronet. "His ideas about farming are those of a hundred years ago, and he won't alter them."

"I hope you will see your way to put up a new barn, sir, in spite of what you have said," urged Caleb, "as well as attend to the other outhouses I have mentioned."

"I don't know that I shall," replied Sir John. "Owners

of land are passing through a hard time just now, and money is very tight. Several of my friends have refused appeals similar to Trethewy's. What with extra expense and increased taxation, they simply can't afford it. Land-lording is a bad business, and I wish I had never seen the place. By the way, when does Trethewy's tenancy expire?"

Whereupon he took down from a shelf near by a large book bound with red leather. "Ah, here it is. I see he has the place at a mere peppercorn rent, and that his holding expires two years from now. No, I do not feel disposed to lay out the money which you suggest while the place is in the hands of such a man. By the way, have *you* studied the science of farming?"

"A little, sir."

"A little? What do you mean? Do you know anything about chemistry?"

"Not about chemistry in general, sir, but I have tried to learn something about soils."

"What do you mean by that?"

Caleb told him.

He had for the last two years spent many of his evenings with a retired schoolmaster who prided himself upon having made a scientific study of farming. This retired schoolmaster, Mr. Elijah Clemmow by name, was a man of more than ordinary intelligence; and because he was interested in farming he had studied not only how land should be treated, but what crops land, according to its chemical constituents, would best yield. He had been an omnivorous reader on such questions, and had lent Caleb many of the books in his possession. This, because the young man's mind was hungry for knowledge, had led to his devoting as much time as he was able to the practical study of farming; and, as a consequence, he was able to talk intelligently with the baronet.

"Where did you learn all this?" asked the baronet presently.

Caleb told him.

"And do you like farming?"

"There seems little else that one can do in such a neighbourhood as this," was Caleb's cautious answer.

Sir John looked at the young man with renewed interest. He had often bewailed the fact that the sons of the farmers on his estate were contented with old-fashioned methods, and never tried to understand the charm there was in agriculture. As a consequence, his conversation with Caleb not only interested him, but pleased him.

“And what do you mean to do with your life?” he asked, still looking at the youth scrutinizingly.

“What is there one can do?” evaded Caleb.

“Look here,” said the baronet in a burst of confidence, “supposing that at the end of two years I refuse to re-let Spring Farm to Trethewy and offered it to you. What would you say?”

“I hope I should thank you for your goodness,” Caleb replied, “but I should tell you that I could not take advantage of your offer.”

“But why not?”

“First of all, because I have no capital to stock such a farm,” replied Caleb. “According to my calculations, Spring Farm needs at least four horses. There ought to be also forty head of cattle, besides sheep and other live stock. Then the farm implements necessary would also have to be taken into account. Where could I get all the money?”

“But supposing it could be managed,” exclaimed the baronet. “What then?”

“But it couldn't be managed,” cried the young fellow; “and even if it could I should be head over heels in debt, and I could not stand that.”

For the first time since Caleb had been in the room the baronet laughed heartily. He seemed pleased with the unsophisticated and yet sturdy way in which his visitor spoke.

“Of course, I am only putting a hypothetical case,” he explained, “but supposing all that could be arranged. What then?”

“I only gave you one reason, sir, why I could not do it,” replied Caleb; “but I had another in my mind.”

“And what was that?”

“That I couldn't turn out my master, sir.”

"But supposing I determined to get rid of him as a tenant, anyhow. What then?"

"It would make no difference to me, sir. I should still refuse to take advantage of your displeasure with Mr. Trethewy. It wouldn't be fair, sir."

Again the baronet looked at Caleb critically. "Where in the world did you get such quixotic notions from?"

"I don't know what you mean by quixotic, sir, but I couldn't do it. I hope you will not do what you hinted at, sir."

"Hinted at! What did I hint at?"

"I hope you will not let Mr. Trethewy down, sir. He has been very good to me, and he took me in when I had no place to go."

"Do you suggest then, knowing what you do about farming, that I should allow him to stay on at Spring Farm?"

"I hope you will, sir. He dearly loves the place, and he's the most hard-working man I know. I hope, too, that you will promise to build the barn and attend to the other outbuildings. I shall feel that I have been a miserable failure if I can't go back and tell him this."

Caleb's voice had changed. While he was discussing farming he spoke with eager interest, and there was something hard and practical in the way he gave expression to his opinions. But now there was a new tone, a tone of beseeching, almost of affection. But Sir John was unmoved by it.

"At any rate," he said at length, "although you refuse to accept any reward for your service to my daughter, my judgment tells me I ought not to do what you ask for Trethewy. Still, you can tell him all that has taken place, and you can inform him that although I think him a fool as a farmer, he is very fortunate in his servant."

Caleb looked bewildered. "I don't know what you mean by that, sir. Am I to tell Mr. Trethewy that you will do what he says? I hope you mean that. I shall be afraid to go back to Spring Farm and confess myself a failure."

"And you don't like being a failure?"

Caleb was silent.

"It is hard to refuse a request from one who has rendered me such a service," said the baronet like one thinking aloud; "and if I grant it——" He stopped as if not knowing how to continue.

"But I may tell Mr. Trethewy that you will do what he asks?" urged Caleb.

Sir John Luzmore was not given to sentiment. Indeed, he was spoken of among his tenants as being "hard as nails." Nevertheless, as he looked at Caleb's eager face and remembered what his daughter had told him, he forgot to be a business man. "Perhaps you may," he laughed.

Had he known what was in Caleb's mind, however, his answer would have been different.

CHAPTER IV

THE sun was sinking behind the tree-tops, and the river which coiled its way through the parklands in the front of Luzmore Hall was sparkling in its bright light as Caleb made his way towards the park gates. But he saw nothing of it. His mind was full of what he had seen and heard.

But it was not of Sir John Luzmore that he was thinking. It was true he had been eager to obtain his consent to what his master had asked, but the baronet had little place in his thoughts. He was thinking of the sparkling eyes and the laughing voice of the girl who had spoken kindly to him.

"She looked as though she came straight from heaven," he reflected. "I never thought anyone could be so beautiful, so wonderful! And she will be the owner of all this; she practically owns it now!"

He reached the park gates and passed through them without knowing what he was doing, but when he came to the spot where he had caught the frightened mare an hour or two before, he stood still and shuddered.

"She might have been killed!" he said aloud. "She

might——! But there, I was in time, and she will always think kindly of me."

He stood as if rooted to the spot for nearly five minutes. In his eyes was a strange light, while every nerve in his body quivered.

"They offered to pay me," he reflected presently. "Great God! As though I could take a penny from her! And yet——"

He turned on his heel and walked rapidly in the direction of Spring Farm, and then when he had reached the hill-top from which he had first seen Luzmore Hall, he turned and looked long and intently.

"A farmer's daughter! Josiah Sleeman's maid!" he exclaimed scornfully. "No, by God, no! I am going to have *her*, HER!"

The madness of his resolution appealed to him even as he uttered the words. He thought of the great house which he saw in the distance; noted the wide-spreading park; watched the river as it coiled its way down the valley. And it all belonged to her! He thought, too, of Sir John Luzmore, the bearer of an old name, an aristocrat of aristocrats. Then he remembered who he was, Caleb Besowsa.

No, it was impossible! Hadn't he better give up such wild, fanciful notions and settle down to the station of life in which he had lived? He was a farm-servant. He had spent his days in looking after cattle, grooming horses, tending the sheep in the lambing season, ploughing fields and preparing them for sowing. Yes, he was just a farm-servant. He had felt gratified when he had heard Sam Trethewy speak of him as being worth two of his fellow-servant, Gad. How could he get out of the rut in which he had lived, and fulfil the dreams which had that day been born in his mind? No, no, it was impossible.

But was it?

He remembered the books he had read: called to mind the lives of poor lads who had risen from humble positions. Garfield and Lincoln were both poor working boys, and yet they had risen to be presidents of the greatest republic in the world.

Well then, why should he, Caleb Besowsa, be content to live a humble life? He did not want to be great as Garfield and Lincoln were great, he only wanted to be worthy of the love that had come to him; and in order to be worthy he must win a position equal to that of her father.

But how could he do it? How could he, Caleb Besowsa, a farm-servant, a lad who had spent his life among the pigs, and sheep, and cattle, win his way to a position whereby he could go to Sir John Luzmore's daughter and tell her of his love, and win her as his wife?

He had been four years with Sam Trethewy as a servant. The first year he received twelve pounds for wages, the second year he claimed twenty pounds, while the last two years he demanded more. What a pitiful amount it was, even when it was all added together. He had not spent much of it, just a few pounds for clothes; that was all. Altogether his savings were something like fifty pounds. But what was that? It would not buy one of the meanest cottages on Sir John Luzmore's estate! And yet he——

Nevertheless, the grim look on his face, and his set jaws did not relax as presently he resumed his journey; neither did the bright light in his eyes become dimmed.

"Well, Caleb, how did you get on?" asked Sam Trethewy on his return to Spring Farm.

"Not so bad," was Caleb's nonchalant reply.

"Did you see Sir John?"

"Yes."

"What did you say to him and what did he say to you? Come now, tell me."

Caleb was silent. He tried to think of a way whereby he could let his master know how matters stood without telling him what had taken place; and presently he managed to convey to the farmer the fact that his landlord had yielded to his wishes. "You must be careful, though," Caleb concluded.

"Careful! What do 'ee mean?"

"Sir John doesn't like the way you have farmed Spring Farm. You know what I've told you scores of times about your old-fashioned ways."

"What does he want me to do?" asked the farmer.

Caleb told him. "He says he means to have his land farmed according to his own ideas," he concluded, "and I thought at one time that he wouldn't re-let the place to you when your term expired."

The farmer, as his wife expressed it, looked very glum at this, and seemed to be angry with Caleb for not having been a better ambassador. Gracie, on the other hand, who had been eagerly listening to the conversation which had taken place between the young man and her father, seemed to think that his success was wonderful.

"I quite thought that Sir John would be angry," she exclaimed, "and that he would refuse to spend a penny upon the place. What arguments did you use, Caleb, to persuade him?"

Caleb was silent, but looked curiously at the girl who had interrogated him.

Gracie had not altered much since the night he had come to Spring Farm. It was true she had grown taller and had advanced in learning, but she was still a simple-minded, warm-hearted child.

"I think you are very clever, Caleb," she said admiringly.

"Clever," repeated Sam Trethewy. "I can't see where the cleverness comes in."

"Why, Father," exclaimed Gracie, "you know that when Sir John was here a few months ago he was very angry with you. He refused to do a single thing that you asked him, and he even hinted that he would let the farm to someone else. You know you sent Caleb to-day because you were afraid to go to him yourself; and I think Caleb has done wonderfully."

When a week later Sir John accompanied Mr. Beans, the steward, to Spring Farm and told him what he proposed doing, Sam Trethewy was much surprised; and when after the baronet had talked with him alone, he evidently looked upon Caleb in a new light.

"I'll tell you what, Trethewy," Sir John said to him, "you may thank Besowsa for this, and if I were you I should listen more to what he says than you have done in the past."

He told him other things, too, which caused the farmer to wonder greatly.

"Look here, Caleb," said Sam Trethewy to him that same evening, "I'm going to put on a couple of pounds to your wages this year. Perhaps," he added, "I haven't recognized the interest you have taken in the place."

Caleb did not speak.

"I find, too," went on the farmer, "that you only told part of your story after you came back from Luzmore Hall the other day. You didn't say a word about the way you got Miss Rosalind out of a nasty place."

"Miss Rosalind," repeated Gracie, who had been listening attentively. "Who's she?"

"Miss Rosalind is Sir John Luzmore's daughter," replied the farmer. "Didn't you know her name?"

Caleb continued silent. Up to now he had not known the name of the girl to whom his heart had gone out in such a fashion. He had never dreamed of mentioning what he had done, and had only thought of her as one far removed from himself, but who one day should be his own.

"Rosalind! Rosalind!" he reflected. Yes, the name fitted her to perfection. He had during the last winter read Shakespeare's great comedy, and remembered the romantic story of Rosalind and Orlando. The name sounded like music in his ears; it made him think of days when men fought impossible battles and did impossible deeds for the women they loved. But he made no sign.

"Anyhow," went on the farmer, "Sir John brought plans for a new barn, and he is going to attend to those outhouses, too. The masons are starting next week," he added.

Caleb was very silent during the next few days. It was true he seemed interested when the workmen came to build a new barn, but he scarcely spoke to them; neither, for that matter, did he seem to appreciate Sam Trethewy's grudging admission that he owed their advent to Caleb.

The truth was, the more he thought about his experiences on the day he had visited Luzmore Hall, the more he felt his own madness. What connection was there

between Spring Farm and Rosalind Luzmore? None, except that the baronet's daughter was the owner of it, and that he worked there as a servant. According to common parlance, he was called a "farm labbut," while she was the potential lady of the manor, and would one day be the owner of this and scores of other farms.

But he did not give up his thoughts or his determinations. What did not come to-day would come to-morrow.

He remembered, too, a small farmer who was the owner of a barren piece of moor which he had thought to be utterly valueless, but which some clay experts recognized as valuable clay land. They had bought the land from the farmer for a song, and afterwards made thousands out of their purchase.

During the weeks which elapsed between the hay harvest and the corn harvest, Caleb became a mystery to his master. Instead of devoting his whole time to the farm, regardless of ordinary working hours, he had on several evenings, directly tea was over, which took place about half-past five, left Spring Farm and made his way across the country in the direction of Liskeard. Why he did this no one seemed to know, and although presently Sam Trethewy became suspicious and took steps to follow him, he discovered nothing. Caleb did not act without a purpose, however. He had heard of an old man who went by the name of "Bunny Joe," who had been responsible for the discovery of more than one tin-mine in the neighbourhood of Cheesering and St. Clear. Bunny Joe's cottage was several miles from Spring Farm, but he had willingly tramped the distance in order to get information about him. Caleb had his own methods of inquiry. He did not first of all go to Bunny Joe's cottage and directly approach the old man, but by roundabout and devious means learnt all he could concerning him. He discovered that Bunny Joe was now a very old man who lived alone in a small cottage some miles from Linkinhorne, and one Sunday evening he determined to visit him.

He found Bunny Joe sitting in a little garden in front of his cottage, sucking industriously an empty tobacco pipe.

"Good evening," Caleb greeted him.

Bunny Joe looked attentively at his visitor for nearly a minute, but he did not respond to his greeting.

"It's a nice evening," went on Caleb.

"Well, you've got your share of it, 'aven't 'ee?" Then he asked almost like a man in anger: "Why 'aven't 'ee gone to chapel?"

"Is it chapel time?" asked Caleb.

"'Course 'tis."

"Then why haven't *you* gone?"

Evidently Bunny Joe appreciated Caleb's retort, for he chuckled good-humouredly. Then he said somewhat sadly: "My chapellin' days be over."

It was then that the young man realized how old and feeble Bunny Joe was. As far as he could judge, the old man must have been quite eighty years of age, and as the nearest place of worship was at least a mile away, his statement that his chapelling days were over did not seem unreasonable.

"Do you ever go to chapel?" asked Bunny Joe.

"Sometimes," replied Caleb.

"Then why bean't 'ee gone to-night?"

"I've heard you're a wonderful man, Bunny Joe, and I thought I would come and have a chat with you."

The old man looked keenly at his visitor, and was silent for some seconds. "Who've been tellin' lies about me?" he asked.

"No one that I know of," replied Caleb. "Indeed, I have heard it said that you saved more than one mining company from ruin."

"Don't seem like it, do it?" replied the old man.

"Why not?"

"'Cos I be as poor as a coot. 'Ere be I livin' alone in this pigsty of a place without hardly a penny in my pocket."

"Why, haven't the mine owners rewarded you for finding the lodes that made them rich?"

"Rewarded me?" replied Bunny Joe. "Do I look like it? I be livin' on my savings, sonny, and tha's all I've got."

"But you have the old age pension?"

"Old age pension! Me! No, I bean't goin' to be beholden to Lloyd George for nothin'. What's an old age pension after all? Nothing better than parish pay; and poor though I be, I be too proud to take that. No, no; I've always lived upon what I've earned, and I always mean to."

"But is it true that you discovered a lot of tin lodes?" asked Caleb.

"I d'know that I be suckin' an empty pipe 'cos I ain't got money enough to buy bacca," replied Bunny Joe indignantly.

"Ah," replied Caleb, producing his own pouch, for this was the young man's only extravagance. "I'll smoke a pipe with you, if I may?"

"Will 'ee? Tha's your sorts," responded Bunny Joe eagerly, and seizing Caleb's pouch he proceeded to fill his pipe.

"How did you do it?" asked Caleb.

"Do what?"

"Find those lodes. I am told that but for you there wouldn't have been a mine in the district."

Bunny Joe, who by this time had lit his pipe, smoked contentedly and looked at Caleb with a kindlier expression in his eyes. "Well, I d'reckon tha's true," he said complacently, "but I don't claim no credit for it. I d'owe it all to the Loard. The Loard made me a dowzer, and there 'tes."

"What's a dowzer?" asked Caleb.

"Dowzer! Don't 'ee know what a dowzer is? Come this way a minute."

He led the way into the cottage as he spoke, and there hanging on the side of the wall he pointed towards a number of hazel twigs. "That's dowzin'," asserted the old man, nodding towards the twigs. "People don't believe in me now," he went on, "but facts is facts. Look 'ere," and he took one of the twigs from the wall. "You see this bit of stick, don't 'ee? Now then, it 'ave got two prongs to it, ain't it, with a single stick at the end. Now watch. I d'take hold of this prong with my left

'and and the other prong with my right 'and. See it? The bit of stick at the end of the prong is standing straight up, ed'n it? "

" Yes," replied Caleb eagerly.

" Well now, I'll tell 'ee what dowzin' is. If I was to hold this stick like that, and I was to walk over a piece of ground where there was a lode underneath, that bit of stick at the top would turn down, and I couldn't stop it from turnin'. It would turn down at the very place where the lode was. It might be fathoms down, but 'twouldn't make no defference; and I tell 'ee, it was with they sticks that I've found nearly all the lodes round 'ere."

" Are those dowzing sticks any good now? " Caleb asked.

" Good! I should think they be. I cut 'em when they was green, I did, but they be better now than when I cut 'em. As you d'see, they be nut sticks, and they don't change. Besides—a dowzer is always a dowzer."

" Have you discovered any lodes lately? " asked Caleb.

" Why should I? People don't do nothing but laugh at me now. Besides, I've got enough to live upon, and I be very old, and I've found out everything there is to know round 'ere. In fact' there is no more lodes to discover in these parts."

" It's strange, isn't it," asked Caleb, " that the lodes have all died out a little north of here? "

" 'Ave they all died out? " cried the old man. " I bean't so sure! Why, years agone I was walkin' along a road away in the Launceston direction, (it was a good many miles this side of Launceston,) and I saw signs of tin."

" What are the signs of tin? " asked Caleb.

" When you d'see water running, and the ground underneath it is red and rusty, it is a sign of mineral," replied the old man. " It may not be tin, and it mayn't pay for workin', but you may be sure there's mineral there! "

" How can I reward you for what you have told me? " asked Caleb presently, when he was preparing to leave.

"Give me a bit more of your beautiful bacca," replied the old man. "Tha's all I want."

"You shall have all I've got," cried Caleb eagerly. "Will you sell me some of those dowzing sticks?" he added.

"No, I shan't. They be all I've got to remind me of what I used to do, mester."

"Let me have a couple of them," pleaded Caleb. "I'll give you half-a-crown each for them."

"All right," said Bunny Joe.

CHAPTER V

ALTHOUGH it was now midsummer and the days were at their longest, Caleb did not leave Bunny Joe's cottage until long after dark. Perhaps it was owing to the quality of the tobacco that the young man had supplied him with, or it might have been that his vanity was flattered by the evident interest which was taken in what he had to say. Anyhow, his usual reserve was broken down, and he became quite communicative.

"You've 'eerd 'bout the Daffodil Mine, aven't 'ee?" asked Bunny Joe after they had been talking together for a long time.

"Everyone has," replied Caleb.

"'Tis scat now," remarked the old man, "like nearly all the other Cornish mines be scat, but a lot of money 'ave been made out of it."

"I've heard so."

"Well, I found that mine just by accident. You d'mind what I told 'ee 'bout mineral turnin' the ground red, don't ee? Well, one day, 'twas terrible 'ot I d'mind, I'd bin over to see Zacky Keast 'bout a vere (a baby pig) I wanted to buy. I was livin' at Treluggy at the time, and as Zacky's place was nearly three miles away, I got awful 'ot and tired. Well, I seed a little spring of water beside the road, and I said I'd 'ave a drink. I lied down

'pon my face to taste it, but I didn't drink more than a taaspoonful."

"Why?" asked Caleb.

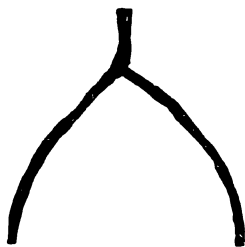
"'Cos it tasted all irony, and irony water ed'n good for the stomick. Now that road was right out of the minin' district, but it set me thinkin', and after a bit I seed a lot of nut sticks growin' and I went and cut one right away. Now I'll tell 'ee somethin'. That nut stick which you d'hold in your 'and was the very one I cut. You d'see the shape of'n, don't 'ee, and you d'see that" (and Bunny Joe put his finger on the lower part of the two prongs) "the skin is gone. Anyhow, I began dowzing just around where the water was bubblin' out, but nothin' happened. 'Where d'that water come from?' I said to myself, and I jumped over the hedge and followed what I thought would be the course of the stream. Well, I dowzed I should think a score of places, and still nothin' happened. Then just as I was about to give up I felt that stick turn in my 'and. I walked away towards what seemed to me a likely direction, but the stick seemed as dead as a gate-post. Then I went back again, and it began to turn. I walked in several directions but that stick became dead again. Now, I tell 'ee, the place where I started from was close by a marshy bit of ground where a lot of bushes was growin', and as I didn't want to get wet feet I didn't go that way. But after a bit I said, 'Wet feet or no wet feet, I'll go into the marsh,' and, would you believe it, no sooner did I get into the marsh than that stick became like a live thing. The skin all came off in my 'and, while the little bit at the top turned right downward."

"And was there a lode there?" asked Caleb.

Bunny Joe chuckled. "The Lent Lilies (daffodils) was growin' all round there, and one of the best mines in these parts was started. 'Tis scat now, but there was a fine lot of tin found there, and for years it was known as the Daffodil Mine."

Caleb looked steadily at the bit of hazel twig for some time, but he did not tell the old man what thoughts were surging in his mind. Nevertheless, it seemed wonderful

to him that the hazel twig, shaped something like the rough sketch which I here set down, could help in the discovery of minerals.



Presently, when making his way to Spring Farm, he recalled a conversation he had had with the man who had taught him something of the science of farming. Indeed, it was this conversation which had eventually led him to visit Bunny Joe's cottage.

"I wonder if the old man was right?" he reflected as he trudged along the lonely lanes. "I wonder if I have the gift of dowzing? At any rate, I'll have a try to-morrow evening, and if there is anything in my fancies it may lead to something."

For, as may be imagined, Caleb did not visit Bunny Joe without a purpose. Not long after he had seen Rosalind Luzmore, he had, one Sunday afternoon, left Spring Farm alone and tramped in the direction of the Altarnum Moors, wondering how he could translate his dreams into realities. As we have said, he had studied not only chemistry as it could be applied to the science of farming, but had read the history of the industries of the county, especially the mines and clay works.

It was while taking this lonely tramp in the direction of the Bodmin Moors (or, as some call them, the Altarnum Moors) that he happened upon something which puzzled him greatly.

It was about five o'clock one Sunday evening that he reached a lonely spot far removed from any human habitation. From where he had stood he could see nothing but the dreary desolation of the moors.

Summer though it was, a high wind was blowing, and seeing a hollow in the near distance, he made his way towards it for the purpose of getting out of the wind so

that he might with comfort eat the pasty which Mrs. Trethewy had provided him.

Reaching the hollow, he looked around him curiously. It was more than a hollow ; indeed, it might almost be called a gorge, especially as at one spot the ground rose on each side of him almost perpendicularly.

“ It might seem as though someone has been working here,” he said to himself ; but he quickly saw that this could not be so.

There was not the slightest sign that the moss which grew close to the moorland streamlet which ran through the gorge had been disturbed for unnumbered years. Nevertheless, his interest was aroused. At the bed of the streamlet the earth was almost blood-red, and he wondered why it was so. Then he recalled an incident of the days when he had lived farther west. Not far from the farm on which he had worked during the lifetime of his father was a mine, and he noted that the ground there was discoloured by the water just as it was discoloured here on this lonely moor.

He did not pay much attention to it, however, and even when he picked up a stone in the gorge which sparkled in the sunlight, he did not attach much importance to it.

Now, however, he became quite excited. “ I was a fool not to take it,” he said to himself, “ but I didn't think, I didn't imagine——”

When presently he reached Spring Farm he found the house in darkness. He had no idea of the actual time. He found the door unlocked, however, and presently, after eating the supper which had been placed on the table for him, he found his way towards a room in which he and Gad still slept, hoping that no one had noticed his return.

“ That you, Caleb ? ” It was Sam Trethewy's voice.

“ Yes.”

“ Where 'ave 'ee bin ? ”

Caleb was silent.

“ I don't like it,” and he realized that the farmer's voice was strident and angry.

“ What don't you like ? ”

"Don't like 'aving to leave the door open when you d'go out of a night. I like to lock up at ten o'clock and go to bed, while now it must be past midnight. Where 'ave 'ee bin?"

"Over Linkinhorne way."

"What 'ave 'ee bin doin' over there?"

"Thinking."

"That's all nonsense," exclaimed the farmer angrily. "You can think as well 'ere as you can over Linkinhorne way. You've bin after some maid, tha's what you've bin doin'."

"And what if I have?" chuckled Caleb.

To this the farmer found no answer. It was true that farm-servants were expected to be indoors at ten o'clock both Sundays and other days, but he reflected that Caleb was not quite an ordinary farm-servant. Had he been he would probably have threatened to "sack him," but he dared not threaten Caleb. He knew that if he did, the young man might probably take him at his word; and he dreaded this. As the years had passed by he found himself more and more dependent upon Caleb. He remembered, too, that the new barn, which was now in the course of erection, he owed to his servant's good offices; and, angry though he was, he felt that he would be a fool to do anything whereby he might lose him.

"Don't say anything more," whispered Mrs. Trethewy as she heard Caleb making his way towards his bedroom. "You will be sorry if you do."

"I don't like it," grumbled Trethewy. "There's not a farm in the parish where servants d'live in, whether they be men or women, who are not in by ten o'clock."

"Get away, you fool!" protested his wife. "You know you can trust Caleb."

"I believe 'ee've bin after some maid," grumbled the farmer.

"Well, supposin' 'ee 'ave, 'tis nothin' to do with we. All the same, I don't believe it. Why, as you d'know, 'ee've never put a maid 'ome all the time 'ee've lived 'ere."

"Then what's 'a out so late for? Tha's what I want to know."

Mrs. Trethewy was as anxious as her husband concerning this, and made up her mind to "pump" Caleb on the first convenient occasion; but she determined to say nothing to her husband about it.

When early on the following morning Caleb found his way downstairs, he found the farmer at the breakfast-table, and noticed that he was subjected to close scrutiny; but no word was spoken concerning his late arrival on the night before. Nevertheless, Trethewy watched Caleb's every action during the day, and when immediately after tea the young fellow went out alone, the farmer determined to follow him. "I'll warrant 'ee's goin' after some maid over Linkinhorne way," he said to himself. But he was soon deceived.

He had not gone far before he discovered that his servant had taken quite the opposite direction. "I do believe 'ee was tellin' me lies last night," exclaimed the farmer presently, "and yet I can't believe it. I've never found him to tell a lie ever since 'ee's bin 'ere. Why, 'ee's goin' straight to the Moors where there's hardly a livin' soul! What can 'ee be doin' that way, I wonder?"

Sam Trethewy was a strong, active man, but he found it hard to keep his servant in sight. Indeed, after following him for nearly three miles, he gave up the chase and returned to Spring Farm.

"Where 'ave 'ee been?" asked his wife on his return.

"Never mind where I've bin," replied the farmer, who was angry at the failure of his quest.

"Where's Caleb?" asked Mrs. Trethewy. "Do you know?"

"Yes, I d'know."

"Where's 'ee gone?"

"Gone maazed."

"Gone maazed! What do 'ee mean?"

Sam told his wife of his experiences and of his own conclusions.

"Why, think," he exclaimed, "I be a braa fast walker, but I could hardly keep'n in sight. And why should 'ee be goin' away towards the Bodmin Moors where there's not a livin' soul?"

"You be a fool," exclaimed his wife.

"Why do 'ee say that?"

"'Cos you didn't find out where 'ee went. If I'd bin you, I'd 'ave found out."

What conclusions the farmer would have come to had he followed Caleb I cannot say. Anyhow, he would have been greatly puzzled. Indeed, there seemed neither meaning nor purpose in his actions.

Making his way in the direction of the Moors, he at length arrived at the spot we have described. But he did not stay long. Finding his way to the lonely gorge, he stopped only long enough to pick up a few stones, and then, at the same headlong speed, he rushed in the direction of the cottage in which he had spent so many hours on the previous night.

He found Bunny Joe on the point of going to bed. "What be 'ee wantin' now?" asked the old man.

"I've been wondering," replied Caleb.

"Wonderin' what?"

"I've been wondering if you know tin."

"I knaw tin?" chuckled the old man. "I knaw tin? Tha's a beauty, that es! But why do 'ee ax?"

"Look here," cried Caleb excitedly, "if I gave you a piece of stone, could you tell me if there was tin in it, just by looking?"

"As aisy as I could tell if there was currants in a bun!" the old man asserted.

Caleb took one of the several stones he had picked up near the gorge and placed it in Bunny Joe's hand. "Is there any tin there?" he asked.

The old man did not speak a word, but weighed the stone carefully in his hand like one in deep thought. "Where be my spectacles?" he muttered.

Groping his way towards the mantelpiece, he took a pair of iron-rimmed spectacles which he carefully wiped; then, muttering all the time, he put them on.

"Where did this stone come from?" he asked, almost like a man in anger.

"Never mind that just now," was Caleb's reply. "Do you see any tin in it?"

Bunny Joe, still muttering, took it to the door and again examined it carefully.

Summer-time as it was, daylight had not yet gone. Nevertheless, although there was still a glow in the western sky, the sun had disappeared.

"Why ded'n 'ee come earlier?" he asked angrily. "You ca'ant see tin properly in a light like this." Nevertheless, he still continued to look at the stone which Caleb had brought him. "Come inside," he commanded presently. "You see that lamp there? Light'n to once."

Caleb eagerly obeyed, and a minute later the lamp threw a bright light around the room.

"Is there any tin in it?" repeated Caleb.

"Where did 'ee git it from?" countered the old man.

"Why, you fool, 'tis shinin' with tin!"

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I be sure. Why, 'tis beautiful. I ain't seed nothin' like it for years. Where did 'ee get it from?"

For reply Caleb took the other stones which he had brought, and laid them on the table. "Is there any tin in them?" he asked.

"You've been somewhere down West," Bunny Joe replied when he had examined them. "There's nothin' like this to be found in these parts. See that black spot there, and that one there? See how bright they be? Tha's tin, my dear! Tin! They be regular beauties, they be. Come now, tell me where you got them from!"

Half an hour later Caleb had left Bunny Joe in a state of great excitement. Nevertheless, the old man's excitement was not equal to his own, for he had seen what the other had never dreamt of. To Bunny Joe the stones were rich with mineral which was worth so many pounds a ton, but Caleb thought he saw in them means whereby his dreams might be realized.

"If he is right," he muttered as he strode along, "I'll be as rich as a Jew, and then everything will be possible."

He had not gone far, however, when his dreams and hopes seemed but the wild imaginings of a madman. How could that ignorant old man be sure of what he had said? Supposing he had been mistaken? Besides, even if he

were right, everything was hopeless. He had found those stones away in a lonely place in the wild moors. It was true he had been careful not to divulge the whereabouts of the gorge to Bunny Joe ; nevertheless, everything remained impossible. It was not *his* land where he had found them. Those moors were all owned by someone, although he had not the slightest idea who the owner was.

But he would find out—yes, he would find out everything, and he would be careful, too. Bunny Joe had, on the previous night, told him how he had discovered lodes which had meant great wealth to those who afterwards owned them. And yet Bunny Joe was a pauper ; he had not benefited by his discoveries.

Yes, he must be careful.

He hugged himself as he drew near Spring Farm. As he thought of his discovery his hopes became probabilities, and his probabilities became certainties. How glad he was that he had made the acquaintance of Elijah Clemmow, and had read the books which this retired schoolmaster had lent him.

“Where 'ave 'ee been ?” asked the farmer when at length he reached Spring Farm.

“Been for a walk,” replied Caleb.

“You told me a lie last night,” exclaimed Sam Trethewy presently.

“What lie did I tell you ?”

“You told me you had been Linkinhorne way when you 'adn't been there at all.”

“How do you know ?”

“'Cos when you went out after tea I followed 'ee. You went away towards the Bodmin Moors.”

A great fear came into Caleb's heart. Had the farmer seen him enter the gorge ? Had he seen him pick up the stones ?

“How far did 'ee go ?” persisted the farmer. “There's nobody livin' out that way.”

“You said you followed me,” replied Caleb. “If you did you know where I went.”

“Yes, but I lost sight of 'ee. I couldn't keep up with 'ee.”

Caleb laughed. The fear which had been born in his heart departed.

"Come, 'ave 'ee got a maid out that way?"

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Caleb.

"Oh, you needn't be so close," said the farmer angrily. "I d'know all the people who d'live that way. There's only three small farmers, and neither of them 'ave got daughters."

Caleb laughed again. He felt sure his secret was safe.

Nevertheless, when he went to bed he had much to think about. Gad, his fellow-servant, was sleeping soundly in another part of the room, and, although he snored loudly, he did not interfere with Caleb's cogitations.

He found himself faced with difficulties which became greater and greater as he faced them. First of all he must make certain whether the stones he had found formed part of a lode or whether they came to the gorge by accident. Then he must be sure that, supposing he found a lode, it would pay for working. This revealed to him all sorts of obstacles. He was utterly ignorant of mining, and except what he had heard from miners when he was a boy, and from Bunny Joe on the previous night, even the language of mining was unknown to him. How could he, without divulging his secret, discover its value?

Then again, assuming that there was a lode on the moors which would pay for working, how could he make use of his discovery? The land did not belong to him, neither did he know to whom it belonged. There were all sorts of impediments in the way.

And, besides all this, one could not start a mine without capital; and he had no capital. He thought of the fifty pounds he had saved and which he had carefully deposited in a savings-bank. But what was the use of that? The whole situation was full of difficulties, and he could not see his way to overcome them.

But he *would* overcome them! If the men whose lives he had read had risen from obscurity to greatness in spite of a thousand difficulties greater than those which confronted him, he also would overcome his difficulties.

As fortune would have it, too, the next day proved

momentous in his history. While hoeing turnips in a field not far from the house, Gad, his fellow-servant, came to him and told him he was wanted at the new barn which was being built.

"Who wants me?" he asked in astonishment.

"Go and see for yourself," laughed Gad mysteriously.

When he reached the farmyard he saw a motor-car standing, while close by the new barn was Sir John Luzmore talking to the workmen. But that was not all. Near her father's side was Rosalind Luzmore, who was watching with interest the men as they worked.

To Caleb she seemed like a visitant from another world. Never since he had first seen her had she seemed so far removed from him as now. He knew little or nothing about women's dress, but in the world in which he lived he had never seen anything like hers. How dainty she was! How perfectly she was attired! How beautiful she looked!

He felt ashamed of himself. He was wearing the clothes of a farm-servant. Hitherto he had thought little about such things, but now he could not help noticing the garments which he wore. He was, in farmer's parlance, in his "shirt-sleeves," which were rolled up above his elbows, revealing his brown, brawny arms. He knew, too, that the common corduroy breeches which enveloped his lower limbs must be utterly out of accord with her ideas of men's attire. How coarse and repugnant he must appear in her eyes!

At that moment the baronet caught sight of him. "Hullo, Besowsa," he said, "here you are. I wanted to speak to you before I went back."

Caleb did not know what to say or do. He felt that if he acted according to the manner of the class to which he belonged he should have touched his cap and spoken almost servilely to the great man. But he knew that Rosalind's eyes were turned towards him; knew that she was watching him closely.

"Come this way, will you?" continued the baronet, as he looked almost admiringly at the stalwart form of the young farm-servant. "Yes, my dear," turning to his

daughter, "of course you can come, too. It was through you that I wanted to speak to Besowsa!"

He led the way out of the farmyard as he spoke until they came to a little field close by, which Sam Trethewy had been led to call the "calves' meadow."

"Are you happy here, Besowsa?" asked Sir John when they had moved out of hearing of the workmen.

"I suppose so, sir," replied Caleb, "although——" Then he stopped.

"Although what?" asked the baronet, looking at him curiously.

"I suppose happiness is a relative term," replied Caleb.

The baronet smiled. He knew it was not common for farm-servants to speak in this fashion. "What are your prospects here?" continued Sir John.

Caleb did not reply, but looked uncomfortably towards the hobnailed shoes which encased his feet. And he was uncomfortable. He realized that he was standing close to the girl who had never been out of his thoughts since that day, weeks before, when he had first seen her. She was only a child, and yet she fulfilled every fond dream of his life. She was the centre of all his hopes; the ultimatum of his highest ambitions.

He was sure he was acting like a clown, although he did not know what he should have done. Ought he not to have spoken to her? Ought he not at least to have raised his cap and thus recognized her presence? And yet he stood before her dumb, awkwardly shifting from one foot to another, while she waited for him to speak.

"Prospects!" he repeated at length. "What prospects can there be?"

"What education have you had?" asked Sir John.

"Not much, I'm afraid. When I came here four years ago I had forgotten nearly all I had learnt at school—since then I have done the best I could."

"Yes, what?"

"Mr. Elijah Clemmow started night classes for any who cared to go to them, and I went."

"Very sensible of you," replied Sir John patronizingly. "What did you learn while you were with him?"

"He taught me some mathematics," replied Caleb, "also a little chemistry."

After this the baronet asked him many more questions which Caleb answered as well as he was able.

"And do you intend to stay here all your life?" asked Sir John presently.

"I suppose so, sir. You see, I am utterly ignorant of everything except farming."

During this time he had never looked in the direction of Rosalind, but he knew that the girl was listening attentively. He wondered what the baronet would say if he knew the mad thoughts which were chasing each other through his brain!

"I am not asking you these questions without a purpose," Sir John informed him at length. "I have thought a great deal about your visit to me some weeks ago. I don't wish to raise hopes which can never be realized, but you seem a young fellow of some intelligence, and you evidently desire to improve your position. What would you say if you were offered something utterly different from what you are doing now?"

"I don't know, sir. I should want to know what it was first."

The baronet laughed. The youth's simplicity of mind pleased him.

"Mr. Beans, my steward, is getting old," Sir John informed him at length, "while his work increases instead of decreases. He told me only yesterday that he wanted clerical help, and there are many things on the estate which need attention. Supposing I were inclined to give you a job under him, what would you say?"

Caleb's heart beat madly, but he did not speak. He was trying to understand what Sir John's suggestion meant. It opened up a world of new ideas to him as well as a world of new possibilities. Nevertheless, he was silent. He remembered his visits to Bunny Joe, also his dreams concerning the stones he had picked up in the gorge miles away from Spring Farm. How would Sir John's suggestion affect them?

There was something else, too. What was Sir John's motive in questioning him? Sir John was not spoken

of as a generous man ; rather he was said to be mean and stingy. More than that, he was an aristocrat of aristocrats who held to the old-fashioned beliefs that it was a dangerous thing for people who had been born in lowly positions to rise out of them. He remembered, too, that the baronet had bidden his daughter to accompany them to the spot where they now stood, and had reminded her that it was through her that he wanted to speak to Caleb.

"Come now," and Sir John looked at him attentively. "You seem afraid to answer me. What do you think about it?"

"Forgive me, sir, but I don't know what to think."

He was vexed with himself for being so awkward, and he was afraid he was making a bad impression upon the girl who stood listening.

"Don't you think you could do the work?" and the baronet laughed as he spoke. "Mr. Beans is said to be a hard task-master," he added.

"Do the work!" and Caleb's eyes flashed almost angrily. "I could do anything!"

There was nothing boastful in the way he spoke, and yet his words puzzled his questioner.

"Then why don't you answer me? Of course you may think it strange that I should mention such a job to one in your position, but I was favourably impressed by you when I saw you at Luzmore Hall. Besides, as my daughter has more than once reminded me, you rendered her a great service."

"Is it because of that you are thinking of me for this job?" asked Caleb quickly. "If it is, I would rather not have anything to do with it."

The older man looked at him in astonishment. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean this, sir. If you are thinking of it as a kind of reward, I—I couldn't take it." Then he went on excitedly: "I can't tell how much I am obliged to you for your good opinion of me, and I would work night and day to please you, but—but——"

He moved uneasily as he spoke, and, for the first time, turned and looked at Rosalind.

“As for the work, I am sure I could do anything Mr. Beans does, but I could not take anything that was offered to me because of a sense of gratitude.”

There was something so honest in his face, and so much suggestive of self-respect in his words, that even the baronet could not help being favourably impressed. Nevertheless, he was not altogether pleased at the youth's evident reluctance.

“Anyhow, I must be going now,” he said. “It is nearly lunch-time, and I must hurry back. Mind, I am offering you nothing, although I have not spoken without much thought. Still, as you do not seem to regard my suggestion favourably, we had, perhaps, better not say anything more about it.”

Then Rosalind spoke for the first time.

CHAPTER VI

FOR up to now she had been silent. She had been more than a little interested in her father's conversation with this superior farm-servant, for she recognized the fact that he was superior. Farm-servants, as a rule, did not speak as he had spoken. Besides, he had perhaps saved her life only a few weeks before, and she could not help feeling kindly towards him.

Nevertheless, she was angry with him for not eagerly accepting her father's suggestion. After all, it was for him the chance of a lifetime, and she remembered that it was not without difficulty that she had persuaded her father to speak to him. As a consequence he was moving towards the car without intending to utter a word, then, yielding to a sudden impulse, she turned towards Caleb.

“Then you do not feel disposed to consider my father's suggestion?” she said, and he could not help realizing the note of condescension in her voice.

He was afraid to answer; afraid lest he should say something that might offend.

“I think you are very foolish, Besowsa,” she went on.

"Perhaps I am," replied Caleb. "But somehow——"

"Somehow what?" She asked this peremptorily as he hesitated.

"Oh, it is not because I do not long for the job," cried the young fellow almost passionately. "I think I would do anything to get out of this hole, and—and I am as proud as Lucifer that Sir John thought enough of me to even mention it. But—but—it was the way he put it."

"What do you mean by that, Besowsa?" and there was a touch of anger in Sir John's voice.

"I hardly know what I mean, sir, and I hope you will forgive me if I am saying what is wrong, but I judged from what you said that it was only from a sense of gratitude, and because I was lucky enough to stop that horse, that you thought of me in this way. And I couldn't, sir, I really couldn't."

"That's nonsense, Besowsa," and there was a scornful laugh in the girl's voice. She was positively angry that anyone in Caleb's position should have such quixotic thoughts.

She went away in the direction of the car as she spoke, but Sir John, who was rather pleased than otherwise at the young man's demeanour, stayed with him a few seconds longer.

"Think over what I have said, Besowsa," and the older man spoke almost kindly, "and don't let foolish notions stand in the way of improving your position. Of course," he added, "you may not be of the slightest use to me, and Mr. Beans, whose judgment I trust implicitly, may not think it worth while to have anything to do with you. But think it over as a sensible man should, and write telling me your conclusions. I should like to do something for you."

He, too, moved away at this, while Caleb stood watching them.

"What 'ave Sir John said to 'ee?" asked Sam Trethewy, who, after watching the baronet's car pass into the main road, made his way to the spot where Caleb stood.

But Caleb made no reply. Somehow, he could not tell

why, but the thought of informing Trethewy what the baronet had said seemed impossible.

"Come now, tell me," went on the farmer. "It must have been something important. I could see that."

"How could you see?" asked Caleb.

"Of course I could see. I was watchin' 'ee all the time you was talkin'. What did 'ee say to you?"

Before Caleb was able to make any answer he heard a laughing voice close by, and turning he saw Gracie Trethewy.

"Mother has sent me out to say you must come to dinner at once," cried the girl. "If you don't the roast pork will be spoiled."

"All right, my dear," laughed Sam Trethewy. "We won't wait a minute. Come on, Caleb."

Roast pork was the farmer's favourite dish, and even curiosity concerning what the great man had said to his servant was forgotten when his daughter brought her message.

"Didn't Miss Rosalind have a beautiful frock?" laughed the girl as the three made their way towards the house.

"Yes," replied Trethewy. "Sir John don't dress she for nothin'."

"And didn't she look beautiful?" went on the girl enthusiastically. "You thought so, didn't you, Caleb?"

"Not so bad," replied Caleb, who by this time had grown calmer, and had also realized the necessity of being careful about what he said.

"I didn't think so much of her looks," remarked Trethewy. "If you had clothes as good as she's got, you'd be as pretty as she—in fact, you'd be prettier."

"Nonsense, Father! I am not fit to hold a candle to her," replied Gracie, who was, nevertheless, pleased at what her father had said.

"It's not nonsense at all," persisted the farmer proudly. "Still, she is very young to 'ave her marriage fixed up. She can't be much older than you, Gracie."

"Is her marriage fixed up?" asked the girl.

"I was told so. I hear that old Lord Trelaske and Sir John 'ave fixed it up between them, and that when Lord

Trelaske's eldest son comes of age, which will take place next May, the engagement will be announced. I hear, too, that there's to be great doings when that happens. It will be a fine match for 'em both," he added.

Caleb's heart became like lead as he heard the farmer speak. Next May, and it was now the end of July! Of what use were his vows? What chance had he in the face of what he had just heard? But he spoke no word.

Hours later he was again out in the turnip field. Row after row he hoed without in the least knowing what he was doing. He worked like an automaton, and did not know when one row was finished and another commenced.

Never before had he realized his madness as he realized it now. Never did he see the width and the depth of the gulf which lay between himself and the girl of his dreams.

But he did not give up hope, neither would he yield one iota of his determination. . . .

He must do something, and he must do something at once. But what?

Again he saw Rosalind Luzmore as he had seen her that morning. He remembered the proud flash of her eyes; he called to mind her every feature. Yes, both Sam Trethewy and Gracie were right. She was a patrician girl, and she showed it by her every look and movement.

And what was he?

He saw himself as he worked there in the turnip field. Hobnailed shoes, corduroy breeches, a shirt made of coarse material with sleeves turned up past his elbows. Great heavens, what a fool he was!—But no, he was not a fool. He remembered Napoleon who said that he would not have the word "impossible" mentioned to him.

How mad he had been that morning! Sir John had offered him the chance of a lifetime, and he had been insane enough to refuse it. He had been worse than mad. If he became Mr. Beans' assistant he would be constantly coming into contact with Mr. Beans' master, and might see Rosalind almost daily. How thankful he was that Sir John had left the way of acceptance open.

But what was the use of it? The baronet had suggested that he should write to him about the under-stewardship.

But was he fit for the post? He was an ignoramus who knew nothing of a steward's work. How could he be otherwise when he had spent his life as a farm-servant?

Then he remembered what he had said to Sir John. He had told him that he could do anything that Mr. Beans did. It was a silly boast, perhaps, but he knew it was true. Mr. Clemmow had told him that his writing was that of an educated man, while his spelling was impeccable. He had studied literary composition, too, and knew something of the value of words.

No, he would not give up hope. He would do what he had vowed. But how? . . .

He was glad he had spoken as he did that morning. At any rate, he had shown Rosalind Luzmore that he was too proud to accept anything as a reward for what he had done.

Yes, he would write to Sir John that very night, and tell him that he had reconsidered the whole position and that if he, Sir John, would give him a chance he would serve him as faithfully as a dog. Of course, the baronet would show the letter to his daughter, and they would discuss it.

Would she laugh at him for yielding so soon? Would she despise him for not being true to what he had said?

A distant sound reached his ears. It was not often that it was heard at Spring Farm, but he knew what it meant. It was the noise of what was called a buzzer, and it came from a mine somewhere in the Linkinhorne district, and it told him that it was five o'clock, when miners left work for the day.

This brought back his recent experiences with Bunny Joe, and what the old man had said about the stones he had picked up in the lonely gorge. He remembered, too, the dowzing sticks which he had obtained from the old dowzer.

No, he would not write to Sir John that night. He would, first of all, go again to the lonely moors and, bearing in mind what the old miner had told him, he would apply the tests he had heard of, so that he might be sure whether there was any meaning in what he had seen.

"Well, Caleb, you 'aven't told me what Sir John said

to you yet. What was it?" asked the farmer when a little later he sat down to tea.

Caleb did not speak.

"I reckon I know," laughed Trethewy.

"What was it, then?"

"I expect he told you what he told me; he said I must thank you for the new barn. Was that it?"

"At any rate, you haven't thanked me," Caleb retorted grimly.

"I don't see that there was anything to thank you for." Sam Trethewy was a little angry at the thought of being beholden to his servant for anything.

"For shame, Father," cried Gracie. "You know it is all owing to Caleb that you are going to have the new barn."

"I am not so sure of that," replied the farmer. "After all, neither Sir John nor Mr. Beans are fools, and they know when they've got a good tenant."

"Then why did Sir John threaten not to re-let the place to you when your term was up?" asked Gracie, who was rather indignant that her father should try to belittle what Caleb had done.

"Don't be foolish, Gracie," retorted the farmer. "What d'little maids like you know about such things? I don't say that Caleb didn't do very well when I sent 'n to Luzmore Hall, but there was nothin' in what 'ee did to make a song about. Besides, there isn't a farmer on the estate that pays his rent more regularly than I do. Every Court day I am there with my money, and all this talk about scientific farmin' is so much foolishness. I don't like new vangs, and although Sir John may be carried away by his new-fangled notions, I know which d'pay best."

This was a favourite topic of the farmer, and he gave two or three examples which, according to his ideas, proved him to be right.

"Where's Caleb gone?" asked Mrs. Trethewy, who had listened impatiently to what her husband had been saying.

"Good lor'!" ejaculated the farmer, looking around the table. "He must 'ave left without my noticin' it. How long has 'ee been gone?"

"He went out nearly ten minutes ago," answered his

daughter, who had evidently watched the young fellow's movements.

"'Ee's off again," ejaculated Trethewy. "I believe 'ee've got a maid somewhere."

"Don't be silly, Sam," replied his wife. "Caleb isn't that sort."

"'Ee've acted very strange lately," grumbled the farmer. "Evenin' after evenin' 'ee've gone away by hisself, and when I've asked'n where 'ee've been, 'ee's just put me off."

Mrs. Trethewy's reply was more forceful than elegant. But Gracie said nothing. There was a strange look in her eyes as if she were wondering whether there were any truth in her father's words.

Meanwhile Caleb had left the house, and making his way to the calves' meadow he stood on the spot where he had talked with Rosalind Luzmore that morning. Casting his eyes searchingly around as if to make sure that no one was watching him, he jumped over a high hedge and thus became hidden from the house. After keeping beside this hedge for some distance he plunged into a copse where there was a lot of undergrowth. Here he cut three hazel twigs, and, after shaping them according to the fashion of those he had brought from old Bunny Joe's cottage, he made his way in the direction of the moors.

"I am sure no one saw me," he reflected as presently he reached a wild and lonely region, "and even if they did no one would guess what I am after."

Nevertheless, there was a look like fear as well as of excitement in his eyes as he tramped over the trackless waste of moors. It was a dreary region, and although the sun was still shining brightly he could not help feeling the effect of his surroundings. There are perhaps few districts in the whole of England more desolate and uninviting than the Bodmin Moors, for although there is a well-made road which cuts its way right across this vast tract of land between Altarnum and Bodmin, and while a few sturdy Cornishmen have "taken in" a few acres and tried to extract a living therefrom, there are large tracts of almost unexplored desolation reaching from Rowter and

Brown Willy on the one hand, to near Bodmin on the other.

After he had put some miles between himself and Spring Farm, Caleb, having reached his objective, stood and looked around him. In a way the sight was imposing. Many miles away stood two of the highest peaks in the county, rugged, uninviting and desolate; while between him and them, except for the lonely farmsteads I have mentioned, was a vast area of uncultivated land. Not a house was near him; not a single human being was in sight. "Great God!" he ejaculated after gazing around him for some time.

A minute later he was standing by a stream of water, at the bed of which the ground was as red as blood.

"That stream comes from a spring," he reflected. "There hasn't been any rain for nearly a fortnight, and all around the ground is dry and parched."

He remembered what Bunny Joe had told him about this, and his hands trembled with excitement as at length he took one of the sticks he had cut that evening. A few minutes later he was wandering around holding the stick according to Bunny Joe's instructions.

Nothing happened.

The stick did not move in his hand. It lay as motionless as if he had held a spar stone.

He found his way into the gorge we have previously mentioned, but still nothing happened. At his feet a number of loose stones lay, while the streamlet purled musically towards a distant valley.

A great dread laid hold of him. He had been building his hopes on a phantom. How those stones came into the gorge he had no idea, but, if Bunny Joe was right, they did not come from a lode.

Again he reflected, the stream did not have its source in the gorge, but away up in the hill. He knew that at times, after great floods, streams were rushing down the hills in all directions carrying masses of debris before them. Might it not be that——

He made his way up the hill, still following the course of the stream which seemed to become smaller and smaller, until he came to a spot where it ceased altogether. Looking

around him he saw stones similar to those he had picked up in the gorge, only larger.

Again he looked around him to assure himself that no one was near. Then he took a dowzing stick from his pocket and held it as Bunny Joe had told him.

A minute later he uttered a cry which was not unlike that of an animal in pain. "My God, it's moving!" he shouted.

It was true. Although he held both forks of the twig tightly, it was turning in his hand, while the thick part of the stick was moving towards the ground until presently it pointed to his feet. Looking at the prongs he saw that the bark had come off in his hand.

He again stood still and looked around on the scene of dreary desolation. No, there were no watchful eyes upon him. He was alone!

"Bunny Joe said that if a dowzing stick turns it may be only water," he muttered, "but if the water discolours the ground it means mineral."

He remained hesitating for nearly a minute; then he took the dowzing stick with which Bunny Joe told him he had discovered a lode which resulted in the Daffodil Mine. Again, although he held it with all his strength, the top of the stick pointed towards the ground. "I've got it! I've got it! Great God, I've got it!" he almost shouted.

Then another thought struck him. He remembered what Bunny Joe had told him about building one's hopes too high because a dowzing stick promised mineral.

"Look 'ere," the old man had said. "Dowzin' is a funny game, and what you may think is a lode, may turn out to be only a bunch of tin. If it's that it may hardly pay for workin', 'cos it'll soon come to an end. God moves in a mysterious way, sonny, and His purposes are past findin' out."

"What do you mean by that, Bunny Joe?" he had asked.

"Well, 'tis this way. A lode is one thing and a bunch of tin another. A bunch of tin may be nothin' but a pocket of mineral, so to spaik, but a lode is a different thing. Sometimes it do run for miles."

“ But how can you tell the difference between a bunch of tin and a lode by dowzing ? ” Caleb had asked.

“ This way, my dear,” the old man had replied. “ Dowze round all the ground. Lodes do run sometimes east and west, and sometimes north and south, but they d’generally run east and west. Now if you d’find a bunch of tin, try the ground, say, two hundred yards east and then two hundred yards west, and if it’s a lode the stick’ll turn.”

The perspiration stood thick on his forehead, while his eyes glittered with an unearthly light. He felt like a man feels when fighting for his life, and more than his life. He remembered his first meeting with Rosalind Luzmore ; remembered, too, that his heart had become like a ball of fire when he had first seen her. Life, and all that life might mean to him, had changed from that moment, and he had determined that neither heaven nor hell should stop him from having her as his own. Then his mind flashed back to that very morning when he had stood close to her in Sam Trethewy’s meadow. He thought also of what the farmer had said about her becoming betrothed to Lord Trelaske’s eldest son in the following May, and his repeated vow that Rosalind should be his and his only.

It had all seemed so hopeless, so impossible then, but now hope rose triumphant again. It seemed to him like destiny that he had been led to enter the gorge a few hundred yards down the hill-side ; and it was only by chance, as it seemed to him, that he had picked up the stones which old Bunny Joe had declared afterwards to be rich with tin.

A little later he became calm enough to follow the old man’s instructions. Going eastward for more than a hundred yards, he had again held the dowzing stick in the prescribed fashion, but it remained motionless in his hands. Still, he made his way over the ling, which was practically the only thing that grew on the moors just there, still holding the dowzing stick firmly. It again turned in his hands, and again it pointed to the ground at his feet.

“ It’s a lode right enough,” he panted. “ Great heavens, it’s a lode ! ”

Then he went away in an opposite direction until he

came to a spot more than a hundred yards on the other side of the place where the stick had first turned. Here again he had a similar experience.

“ I've got it ! ” he cried, and his voice was hoarse with excitement. “ It's running nearly east and west somewhere underneath here. How many fathoms down I don't know is tin,—and tin means gold, and gold means power, and power means Rosalind ! ”

The sun sunk lower and lower, but still Caleb remained on the moors. He was using one test after another according to old Bunny Joe's instructions ; and every test proved successful.

At length, strong as he was, he became exhausted. It seemed to him that life had oozed from his being, and he could scarcely drag one leg after the other. He threw himself on the ground and began to think.

During his peregrinations he had picked up a number of stones from the hill-side, and, by means of a hammer he had been careful to bring with him, he had broken these stones. One after another they had sparkled with the same light which had brought forth Bunny Joe's exultant cries.

“ You little beauties ! ” he exclaimed aloud as again and again he saw the bright spots which the old man had told him was tin. “ I see Rosalind's eyes in you ; I see *everything* ! ” His blood coursed madly through his veins ; his pulses beat wildly. He was like a man in a fever.

Presently he became calmer, and he began to realize that his difficulties were not yet over ; saw that while his discoveries might mean all that he had hoped, there were a hundred things to do.

* * * * *

Caleb had imagined himself to be alone. More than once he had looked around him only to see a wild, uninhabited, desolate region. Nevertheless, he had been watched. Unknown to him he had also been seen when he had first visited the gorge where he had become so excited. Strange as it may seem, too, the one who had seen him was the young girl who, with her grandfather, had followed him on the evening he had first come to the

Bodmin Moors. This girl, who had been but a child at the time, had during the last four years developed into a young woman of more than ordinary attractiveness. A look of refinement was on her face, too, which was not common among girls who live on the moors. The reason for this needs perhaps a word of explanation. Old Adam was, as we have said, spoken of in the district as "a wise man." He knew much which was strange and unknown to those who lived in that region, and shortly after he had first seen Caleb he realized that the girl who lived with him and who was spoken of as his granddaughter was reared in ignorance. Accordingly he had taken steps to send her to school. How he had obtained the money to do this I need not, at this juncture, inform the reader. Nevertheless, such was the case. Thus little Eve had not only fulfilled the promise of her childhood and become a beautiful woman; she had become also not only a refined, but a comparatively well-educated girl.

During the years which passed, after having first seen Caleb, she had several times, when home on holiday, asked the old man whether he had again seen the boy whom they had watched years before; but the old man had professed entire ignorance.

On the day when Caleb had first visited the gorge, Eve, who had now left school, when wandering alone over the moors, had seen Caleb picking up stones, and although she had not spoken to him or in any way made herself known to him, she had watched him curiously.

At first she did not recognize him, but she soon became convinced that he was the boy she and her grandfather had followed years before.

"Grandad," she said on returning to the farm, "haven't you told me that you had no knowledge of what had become of that boy we followed? I mean the one I was afraid was dead."

"Why do you ask about him?" asked the old man.

"Because I saw him this afternoon."

"Where?" He spoke eagerly.

"He was in the Ghost's Gorge. He seemed awfully excited."

"Why should he be excited?"

"I don't know," replied the girl. "He seemed very much interested in the stones which lay around there. He brought a hammer with him, too, and was breaking them. Why should he do that?"

The old man did not reply for more than a minute. Into his eyes had come a look which suggested madness. It might have been that he had a peculiar interest in anyone who was found examining stones in the Ghost's Gorge. "Eve," he said presently, "if ever you see that fellow in this district again, let me know."

"Why should I?"

"Never mind why, let me know."

"Of course, it may not be the same boy we followed years ago," went on the girl. "He was a little chap then, and seemed to be starving, while now he is big and strong; but I am almost sure he is the same."

Again the old man was silent for some time, then he repeated his command. "If ever you see him around here again, tell me," he said.

Perhaps it was only a coincidence, but on the evening Caleb again visited the Gorge, bringing old Bunny Joe's dowzing sticks with him, the girl again saw him. She watched him for a few minutes, and then made her way to the lonely little farmstead where her grandfather sat alone looking over the wide stretch of moors. "Grandad," she said, "he's there again."

"Who? Where?" exclaimed the old man excitedly.

"The boy we saw. He is at the Ghost's Gorge."

"Come with me," the old man commanded. "I must know for sure."

Half an hour later the two were hidden behind a great rock from which they watched Caleb's every movement.

"Don't speak, and don't make a noise," old Adam commanded her; "but take note of everything he does."

The expression on their two faces as they watched was different. The old man as he noted Caleb's every movement looked with a fierce glare in his eyes. He might have been angry at his being there, and looked upon Caleb as an interloper. Had the girl been watching him she would

have seen not only curiosity but cupidity, as well as an expression of wonder ; but she was not looking at her grandfather. All her interest seemed to be centred on Caleb.

“ What’s he doing ? ” she whispered after watching for a long time.

“ Silence ! ” was the old man’s reply. The word was scarcely audible, but she heard it plainly. “ See,” he continued presently, “ he’s found it ! I must be careful ! I tell you I must be careful ! ”

Both remained in their hiding-place until at a late hour Caleb left the district of the Ghost’s Gorge and made his way towards Spring Farm.

“ What was he doing, and what did he find, Grandad ? ” asked the girl when at length Caleb was out of sight.

But old Adam did not reply. He kept looking in the direction Caleb had gone, then drawing himself up to his full height he pointed to a distant peak. He looked and spoke like an old Hebrew prophet. “ I felt then as I feel now,” he said slowly ; “ there was destiny in his coming ; there is destiny, in his being here. But never fear, Eve, my dear, your old grandfather will look after you, and you shall not be robbed.”

Together they made their way across the moors until at length they came to the lonely farmstead where the two lived together. When they entered the house the girl lit a little lamp and placed it on the table, while the old man watched her.

“ You are very beautiful, Eve, my dear,” he exclaimed presently.

“ Beautiful ? Don’t talk nonsense ! ” replied the girl with a laugh.

“ But you are. You are as beautiful as any lady in the land, and you must have your rights, too.”

“ What rights have I ? ” asked the girl.

“ He will rob you if he can.”

“ Who will rob me ? ”

“ That fellow. He is scarcely recognizable, is he ? When we saw him first he was a small, starving boy, while now he is a big, handsome man. He is strong, too ;

determined and strong. But he shall not rob you; I'll see to that."

"What can he rob me of?"

But the old man did not reply; instead he sat for a long time in silence. "I shall be very busy for the next few days," he went on at length. "In fact, I shall have to be away from here, and I dare not leave you here alone. I've often told you, haven't I, that my brother would like you to go and stay with him?"

"Yes," replied the girl.

"You shall go to-morrow," went on old Adam, with a look of sudden resolution in his eyes. "Yes, you shall go to-morrow. In a week I shall have done all I have to do, and then you can come back. Your uncle lives in a lonely place, but it is not lonelier than it is here, and he will give you a royal welcome."

After that they sat for a long time evidently making arrangements for the girl to visit old Adam's brother.

* * * * *

It was nearly midnight when Caleb at length reached Spring Farm, and although Sam Trethewy waited up for him, he asked him no questions. He felt he could not. The light in the young man's eyes seemed to forbid him, and when at length Caleb found his way to his bedroom the farmer had said nothing about the questions he had determined to ask.

On the following morning, however, he received a shock.

"I want a week's holiday," Caleb asserted.

"A week's holiday!" repeated the farmer in astonishment. "You can't have it."

"Why can't I have it?"

"'Cos the corn harvest begins next week. The ten-acre wheat-field is nearly ripe, while both the oats and the barley want cuttin'. Why, you must know as well as I do that labour is scarce at this time of the year, and I can't afford for you to go away."

"I am going, anyhow," replied Caleb quietly.

"Then you don't care about me or my welfare?"

"I am going away for a week. I am going to-morrow," and Caleb spoke every word clearly.

"Then you are an ungrateful young rascal!"

Caleb looked at the farmer steadily. "I've been here four years," he said, "and during those four years I have never had a day off. I've been underpaid, too. I might have got pounds a year more if I had gone to other places, but I have stayed on, and now you tell me I am ungrateful for wanting a week's holiday. Very well. I'll pack up my clothes and clear out to-night."

"But, Caleb," cried Gracie plaintively, "do you mean to say you are going to leave us altogether?"

"Yes," replied Caleb.

"What, never to come back again?"

"Not after what your father has said," was the young man's answer.

"Come now, Caleb," said Sam Trethewy, who felt he had gone too far, "you mustn't take it like that. Of course, you 'ave been 'ere a long time without a 'oliday."

"I am going away to-morrow for a week," said Caleb, still speaking quietly, "and of course if I am 'an ungrateful young blackguard,' I shall not come back again."

"No, no," exclaimed the farmer anxiously. "We mustn't 'ave that. Perhaps I 'aven't given you proper consideration. Mother and I were only talkin' last night about it, and she said it was a shame for you to 'ave to sleep in the same room as Gad, when we 'ave another room that you can 'ave for your own. I promised to raise your wages two pound a year, too, but I 'ave been thinkin' I'll make it four."

Caleb showed no sign of satisfaction at his victory, nor did he seem to pay any attention to the farmer's changed demeanour.

"But you will come back at the end of the week, Caleb, won't you?" asked Gracie.

"Not unless your father wishes me to."

"Of course I wish you to," urged Trethewy. "You mustn't take any notice 'cos I was a bit upset. Where be 'ee goin'?" he added.

"Home," replied Caleb.

"But you said you hadn't got a home?"

"I am going to where I came from, anyhow."

The farmer would have liked to have asked other questions, but he refrained. He felt that a change had come over his servant which he could not understand.

The next morning Caleb was up at dawn, and before five o'clock was on his way to the nearest railway station.

CHAPTER VII

A LITTLE past midday Caleb arrived at the home of his boyhood. His determination to pay this visit was sudden. There were certain things he wanted to find out.

Seeing a man near the house, he made his way towards him. He was sure he was one of the men he had come to see. His name was Tom Bennetto, and he had more than once tried to rent his father's farm before old Caleb Besowsa died.

"A dry summer seems to suit your ground," remarked Caleb to Bennetto. "Your crops are very good."

"Not so bad," replied Bennetto, looking scrutinizingly at Caleb. "Do you know these parts?"

"I live away up North," evaded the young man, "and hearing that there was a farm to let in this neighbourhood, I thought I would have a look at it."

"What farm?" asked the farmer.

"Tolgarrick," replied Caleb.

"That ed'n to let," Bennetto informed him. "Why, I saw Maaster Hicks only last night and he didn't say a word about it."

"Then I must have been mistaken," replied Caleb. "Tolgarrick Farm is near here, isn't it?"

"Why, the fields do join mine," replied Bennetto, "so, as I d'live next door to Maaster Hicks, so to speak, I am likely to knaw."

"I am on the look out for a place," Caleb informed him. "Your farm isn't to let, I suppose?"

"No, it isn't," replied Bennetto. "Why, I have only been here a little more than four years."

"The place looks in a good condition," Caleb ventured.

Evidently Bennetto was pleased, for he gave a smile of satisfaction. "Aw, you should 'ave seen it before I came," he volunteered. "'Twas in a mess, I can tell you. It had been all left to go to wrack and ruin, and people laughed at me when I took it."

"How was that?"

"Well, you see, it had been in the hands of a man by the name of Caleb Besowsa. An old drunkard he was. Come to that, I don't believe he was ever sober for two years before he died. Oh, 'twas funny! He lived 'ere alone, did old Caleb, except for one little boy; and, would you believe it, that little boy ran the farm! Of course, there was a woman who came every day to look after the dairy, but a little boy ran the farm."

"A little boy ran the farm?" repeated Caleb. "That seems impossible."

"But he did, and the old man led him a dog's life."

"I wonder the boy stayed."

The farmer laughed again. "He couldn't do any other," he replied. "You see, the boy was old Caleb's only son, and they lived here in this house alone. Little Caleb would 'ave run away but for that. Anyhow, 'twas he that kept the place together, so to speak, and when old Caleb died the boy hooked it."

"Hooked it! What do you mean?"

"Well, there is a bit of a mystery about it."

"Mystery?"

"Yes. You see, the old man was drivin' home from market one night, drunk as usual, and somehow or other, I can't explain how, the cart ran over him and killed him. Of course, there was an inquest, and a verdict of 'accidental death' was brought in, and the old man was buried; but directly after the boy hooked it."

"But there was no mystery about that, was there?"

"Yes, in a way there was. You see, although the old man left the place go to wrack and ruin, a few things were left; a few cows, some sheep, two horses, and the farm implements. Well, these things naturally belonged to the boy, and they brought in a fairly good sum at the sale. But there was nobody there to claim it, so to speak. Of

course, there were a lot of debts, but even when every penny was paid there were a good many pounds in hand. But the boy had gone nobody knew where. For that matter, nobody knows to this day."

"That's interesting," remarked Caleb. "What became of the money?"

Farmer Bennetto laughed again. "The whole thing was funny," he said presently. "You see, directly the old man was killed the landlord stepped in and arranged for a sale, in order, so he said, that he might get what was owing to him. This landlord wasn't one of the big land-owners as you may say; he'd just got this little place and one or two more, and people weren't surprised when he got anxious about his money. All the same, there was one man in the parish, called Jimmy Yelland, who had been a sort of friend to old Caleb. He had tried again and again to make him give up the drink, and although he couldn't succeed he kept on being friendly with him. Now Jimmy Yelland had, as a young man, been a lawyer's clerk, and in later years he had got the job of being rate collector, and had something to do with the Income-tax Commissioner. Anyhow, after the boy had run away, and the sale was coming on, Jimmy determined that Teague, who was the landlord, shouldn't rob that poor boy, although he did not know where he had gone."

"I see," remarked Caleb thoughtfully. "And what was the outcome of it?"

"The outcome of it was that the things at the sale were sold for twice what the debts amounted to, and so, although Teague tried to diddle that poor boy, Jimmy Yelland said that there was more than a hundred pounds owing to him."

Caleb's eyes flashed, but he did not let the farmer see that he had any particular interest in the matter.

"You see the position, don't 'ee?" went on Bennetto. "The boy had gone no one knew where, and yet he was the rightful owner of more than a hundred pounds."

"Well, what was done?"

"That's where the fun comes in," replied the farmer. "As I told you, Jimmy Yelland, when he had been young,

had been in a lawyer's office and had learnt the way of things. Anyhow, whether he did right or not I do not know, but he advertised in the *West Briton* and explained the whole case. He hoped, I suppose, that the boy would see it."

"And did he see it?"

Farmer Bennetto shook his head meaningly. "No," he replied, "*he* didn't see it, but somebody else did."

"Somebody else! What do you mean?"

"Why, the brother of old Caleb Besowsa. There was nearly a lawsuit about it, and there would have been one, if it had not been discovered that old Caleb had made a will."

"What, the old man you told me about?"

"Yes. He wasn't always so drunk as we thought. He made a will and in it he left everything to his boy. But that wasn't all. It came to light that old Caleb had a younger brother called Joshua who lived down Camborne way, and this brother, Joshua, was appointed executor or something of that sort. There was a pretty to-do about it, I can tell you. Anyhow, this man came here and proved that he was old Caleb's brother."

"And has he got the money?" asked Caleb.

"That's where the fun comes in!" laughed Bennetto. "Jimmy Yelland turned up a regular trump, he did, and he arranged it so that while this man Joshua Besowsa handled the money, as you may say, he was not able to spend it. It was put in the bank in the boy's name, and, as far as I know, 'tis there still. Thus, as you see, there are over a hundred pounds going a-begging, and nobody knows where the boy is."

"And you say he has never been heard of since?"

"Never a breath has been heard about him. For my own part I believe he's dead. Why, I was at old Caleb's funeral, and the boy was the only mourner, as you may say; a poor, pale-faced, starved-looking little boy he was who looked as though he might die of consumption in a week; and I believe that he did die, too. I am sure that if he had lived we should have heard about it; 'twas in everybody's mouth. Anyhow, everybody around here was talking about it."

"You have told me a very interesting story," said Caleb. "If anyone had read it in a book it would have been regarded as unbelievable."

"Yes, I suppose it would," remarked the farmer. "Would 'ee like to see the place, then, sir? I am sure my missus wouldn't mind showing 'ee around. Come to that, I bought some furniture at the sale. The settle, and the kitchen table that was there in old Caleb's time is there now. I'm told old Caleb bought them before he married the little boy's mother."

"Yes, I should like to look around very much," remarked Caleb.

It was with a curious feeling in his heart that the young man followed the farmer to the house. In a way he could not explain, what Bennetto had told him had aroused tender memories concerning this home of his boyhood; and the remembrance of himself as a poor, undergrown, half-starved lad who slaved in the very fields which surrounded him, filled him with longings which he could not understand.

It had not been because of any sentimental feelings about the home of his boyhood that he had come, however, but something entirely different. On his way back from the Bodmin Moors where he had been dowzing, he had remembered the circumstances under which he had left his old home four years before. He also called to mind the fact that Isaiah Teague had called at the farm the day after his father was killed, and had threatened to "sell him up."

"Why, everything you have got on the place," Teague had said, "wouldn't pay me."

This had been in Caleb's mind when he had left his old home early in the morning after his father's funeral, for he had implicitly believed Teague's words. A great fear had been in his heart, too. If there was not enough on the farm to pay his father's debts, then perhaps he himself might be in danger of prison.

As he had grown older, however, he had learnt the foolishness of such fears, and later still as he had tried to think of means whereby his dreams could be translated

into realities, he had wondered whether, after all, there was not more than enough to pay Teague. That was one reason why he determined to pay a visit to the only home he had ever known prior to his coming to Spring Farm.

Mrs. Bennetto scrutinized her visitor closely as she showed him around the house. She wondered at his evident interest in the old settle and the kitchen table, but she never connected him with the pale-faced little brat who had lived there years before. Indeed, there was such a disparity between the well-dressed, stalwart young fellow who spoke to her with such confident assurance, and the shrinking, half-starved urchin of years before, that the thought of their being the same person never occurred to her.

After his visit to Besowsa, which was the name that old Caleb had persisted in calling the farm, he made his way to the village of Polgooth, where Mr. James Yelland, known as Jimmy Yelland, lived. Caleb remembered him perfectly. He was one of the very few who had spoken to him kindly in the old days, and who had made any endeavour to persuade his father to give up the habit which had eventually led to his death.

Mr. Yelland received his visitor with a certain amount of curiosity. Knowing as he did practically every resident within three or four miles of Polgooth, he was sure that he was a stranger, and he wondered why this stranger should visit him.

Besides being rate collector Mr. Yelland was known for miles around as an "acceptable local preacher." Indeed he was in great demand as a preacher on special occasions at the various Methodist chapels which abounded in the county, and wondered if Caleb had come to him from some distant circuit seeking his services. Like Mrs. Bennetto, he did not at all connect him with old Caleb Besowsa.

"You do not seem to recognize me," Caleb said soon after their meeting in a room which Mr. Yelland called his "counting house."

"No, I am afraid I don't."

"And yet you have lived in this district many years?"

"All my life," was the reply. "I was born in this house fifty-seven years ago."

"And know everyone for miles around?"

"That forms a part of my duty," replied Mr. Yelland.

He was looking at his questioner keenly, and was trying to remember if he had ever seen him before; but in vain. As Sam Trethewy had said when he came to Spring Farm years before, he had, although sixteen years of age, looked less than fourteen; while now, although he was only just turned twenty, a passer-by would have judged him to be much older. He was utterly changed, too. As we have said, he was tall and stalwart. Indeed, he was nearly six feet high, and looked like the son of a prosperous yeoman rather than the half-starved brat of drunken old Caleb Besowsa.

"I used to belong to this parish," Caleb informed him suddenly.

"Did you, sir? It must have been many years ago when you were a child; I have no remembrance of you."

"It is true, anyhow."

Mr. Yelland looked at his visitor again, and wondered why he had come to see him.

"I am a busy man," he said after a long scrutiny, "and cannot afford to waste my time. May I ask your business? Because if it isn't important, I must ask you to excuse me. As you may know, I am rate collector for this district, as well as—other things."

"You are sure you don't recognize me?" asked Caleb with a smile.

Mr. Yelland deliberately extracted his eyeglasses from his waistcoat pocket, and after having carefully wiped them, placed them on the bridge of his nose.

"No," he replied, "I do not recognize you. Ought I to?"

"Perhaps I can best answer that," replied Caleb, "by telling you my business. I want to know the address of Joshua Besowsa?"

"Joshua Besowsa! What, Joshua Besowsa who told me he came from Polskiddy, down Camborne way?"

"I don't know where he lives, but he's the man who,

I'm told, claimed to be the brother of old Caleb Besowsa who did not live far from here."

"Old Caleb Besowsa! What do you know about him?"

"My name is also Caleb Besowsa," replied the young fellow.

"But you are not related to old Caleb, of Besowsa Farm?"

"He was my father; that's all. Although you do not remember me, Mr. Yelland, I remember you perfectly. You spoke kindly to me when I was a half-starved urchin, and when my father treated me as though I were a dog."

"But do you mean to tell me you are the little Caleb who——?"

"You saved me from more than one thrashing in the old days, Mr. Yelland, and I have not forgotten your kindness."

"Bless my soul!" cried the older man as he started up from his chair. "Yes, I see the resemblance now. But surely you can't be he? Evidently you have greatly prospered. Where do you live now?"

"I am a farm-servant, and I live up in the north of the county."

"A farm-servant! Why, you speak like a—— But tell me, what can I do for you?"

"Perhaps nothing; perhaps a great deal."

"How? In what way?"

"As you may remember," replied Caleb, "during the last three years of my father's life I practically did everything on the little farm."

"Did everything! Why, you kept the place going, and—and——"

"Just at the time of my father's death," went on Caleb, "two things happened. As I think of them now they seem of little importance, and yet they decided the course of my life. One was that I picked up this bit of newspaper not far from your house. As you see, it contains an advertisement for a farm-servant. The other was a visit from Mr. Teague, the owner of my father's farm, who said that when everything of value was sold there would not be enough to pay him what was owing to him. The two

things together decided me to leave the morning after my father's funeral. I tramped more than thirty miles that day, and took service under the farmer who is now my master."

"Do you mean to say you have been a farm-servant for the last four years?"

"A little over four years."

"But you speak correctly; you dress well."

"Thank you," replied the young man. "Since leaving this neighbourhood I have tried to educate myself, and as I have been careful of my wages I have been able to buy good clothes. I have heard it said that my father, although he was called drunken old Caleb Besowsa, was well brought up. Whether it is true or not I do not know, but I expect it aroused the pride that lay dormant within me. Anyhow, I wanted to get away from this district, and I determined to be something different from what I was down here. I was ashamed of being called 'drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat,' and I longed for something better."

"And when did you come here?"

"I came to-day."

"Why did you come?" Mr. Yelland looked at him suspiciously now. He wondered what lay behind the visit of this young man.

"To be absolutely frank with you," replied Caleb, "I came to find out what could be known about my father. For another thing, I have naturally thought a good deal since I left this neighbourhood a few years ago. At that time I believed that Mr. Teague could put me in prison for not being able to pay my father's debts. Since then I have learnt that such fears were foolishness. More than that, I have been led to believe that Mr. Teague told me lies. I knew to a nicety what my father owed, and on thinking it over I felt sure there was more than enough left on the place to pay his debts; so I decided to come and see for myself.

"And have you found out anything?" asked Mr. Yelland suspiciously.

"All that Mr. Bennetto could tell me."

"And what did he tell you?"

“ He told me that, after all my father's debts were paid, there were more than a hundred pounds left. He told me, too, that you had looked after my interests.”

James Yelland did not speak again for some time. Perhaps he was trying to understand the character of his visitor. For there are few men more suspicious than the typical Cornishman. A century ago, owing doubtless to the influence of Methodism in the county, Cornish people were regarded as extremely emotional, besides being credulous to a degree. As the years passed, however, a great change took place until the typical Cornishman, instead of being credulous and emotional, became sceptical, if not altogether unbelieving. Be that as it may, James Yelland looked at Caleb suspiciously, and seemed inclined to believe that the young man had come for some unworthy purpose.

“ Have you proofs to show that you are old Caleb Besowsa's son ? ” he asked. “ Have you the certificate of your birth ? ”

Caleb could not help laughing. He saw what was in the older man's mind, and determined to meet this one-time lawyer's clerk on his own ground. “ That will not be hard to obtain, Mr. Yelland,” he replied. “ Old Caleb Besowsa was a well-known character in the parish of Polgooth, and the little boy who, as you admit, ran the farm years ago is still remembered. Do you recognize this ? ” he went on, taking an envelope from his pocket, from which he extracted a photograph.

“ Bless my soul ! ” exclaimed the older man. “ To be sure ! How did you come by this ? ”

“ It is one of the very few things I took away from Besowsa Farm when I left it more than four years ago,” replied Caleb, and there was a quiver in his voice. “ My mother gave it to me just before she died. I was only a little boy at the time, but I remember that she took me to a photographer in Truro.”

“ Yes, this is she,” said Mr. Yelland musingly, after gazing for some time at the photograph. “ Of course, you have grown out of all recognition, but this is she as she was not long before she died.”

“ My mother is little more than a beautiful memory to

me," and Caleb's voice was husky. "Can you tell me anything about her, Mr. Yelland?"

"Very little, I am afraid. It was said in the parish," he went on after a long silence, "that she died of a broken heart."

"I was only five years old when that photograph was taken," Caleb said slowly, "but I do remember that I loved her very dearly. She was very beautiful, wasn't she?"

"Yes," replied the older man, "she was. I do not know the rights and wrongs of it, but it was talked about at that time that she was a lady, and that she had married beneath her."

Caleb's eyes flashed with a new light. It was evident that what he had heard gratified him. "Mr. Yelland," he said presently, "I want to tell you something, and I want to ask a favour of you. When I left Besowsa Farm after my father was killed, it was with a desire to forget my past. I was known here as 'drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat,' and I wanted to be rid of that stigma. I will not tell you where I went, except to say that I got a place as a farm-servant in the north of the county. Up to yesterday I was working on that farm. During the four years I have been away from here I have tried to improve myself and to better my position. Naturally, too, I have dreamt dreams of what I shall do and be. Do I look like an ordinary farm-servant?"

"God bless my soul, no!" was the reply.

"I have been, and still am, ambitious, and the night before last, while away in a lonely part of the county, I tried to understand why I was as I am. I think I know now!"

"Why was it, then?" asked Mr. Yelland.

"You have just told me."

"In what way?"

"You have told me that my mother was a lady," replied Caleb.

"I have only told you of common gossip."

"Will you help me to find out the truth?" asked the young man, almost beseechingly.

"How can I do that?"

"By telling me all you know of my father and mother."

"Surely you know what there is to know about your father?"

"No, I don't. I know he was spoken of as drunken old Caleb Besowsa, but he was more than that. I know I hated him. He treated me as if I were a dog, and half starved me; but as I remember him, I think of occasions when he didn't seem like a drunken sot at all. He spoke correctly, too, and, in many ways, was far removed from a working farmer. Will you tell me what you know about him, Mr. Yelland?"

Again the older man looked at his visitor scrutinizingly as if in doubt as to whether he should obey his behest. "I will tell you all I know," he said presently. "It is something like twenty-two years ago since your father came to Polgooth parish. At that time Besowsa Farm was called Little Tolgarrick, and I remember that the people laughed when he re-christened it Besowsa."

"Did he bring my mother with him?" asked Caleb eagerly.

"Yes," was the reply, "and she became the talk of the neighbourhood."

"Why?"

"Because, as I told you, we could all see at a glance that she had been accustomed to something different from the life on a farm. But your father was not called 'drunken old Caleb Besowsa' then, neither was he a drinking man. He evidently worshipped his wife, too, and seemed to be ashamed of her doing the common drudgery of the farm. Neither your father nor your mother, however, had any intercourse with their neighbours. Indeed, they seemed to hold themselves aloof from everyone. Mr. Taylor, who was the rector of our parish at that time, visited them and tried to find out who they were, and where they came from; but he didn't succeed. I think your mother received him coldly, and as good as told him to mind his own business."

"And did they make the farm pay?" asked Caleb.

"Yes, I should say they did. Your father, although a

good many years older than your mother, was a strong, capable man, and worked hard. But your mother was not fit to be a farmer's wife. She was delicate, and, as I judged, tenderly reared. I know this, too. After you were born the doctor told her that she must give up doing farm work; but she didn't. She kept on working, and then, while you were still a very little boy, she died."

The rate collector hesitated at this point as though he found it difficult to proceed, but after a painful silence he burst out suddenly: "Your father was never the same man after that. He still stayed at Besowsa and made a pretence of farming the place, but it was plain to see that he had no heart in it. He took to drink, too, which eventually led to his death. At that time," went on Mr. Yelland, "I believe I was his only friend, and I honestly tried to help him; but I could do nothing."

"Did he tell you anything?" asked Caleb.

"Nothing that I could depend on," replied Yelland. "I could never get him to talk except when he was nearly drunk, and then he spoke wildly and incoherently. He told me that he hated you."

"Why?"

"Because he believed it was through you that his wife died. Anyhow, he became three parts a devil at that time. Sometimes he seemed to try and pull himself together, and for weeks on end he would never touch the drink. On these occasions he worked hard, but during the last four years of his life he was nearly always drunk. I don't think I need tell you any more."

"Did he by any chance ever tell you my mother's maiden name?" asked Caleb.

"Never," replied Mr. Yelland.

"Nor where he lived before he came to Besowsa?"

"Never. As I said just now, he never made any confidences except when he was under the influence of drink."

"Tell me exactly what he said."

"I have never repeated what he told me," replied Mr. Yelland, "and I didn't know whether or not to believe him. You see, it was generally of a night-time that he made his

confidences, and in nearly every case he came here on the following morning and denied the truth of everything he confided to me."

"But what did he confide to you?"

"Oh, he said he had wrecked your mother's life, and but for him she might have held her head high in the county. He said he had taken advantage of her unhappiness, and persuaded her to marry him. He told me, too, that she bore one of the proudest names in the county, and that she had forfeited everything for him."

"But he gave you no names, no particulars?"

Mr. Yelland shook his head. "Not one," he said decidedly.

"And he never told you anything about himself before he came to Besowsa?"

"Never."

A long silence ensued.

"I am going to find out," Caleb burst out presently.

"I am afraid that will be impossible."

"Why? Look here, Mr. Yelland, as I have told you, I have had a talk with Tom Bennetto. He told me not only about the sale at Besowsa, but of your endeavours to do justice to me."

"And you have come about that money?" asked the other quickly.

"I knew nothing about any money this morning," replied Caleb. "Money may have been at the back of my mind when I determined to come here, but that was not my main purpose in coming. I wanted to learn the truth about my father and mother, and I am grateful to you for telling me what you have told me. Don't mistake me, Mr. Yelland. I am going to have that hundred pounds, or whatever it is, you have saved for me. It is mine, and I need it. But that is not all."

"I doubt if you can get it," replied Mr. Yelland.

"Why?"

"I expect it is all gone before now."

"But Bennetto told me that you had so managed my affairs——"

"Did he say anything about your father's brother?"

interrupted Yelland. "Did he tell you that there was a Mr. Joshua Besowsa who was made your executor?"

"Yes."

"He is the man who holds everything."

"But only as a trustee for me."

"I think your father made his will under his brother's influence," replied Mr. Yelland. "Anyhow, in spite of all I could do, he declared that, according to the provisions of the will, everything would come to him at the end of three years if you did not put in any claim. But that is not all."

"What is there else?"

"He told me that he lived at a place called Polskiddy, in the district of Camborne, but when about a year ago I made inquiries about him I discovered that Polskiddy was not in the Camborne district, neither did anyone know anything about him."

"Why did you make inquiries about him?" asked Caleb.

"Because I discovered that the money had been taken out of the bank, and on inquiring of the manager he told me that Joshua Besowsa had taken every penny of it."

"And could he give you no information about my uncle?"

"He was utterly ignorant concerning him."

"And had Joshua Besowsa the right to do it?"

"I am afraid he had," replied Mr. Yelland. "As I told you, I did my best for you, but it was a funny will your father had made and I am sure his brother had so influenced him that it might mean almost anything. Anyhow, the money is gone from the bank, and although I did my best to discover your uncle's whereabouts, I was utterly powerless."

When Caleb left Mr. Yelland's house an hour later he seemed like one in a dream. For some time he wandered aimlessly around the lanes, and when presently he found himself in the graveyard, which was contiguous to the old parish church of Polgooth, his mind seemed a blank.

At length, however, a new light came into his eyes; then like a man angry with himself he made his way out of the graveyard and walked rapidly towards a distant railway station.

CHAPTER VIII

ON the following morning, while walking around the streets of a town in the Cornish mining district, Caleb, after much hesitation, made his way to a policeman who was on duty. "Can you give me some information?" he asked.

"What information?" was the policeman's good-humoured rejoinder.

"I want to find out where a man lives," was Caleb's response.

"What man? What's his name?"

"I don't want to tell you," replied Caleb, after hesitating awkwardly.

"Why, you must be mad! How can I help you to find out where a man lives unless I know what he's called?" Then the policeman looked at him suspiciously. "Look here, you are up to no good. What do you mean by such a question? Who are you and where do you come from?"

"That's my business," replied Caleb, whose temper was rising.

"You will find that it is my business too if you don't speak civilly," responded the other. "You had better clear out of this, young fellow, or you will get yourself into trouble."

Caleb's native wit came to his aid. He knew that he had approached the policeman awkwardly and had aroused his suspicions, but although he scarcely knew what to do under the circumstances, he remained calm. "I know this," he said at length, "that you should be civil when anyone asks you a question, so I will go to the police-station and report what you have said to me."

"In what way have I not been civil?" demanded the constable. "You asked me to tell you where a man lived. I naturally asked you what the man was called, and you wouldn't tell me. What have you got to report?" Then noting the glint in Caleb's eyes and not being desirous to be reported to his superior officer, he added: "The

General Post Office is along there, you had better inquire of the postmaster."

A minute later he was in the General Post Office.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" asked a clerk.

"I want to see the postmaster," was Caleb's reply.

"He's engaged. What's your business?"

"I'll wait until he's disengaged," replied Caleb; "then I'll tell him myself."

The clerk eyed him closely, then seeming to realize that he was not to be trifled with, he left the counter and made his way to a room at the back. A few seconds later he returned. "This way, please," he said.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" the postmaster asked when Caleb had been admitted into his presence.

"I've been told that a man called Besowsa lives in this district. I want to find him."

"Besowsa! Besowsa! Does he live in the town?"

"I believe so."

"What's his Christian name?"

"Joshua."

The postmaster took a book from a shelf and hastily examined it. Caleb noted that it was a local directory.

"There's no such person living here," the postmaster informed him. "Are you sure he lives in this neighbourhood?"

"I am told that he did."

"*Did!*" replied the other. "But does he now?"

"I don't know. I am sure he lives somewhere in Cornwall."

"Then you had better consult a county directory."

"Where can I get a county directory?"

"Probably at the police station," was the reply. "If you can't get it there you had better order one at some book-shop."

When Caleb left the Post Office he felt he was in a strange world. His life at Spring Farm had ill-prepared him to be an inquiry agent.

At length, more by good fortune than anything else, he got hold of a County Directory, over which he pored anxiously.

But he was doomed to disappointment. He found a list of Besowsas, but, as far as he could discover, there was no Joshua Besowsa among them. He searched the Directory from cover to cover, but no success attended his labours.

He did not give up hope, however, for although the Directory made no mention of Joshua Besowsa, it informed him that there were three places by the name of Polskiddy which, according to the information he had received, was where Joshua Besowsa had lived. He realized to his dismay, however, that Cornwall was nearly a hundred miles long, and that these three Polskiddys were situated at a considerable distance from each other. Both Bennetto and Mr. James Yelland had told him that the Polskiddy where his uncle lived was situated in the neighbourhood of Camborne, but as he could discover no place of that name in the mining district, he was led to the conclusion that either his informants had mistaken the name, or that Joshua Besowsa had intended to deceive them.

For the next three days Caleb remained in the mining district. He tramped the whole countryside from near Helston on the one hand to the sea on the other, eagerly making inquiries everywhere, but without arriving nearer to the knowledge he desired.

Then suddenly his fortune changed. Tramping one day across a piece of waste land near the northern coast of the county, he saw beneath some stunted fir trees what looked like a small farm-house, together with some dilapidated farm buildings. The day was oppressively hot, and being parched with thirst, he made his way to the farmstead in the hope of getting something to drink with the pasty he had brought with him. Arriving there, however, he decided that it was uninhabited. There was no sign of life anywhere, while the few fields which surrounded the lonely farmstead looked parched and uncared for.

He was about to turn away when he heard a rushing noise close to him, which was immediately followed by the savage growl of a dog. Turning, he saw a creature, half mastiff, half sheep-dog, which seemed on the point of springing on him.

Caleb, who during the years since he had left Besowsa had learnt a good deal about dogs, lifted a heavy stick he carried, and prepared to do battle. The dog, perhaps recognizing the fact that he had a formidable opponent before him, refrained from making the leap which he had evidently intended; but continued to snarl savagely.

"Who be 'ee, and what do 'ee want?"

"Call off your dog and I will tell you," replied Caleb without taking his eyes off the animal.

"Clear out of this. You bean't wanted 'ere."

"Call off your dog or I'll kill him," shouted Caleb.

Whether the occupier of the little house believed that Caleb was able to fulfil his threat or not I cannot say, but in a loud voice he shouted "Down, Cæsar!" and a few seconds later the dog was creeping away from him.

"Now then, tell me who you are and what you want. You mustn't think because I live 'ere alone that I am not able to take care of myself."

Turning, Caleb saw an old man coming towards him. He looked quite seventy years of age, but he was evidently hale and hearty. His footsteps were quick and decided, and although his hair was white, and he was clothed in rags, he showed no signs of decrepitude.

"Who are you and what do you want?"

"I wanted some water to drink with my pasty," replied Caleb.

"Is that all you want?"

"I shouldn't come here if I wanted anything else," was the young man's reply.

"But what's your name?"

"Caleb Besowsa."

"Besowsa!" and the other looked at him in astonishment. "Caleb Besowsa!—Where did 'ee come from?"

The look on the old man's face at the mention of his name aroused Caleb's suspicions; for although he bore not the slightest resemblance to his father, he could not help noticing the altered tone in his voice.

"What is it to you where I came from?" asked Caleb.

But the other did not reply, instead he kept looking steadily at the young man as if he saw in his face some-

thing which recalled memories long dead. "What is it to me?" the old man asked at length. "Well, that's funny!" and he laughed like one amused.

"I have told you my name," said Caleb as he looked searchingly at his questioner's face. "What's yours?"

"'Ted'n Besowsa!" he replied.

"What is it, then?"

"My name? Why, 'tis Levi Sticker," was the reply.

"So you needn't look at me like that."

He came nearer to Caleb as he spoke, still scrutinizing him closely. "Ess," he muttered, "it's the Besowsa face right enough, and, by Gor, it's the Besowsa eyes!" Then as if something had struck him, he went on:

"Be you Caleb's boy? But no, you caan't be."

"What's the name of this place?" asked Caleb, who had been wondering at the old man's words.

"It ain't got no name," was the reply. "Who would give a name to a place like this?"

"Does it belong to you?"

"Belong to me!" and again the old man chuckled as though he were amused. "You say you are called Besowsa," he went on; "if that's true you ought to know more about it than I do."

"Why should I know more about it?"

"Because it d'belong to a man called Besowsa."

"Does the owner live here?"

"Joshua Besowsa live here? My Gor! He d'knaw a trick worth two of that! Catch Joshua Besowsa livin' here!"

Caleb's heart began to beat rapidly. The mention of his uncle's name told him that he was getting near the knowledge he desired.

"Do you know Joshua Besowsa?" he asked.

"Knaw'n? I ought to."

"Why should you know him?"

"Because the place d'belong to un, and because he d'allow me to live 'ere rent free, and because sometimes 'ee d'come 'ere."

"You say that Joshua Besowsa owns it?"

"If he didn't own it, how could he give me the right to

live 'ere." And there was a cunning look in the old man's eyes.

"Then," replied Caleb, "if he owns it he must have the title deeds, and if he has the title deeds there must be a name to the place. What is it?"

"I'm told," replied the old man, "that years ago it was called Polskiddy, because the man who took it in from the downs, and built the house, was called Polskiddy; but it 'aven't had no name since I've known it."

Caleb looked around him and realized that there was not another house in sight. Away in the distance the waters of the Atlantic flashed in the sunlight, but all around him, except for this lonely farmstead, there was nothing but a wild stretch of moors.

"Where does Joshua Besowsa live?" he asked.

"He never told me," was the answer, "so how can I tell?"

"All the same, you know."

"You are trying to pump me," the old man retorted, "but I bean't so green as that. Look here, you 'ave the look of the Besowsas on your face. Be you old Caleb's boy?"

"What if I am?" asked Caleb.

"Well, if you've got the Besowsas' blood in 'ee, so to speak, it would make a difference, wouldn't it? But 'ave 'ee now? Tell me."

"What do you know about the Besowsas?" asked Caleb eagerly.

"I knawed they two Besowsa boys when they were cheldern. Look here, you are not making a fool of me, are 'ee? Are 'ee old Caleb Besowsa's boy?"

"My father was called Caleb Besowsa."

"Where ded a' live?" and there was eagerness almost amounting to frenzy in the other's voice.

"A good many miles from here in the parish of Polgooth."

"That's ev et! That's ev et! Come inside, will 'ee?"

The angry tones with which old Levi Sticker had at first greeted him were gone now, and there was something almost caressing in the way he asked Caleb into the house.

Caleb looked around him curiously. The little farm kitchen into which he had followed old Levi Sticker looked desolate and poverty-stricken beyond words. Except for two chairs and a deal table there was scarcely any furniture. The floor was of blue slate stones.

"You said you wanted some water to drink with your dinner," remarked the old man. "Here's a cup, and there's a pump in the back kitchen."

"Thank you," replied Caleb, "but I want something more than water."

"What do 'ee want, then?"

"I want to know all about Joshua Besowsa. Tell me where he lives and how I can find him."

"What do 'ee want to know that for?" and the old man continued to look at him suspiciously.

"Because I believe he is my uncle."

"Tell me again. Are you old Caleb Besowsa's boy?"

"Yes. Why are you anxious to know that?"

"I'll tell 'ee," and there was something almost caressing in Levi Sticker's tones. "I've knawed they Besowsa boys all my life. I worked for their father." He hesitated a second and then went on: "I expect there was always something funny about me, and people always said that I was a button short."

Caleb quite understood this cryptic phrase. When Cornish people spoke of those who were mentally deficient, without being what was termed idiots, they spoke of them as being a button short.

"Well, go on," said Caleb as the old man hesitated.

"I d'mind Caleb leaving home," continued Levi, "and I d'mind, too, that 'ee made Joshua promise to look after me. 'Levi must never want a home, Joshua,' he said, 'and you must promise to look after him.'"

"And did Joshua promise?"

"He did. 'Ee took a solemn oath on the Bible that 'ee would never let me want. 'Ee kept his promise, too, and up to four years ago I always lived with him. Then Joshua behaved in a very funny way. 'Ee seemed all excited like and went around the place groanin' to 'isself.

I tried to find out what was the matter with him; then someone told me that Caleb was dead."

"Did he grieve much at the death of his brother?" asked Caleb, who was trying to see the inwardness of the old man's narrative.

"I don't know, but soon after 'ee bought this place and told me I must come 'ere to live."

"But why should he do that?"

"There was something mysterious about it," replied old Levi. "'Ee made me promise I would never tell where I came from or who I was."

"Where was he living when he made you promise this?" asked Caleb.

"I ought not to tell 'ee, but seein' your father made him promise always to look after me, I shouldn't be breakin' my word, should I? 'Ee lived on a farm called Pentewan in Week St. Peter's Parish; but 'ee don't live there now."

"How do you know?"

"'Cos not long after I came 'ere I went back there, and found that 'ee had gone."

"Where had he gone?"

"No one knew; not even the farmer who had bought the place knew. But I found out," and the old man chuckled as though he were amused at his own cleverness.

"How did you find out?"

"It was this way," replied Levi. He looked around the little room as though he were afraid. "'Ee comes to see me sometimes, and one time when 'ee came 'ee told me that if anyone asked me who I was I must say I was 'Joshua Besowsa.' Funny, wasn't it? But no one has asked me, so I've told nobody."

"But you told me your name was Levi Sticker?"

"Yes, and why? Why, 'cos the moment I seed 'ee I knawed you was a Besowsa. I felt it in my bones like; that was why I slipped it out. Why, you be the very image of Caleb when 'ee was your age."

"You told me just now that you knew where Joshua Besowsa lived."

"Yes and I do, too. 'Ee didn't knaw I'd found it out," and again the old man chuckled boastfully.

"Where, then?" asked Caleb eagerly.

"There's something funny about it," and a puzzled look came into Levi's eyes. "Why should 'ee change his name, and why should 'ee leave Pentewan where 'ee had a good farm?"

"How do you know he has changed his name?"

"Look 'ere," cried Levi, taking a soiled, crumpled envelope from his pocket. "'Ere it is. But mind, you must promise me never to let him know I told you. 'Ee've got the temper of a devil, Joshua 'ave, and 'ee might stop my allowance."

"He makes you an allowance, does he?"

"How else could I live? But never mind that now. I got 'old of this envelope unbeknown to him. You'll promise you'll never tell'n if I show it to 'ee, wa'ant 'ee?" and there was a look of fear in the old man's eyes.

"Yes, I'll promise. Let me see it."

Caleb took the envelope. "J. Beziza, Porthskipton House, Porthskipton," he read, after which the two talked long and earnestly together.

After Caleb had gone, old Levi Sticker, after watching the young man till he was out of sight, returned to the little house again. But he did not stay in the front kitchen where Caleb had eaten his pasty, but made his way into another room close by. Here he was met by a girl of perhaps eighteen or nineteen years of age with dark, sparkling eyes and shining black hair. "Who is that man, Uncle Levi?" she asked eagerly. "What was his name?"

"What do 'ee want to know for, Eve, my dear?" asked old Levi.

"Never mind, but I must know. Who is he, and why did he ask you so many questions?"

"I don't know if I ought to tell you," replied Levi.

"But you must tell me. I insist upon knowing all you said to each other."

Whereupon the old man told the girl what had taken place between him and his visitor, while the girl listened intently.

"Have you ever seen him before?" asked Levi pres-

ently. "He's a handsome-looking fellow," he added as though the thought had just struck him. "Proud, too; but the Besowsas were always proud."

"Caleb Besowsa," repeated the girl like one reflecting. "Caleb Besowsa. Uncle Levi, I'm going home to-morrow."

"No, my dear, you mustn't go yet. Why, the place has seemed altogether different since you've been here."

"I'm going home to-morrow," she insisted.

The next morning Caleb left the little inn, where he had been staying, early, and having caught the train, he travelled northward until he came to a little station called Carnwinnick Halt. Here he alighted, and then, having made some inquiries, walked for more than two hours towards the southern coast of the county.

A little before noon he caught a glimpse of the sea, and almost at the same time the decorated pinnacles of an old church tower appeared to his view.

"That's it," he reflected. Then with a strange light in his eyes he moved more rapidly, until he came to the entrance of a village, where a piece of circular sheet-iron had been placed, on the surface of which was painted the word "Porthskipton."

Arrived here he looked eagerly around.

It was a pretty village almost embowered in trees, for the south coast of Cornwall is utterly different from the north. There, it is, in the main, bleak, sterile and forbidding, but here there was much luxuriant foliage. The old church tower which he had caught sight of a little before was situated on the top of a hill, but the village sloped seaward. Caleb could not help noticing how trim and neat the cottages were, and the abundance of flowers which bloomed everywhere. "It ought to be called Rosalind," he said to himself as he looked around. "Surely this is a bit of paradise."

Perhaps his exclamation was natural, for although the sea coast, which was only a little distance away, was rock-bound, and the cliffs were hundreds of feet high, nature had been especially generous in making the countryside beautiful. It was true that, here and there, great

rocky peaks were to be seen, but, in the main, there was a beauty which is seldom found except in the two southernmost counties of England.

Caleb found his way to a blacksmith's shop where a man was busy shoeing a horse. "This is Porthskipton, isn't it?" he asked.

"The name is painted plain enough on that piece of iron at the end of the road," replied the blacksmith.

"It's a beautiful place," went on Caleb.

"'Ted'n so bad."

"Are there many strangers living here?"

"Strangers!" remarked the blacksmith. "It's altogether different from what it was twenty years ago. Then we did know everybody, and everybody did know we. But now, especially at this time of the year, we don't know nobody."

"Is there a place here called Porthskipton House?" asked the young man.

The blacksmith finished filing the horse's hoof before he replied. "There wad'n no name to it years ago," was his answer. "For my own part I don't like these New Vangs. Silly, I call it. Why, Billy Best lived there twenty years, 'ee did, without 'avin' a name to the house; but when 'ee died, and it's all the result of these new-fangled ways, a name was gived to it, and painted up on the gate."

"Who lives there?" asked Caleb.

"Somebody with a foreign name," replied the blacksmith.

"Is he a foreigner?" and Caleb's heart was beating rapidly as he asked the question.

"Not 'ee. 'Ee may try to make out that 'ee is, but 'ee ed'n. A stranger from London told me that Beziza was an Indian name, but 'ee ed'n no Indian."

"Where is it?" asked Caleb. "Is it near the sea?"

"No," replied the blacksmith. "It is up close by the church."

CHAPTER IX

CALEB saw at a glance that Porthskipton House was a residence of considerable size and importance. It was surrounded by spacious lawns and well-stocked gardens, and was evidently the residence of a well-to-do person.

An elderly woman appeared at the door in answer to his knock, and, as Caleb thought, looked at him suspiciously. "Is Mr. Beziza in?" he asked.

The woman did not reply, instead she countered his question by another. "Do you want to see him?"

"If he is at home."

The woman continued to look at him steadily. "Mr. Beziza doesn't enjoy good health, and seldom sees strangers," she informed him. "What name shall I give him?"

"I have come from the north of the county, and he doesn't know me at all," replied Caleb.

"What's your business, then?"

"It's private," was the reply.

The woman continued to look at him steadily. Perhaps she was trying to estimate his social status and to understand why he should want to see Mr. Beziza. She did not look like a servant at all, for although she was plainly dressed, her clothes gave no suggestion of a servant's uniform. She had an air of authority, too, which made Caleb feel that she was in the confidence of the owner of the house. But she wore no wedding ring, and looked a typical spinster.

Apparently the young man made a good impression on her, for presently her face relaxed and her tones became less acid as she told him to wait while she discovered Mr. Beziza's wishes.

"Will you come this way?" she said when she returned again. "Mr. Beziza will see you."

Caleb followed her into a spacious entrance hall which was thickly carpeted and newly furnished. A few seconds later he found himself in a large room overlooking a well-

kept lawn. Here again all the furniture was nearly new, while everything was spotlessly clean. And yet Caleb felt a sense of discomfort. He knew practically nothing about well-furnished houses, while many of the objects by which he was surrounded were utterly strange to him. Everything proclaimed that the owner of Porthskipton House was a well-to-do man, and yet, as Caleb continued to look around him, the sense of discomfort grew stronger.

At length he heard the sound of whispering voices outside the door which was immediately opened, and a man appeared. "Who are you and what can I do for you?" asked the new-comer, giving a quick glance towards his visitor.

Caleb hesitated a little before replying. "Are you Mr. Beziza?" he asked, looking at him appraisingly.

"That's my name. What do you want?"

The whole attitude of the man was unfriendly, just as his voice was. It was more than unfriendly; it was forbidding. Not that he was ill-looking in the ordinary sense of the term. He had regular, well-formed features, and wore the garb of a well-to-do Englishman. In many respects he was good-looking. He appeared to be about fifty years of age, and was more than ordinarily tall. His well-shaped head was covered with iron-grey hair, while his beard hung heavily on his chest. But his eyes, although large and brilliant, gave Caleb a sense of antagonism. They suggested furtiveness, too, as well as cruelty.

The young man cast his mind back to the time when he lived at Besowsa Farm with his drunken father, and mentally compared the face of the man who now stood before him with that of what the people called "drunken old Caleb Besowsa." Yes, in spite of everything, there was a strong similarity between them, and no one would have hesitated to pronounce them brothers. The colour of their eyes was the same; they had the same shaped forehead; the same cast of features. All these proclaimed the fact that although they were far removed from each other they sprung from the same stock.

Caleb stood with his back towards the window as he watched the older man, and, as a consequence, his face

was somewhat in the shadow, but the light fell strongly upon that of the owner of the house.

“ Good afternoon, Uncle Joshua.”

“ What ! ” and the owner of the house started perceptibly.

“ Good afternoon, Uncle Joshua.”

For some time the older man did not speak. His features worked convulsively, while his whole attitude suggested fear. But this was only for a few seconds. Fear and irresolution passed from him, and his whole appearance suggested an angry dog which is on the point of being attacked. “ Who are you ? ” he asked. “ What are you called ? ”

“ My name is the same as yours, Uncle Joshua.”

“ Uncle indeed ! ” and there was scornful laughter in his voice. “ Uncle ! You claim to be my nephew, then ? ”

“ I am your nephew.”

“ In order to have a nephew I must have had a brother, but seeing I never had a brother I fail to understand how you can be my nephew. What's your name ? ”

“ Caleb Besowsa.”

Again the young man saw the other give a quick start, while anger, and something more than anger, flashed from his eyes.

But he mastered himself immediately. “ Besowsa ! Besowsa ! ” he repeated. “ Yes, the name is not unlike my own. Still, there is a distinct difference. Beziza is different from Besowsa.”

“ Your name is not Beziza,” replied Caleb, “ neither are you a foreigner. You are a Cornishman, and you were reared with my father, Caleb Besowsa, on a farm called Pentewan in Week St. Peter's Parish.”

The older man walked towards the window, while Caleb's eyes followed him. In so doing he turned his face towards the light so that the owner of the house could see him plainly. “ Of course, you must be joking,” he said. “ If I am called Besowsa, why am I known here as Beziza ? Besides, what do you want ? Why have you come to me ? Are you here as a beggar ? If so, let me tell you at once that I have nothing to do with beggars or cadgers.” There

was an insult in his every word, and it flashed into the mind of the quick-witted young man that the other had a purpose in trying to arouse him to anger.

"No," he replied, "I have not come here begging."

"Why are you here, then?"

"To know why you persuaded my father to make a foolish will," replied Caleb. "I want to know, too, what has become of the money you robbed from me."

"Money I robbed from you? My dear man, you must be mad!"

"It wasn't much," went on Caleb. "It was only what remained from the sale at Besowsa Farm after my father's debts were paid. Still, it was considerably over a hundred pounds, and I have come for it."

The older man looked at Caleb doubtfully. He might have been calculating as to what he should say and do next. The look of fear in his eyes grew stronger, too, until it became like frenzy. "Leave the house!" he cried. "Leave it immediately or I'll call the police!"

"Not yet," replied Caleb. "I am going to stay here until I have obtained my rights."

"Your rights?"

"Yes, my rights."

"Why, you foolish fellow, you are acting like a lunatic! Do you think that I, the owner of this house, would rob such as you of a hundred pounds? A hundred pounds is nothing to me. What's in your mind? What are you scheming for? Why are you looking at me like that? I haven't robbed you, you fool! What did your father tell you before he died? Tell me now! What mad things did he say to you?"

Caleb was not slow to fasten upon what these words purported. A minute before he had declared that the name of Besowsa was altogether unknown to him and that he had never had a brother. Now his words suggested a knowledge which he had denied. Caleb had but little experience of the ways of the world, nevertheless nature had endowed him with a quick mind, and his uncle's behaviour was, to say the least of it, suspicious.

"Don't you see what a fool you are?" went on the other.

“Come now, you must leave the house at once. I don't wish to be hard on you, but I have no mercy on people who come to me under false pretences, mind that. How do I know you are Caleb Besowsa's son?” he added.

“Would you like me to prove to you that I am Caleb Besowsa's son?”

The other evidently realized that he had made foolish admissions. “Of course not,” he replied. “There may be a man called Caleb Besowsa for all I know, but what is he to me? I am not called Besowsa, and my name is not Joshua either. I was christened Jethro.”

Wild, whirling thoughts were rushing through Caleb's mind as he listened to this. Not only were the tones of the man's voice suggestive of panic, but his whole appearance was that of one who was afraid. Caleb remembered his conversation with old Levi Sticker, too, and called to mind what he had said to him. It was true the dweller in the deserted farm cottage was mentally deficient; nevertheless, Joshua Besowsa's behaviour threw a sinister light upon what old Levi had told him.

“Am I to understand, then,” and Caleb spoke slowly, “that you disclaim all knowledge of my father, Caleb Besowsa?”

“Of course I do. I never saw him, never heard of him until now. Now remember, young man, I don't want to be hard on you, but the law is very hard on blackmailers and——”

“In what way have I tried to blackmail you?” interrupted Caleb.

“You said I had over a hundred pounds of your money.”

“Haven't you?”

“Of course not! The very thought of it is madness.”

“You persist in saying that?”

“Naturally I persist. Why are you looking at me like that? Leave the house, I tell you! Leave the house at once, you beggar, you thief, you blackmailer!”

“All right,” replied Caleb quietly. “I will leave it, but I'll go straight to the police station, where I shall obtain the name of the nearest magistrate who will give me a warrant for your arrest.”

"A warrant for my arrest! Why, in heaven's name?"

"Because I wish to bring you face to face with Mr. James Yelland of Polgooth. It is true you had no beard when you went to see him immediately after my father died, but no doubt he will recognize you; and I shall want you to confront the manager of the County Bank where that money was placed."

Evidently Joshua Besowsa was thinking quickly. His eyes flashed with a new light, and he seemed to be wondering what to do. "Look here," he said hastily, and his voice was tremulous with excitement, "supposing I admit that I am your father's brother; supposing you were not to be found at the time your father's affairs were cleared up and I made arrangements according to your father's will! Supposing I admit that?"

"You have admitted it," declared Caleb quickly. "Just now you denied all knowledge of my father, while now you practically admit that you knew everything my father had done."

"I said supposing I did admit it, and supposing I didn't want to be bothered about such a trifling sum, and were to give it to you. What then?"

"Yes, what then?" asked Caleb, who was startled by the change in the man's demeanour.

"Mind, I don't admit it," went on the other cunningly, "but rather than be pestered by such as you I might be led to do foolish things."

"Are you making me an offer?" asked Caleb.

"Supposing I am," cried the other eagerly. "Would you sign a paper declaring that I am rid of all obligations to you, and that you have no further claim on me?"

Caleb was silent at this; his mind was busily at work trying to understand what the other meant.

"Mind, you have no claim on me at all, please understand that; but suppose that, in order to get rid of you, I were to give you a hundred pounds, would you sign a paper to the effect that I had fulfilled all my obligations to you?"

"Let me see the paper that I should have to sign," replied Caleb.

"Ah, yes," and the other spoke eagerly. "I'll write it

here and now." He went to a writing-desk as he spoke and seized a pen, but not a word did he set down. "No," he said after a long silence, "I will not do it."

"I thought you wouldn't," replied Caleb with a laugh. "Why?"

"Because you would have to admit certain obligations to me. More than that, you would have to use your own name. Don't you think, Uncle Joshua, that it would be best for you to be honest with me?"

"What do you want?" exclaimed the older man presently.

Caleb had been thinking hard during the whole conversation. When he had started for Porthskipton that morning two thoughts were uppermost in his mind. First of all he was anxious to obtain the money which he believed to be rightfully his. But, more than that, he was eager to know what his uncle could tell him concerning his father's boyhood. Perhaps, too, he might learn something concerning his mother. He wanted to know who she was, and whether any of her relations were living. Up to the time he had left Spring Farm he had regarded himself simply as "drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat." He knew, too, that he had been looked upon as such up to the time of his father's death, but since he had seen Rosalind Luzmore and had taken his mad vow concerning her, his life had been different. It was true that before he had gone to Luzmore Hall on that fateful day, he had had dreams and hopes which removed him from being an ordinary farm-servant, but directly he had seen Rosalind and had made his vow, hopes and ambitions stirred within him which were unknown to him before. Thus when James Yelland had told him about his mother, new and unthought-of possibilities became possible.

He had asked himself again and again how he could, even although he became rich, ever persuade Rosalind to become his wife. He knew the pride of the Luzmores; knew the position they held in the county. How then could he scale the mountains of difficulty which stood in his way before his dreams could be realized?

But if his mother had been a lady born, and if, as his

father had confessed to Yelland, she bore a name second to none in the county——

“Uncle Joshua,” he said aloud, “for you are my Uncle Joshua. Your name is not Beziza at all, it is Besowsa. What is more, that old woman who showed me in here knows it. What your reason is for calling yourself Beziza and posing in Porthskipton as a foreigner I don't know; you are Joshua Besowsa and you lived up to four years ago at Pentewan in the parish of Week St. Peter.”

“Don't speak so loud!” the other exclaimed in a hoarse whisper. “For God's sake don't speak so loud!”

“Why not?” retorted Caleb.

“Because—— Oh, go away! Do go away! Look here, if you go away without saying a word of what's taken place here, I'll give you the hundred pounds which you say is yours. Yes, a whole hundred pounds. Think of it! Not a cheque, or anything of that sort, but a hundred pounds in new Bank of England notes.”

Caleb looked at his uncle as he spoke. Up to now his mind had been too much in a state of wonderment to realize the kind of man he was. More than that, he had been so excited that he had not been able to see beyond what appeared on the surface. But now his eyes were opened, and he saw this man as he really was; saw that he was a little man with a very limited intelligence and slender education—— But he was cunning, cunning as the devil; a man who would descend to all sorts of mean tricks to get what he wanted, and who fancied himself clever while he acted the fool.

But there was more than that. It was not for nothing that he had left Week St. Peter and come to Porthskipton under an assumed name. He had had a purpose in sending old Levi Sticker to the lonely northern coast of the county. There was something at the back of it all which he must find out.

“Good afternoon, Uncle Joshua,” he said suddenly. “I'll be going now.”

“Where are you going?”

“I'm going to my father's old home at Week St. Peter; I'm going to visit the man who took Pentewan Farm,

and I am going to find out all I can about my father—and you.”

“Why, you fool, there is nothing to find out!”

“Isn't there? Anyhow, I am going to find out all there is to know. After that, I am going to bring Mr. James Yelland of Polgooth, and the manager of the bank where that money was put, to meet you here. You see, I've nothing to hide,” he added significantly.

“Don't do that! For God's sake don't do that!” His voice was hoarse as he spoke, and blank terror was on his face.

“Why not?”

“Because, because—— You'll find out nothing that way.” Then he leered at Caleb with a cunning look in his eyes. “Look here, Caleb,” he said, “I believe you are my brother's boy. When you came first I thought you came cadging, and I didn't believe you; but now I can see that you are a Besowsa. You've got the Besowsas' eyes, the Besowsas' features. You are a good-looking chap, too, and you are clever; cleverer than ever I was. Oh yes, I admit that, and I'll admit you found me out, too. My name is not Beziza. I'm a Besowsa just as you are. But, wait a minute, my boy. I don't want it to be known here who I am. It has nothing to do with you, but I had a reason for changing my name.”

“What reason?” asked Caleb, looking steadily at his uncle.

“Never mind that. I'll take my solemn oath that it had nothing to do with you. You'll bear that in mind, won't you? It had nothing to do with you. If it had, I would tell you so plainly. Now that I've seen you I've taken a real liking to you. What wonder? We are Besowsas, we are. The same blood runs in our veins, and we came of the same stock. Of course, I thought you were dead, or you would have claimed that hundred pounds, and I never meant to keep it, Caleb, as true as I'm living, I never meant to keep it. I said to myself when I took it out of that bank where it had been lying for three years and earning interest, I said: 'If ever I find Caleb's boy, he shall have it, however long it is.' But don't go back to Week St. Peter,

my boy! You will lose everything if you do, everything; and the reason I left there and came here under another name has nothing to do with you, I'll take my Bible oath on that."

Caleb listened to this long harangue without uttering a word. Nevertheless, he was watching his uncle closely, and weighing every word he uttered. Suspicions were forming quickly in his mind, too; suspicions which had been altogether strange to him. Why was Joshua Besowsa so anxious that he should not go to Week St. Peter? What was the reason of this sudden change in his uncle's behaviour?

"You don't wish me to go to Week St. Peter, then?" he asked at length.

"It would be only waste of time, and—— You see, Caleb—— Yes, I'll tell you! Mind, I didn't mean to, but now I see what you are like I'll tell you everything. Just before my father died he made over Pentewan Farm to me. 'Joshua, my son,' he said, 'you have been a good boy to me and you shall have everything. All the same, things are not as well as you think. There's a flaw in the title deeds of Pentewan.' There is, too. I took it to Lawyer Skinner and he told me there was, but he said that if it wasn't talked about it wouldn't matter. Well, four years ago I sold the farm to Billy Polkinhorne. It sold very well, too."

"And did you tell him there was a flaw in the title deeds?" asked Caleb.

The other laughed cunningly. "That's it, my boy, I never said a word about it. I got Polkinhorne to accept Skinner as the lawyer to do the business, and I persuaded Skinner not to let on to Polkinhorne about the flaw. But Polkinhorne found out. That's why I changed my name, my boy, and that's why I am anxious that he shouldn't know where I am gone."

Caleb did not utter a word while the other made his explanation, but he knew that every word of it was a lie. It was only a clumsy excuse conjured up on the spur of the moment in order to keep him away from his father's old home.

"I'm nervous about it," went on Joshua, "and I wouldn't for anything for anyone to go there asking questions about me."

"Did you know my mother?" asked Caleb suddenly.

"Your mother?" There was no mistaking the tone of terror in which the two words were spoken, or the look of blank panic which came into Joshua Besowsa's eyes.

"Yes, my mother. Did you know her? Was she a native of Week St. Peter?"

The answer was a long time in coming, and Caleb could not help noticing that the other seemed to be trying to swallow something, but could not do so because his throat was parched. "I am sorry you asked that," he replied at length.

"Why are you sorry?"

"I was hoping you wouldn't say a word about it; I was really. I can see you are a proud chap, Caleb, and you wouldn't like it known that there was a stain upon your birth, would you? We Besowsas have never claimed to be gentle-folks, but we were always respectable. That is why we were nearly all broken-hearted when your father picked up with your mother."

"What was wrong with my mother?" and Caleb's voice was hoarse with pain.

"She—she wasn't any better than she ought to be. Don't ask me anything more about it, Caleb my boy! I don't want to pain you."

"Do you mean to say that there was anything wrong with her character?"

"I don't want to say anything more about it, and, as I said, I am sorry you asked me."

"But I want to know. What was her name before my father married her?"

"She hadn't got a name." The man spoke as if the words were dragged out of him in spite of himself, and Caleb saw that his lips were twitching as though he were in a state of panic. "I am only telling you this for your own peace of mind, Caleb," went on the other. "I want to save you from pain and shame. Not only was she no better than she ought to be, but she was a come-by-chance

maid. I pleaded with your father, and my father pleaded with him, but he wouldn't listen; he was simply crazy. Don't look at me like that, my boy. I couldn't help it, neither could I help my father disowning him. But there it was. He took the maid away from Week St. Peter and he never came back again. I shouldn't have known where he had gone if I hadn't seen it in the *West Briton*."

"Seen what in the *West Briton*?"

"That advertisement about you. The advertisement which that man Yelland put in just after the sale of your father's goods."

Caleb did not speak for more than a minute, but it was evident that he was thinking hard. There was a strange glitter in his eyes, too, while a close observer would have seen that he was trembling from head to foot. "I think I will be going now," he said at length.

"Going? Where are you going, my boy?"

"I don't know yet."

"But not before you have had some tea? I shouldn't like it to be said that I was inhospitable to my own nephew. You will stay to tea, won't you?"

"No, thank you," replied Caleb. "Good-bye."

"No, don't go away like that. I want to know more about you."

"Why should you want to know more about me?"

"Because—— You see, I want to know where you live. I must arrange for that money to be paid to you. You are sure you won't have it now?"

"No," replied Caleb, "I won't have it now," and his thoughts seemed to be a long way off.

"I'll tell you," and there was eagerness in Joshua Besowsa's voice. "I'll meet you—yes, I'll meet you the day after to-morrow at twelve o'clock at the County Bank, Polgooth. Then the manager of the bank shall pay over to you whatever is owing, and you can give me a full discharge of all my obligations. That's it! That's it!"

Caleb did not reply immediately, his mind still seemed to be a long way off. Then he said slowly: "The day after to-morrow, at twelve o'clock, at Polgooth County Bank. Yes, I'll meet you there."

“That’s right. You can see how fair and square I am with you, Caleb, can’t you? I’ve always wanted to do right by you, always. You will remember that, won’t you? And you will not go to Week St. Peter and tell Polkinhorne where I live, will you? For heaven’s sake, don’t do that, Caleb! You would do me a bad turn if you did, and you don’t want to do that. ‘Let sleeping dogs lie’ is always my motto.”

Caleb kept his eyes steadily on his uncle’s face while he was speaking. A hundred questions flashed through his mind, but he did not ask one of them. “The day after to-morrow at twelve o’clock, then?” he said as he moved towards the door.

“Have a cup of tea before you go? Matilda can get it in five minutes. Do, my boy! I’ve nothing but kindness in my heart towards you. Remember that, won’t you?”

But Caleb spoke no further word, and a minute later he had left his uncle’s house and was walking towards the churchyard, the gate of which was wide open.

Joshua Besowsa stood at the window and watched him. “I think I’ve managed him,” he muttered, and there was a cunning look in his eyes. “He doesn’t suspect anything. How can he? As for that bit of money—— Well, I shall be rid of him! But who would have thought he would turn up like this?—and how did he find out where I lived?”

CHAPTER X

CALEB found his way into Porthskipton church, and, after looking aimlessly around him, walked towards the altar screen. Then, seating himself behind a pillar, he gave himself up to thought.

He sat there for more than an hour. The silence of the old church helped him. At first his thoughts were confused, and his mind a maddening maze; presently, however, he became calm, and he thought he saw a meaning in all that had been said.

But he was not sure, and he was afraid to build hopes upon vague conjectures. He believed he had judged his uncle's character correctly. The man was selfish to the heart's core, and as cunning as the devil. Nevertheless, his intelligence was limited, and he would judge others according to his own standards. But he must be careful, and not allow his judgment to be warped by his desires. . . .

The silence of the church became oppressive, and a feeling like fear came into his heart. Then his eyes turned towards the East window and his face lit up with a new light. "It's Rosalind," he whispered to himself. "Rosalind! Yes, I'll have her; nothing shall stand in the way of my having her!"

His words were called forth by the picture he saw on the window. He didn't know at all what it meant, neither did he care, but the face in the window reminded him of the girl he loved. It was the face of the Virgin Mary, and the artist, whoever he might be, had copied it from a famous painting he had seen in Florence. The Virgin had just received the news from Heaven that she was to become the mother of Our Lord, and a look of Holy joy shone from her eyes. This the artist had tried to reproduce in the picture.

To an ordinary observer it bore no resemblance to the face of Rosalind Luzmore, but Caleb, excited as he was by the mad schemes which filled his mind, saw Rosalind everywhere, and his heart was in a tumult as he thought of her.

"Yes, I'll go at once," he said aloud as he made his way out of the church.

He looked neither to the right nor to the left as he walked down the churchyard path, otherwise he might have seen that Joshua Besowsa was watching him, and following him, as he made his way into the village. A motor-bus was standing close by the village inn and was evidently on the point of starting. "Where are you going?" he asked the conductor.

"Buryan Cove, Porthbean Cliffs, Carnwinnick Halt, Melendor Downs and then on to Sticker High Lanes."

Caleb did not wait to hear the man finish the list he had got off by heart. He made his way into the front part of the 'bus evidently pleased by the fact that he would be taken to Carnwinnick Halt.

Arrived there he was told that there would be no train for nearly an hour, but he did not trouble. Sitting in the little station he industriously examined a map he had brought with him, busily making notes all the time.

Presently the train for which he waited arrived, and it was quite dark when he reached a little town four miles from Week St. Peter. Here he obtained supper and a bed, but although the landlord of the inn where he stayed seemed more than willing to enter into conversation with him, Caleb was very silent and reserved.

On the following morning he left the inn early, and before ten o'clock had arrived at the little village of Week St. Peter.

Caleb looked around him with peculiar interest. He had never been in this part of the county before, and the scene on which he gazed was utterly different from those with which he had been associated all his life. It was a purely agricultural district, and, as far as could be judged, the land was rich and loamy. No mines or similar industries were anywhere to be seen, and a feeling of restfulness was everywhere to be felt.

But it was not of this that Caleb was thinking. As he looked upon the old grey church tower and the quaint homely cottages which clustered around it, he realized that near here his father had been born and reared. It was from somewhere in this neighbourhood, too, that he had taken his young wife to Besowsa Farm, in the parish of Polgooth, more than twenty years before.

Caleb had few pleasant memories of his father. During the last years of his life he had, as we have said, treated him like a dog. He remembered, too, that after his mother had died his father was nearly always drunk, and that he had been known throughout the whole of the parish of Polgooth as "drunken old Caleb Besowsa." In spite of this, however, Caleb had kindly thoughts about him. There were times, even since his mother's death,

when he had regarded him almost with pride. In a way he could not understand he was different from other men in his position. He spoke correctly and sometimes acted as though he had been accustomed to refinements unknown to the inhabitants of Polgooth. And that was not all. It was true that memories of the days when his mother was alive had become dim to him, but he could not help recalling a happy childhood, when he had thought not only of his mother, but of his father, almost with tenderness.

Old Caleb Besowsa had never told his son anything about his own boyhood's days. His early life, as far as little Caleb was concerned, was a blank, and it was not until his talk with James Yelland, the rate collector, that his mind seriously fastened on the thought that one of his parents, at least, had been tenderly reared.

And now he was in the district where, he believed, his parents first saw the light. The fact was still unreal to him, in spite of his conversation with Joshua Besowsa the day before; but it came to him as he stood alone in the quiet parish church town that he was on the brink of discoveries. What those discoveries might be he did not, of course, know; but he had a feeling that they would somehow bring him nearer to Rosalind.

For it was Rosalind who filled his horizon. It was with Rosalind in his mind that he had talked with Bunny Joe days before; it was with Rosalind in his mind that he had gone out on the Bodmin Moors excited beyond measure at the thought of finding wealth there, and it was still Rosalind who caused him to go to the only home he had ever known in order to find means whereby he could possess her.

Of course it was madness. He had realized that from the first moment he had seen her. Nevertheless, his heart had become a flame of fire the moment her eyes had flashed into his, and he had vowed that, no matter what difficulties might stand in the way, this proud patrician girl should be his wife.

Seeing an old man hobbling along the village lane by the aid of a stick, Caleb hailed him. "This is Week

St. Peter's village, I suppose?" he said as he came up to him.

"I 'spose 'tis," was the answer.

"Why, is there any doubt about it?"

"Of course there ed'n, although some people d'say it had a different name at one time. Are you a stranger here?"

Let me remark in passing that the true Cornishman seldom gives a categorical reply to a definite question. What there is in the Cornishman's character that accounts for this I do not pretend to know, but he generally speaks in a tentative and undecided way. As a consequence strangers who come to Cornwall are constantly met with such sayings as: "Perhaps 'tis, perhaps ted'n," "I shouldn't wonder," and "As the old men used to say."

"Have you lived here long?" asked Caleb.

The old man looked at him steadily before replying. "Before Jimmy Truscott's shop was built," he said at length.

"And when was that built?"

"Let me see now, that must a' bin built just afore Passon Childs came to the Rectory, I d'reckon."

"It's a pretty village," ventured Caleb.

"Strangers d'often say so. Who might you be, and what might 'ee be called?" For if the Cornishman is in the habit of giving tentative replies, his questions do not lack directness.

"I was wondering," replied Caleb, "if you could tell me where Pentewan Farm is."

"You d'mean Billy Polkinhorne's place?"

"Yes, I think the man is called Billy Polkinhorne. Has he been there long?"

"I shouldn't wonder if 'ee ain't bin there four or five years," was the reply. "My memory is gettin' awful bad, but Susan Keam up at the Post Office will know exactly."

"Where is it, and how far is it away?"

"If you d'go down that lane there about half a mile you will see it in front of 'ee."

"Is it a big farm?"

"I don't know exactly how big it is, but 'tis a braa size place. It may be a hundred acres or may be two. I dunnow. I don't think you've told me what your name is, or what you wanted to know for," added the old man as he looked at Caleb scrutinizingly. "I be called Siah Skidgemoor. Look 'ere, maaster," and he took a step nearer to Caleb, "I shouldn't wonder if Billy Polkinhorne ed'n up 'ere during the forenoon. I 'eerd'n tell John Yelland, the blacksmith, that his plough-shire wanted layin', and that 'ee might be up 'ere this mornin'."

Caleb, without waiting any longer, made his way in the direction Siah Skidgemoor had indicated, who watched him till he was out of sight.

"'Ee ded'n tell me what 'ee was called after all," the old man reflected; "but I'll find out. If 'ee's goin' to Pentewan 'ee'll see Billy Polkinhorne, and Billy Polkinhorne will be sure to tell John Yelland 'bout'n. I'll go over and speak to John Yelland right away."

Caleb, not realizing the interest he had aroused in Siah Skidgemoor's mind, walked rapidly along the road until he came to the spot which his informant had indicated; there he saw in the near distance a large and comfortable-looking farmstead surrounded by what looked like rich and undulating land. Caleb looked at it long and attentively. He could not see the whole of the dwelling-house, but it seemed to him larger than the farm-houses which had met his gaze during his journey to Week St. Peter. Indeed, it looked more like a manor-house than a farm-house, while the buildings in the near distance suggested an important demesne.

A feeling of pride filled Caleb's heart as he looked. Could it be that his father had been born and reared in that place? If so——

"Is that Pentewan?" he asked of a little girl who was making her way to the village.

"Yes, sir."

"Does it belong to a man called Polkinhorne?"

"Yes, sir."

A minute later Caleb, with a fast-beating heart, was making his way up the farm lane which led to Pentewan.

Arrived at the farmyard he saw a middle-aged man coming out of one of the buildings. "Are you Mr. Polkinhorne?" he asked.

"My name is Polkinhorne," was the reply, and then he looked at Caleb questioningly as if wondering what his business might be.

"Are you the owner of this place?"

The man continued to look at Caleb scrutinizingly as if to appraise his social status. Then looking at his own well-worn and somewhat shabby attire he said apologetically: "Perhaps you be thinkin' of Squire Polkinhorne who owns Trevear, sir."

Again Caleb's heart swelled with pride. The man had called him "sir," and had evidently associated him with some Squire who lived in the neighbourhood. "I am informed that this is Pentewan," he said. "Am I right?"

"Yes, this is Pentewan," and again he looked at Caleb as if demanding his business.

"I am interested in a family called Besowsa," and he scarcely recognized his own voice as the last word passed his lips. "Joshua Besowsa. He used to live here, didn't he?"

The farmer laughed raucously, and a look of interest came into his eyes. "Do you know Josh Besowsa?" he asked. "Do you know where he d'live now?"

Caleb shook his head. "I am interested in him," he evaded, "and I was wondering if you could tell me anything about him."

"Tell you anything about Josh Besowsa!" and again the farmer laughed loudly.

"Why, isn't he a respectable man?"

"Respectable!" and the farmer emphasized the word. "Look 'ere, maaster, what do 'ee want to knaw about Josh?"

"He used to own this place, didn't he?"

"Well, what if he did?"

"Did you have any difficulty with him when you bought it?"

"Difficulty?" and the farmer laughed again. "You said you didn't knaw anything about Josh, didn't 'ee?"

If you did you would know what sort of a bargain I was able to make."

"Why, wasn't he straight?"

"Straight? Old Josh straight? Why, 'ee couldn't do a straight thing if 'ee tried!"

"What sort of a name did he have in the neighbourhood?"

"Name? Look 'ere, maaster, who are you, and what do you want to know for?"

"I am interested in the title deeds of the place," replied Caleb, "and I was wondering if you could give me some information."

"Title deeds! The title deeds are all right."

"Are you sure of that?" Caleb remembered what Joshua Besowsa had told him the day before, and he wanted to be sure whether his own suspicions were correct.

"Sure of it? Of course I be. Do you think I would buy anything from Josh Besowsa without making certain. I had my own lawyer, maaster, Mr. William Trebilcock from Plymouth, and I had everything examined to the minutest detail before I paid a penny. Of course, there were no doubts about it, Pentewan had belonged to the Besowsa family for generations, but knowin' what a crooked old beggar Josh was, I determined to make certain of everything."

"Was he a rich man?" asked Caleb.

"Rich?" replied Polkinhorne. "If you'd seen'n when 'ee lived 'ere years ago you would 'ave said 'ee was as poor as a coot. But 'ee was always a mystery, always; and as hard as iron. And you never heard a man grumble so; for that matter, lots of people used to call him 'grumblin' Josh.' Nothin' was ever right with him. It was always too wet or too dry, too hot or too cold; a miserabler man never lived."

"Where does he live now?"

"Nobody d'know," laughed the farmer, "and 'ee never told anybody where 'ee was goin' when 'ee left 'ere. Some say 'ee had somethin' on his mind."

"Something on his mind! What do you mean?"

Again the farmer looked at his interlocutor scrutinizingly. "You bean't no friend of Josh, be 'ee?" he asked.

Again Caleb shook his head. "I know practically nothing about him," he said.

"Then I'll tell 'ee, maaster. Josh Besowsa was a miser, that's what 'ee was, and as crooked as a dog's hind leg. Nearly everyone who had any dealings with him 'ave repented of it."

"Was he a clever man?"

"Clever? No, 'ee wasn't clever. In a way 'ee was always makin' a fool of himself, and yet a more cunnin' man never breathed, and nobody had a good word to say for him."

"Pentewan seems a nice place," Caleb ventured. "As it had been in his family for several generations it was a wonder he was led to sell it."

"'Ee was afraid, that's what I believe," the farmer informed him.

"Afraid of what?"

"I don't know, nor d'anyone else know. Although it is my own, so to speak, Pentewan is the best farm for miles around, and, as I said just now, it had belonged to the Besowsas for several generations. I would like to 'ave bought it years before I did, and I asked Josh, seein' 'ee was always grumblin', whether 'ee would sell it, but 'ee wouldn't. 'It has been in the Besowsa family for generations,' he said, 'and it will remain there.' Then one day 'ee came to me. 'Billy,' 'ee said, 'I be gettin' old and I am tired of farmin'; you 'ave often said you would like to 'ave Pentewan; well, I'll sell it to 'ee if you like.'"

"And you bought it?"

"After weeks of 'agglin' I did. You wouldn't believe the job I had with'n. First there was one difficulty and then another, but we settled it up at length; and then somethin' queer 'appened."

"Something queer?"

"Well, in a way 'twas queer," and Polkinhorne laughed again. "Directly 'ee got his money 'ee cleared out of the neighbourhood without tellin' anybody where 'ee was going. Since then I've never 'eerd anythin' about'n. 'Ee

may be dead or 'ee may be alive, I dunnaw. Matilda Crowle, his old housekeeper, left at the same time, and nobody has ever 'eerd a word about her either. As for old Levi Sticker, 'ee's a mystery too."

"Levi Sticker?" repeated Caleb questioningly.

"Aw ess, I didn't tell 'ee about him. Levi Sticker lived 'ere when old Caleb, that Josh's father, was alive. Levi was always a button short, but 'ee'd lived 'ere ever since 'ee was a boy, and 'ee left just before Josh did. All the same, 'ee didn't go with Josh."

"How do you know?"

"'Cos a long time afterwards 'ee came 'ere late one night and asked me to tell him if I knew where Josh was. Of course, I asked him a lot of questions about himself, but 'ee would tell me nothin'. But it's years now since I seed'n."

"And you say you found the title deeds all right?"

"Yes, they were as sound as a bell; Mr. Trebilcock saw to that. Still, there was somethin' funny about it."

"How?—funny?"

"Well, you see, old Caleb, that's Josh's father, died without makin' a will, and, that bein' the case, Pentewan should 'ave come to the eldest son and not to Josh."

"Eldest son?" repeated Caleb.

"Yes, eldest son. You see, Josh had an elder brother called Caleb, after his father, and I d'say that Pentewan, accordin' to the law, should 'ave gone to him; but it didn't."

"How was that?"

"'Cos just before Josh sold me the farm, Caleb, that's Josh's brother, was killed, so Josh grabbed the lot."

The young man made no sign, except that a look of increased eagerness came into his eyes, and his voice became husky. "How could he do that," he asked, "without consulting the elder brother's family?"

"That's where the funny part of it comes in," laughed Polkinhorne. "It was generally believed that the eldest son, Caleb, got married and had a boy of his own, but when inquiries were made, this boy had left Polgooth, where Caleb had gone to live, and no trace of him could

be found. And that wasn't all either," added the farmer significantly.

"Why, what was there beside?"

"No proofs were forthcoming, or, at any rate, no proper proofs, that Josh's brother, Caleb, had been properly married. Perhaps I'm wrong though! There were records up in London that he had been married, but no one knew who the woman was. Anyhow, as this boy couldn't be found, Josh claimed the right to sell Pentewan, and Mr. Trebilcock, after goin' into the matter, said it was all right."

Caleb managed to remain outwardly calm. Nevertheless, his every nerve was in tension, and every faculty of his being aroused to life. He thought he saw a reason now why Joshua Besowsa had, on selling Pentewan, left the neighbourhood and hidden himself at Porthskipton under another name. This uncle of his had not only sought to rob him of the few pounds which remained after the sale of his father's goods, but he had robbed him of his share in Pentewan Farm. He remembered how eager his uncle was that he should sign a paper declaring that on receipt of the hundred-odd pounds all liabilities were discharged.

"Forgive me asking, Mr. Polkinhorne," Caleb said presently, "but how much did you pay for Pentewan?"

"I paid six thousand, nine hundred and seventy-three pounds," replied Polkinhorne, "and you should 'ave seed how the old miser stuck out for the odd pounds. More than once I almost made up my mind to tell him to go to the devil, where he belonged. And I would, too, only I knew there were others who would be glad to buy the farm, and I wanted it badly."

Yes, what he had just learnt would explain everything. He remembered the look on the man's face when he called him Uncle Joshua; remembered the expression of greed in his eyes when he had asked him, Caleb, if he would sign a paper declaring that for a hundred pounds he, Joshua, would be free from any further obligations. He felt sure that this was the reason why his uncle had tried

to dissuade him from going to Week St. Peter. He was afraid of the truth coming to light.

"Did you know Caleb Besowsa?" he asked presently.

"Of course I did. I knawed old Caleb, the father, and I knawed Caleb the son."

"What sort of a man was Caleb, the son?"

The farmer looked at the young man questioningly. He was evidently wondering why all these questions should be put to him. "Why do you want to know?" he asked.

"I have instructions to find out," was Caleb's reply.

"I am acting on behalf of Caleb Besowsa's son."

"He's alive, then?"

Caleb could not help smiling. "Yes, he's alive," he replied; "and if what you say is true he should have an interest in this place. But you say you knew Joshua's brother. What kind of a man was he?"

"Altogether different from Josh," was Farmer Polkinhorne's reply. "A happy-go-lucky, daredevil sort of a fellow; and yet in a way 'ee wasn't. In a way 'ee was a gentleman, open-handed and free; but 'ee was a rollin' stone."

"Rolling stone? What do you mean?"

"'Ee was constantly leavin' Week St. Peter and goin' away for months at a time. I don't know much about it, but it was said that 'ee nearly broke his father's heart. I suppose 'ee was the apple of the old man's eye, and yet 'ee wouldn't fall in with his wishes. I don't know if there is any truth in it or not, but it is said that old Caleb wanted his eldest son to marry Kezia Tamblin, who would 'ave brought him five thousand pounds as a weddin' dowry. But 'ee would 'ave nothin' to say to her. Instead 'ee went and married this unknown maid from whom 'ee never got a penny."

"What unknown maid?" asked Caleb, bearing in mind what James Yelland had told him. "Did no one know who she was?"

"There were all sorts of stories about her," replied Polkinhorne, "but whether there was any truth in them, I don't know. Some say she came from up the country,

Somersetshire or somewhere around there, while others d'say that 'ee married a Miss Lanivet of Lanivet, a mansion about twenty miles from 'ere ; but no one knows for certain. From what I am told they were married in a registry office, and that the maiden name of his wife was given as Mary Brown."

"Then why is there a mystery about her?"

"'Cos it is said that the housekeeper of Lanivet confessed on her dyin' bed that her young mistress, Mary Lanivet, married a farmer called Caleb Besowsa of Week St. Peter ; that she went away with him, and that her father disowned her as a consequence."

"Lanivet!" repeated Caleb. "There's a place called Lanivet somewhere near Bodmin."

"That isn't the place," replied the farmer ; "it's nearer 'ere than that. However, I don't know any particulars for sure ; all I do know is that Josh's brother, Caleb, was a wild, gay spark. Some say 'ee drank 'ard before 'ee got married, but I don't know the truth of that. Anyhow, it is certain that 'ee did get married and took a farm near Polgooth, and that his wife died there."

When Caleb left Farmer Polkinhorne he realized that while he had not obtained definite knowledge in the direction he desired, his way seemed plainer. He had been wondering in what way he should meet his Uncle Joshua at the County Bank, Polgooth, on the following morning. Now, however, he was able to formulate plans entirely different from those which had appealed to him on the previous day. He had never dreamt that the man who had changed his name and buried himself in the parish of Porthskipton had tried to cheat him out of his share in his father's old home. Now, however, he felt sure that this was the case.

But that was not all. What Polkinhorne had been able to tell him about his father excited him beyond measure. It is true it was not much, but it was enough to give him some data upon which to go. Polkinhorne's news, vague as it was, seemed to support that which James Yelland had told him ; and even if it contained only a modicum of truth, there was enough to cause his imagination to soar,

and he might have good grounds to hope concerning the dearest dreams of his life.

When he had first visited the farm-house where he had been born and reared it seemed to him that nothing was possible. How could he, even although his dreams of finding wealth on the bare Bodmin Moors came true, aspire to the hand of Rosalind? How could he, Caleb Besowsa, a farm-servant, ignorant and inexperienced, win the proud Rosalind, only daughter of Sir John Luzmore, as his wife?

But if there were any truth in what he had heard. . . .

When he had again reached the spot from which he had first seen Pentewan he stopped and gazed long and steadily. Yes, it was utterly different from the little farm of Besowsa, Polgooth. Of course, it could not in any way be described as a mansion or the home of a great family, but it was a comfortable homestead. It had been in his family for generations; that, at least, was something. He, Caleb, had sprung from yeoman stock.

Of course, it was snobbery, but perhaps it was natural. Years before he had writhed with pain when he had heard himself described as drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat, and he had longed with a great longing to be something different. Pride had stirred in his heart, vague hopes had appealed to him, and when at length his heart had caught fire at the sight of a proud maid who seemed utterly beyond his reach, he had made a great vow. A mad, impossible vow perhaps, but still, it had somehow helped to satisfy the dormant feelings that were stirring in his bosom.

Of course, he had said nothing to Polkinhorne as to who he was, or of the hopes that surged in his heart. To the farmer he was simply a stranger asking questions. Polkinhorne, doubtless, wondered about him, but that he could not help. He must make the best use of the information he could gather, and act accordingly.

"Lanivet," he muttered to himself as he again neared the village of Week St. Peter. "Great God, if it's true! Anyhow, I will go and make inquiries."

An hour later, after having partaken of a simple lunch at the village inn, he made his way towards a junction

of roads where, he was told, a motor-bus would pass at three o'clock, and take him near the spot he wanted to reach.

CHAPTER XI

AS we have seen, Caleb was very ignorant. It was true that during the past four years he had amassed a great deal of book learning as well as an amount of practical knowledge on farming and mining; but concerning the ways of the world he knew little or nothing. How could he? Nevertheless, he possessed a good deal of what people in the North-country called "gumption" and which in Cornwall is known as "scoance." There were certain things which he instinctively knew to be right, and others which he felt just as strongly were wrong. His intuition told him that if he gave any hint concerning his secret hopes he would not only be laughed at, but he might frustrate the things he most longed for.

During his stay at Spring Farm Caleb had read but few novels. Books of the imagination had appealed to him but little; his desire was to know hard practical facts. But he had read some, and they had told him things which came to his aid now. For one thing, he had learnt that if one desired to obtain information about the important people of a district the best person to go to was the clergyman of the parish. He knew, too, that the rector of the village church, which stood some two miles away from Spring Farm, was a friend of Rosalind's father. It might be, therefore, that the rector of Lanivet could give him some information about the Lanivets of Lanivet.

When the motor-bus by which Caleb had travelled came to a stop at a little village which he was informed was called Lanivet, however, he was told that there was no parish of that name.

"This," the village grocer's wife told him, "is on the very edge of the parish, and I don't know the passon."

"What is the name of this parish, then?" asked Caleb.

"Well, as you may say," replied the woman, "Lanivet is in three parishes. One is called St. Bosiny, the other St. Miriam and the other St. Edison; but we be all Wesleyans down 'ere and don't go to no church t'oall."

"This is the village of Lanivet, then?" he ventured.

"That's ev it, maaster."

"But isn't there a big house called Lanivet in the neighbourhood?"

"Of course there is. It's about three mile over that way," and the woman pointed westward.

"And what parish does it belong to?"

"I can't say for certain, but I should think it d'belong to St. Bosiny," was the woman's reply, "'cos I d'know that St. Bosiny Church d'lie over there."

With this knowledge Caleb had to content himself, for the woman could tell him no more, but he imagined that it would be sufficient for his purpose, and he accordingly made his way in the direction the woman had indicated. Arrived there he discovered that St. Bosiny consisted only of six small houses, a church, and the rectory, the latter being a large house near to the church.

"What is the name of the rector?" he asked one of the cottagers.

"Aw, you d'mean Passon Sercombe. Poor man! 'Ee's very old, 'ee is; the fact of the matter es, maaster, 'ee's too old for his job. 'Ee've been 'ere more than sixty years, and 'ee's over eighty now. Of course, 'ee's a great gentleman, but as I d'say, 'ee's too old for his job."

"Do you mean to say he doesn't preach?"

"Aw, ess, 'ee d'preach, if you can call it preachin'; and I'll say this for'n, too, 'ee d'never miss a service. Come to that 'ee's a wonderful peart; 'ee can't see very well, but 'ee d'know the service off by heart, every word of it."

Caleb would have liked to have asked other questions, but he was afraid. Besides, on the whole he had a feeling of satisfaction that the rector was an old man. Perhaps he might be willing to answer any questions he might ask without wanting to know the reasons for his own curiosity.

Accordingly he found his way to the rectory and was

quickly shown into the study. Here he was met by an old man, who, although he might be very old, was yet active, and possessed of all his faculties.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" asked Mr. Sercombe, as he looked steadily at his visitor.

"I was wondering if you could tell me anything about the Lanivets of Lanivet," replied Caleb. He was by no means sure of his ground, nor did he best know how to approach the subject so near to his heart.

Mr. Sercombe did not reply immediately, but looked steadily at his visitor as if trying to understand his purpose in coming. "What do you wish to know?" he asked.

"All there is to know," replied Caleb, who thought it best to make a bold plunge at the beginning of the interview.

Mr. Sercombe slowly took off the spectacles which he had been wearing, and replaced them by more powerful ones; evidently he wanted to inspect his interlocutor more closely. A look of puzzlement came into his eyes during his examination, and it might seem as though he were trying to understand more about his visitor before replying. Apparently, too, he was uncertain about him. Caleb, as we know, had left Besowsa Farm when he was only a lad of sixteen, and when he had reached Spring Farm he was ill-clad and almost starving. Since then he had for many reasons tried to improve himself, and had grown out of all recognition. Moreover, his thoughts and hopes especially during the last few weeks had left their marks upon him, and no one would have regarded him as an ordinary working farm-servant. Nevertheless, marks of his life on the farm were upon him. He spoke correctly, but evidently with an effort, and his lack of knowledge of the ways of the world were constantly to be seen. Mr. Sercombe doubtless saw all this and wondered why he should make such a request.

"All there is to know?" he repeated, and again he looked at the young man scrutinizingly.

"Lanivet House is in this parish, isn't it?" Caleb ventured. "Do you know Mr. Lanivet?"

"Naturally," replied the rector. "He is the Squire

of the parish, and as he is the owner of a great deal of land in the neighbourhood, he is a very important personage. Have you any reason for asking?"

"Yes," replied Caleb. "I have heard that he is the owner of a part of the Bodmin Moors, and as I know a man who is interested in some land on the Bodmin Moors, I was wondering whether I could get some information."

Caleb realized his clumsiness in approaching the subject he had in his mind, and was angry with himself that he was so maladroit. Mr. Sercombe, however, did not appear to notice this and answered him quite naturally.

"Yes, I have heard that Mr. Lanivet owns land on the Bodmin Moors," he admitted, "but I know nothing about it."

"I was wondering whom I could approach to obtain the information I want."

"Your best plan would be to go to his steward, I should imagine," replied the rector.

"Wouldn't it be best for me to go to the owner direct?"

Again Mr. Sercombe looked at his visitor intently. His wits had doubtless become dulled by age; nevertheless, the suspicion crossed his mind that the young man before him was not what he seemed to be.

"I think not," was his reply. "Mr. Lanivet is a great recluse and seldom sees visitors. Indeed"—he hesitated a few seconds as if he found a difficulty in speaking; then he went on as if in a burst of confidence: "I myself have scarcely spoken to him during the last twenty years. You see, he never comes to church, and he delegates all his business to his steward."

"Then if I went to see him——"

"I doubt if you'd gain admission to the house," interrupted Mr. Sercombe. "As I said, he is a great recluse, and I am told that he never sees visitors. For that matter, I have heard that he is seldom seen in the parish. You see," he went on, as if in explanation, "I am not as active as I used to be and know but little of what is going on in the district; but I do know that he never comes to church, and, from what I have heard, he is scarcely ever seen in the neighbourhood. In any case, I am the wrong

man to approach if you wish to know anything about Mr. Lanivet."

"But surely, sir, you as the rector of the parish in which he lives——"

"Yes, yes, I know," again broke in the old man, a little impatiently. "But as I told you, I know practically nothing about him. It is true he is the patron of the living, but he takes no interest in it. I have more than once written to him telling him about certain things that want doing to the church, but he has never deigned to reply. What answer I get comes through his steward, and as he is a lawyer who lives thirty miles away, it does not give much satisfaction."

"But surely," urged Caleb, "Mr. Lanivet must sometimes visit his tenants?"

The rector laughed incredulously. "Visit his tenants!" he repeated. "He might have no tenants for the interest he takes in them. As a matter of fact, I know that owing to the treatment Mr. Trewhella, the steward, has meted out to them, some of his tenants have tried to see him; but all in vain. He has refused to admit them into his house. I have heard it said, although of course I cannot speak with authority, that for months together he is never seen at Lanivet."

"Then he is not a popular landlord?"

"Popular landlord! You need scarcely ask that, need you? Here is he, one of the richest men in Cornwall, and receives many thousands a year by way of rent, and yet he refuses to see even those from whom his wealth comes. No, no, young sir; if you are interested in any land that belongs to him, you had better go to his steward, Mr. Trewhella, who lives at Bolivick."

"How old is Mr. Lanivet?" asked Caleb.

"Oh, he is comparatively a young man; not a day more than fifty, I should think."

"Is there a Mrs. Lanivet?" asked Caleb. "And has he a family?"

"No, he has no wife; she is dead," and the young man could not help noticing the changed look which had come into the rector's face.

"Has he a family?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I heard something about his having a daughter who had given him a great deal of trouble."

The rector shook his head. "I don't think we had better discuss that," was his reply.

Caleb felt his heart beating rapidly, and he wondered if there was any truth in the gossip which Polkinhorne had retailed to him that morning. "Why?" he asked eagerly.

"Because it is not a matter for gossip," replied the rector. Then, as though he were angry with himself for speaking, he went on: "I remember that he was once my friend, and I do not feel disposed to discuss things with which I am not concerned. Besides, it isn't true."

"What isn't true?" asked Caleb.

"What the gossip-mongers retailed. I know what was said! More than twenty years ago it was the talk of the whole countryside that his only daughter had married a worthless fellow, a low farmer fellow of some sort, and went away with him to live in another part of the county. But it isn't true; that, at least, I know for a fact. She may have disappointed her father and married a man of whom he didn't approve, but he was not a low farmer fellow; by birth and education he was her equal in every respect."

"She's dead, isn't she?" asked Caleb.

"Oh no, she's alive still. Mary Lanivet married a man who was a lawyer, and who took her away to Liverpool to live. I am told he has an extensive practice there, and is a man of considerable importance. She has several children, too."

Caleb's heart became like lead at this. Up to this point of the conversation he thought he might be getting nearer the secret which had surrounded his mother's girlhood, but now he knew it was not so.

"You say you know this to be true?" he asked after a long silence.

"Yes, at least I know that," replied Mr. Sercombe.

"Then isn't it a wonder that her father doesn't relent towards her, and——"

“Relent towards her!” broke in the old man savagely. “Relent towards her! Alec Lanivet doesn’t know the meaning of relenting!—he is a man of adamant. When he makes up his mind that a thing has to be done, it has to be done, and if anyone dares to oppose him, he never forgives, never! Mary Lanivet’s husband might become the Prime Minister of England, but still Lanivet would never forgive her for disobeying him. You see, he had selected a man that he wished her to marry, and because she didn’t obey his wishes, he disowned her, drove her from home. I suppose that she was as stubborn as he: anyhow, she married the man she had chosen, and went to Liverpool to live with him. He was the younger son of a Somersetshire Squire whom his father had articed to a lawyer, and—— Well, I hope she has been happy, and, as far as I can learn, she has been. As for Alec Lanivet, I believe he’s been in hell. His daughter was the apple of his eye; she, after his wife died, was the only thing he loved on earth. But she disobeyed him, and, although he suffered the torments of the damned, he wouldn’t relent. Oh, I know I have no business to be talking about this to a stranger, but somehow I can’t help myself. I tried my best to persuade him to forgive Mary, but in vain. For that matter it was worse than in vain. Up to that time we had been friends, but since then he has practically refused to speak to me.”

A silence fell between the two men. To Caleb, what the old rector had told him had been like a death-knell to his hopes. He, with the inexperience of youth, and carried away by his imaginings, had built all sorts of hopes upon what he should learn at the rectory. Therefore, the old rector’s words had been the end of all his fond hopes. As for the rector, he was angry with himself for talking to an absolute stranger about things with which he had no concern, and of which he would not, ordinarily, have dreamt of speaking

“I must ask you to excuse me now,” he said. “I did not mean to talk on this matter at all, but I was led to it in spite of myself.”

“Then you do not think it would be any use my

approaching Mr. Lanivet about that land on the Bodmin Moors? ”

“ Of course, you can try if you like,” replied the old man a little testily; “ but as I have told you, he is a recluse, and refuses to see anyone. Possibly, probably, of course I don't know for certain, but he may not be in Lanivet at all; he spends a great deal of his time on the Continent.”

When Caleb left St. Bosiny Rectory he realized that the day was far gone. His interview with Mr. Sercombe had been longer than he had imagined, and it was nearly seven o'clock. He could not help feeling, too, that his journey to Lanivet had been in vain. The hopes which had come into his heart had died almost at their birth, and he saw no possibility of learning the truth about what James Yelland had told him concerning his mother. He had not left the rectory long, however, before a mad resolve came into his heart, and, in spite of its seeming absurdity, he determined to carry it into effect.

He had during his interview with Mr. Sercombe made a statement concerning which he had no knowledge. He had said that he had received information that Mr. Lanivet was the owner of certain parts of the Bodmin Moors. Concerning this he had no knowledge whatever, and had simply mentioned it in order to have a reasonable excuse for going to the rectory. Thus when he learnt that Mr. Lanivet was actually one of the owners of the Bodmin Moors, the resolve already mentioned sprang into his heart. He would go to Lanivet and, if possible, see the owner. He knew that the great house was only a little more than two miles away, and although his reason told him that it would be sheer folly to seek an interview with the man who, the rector had declared, had refused to see anyone, he made his way to the great house.

After he had walked some distance, he reached the lodge gates, and then, although knowing he was acting the part of a madman, he trudged resolutely along the well-kept carriage drive until presently he saw a grey stone mansion.

“ Yes? ” queried the servant who answered his summons.
“ What do you want? ”

"Mr. Lanivet is at home, isn't he? I want to see him."

"What is your business?"

"I would rather tell him myself," replied Caleb.

The servant gave Caleb a second look and then left him standing at the door. A minute later he returned again with the information that Mr. Lanivet would see no visitors whatever.

"Will you please inform him that it is most important that I should see him," Caleb urged. "My name is Besowsa and I want to see him about some land on the Bodmin Moors."

The man shook his head. "It is no use," he said. "Mr. Lanivet will not see you; he sees no one," he added.

"Can't you ask him again?" asked Caleb. "I've come a long way to see him, and my business is important."

"It's no use," replied the servant. "He refuses to see you; he never sees anyone," he again added as if by way of excuse.

Caleb turned away from the man, and then, as if drawn by some overmastering impulse, he stood for some seconds looking at the great house.

Although it was summer and the stable clock had only just struck eight, the light had become dim. Not only had dark, heavy clouds gathered, but the front entrance was overshadowed by huge trees. Evidently, too, the darkness of the evening was more realized inside the house than out, for Caleb saw that one of the front rooms was lit up.

He did not see, however, that an occupant of this very room was watching him like one fascinated. It was a man, indeed the owner of the house, who watched him; and as he had drawn the curtain aside the light which flashed through the opening fell upon Caleb's face and revealed every feature plainly.

But Caleb was not aware of this. He only remembered the fact that Mr. Lanivet was not only the owner of the house, but the owner of a part of the Bodmin Moors; perhaps the part of the Bodmin Moors which he coveted. Of course, there was no truth in his wild imaginings, and the story about his father wedding Miss Lanivet of Lanivet

was doubtless false ; and yet he was interested in Mr. Lanivet. He wondered why he remained a recluse, and was a little angry that he had refused to see him.

Still, the refusal had been plainly stated, and he would leave. Where he was to spend the night he did not know, neither did he much care. His supreme desire now was to make his way to Polgooth on the following morning and there have a further interview with his Uncle Joshua.

He made his way down the carriage drive towards the lodge gates which were nearly a mile away. But he had not gone far before he heard hurried footsteps behind him. Turning, he saw the man who had refused to give him admission to his master. "Please, Mr. Lanivet will see you." The man spoke pantingly, but evidently in surprise. "Will you come back at once?" he added.

Without a word, Caleb accompanied the man back to the great house, and a minute later was admitted into a large marble-paved hall from which a wide, circling stairway led to the upper rooms.

"This way, please," and the man spoke peremptorily as he went to a door and knocked.

A few seconds later Caleb stood in a brilliantly-lit room ; such a room as he had never seen before. All around him he saw that the walls of the apartment were covered with book-cases, and that they contained several thousand volumes. Indeed, it seemed to him that there were books everywhere, and, as far as he could see, every space, except the door, and a bit of wall over the mantelpiece, was covered by them.

But he did not look long at them. His attention was immediately attracted by a man who was evidently the owner of the room, and who stood close by a huge writing desk.

"I am told that you wished to see me on important business. I seldom see visitors on business matters, but will you tell me yours?"

The voice was not altogether unpleasant, but to Caleb there was something severe and metallic about it. On looking at the speaker, too, it seemed to him that the voice

accorded with the man. He looked about fifty years of age, and, although he stooped a little, Caleb saw that he was more than ordinarily tall. But it was not the physical proportions of the man which attracted him; it was the face. To Caleb the face suggested hardness, if not cruelty. It was very pale; indeed, it looked like the face of a corpse. But there was nothing corpse-like in the bright, flashing eyes and the somewhat thin, quivering lips.

Caleb was reminded of Sir John Luzmore. Why, he did not know, except that Sir John had spoken like a man who would brook no opposition.

“What is your name?”

“Caleb Besowsa, sir.” For a moment the young man had a sense of fear in his heart. There was a suggestion of power in the appearance of the man he had come to see which almost struck terror into his heart.

“Caleb Besowsa? Where did you come from?”

“From a place called Spring Farm which lies between Linkinhorne Church and the Bodmin Moors.”

“Have you always lived there?”

“No, not always.”

“Where did you live before you went there?”

Each question was asked in a quick, peremptory manner, and Caleb felt, as he had never felt before, the meaning of the term “pride of race.” Evidently this man was an aristocrat and an autocrat all compact.

Indeed, Caleb resented the domineering way in which the man spoke, and anger began to surge in his heart.

“I heard of you through a Mr. Polkinhorne of Week St. Peter,” Caleb evaded; “and Mr. Sercombe, the rector of St. Bosiny, told me that you were the owner of a part of the Bodmin Moors. I am interested in some land on those moors, and I was wondering whether it belonged to you.”

“Why should you think it belonged to me?” He was eagerly scrutinizing Caleb's face as he asked his questions, and it was evident from the tone of his voice that his interest was more than ordinary.

"If I am wrong I of course apologize," Caleb evaded again.

"I do own some land on the Bodmin Moors," said Lanivet presently, "but the Bodmin Moors cover many thousands of acres. I've not been there for some years, but, as I remember it, the moors comprise nearly the whole distance between Altarnum and Bodmin. It is probable, therefore, that I do not own that part of it which you are thinking about. Where is it?"

Caleb described, as well as he was able, the position of the tract of land where he had been dowsing a few evenings before, while the other continued to watch him intently.

"There are one or two farms there on the Bodmin Moors near the place which you have described," Mr. Lanivet said. "Have you visited them?"

Caleb shook his head. "I know nothing about any farms," he said.

"What do you want the land for?"

"Before I tell you that," replied Caleb, "I should like to know if that piece of land belongs to you."

"And if it does?"

"If I have your word to that effect I will tell you."

For the first time since his admission into the house Mr. Lanivet gave a laugh. It was not a laugh which suggested merriment, rather it was one which suggested appreciation of Caleb's coolness and of his quick brain.

"You have not told me yet who you are," the older man reminded him. "Who are you? Where did you come from? How do I know you are in a position to buy land even if I were disposed to sell it?" It might have been that Mr. Lanivet was taking stock of his visitor's quality before volunteering any further information.

"When I have your assurance that the piece of land I have described belongs to you, and that you are willing to dispose of it," replied Caleb, "I shall be prepared to give your solicitors proof as to my qualifications as a purchaser."

A silence fell between the two men which lasted for nearly a minute, during which time the owner of the great house was looking keenly at his visitor.

"What did you say your name was?" he asked again at length.

"Caleb Besowsa."

"Is your father alive?"

"No, he is dead."

"When did he die?"

"A little more than four years ago."

"Is your mother alive?"

"No."

Again there was a long silence.

"Has she been dead long?"

"Yes, many years."

Another silence.

"And what if I feel disposed to sell my land? Are you in a position to buy it? Who are your bankers?"

Caleb felt as though the eyes of the other were reading his very soul, and again he was afraid.

"Are you wanting to start farming there?"

Caleb laughed. "I am not quite a fool, sir, and no one in his senses would ever think of trying to farm that part of the moors."

"Why?"

"Because it's covered with rocks, and except in some of the gullies there's scarcely an inch of soil there."

"What do you want the land for, then?"

"Possibly, probably, it is madness on my part," replied Caleb, "but I am inclined to think that there may be mineral on that part of the moor; and what I want is a Mining Sett."

"Mining Sett?" repeated the other as if ignorant of his meaning.

"Yes," replied Caleb. "If you grant it, I should then, if it came to anything, have to pay you so much royalty on any mineral that I may obtain."

As I have said before, Caleb was very ignorant concerning such matters. He felt his ignorance, too, and was angry with himself in consequence. Now that he was face to face with the owner of the land, however, he wanted to take advantage of his position.

"How much land do you want?" asked Mr. Lanivet.

"I want the mining rights over, say, two hundred acres," replied Caleb, and then he went on to describe the portion of the moors which he desired. He was careful, however, not to indicate the spot where he believed he had found tin.

"Two hundred acres is a large tract," replied Mr. Lanivet, after again looking scrutinizingly at his visitor's face.

"I want a large tract," replied Caleb.

"But what you suggest would require money; perhaps a fairly large amount. Have you any money?"

"I think I could get all I require," replied Caleb, who was thinking of the interview he meant to have with his uncle on the following morning.

"In what way? Have you any friend or relation who would be your sponsor?"

Caleb was silent.

"Have you any relations?"

"Yes, I have one."

"Who is he?"

"My late father's brother."

"Who is your late father's brother? Does he owe you money?"

"He is called Joshua Besowsa," replied Caleb. He felt angry with himself for telling his questioner these things, but, in a way he could not understand, the great man of the house seemed to have power to drag answers from him. "I believe," he continued, "that my Uncle Joshua owes me money; for that matter, I am sure of it."

"Owes you money? What for?"

"For one thing, when my father died more than four years ago, I left Polgooth where he had lived and told no one where I was going, but I have since discovered that there was a sale of my father's goods, and that after all his debts were paid, there was more than a hundred pounds left."

"But tell me more. I do not understand."

Caleb, still angry with himself for speaking so freely, related what Mr. James Yelland had told him.

After this there was a silence between the two men, at

the end of which Mr. Lanivet laughed in a peculiar manner.

“Perhaps,” he said, “you wonder why I have asked you all these questions, but when I tell you that only this morning I had a letter from my steward telling me of an application he had received to grant mining rights over the ground you have mentioned, you will understand my curiosity.”

“Another application?” repeated Caleb.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Lanivet.

“Who has applied for such rights? Forgive me for asking.”

Mr. Lanivet was silent for a few seconds, then he said: “I don't know why I shouldn't tell you, but an old man who rents land from me on the Bodmin Moors applied to my steward only a day or two ago.”

“What's his name—if I may ask?” demanded Caleb.

“His name,” the other replied, “is Adam Sticker. Do you know him?”

“Adam! Adam!” repeated Caleb. “You are sure 'tis Adam?”

“Yes. Adam Sticker. As I told you, he has had one of my farms on the Bodmin Moors for many years. Do you know him?”

“No, I don't know him,” replied Caleb at length. The name “Sticker” had startled him, and he wondered whether there was any connection between Adam Sticker and Levi Sticker, who had known his father. Still, as he reflected, Sticker was a common name in Cornwall, and probably the two knew nothing of each other. “I must thank you for the kind way you have received me,” Caleb said at length. “May I hope that you will grant my request?”

“I will certainly think about it,” replied Mr. Lanivet, “and I will communicate with Mr. Trewhella, my steward, at once, and tell him to write to you. Will you give me the address where a letter will find you?”

“I live with Mr. Sam Trethewy, at Spring Farm,” replied Caleb, at the same time giving the postal address.

Mr. Lanivet took a slip of paper which was lying on

his desk close by and wrote : Caleb Besowsa, c/o Mr. Sam Trethewy, Spring Farm, St. Miriam.

“ You live with this Mr. Sam Trethewy ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, I've been a servant there ever since my father died,” replied Caleb.

“ St. Miriam ! St. Miriam ! ” repeated the other. “ Isn't Luzmore Hall somewhere near there ? ”

“ Spring Farm belongs to Sir John Luzmore.”

“ Ah ! Have you ever met him ? ”

“ I've seen him once or twice,” was Caleb's reply, and his pulses beat faster, while the blood rushed into his face as he thought of Rosalind.

He left the great house then and made his way towards St. Bosiny village wondering at his good fortune. For, in spite of the fact that no promise had been made to him, he felt that he was getting nearer the goal he sought to reach.

The following day, just before noon, he stood at the door of the County Bank, Polgooth.

CHAPTER XII

NATURALLY Caleb had thought much during the night concerning his interview with Mr. Lanivet. In spite of everything, too, he could not help believing that his request would be granted. He thought that the proud man who had at first received him so cavalierly had spoken to him more kindly as the interview proceeded, and he had been led to believe, by the interest he had manifested in his financial whereabouts, that he was thinking favourably of the request he had made.

One thing had startled him, however. He had thought that he was alone in knowing that tin was to be found on those lonely moors, while now it was evident that at least another knew his secret. Adam Sticker ! Who was Adam Sticker ? Why should he, almost at the moment he had discovered his great secret, apply for mining rights ? Mr. Lanivet had informed him that this old man farmed a

piece of land which had been taken in from the moors, and that his place was not far from the spot where he had asked for mining rights. He wished now that he had asked the name of this farm, and was angry with himself because of his omission. But he would find out! Within two or three days at least he would return to Spring Farm, and then he would learn all that was to be known.

Yes, on the whole he was gratified at the result of his visit to the great house. Of course the mad dream which had come into his heart when he had visited Mr. Sercombe had proved to be utterly groundless. He had hoped that his visit to Lanivet would, in some way, lead to the discovery of his mother. But that hope had gone now. The only daughter of the man with whom he had been talking, was not only not dead, but she had married the younger son of a Somersetshire Squire who was living in Liverpool, and she was the mother of several children.

Still, he would not rest until he had found out who his mother was. If, as Mr. Yelland had told him, she had borne a proud name before she had married his father, then——

But he would not think of that now. Perhaps after all it was only the talk of a drunken man, and had no foundation in fact. What he wanted was the mining rights over the moors he had visited, and the money to start his venture.

And he would get that money, too! The more he ruminated, the more certain he was that Joshua Besowsa had robbed him. Why else should the man sell Pentewan and bury himself in an obscure village in another part of the county under an assumed name? . . .

On the whole his absence from Spring Farm, and what at first had seemed a mad quest, had been crowned with success. He had learnt more than he had ever dared to hope; it might be that the hand of destiny was guiding him.

Nevertheless, there was a strange fear in his heart as he stood at the door of the County Bank at Polgooth. The great granite stone walls seemed to mock him. How could he expect that he, ignorant and inexperienced as

he was, could match the cunning brain of Joshua Besowsa ? Still——

Yes, Mr. Bryce was in, the clerk informed him when he had asked for the manager, and had mentioned his name. Mr. Bryce was in the manager's room with a gentleman who had arrived some time before.

A few seconds later Caleb was brought face to face not only with Mr. Bryce, the manager of the County Bank at Polgooth, but with his Uncle Joshua.

Caleb caught the situation at a glance, and saw that his uncle had already given his version of his nephew's visit to him two days before.

"Ah, here you are, Caleb, my boy!" was Joshua Besowsa's greeting as he entered the room. "You understand the whole position, don't you, Mr. Bryce? I, a year ago, believing my brother's son to be dead, took out that trifle of money which had been deposited here, and invested it elsewhere. Of course, my nephew here has no legal claim to it, but you remember the old adage, 'Blood is thicker than water'; therefore I am disposed to be generous!" and he giggled out the last words.

"Of course, I take it that you accept this young man as your nephew?" said Mr. Bryce after Joshua had continued to make a rambling statement about things generally.

"Oh yes, I accept him as my nephew," replied Joshua. "He visited me two days ago, and we had a long talk. I was willing to settle the matter there and then, but on consideration I thought it best for us to meet here where the money had been paid in. We can settle the matter in a few minutes. Naturally I wish it to be understood that my nephew here has no claim on me at all. When my brother Caleb made his Will he clearly stated that in the event of his death everything he left should go to his son, but if the son died everything should come to me. He was a cunning chap, Caleb was, and so, to make things doubly sure, it was stated in the Will that if there was any doubt about his son Caleb's death, three years should elapse before any action was taken in the matter. Well, as you know, Caleb here left this neighbourhood directly

after his father was killed, and was never heard of until a day or two ago. We naturally thought he was dead, and at the end of the three years I took out the money. That was more than twelve months ago. Well, anyhow," and Joshua wriggled in his chair, "he's come back like the prodigal son who's been in the far country, and, as I said, he hasn't any legal claim to the money at all. But there, I am not going to quibble about that! I've no doubt he's Caleb's boy, and I want to do what's fair by him. So, after a good deal of thinking about it, I decided that it was best for us to meet here so that we could settle everything up in a friendly way. That's what you want, isn't it, Caleb, my boy?"

During this long, rambling speech Caleb had watched his uncle closely, and saw how uncomfortable he seemed to be. More than once it had seemed that something had stuck in his throat and he had a difficulty in swallowing. At other times he stammered as though he found it difficult to express himself, and Caleb could not help noticing the incoherent way in which the whole statement was made.

"What was the exact amount of the sum left, Mr. Bryce, as the result of the sale?" asked Caleb.

"The amount deposited with me," replied the bank manager, "was £146 18s."

"Then," broke in Joshua, "shall we call it a hundred and fifty pounds? Come, I want to be generous, and I'll make it round figures! You must confess that that's handsome, Caleb, my boy!" and Joshua Besowsa leered at his nephew.

Caleb, however, did not speak. There were many questions he wanted to ask, but he waited until Joshua Besowsa had finished.

"Of course," went on Joshua, "I want to make an end once and for all to this business, and so I've prepared a little paper for Caleb to sign which I think covers the ground exactly. That's fair, isn't it?" and he handed it to the bank manager.

"Shall I read it?" said Mr. Bryce, turning to Caleb.

"Yes, by all means read it," was Caleb's reply.

The manager, having first scanned the paper, read it aloud :

“ ‘ I, Caleb Besowsa, of Spring Farm, St. Miriam, Cornwall, do declare that, having received £150 from my uncle, Joshua Besowsa, he has discharged all and every claim I may have had upon him, and that he has not, in any way, any further obligations to me.’ ”

“ Are you willing to sign that ? ” asked Mr. Bryce.

“ No,” replied Caleb.

“ But why, Caleb, my boy ? ” asked Joshua. “ I am sure I have treated you handsomely. Just think, a hundred and fifty pounds down ! No further questions asked, and no difficulties raised ! What can't a young fellow like you do with a hundred and fifty pounds ? ” He again leered at his nephew.

“ Do you advise me to sign it, Mr. Bryce ? ” asked the young man, turning to the manager. “ Would you sign it if you were in my place ? ”

“ Of course he would,” broke in Joshua. “ Mr. Bryce is a business man, and knows the value of money. Besides, think how difficult ready money is to get ! The country is just crying out for it ! I tell you what, Caleb, you are a lucky dog ! There are not many young fellows in your position who can put their hands upon a hundred and fifty pounds.”

He spoke in a wheedling, coaxing voice, but Caleb, ignorant and inexperienced as he was, was not so easily caught. He remembered what Farmer Polkinhorne had said, too, and determined to be careful.

“ At any rate, I want to ask some questions before I sign anything,” he asserted.

Joshua, who had been looking at his nephew with an uncomfortable leer in his eyes, appeared more easy at this. “ Ask any questions you like,” he said, “ but don't be long about it. I am a busy man, and I must get away.”

“ The sum deposited with you as the result of the sale was, after all my father's debts were paid, £146 18s., I understand ? ” queried Caleb.

“ Yes, that was the amount.”

“ And it was left in this bank here for three years ? ”

“ That is true.”

“ Then should not that money have been earning interest all that time ? According to my calculations that money, at five per cent., would be earning something like seven pounds a year. Thus, with compound interest, it should be worth at the end of three years——”

“ Did you ever hear such nonsense ! ” Joshua almost shouted. “ Five per cent., indeed ! ”

“ Banks don't pay five per cent.,” Mr. Bryce informed him ; “ they only pay the ordinary bank rate of interest. I don't for the moment know the amount, but I could quickly ascertain the exact sum that was paid to Mr. Joshua Besowsa at the end of the three years,” and he put his hand to a bell as if with the intention of ringing.

“ No, no ! ” cried Joshua. “ I am not going to stand any nonsense like that ! Why, I am dealing with you handsomely, handsomely ! Just think!—a hundred and fifty pounds down ! ”

“ There's another thing,” went on Caleb. “ Mr. Joshua Besowsa has stated that after taking the money out of this bank a year ago, he re-invested it. Where did he re-invest it, and what interest did he get ? It seems to me that, whatever it was, it belongs to me.”

“ And am I to get nothing for my trouble ? ” exclaimed Joshua. “ Anyhow, there it is ! You can take it or leave it ; I can't stay here all day talking nonsense. Will you have it or won't you ? ”

“ Not on your conditions,” replied Caleb.

“ You mean that you won't sign this paper to settle up the whole thing ? ”

“ I am sure Mr. Bryce wouldn't advise me to do so.”

“ Mr. Bryce has nothing to do with it,” cried Joshua truculently. “ Well, seeing you are so stupid, I'll leave. But remember this, Mr. Bryce is a witness to the fact that you have refused this hundred and fifty pounds.”

“ I have only refused to sign that paper giving you a discharge of all your liabilities to me,” replied Caleb quietly.

“ Why, what other liabilities have I to you ? ” demanded

the older man. "You hadn't a penny, and you know it, when you left here, and now——"

"There is another question I wish to ask," broke in Caleb.

"You can ask all the questions you want to," snapped Joshua. "I said what I would do at the start, and I am not going to do any more. Good day, I'm off!"

"I wouldn't go yet if I were you," and although Caleb spoke quietly, his voice was husky.

"Wouldn't go yet! What do you mean?"

"I mean that if you won't answer my questions I must go to others who will."

"'Others who will'? Who will answer the silly questions of a boy like you?"

"Mr. Trebilcock, the lawyer at Plymouth," asserted Caleb.

"Mr. Trebilcock? What in the world will you say next! Why, Mr. Trebilcock will want a pound for every minute he spends with you!"

"And cheap at the money too, perhaps."

"What do you mean by that? Now look here, you young fool, I am going to stand no nonsense; mind that! I came here this morning generously inclined, and I made you an offer which any man in his senses would call handsome. As I said, you must take it or leave it; but if you leave it, you will not get a penny from me," and he spoke with such decision that for the moment Caleb felt afraid. Utterly ignorant as he was concerning the tortuous ways of the world, and almost carried away by the thought that he would possess a hundred and fifty pounds, he felt like doing his uncle's bidding, but nature had given him a quick brain, and he had summed up Joshua Besowsa's character with a good deal of accuracy. Besides, he remembered what Polkinhorne had said to him only the previous day; remembered, too, his determination not to yield to his uncle's blandishments.

But more than all this, he had Rosalind Luzmore in mind. The thought of a hundred and fifty pounds, alluring as it was, was nothing compared with what he would need to fulfil his vow. Even as he sat there, he saw the proud

mansion in which she lived, and remembered the traditions of the great house.

And even that was not all.

"As I said just now," Caleb asserted quietly, "there is another question I should like to ask. Where is my father's Will?"

"Your father's Will?" almost shrieked Joshua. "Why, it was only a bit of dirty paper, and not of the slightest value."

"I want to know where it is, all the same," persisted Caleb. "What is more, I am going to see it."

"How can you see it, you fool? Of course, I destroyed it!"

"No, you didn't," and there was a triumphant gleam in the young man's eyes. "I don't know much about such things, but I do know that every Will has to be proved; and I am going to find out all about it."

"Do you hear him, Mr. Bryce!" laughed Joshua. "Why, the poor fool is talking as though he were a Rothschild. It was through me that my drunken brother made a Will at all, and if he hadn't made it, what would have become of this idiot? He wouldn't have had anything at all."

"Mr. Bryce," said Caleb, turning to the bank manager, "would you mind sending a clerk around to Mr. James Yelland's house?"

"Mr. James Yelland!" shrieked Joshua. "What has he got to do with it?"

"I know that but for him I shouldn't have had anything," replied Caleb. "Anyhow, I want him here."

"I refuse to see him," and Joshua Besowsa almost shouted the words. "Things are coming to a pretty pass when a young fool like you can dictate to your elders and betters. I tell you I destroyed the Will, so now what can you do?"

"I can go to Mr. Trebilcock, and I can ask him to get a copy of it."

"How can he get a copy of it, you fool?"

"He can apply to Somerset House, in London, where a copy of every Will in the land is kept," Caleb made answer.

“ That will lead to a lot of things becoming known,” he added significantly.

“ A lot of things becoming known ? ” repeated Joshua. “ What can become known ? ”

“ Why you sold Pentewan to Mr. William Polkinhorne, and why you tried to hide yourself at Porthskipton under a false name,” cried Caleb.

“ It's a lie ! ” shrieked Joshua. “ I'll bring this fellow up for defamation of character, Mr. Bryce ! I'll not stand having such things said about me ! Besides, I had my own private reasons for selling Pentewan, and if I didn't want for people to know who I was, at Porthskipton, what's that to anybody ? ”

Caleb watched his uncle's face closely while he was speaking, and not only noted the fear in his eyes, but saw how he had changed colour ; saw deathly pallor succeeded by red blotches on his face, and drew his conclusions accordingly. There could be no doubt about it ; the man was in a state of deadly fear, and his fear had become all the more manifest since he had mentioned his father's Will. Cunning though his uncle might be, and crooked as he undoubtedly was, he could not altogether hide the truth.

“ Then do you mean to say,” shouted Joshua, “ that you mean to resurrect your father's past so that every booby can know about him ? Have you no more feeling for him than that ? Why, he was a drunkard—and worse than a drunkard ! It was a merciful Providence that killed him, even although he was drunk at the time, and must have gone straight to hell. Would you have all that raked up ? ” Again his voice rose to a scream, and doubtless the clerks in the adjoining room laughed at what he was saying.

“ Since you have driven me to it,” replied Caleb, “ I am going to have everything made known ; everything.”

“ Why, there's nothing to be made known, you fool, except that your father, ‘ drunken old Caleb Besowsa,’ as he was called in these parts, left a few pounds instead of dying in debt ! ”

“ At any rate, I am going into the whole business,” and

there was persistence in the youth's voice. The fighting blood of the ancient Celts was roused within him, and the stubbornness, for which the Cornish character is noted, became uppermost.

"Remember," cried Joshua, "that you are fighting against your own flesh and blood, when you say this. I don't want to harp on it, Mr. Bryce, but I am the only relation that this youngster has got in the world. I am getting to be an old man now, too, and I'll tell you something which I have never told anyone else. I made up my mind, after he had been to see me a day or two ago, that I would leave every penny I had to him—but now!"—and he finished his sentence by an angry snarl.

"I don't think we need detain you any longer, Mr. Bryce," Caleb said quietly, and even then the manager of the bank wondered at the young man's behaviour during the interview. He knew of his upbringing, and Mr. Yelland had told him only the day before that he had been a farm-servant ever since he had left Polgooth. Therefore it was more to be wondered at that he should act so calmly and with such restraint. "Good day, Mr. Bryce," Caleb went on, holding out his hand. "I am going over to see Mr. James Yelland now, and then I should like to come back and have another talk with you when we can discuss matters alone!"

Joshua Besowsa's eyes were bloodshot as he heard this, and for a time he seemed like one who was on the point of losing control over himself altogether, but, with an effort, he mastered himself. "Now look here, Caleb," he shouted, "as I said just now, I came here generously disposed; and, although you have been unreasonable, I do not want to take advantage of you. I'll own that I ought not to have mentioned a hundred and fifty pounds as a settling sum; I ought to have said a bit more; but I thought you would remember all the trouble I had about your father's few leavings. Anyhow, I don't want any after claps, and I am prepared to treat you handsomely. Instead of a hundred and fifty pounds I will say two hundred! Think of that now! What do you say?"

"I say," replied Caleb, "that I am not only going to

know all about my father's Will, but about my grandfather's Will too."

"Grandfather! Who's your grandfather?"

"Old Caleb Besowsa, your father," cried the young man.

"He never made a Will! As God is my witness, he never made a Will!"

"In that case," replied Caleb, "my father, as the eldest son, should have inherited Pentewan, and because I am my father's only child, Pentewan should have come to me."

"It's a lie!" shrieked Joshua. "It's a lie without a foundation! It's a black lie born in hell! Pentewan was mine, and your father sacrificed everything when he left home!"

"I am going to find out all about that," replied Caleb, "and I am going to instruct a lawyer to act for me right away."

"I'll fight you!" shrieked Joshua. "I'll fight you to my last breath, and to the last penny I've got! Curse you, you scheming young vagabond! No wonder I hated you the moment I saw you, you spawn of the bottomless pit! I won't listen to another word, and if there's any justice in the world you'll burn in the same hell that your father is burning in now!" Whereupon Joshua seized his hat and rushed out of the bank.

Mr. Bryce, although disturbed by Joshua's mad frenzy, could not help smiling at his parting words. "You are in for a hot time if your uncle's wishes are fulfilled," he said quietly.

"Have I done right?" Caleb asked anxiously.

"Right! Certainly you've done right. You would have been a fool if you had done otherwise."

"But you don't know everything," said the young man eagerly. "Perhaps you will draw conclusions from what I have said, though?"

"Of course, I gathered that you had something at the back of your mind, and if——"

"May I tell you?" cried Caleb. "I want to. I want to confide in someone; someone who is trustworthy, and I am sure you are. I can speak in confidence, can't I?"

"Certainly," replied the manager.

Whereupon Caleb told him much of what had taken place since he came to Polgooth a few days before. He described his interview with Mr. James Yelland, and then told him of his visit to Porthskipton. Told how he found his Uncle Joshua, and what they had said to each other. Afterwards he described some of his conversation with Mr. Polkinhorne at Week St. Peter.

"What do you think of it all, Mr. Bryce?" he asked.

"I think you have acted wisely," replied the manager; "and I think you would have acted more wisely if you had consulted a trustworthy solicitor before you came here to-day, and brought him with you."

"Perhaps I should," replied Caleb, "but I didn't know; I was utterly ignorant of all this when I came here a few days ago, and I had to feel my way. What shall I do now?" he went on eagerly. "Do you think Mr. Trebilcock of Plymouth is the best lawyer to go to?"

"I am not a lawyer," replied the manager, "although, naturally, I have had a good deal to do with them in my time. In any case, it would be difficult for me to give you advice until I know more about it."

"More about what?"

"If I am any judge of the matter," replied Mr. Bryce, "your father should at least be as much the owner of Pentewan as your uncle, and you should have been consulted before he was allowed to sell it. But a lawyer would advise you about that. Then again, if I may say so, there is something remarkably fishy about your uncle going to Porthskipton under an assumed name. It seems not only silly, but crooked. I can see some interesting developments," he added.

"Do you think that he will fight?" and there was a quiver in Caleb's voice.

"Perhaps you will have a further offer from him," suggested Mr. Bryce after a long silence. "He may offer you a big sum to sign such a paper as this," and he nodded to the scrap of paper which Joshua had handed him.

"Would you take it?"

"No," Mr. Bryce replied after considering for a few

seconds. "I believe there is more in that man's mind than we know about yet."

"But how can I fight?" asked Caleb. "I have no money, or at least very little, and I don't want to spend it. I—I want it for other things. I—I don't know what to do!"

Mr. Bryce looked at Caleb questioningly, but did not speak.

"It is this way," went on Caleb, "I want that hundred and fifty pounds badly, and I shall want a great deal more. You see, I have made a discovery."

"A discovery? What discovery?"

"I have discovered a fortune, at least I believe I have, only it will want money to realize it."

"Tell me more."

Whereupon Caleb told him of his experiences on the Bodmin Moors; told how he had found pieces of stone which, according to Bunny Joe, were shining with tin. Told, too, of his interviews with this old man, and how, by means of a dowzing stick, he had discovered what he was convinced was a lode.

Mr. Bryce listened very attentively, but he was very careful not to express an opinion. He was a man of wide experience in financial matters, and had lived in Cornwall many years. During that time he had more than once heard of the discovery of rich lodes which had eventually come to nothing. Even at that time there was scarcely a tin mine in Cornwall that was being worked at a profit, and thus the young man's story, even although it was told with much detail and great conviction, did not enthuse him. All the same, he was anxious not to damp Caleb's ardour. During the time they had been together he had been impressed not only by the young fellow's honesty, but by his clear-sightedness and his sound judgment.

"Have you had any other opinion besides Bunny Joe's?"

"Yes, I have," replied Caleb eagerly. "When I left Polgooth the other day, I went to the very heart of the mining district," after which Caleb told him of his reasons for going there. "While I was there," he went on, "I

heard of perhaps one of the greatest authorities on tin-mining in the country, and I made up my mind to see him. Captain Benjamin Williams. Perhaps you have heard of him? ”

“ Did you see him? ” asked the manager, almost eagerly.

“ Yes, I did, and I told him all I dared to tell him. But I did not tell him where I had found the lode.”

“ And did you show him the stones you had found? ”

“ I did. I took them with me.”

“ And what was his verdict? ”

“ He wanted me to take him to the spot where I had found them,” replied Caleb; “ but I didn't. I was afraid. You see,” he went on, “ I didn't know Captain Williams, and I didn't know the ropes, so to speak; but I got the truth from him.”

“ What truth? ”

“ That the stones I showed him were rich with tin,” replied Caleb. “ He was terribly anxious for me to take him to the place.”

“ I see,” said Mr. Bryce presently. “ You want to keep every bit for yourself.”

“ I am afraid, Mr. Bryce. I am afraid,” and Caleb's voice sunk into a whisper. “ All my future, everything I hope for in life, seems to depend on my making a fortune. I must make it—I *will* make it!”

“ But it seems to me that you haven't thought of everything even yet,” went on Mr. Bryce, after another long silence, during which he watched Caleb's face closely.

“ What haven't I thought of? ”

“ I know the Bodmin Moors is mainly made up of waste land,” said Mr. Bryce, “ and that there are many thousands of acres of it that are absolutely valueless; but it is all owned by someone. Who owns the land you are talking about? ”

“ Why do you ask that? ”

“ Because you would have to obtain mining rights. You can't go on this land, valueless as it may seem to be, without the permission of the owner. Do you know who that landowner is? ”

"Yes," replied Caleb.

"Who is he?"

Caleb was on the point of telling Mr. Bryce about his visit to Lanivet; but he did not. Somehow the words seemed stuck in his throat. He remembered, too, what Mr. Lanivet had told him about Adam Sticker, and a great fear came into his heart lest this old man should forestall him. But he said nothing of this to Mr. Bryce.

"Anyhow," the manager went on without noticing Caleb's confusion, "I have no doubt the mining rights in such a district can be easily obtained. But, as you will see, there are tremendous difficulties."

"Yes, yes, I know; but, according to you, what are the chief ones?"

"Money," replied Mr. Bryce.

"Yes, it's money, always money," admitted the young man. "Now you see why I was so anxious to get that hundred and fifty pounds from my Uncle Joshua. I have only saved fifty," he added plaintively.

Although Mr. Bryce was by birth a Scotchman, he was romantic at heart, and Caleb's story had moved him greatly. He was sure, too, that the man Joshua Besowsa had, at the back of his mind, schemes which he did not want to disclose, and, if the truth must be told, he thought more about those than he did about the success of Caleb's hopes of finding a fortune on the Bodmin Moors. Still, Scotchman as he was, he wanted to help the young fellow who had impressed him so favourably.

"Look here, Besowsa," he said after he had asked him many more questions, "my advice to you is to make certain of that lode. Make certain that it would pay well for working."

"What can I do more than I have done?"

"Can you trust the man you called Bunny Joe?"

"I have told you his history," replied Caleb; "told you how he has discovered a number of mines within twenty miles of the spot I have described. Yes, I can trust him."

"Then take him to the place; show him everything; tell him everything. Then, if he gives you a good report,

and if you can obtain mining rights from the owner of the land, come to me again."

"Come to you again?" repeated Caleb.

"Yes, come to me again. Mind, I promise you nothing, but it may be that I am disposed to help you."

When Caleb left the bank he was like a man in a dream.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN Caleb returned to Spring Farm two days later his employer asked him no questions. He realized that a change had come over him. Something subtle; something undefinable. In a way he did not seem the old Caleb at all, and he wondered what experiences he had passed through.

"I hope you enjoyed your holiday," he said, but evidently he did not expect an answer.

"I think I ought to tell you," Caleb said, "that I wish to leave."

"What!" exclaimed the farmer; "leave us?"

"Yes, I must!"

"But why, Caleb?" It was Gracie who spoke, and there was an anxious tone in her voice.

"I cannot tell you. Only it would not be fair for me to remain here as your servant."

"But, Caleb," urged the farmer presently, "the busy season is upon us, and I can't do without you."

"Of course," Caleb informed him, "if I can help you in any way, I shall be glad to do so, but it must be on the condition that I can come and go as I please."

"Of course, you'll continue to live here?" urged Gracie, after many more protests had been made.

"May I?" replied the young man. "I shall be awfully glad if I may."

During the next two days, the farmer watched Caleb closely, but in spite of his endeavours he learnt little about him. He noticed, however, that on the night of his arrival

he went away alone, and although he much longed to follow him, he dared not. On the third day, however, he could not help remarking that his one-time servant seemed much excited. There was a far-away look in his eyes, and Gracie, who watched him closely, saw that his lips were tremulous.

At seven o'clock that evening, Caleb left Spring Farm, and went away alone. The farmer watched him closely, but he dared not follow him. There was a look in Caleb's eyes which almost caused him to fear. Half an hour after he had left the house, the country became treeless and barren. Instead of loamy meadows and cattle-grazing land, the wide stretch of the Bodmin Moors began to appear.

"I wonder if he'll come," muttered Caleb as he trudged along.

Presently he reached the Gorge which had attracted him weeks before, and looked around him. Not a soul was in sight; not a sound could he hear, save the sighing of the wind as it found its way through the stunted heather.

"I wish I had no need to take anyone into my confidence," Caleb reflected, "but I expect the bank manager was right."

Summer-time as it was, and although the sun had not yet set, Caleb could not help feeling the eeriensness of the scene. As far as the eye could reach, hill upon hill, barren and lonely, stretched away before him. Here and there a lonely farmstead dotted the dreary wastes which met his gaze, but nothing else. Hitherto when he had visited this region, while he had felt its loneliness, it had not seemed so oppressive as now. He was not given to morbid fancies, but he felt that he was being watched by unfriendly eyes, and he wondered whether Adam Sticker, who Mr. Lanivet had told him wanted to obtain mining rights, was near.

But it was not Adam Sticker that he expected to see. Two nights before, he had visited old Bunny Joe, and had asked him to meet him on the ground where he had found the stones which had called forth the old man's admiration.

But Bunny Joe was nowhere to be seen. Indeed; not a sign of life appeared. Then suddenly, as if by magic, the old man for whom he had waited, emerged from behind some rocks in the gorge, and stood near him.

"Is this the place?" he asked.

"The lode is near by here," Caleb informed him.

"Doan't 'ee tell me nothin'," urged Bunny Joe; "I want to find out everything for myself." Whereupon he took a dowzing stick from his pocket and began to look around him.

As we have said, Bunny Joe was an old man. Little in stature and clad in the attire of a working miner, he was yet a noticeable figure. As Caleb realized, he had walked several miles across the lonely moors to meet him there that night, and he could not help watching with more than ordinary eagerness as the old dowzer cast his eyes around him. As he watched, moreover, he saw Bunny Joe's face grow keen and expectant. His eyes shone with an almost unearthly light, but the old man uttered no word.

The young man watched him as he left the gorge and climbed the rugged hill-side towards a little tor which lay in the near distance.

A little later he heard Bunny Joe grunt with satisfaction.

"Don't 'ee say a word," and there was a peremptory tone in his voice.

Caleb obeyed him. For that matter, he was too anxious to speak. He watched while the little man made his way over huge boulders and along a pathless country-side. A minute later he saw the dowzing stick turn in his hand, but beyond an almost savage growl, the old man made no remark. Instead, he made his way to a spot perhaps fifty yards away and then turning came towards Caleb, still holding the dowzing stick firmly.

"'T'es a lode!" he almost shouted presently. "It do pull as strong as fire!"

"Are you sure of it?" asked Caleb anxiously.

"Be I sure?" and there was an angry tone in the old man's voice. "Be I sure that water do run down 'ill?"

Be I sure that the sun is 'ot? So sure be I that there's a rich lode 'ere."

"Don't make any mistake!" cried Caleb anxiously. "Make certain! Test it in every possible way, and don't say there's a lode there until you can take your oath to it!"

For answer the old man repeated the same operation at least half a dozen times.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Caleb at length.

Bunny Joe nodded his assent.

After that the two men sat down side by side behind a great rock, while Caleb put innumerable questions which the other answered tersely and with conviction.

"'Ave 'ee got the sett yet?" asked Bunny Joe presently.

"No, not yet."

"Then get it to once! Don't wait a minute! There is a fortin here! Why, ef you c'n kip it to yerself you'll be as rich as a Jew."

"Shall I go back to your house with you?" asked Caleb presently.

"Why should 'ee do that?" retorted Bunny Joe angrily. "I bean't waik and I bean't afeard! If you don't want me no more, I'll go."

"Of course," urged Caleb, "this is a secret between ourselves. We don't want the world to know."

"Be I a fool?" snarled the old man. "Do I craake? Or be I given to creaking when there's no use for it? Who do the land belong to?"

"Mr. Lanivet."

"Then get the sett at once. Don't wait a minute, for as sure's God Almighty's above us, somebody else will be after it!"

"Have you any reason for saying that?" asked Caleb.

"Raison! Look here, young fellow, there's something in life above raison. I d'*feel* that there's somebody after this sett, so don't wait till to-morrow's sun goes down."

A few minutes later, Bunny Joe's form had in the evening twilight almost melted into the green-grey heather. Caleb watched him as he went. It seemed to him that there was something almost supernatural in the old man's

powers. To the casual observer, there was no suggestion of anything on the wide moors save poverty, yet if Bunny Joe were right there might be a huge fortune waiting for him.

For a long time Caleb looked around him like a man fascinated. He felt in the grip of a mysterious power; felt as though destiny had led him there for a purpose.

It was strangely quiet, and now that the old man was out of sight, a kind of drowsiness took hold of him and, throwing himself upon a patch of heather, he fell asleep. How long he slept he did not know. He had been much excited throughout the day, and especially during the time he was awaiting Bunny Joe's verdict. Now it seemed to him as though his strength was departing from him, and he felt almost supernaturally tired. As he slept, strange thoughts floated through his brain. During the time he had been awake he had felt himself altogether alone, but now the moors seemed peopled. More than once, too, he felt sinister presences around him. One face especially haunted him. It was that of an old man with a shock of white hair on his head, and a long flowing beard.

Whether Caleb's fancies were influenced by facts, I do not pretend to say; certain it is, however, that he had not been long asleep before an old man, who had evidently been watching him, crept stealthily towards him, and looked at him with anything but a friendly gaze. Indeed, the expression on the old man's face as he watched him suggested anger, if not hatred. More than that, if murder ever gleamed from human eyes there was murder in his eyes as he watched Caleb.

Then something else happened. From a small farmstead which was altogether hidden by a rough tor from where the young man lay, a girl came. She might have had some knowledge of the old man's presence, for she walked rapidly to the spot where he crouched.

"Grandfather," she whispered when she came close to him.

The old man turned angrily.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Who's that, grandfather?" and the girl looked towards Caleb's sleeping form.

"He's up to no good, my dear. He ought not to be here."

"But, grandfather," and there was a curious light in the girl's eyes, "you mustn't stay here."

"Why not?"

"Because the night air is bad for you, and you're wanted at home."

"Who wants me at home?"

"Never mind. You must go at once."

"Tell me, child, tell me quickly. Why am I wanted at home?"

"Someone is waiting for you."

The old man moved away muttering angrily, then, as they neared the little farmstead, the girl left him, and again climbed the hill towards the spot where Caleb lay.

"It's he," she whispered to herself. "I can't be mistaken. It's the same face; the same man."

For several minutes she watched him as he slept, and a close observer would have noticed a strange yearning in her eyes. He would have seen more than that. He would have seen that she was no common moorland girl. Her attire suggested an artist, while her slight lissom form was not only finely moulded, but spoke of athletic exercises unknown to girls on the moors. Perhaps she could not have been called beautiful, but certainly her face possessed a charm which was out of the ordinary. Her features were finely chiselled, while her large dark eyes were full of wondrous light.

But Caleb thought nothing of this. He was far away in the misty vales of dreamland, and presently when he awoke with a start, he had no thought that anyone was near him.

Daylight was now gone, but the far-stretching moors were lit up with a wondrous grandeur by the full-orbed moon. As he arose to his feet, he shivered.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "I wonder whether anything will come of it."

He looked around him in all directions, but nothing

was visible, save the wide stretch of the moors. Then he gave a start.

"Who's there?" he asked. But he seemed to be speaking into vacancy.

Whether the loneliness made him more than ordinarily susceptible to passing influences, I do not know, but he felt sure that somebody was near him, watching him.

"Who is there?" he repeated. But still there was no answer. Then, as if by instinct, he went to the spot where the girl crouched.

"Who are you? And what do you want?"

The girl arose to her feet and met his questioning gaze with a laugh.

"Should not I ask you that?" she retorted.

Although daylight had gone, the bright rays of the moon lit up her face, and he saw every feature clearly.

"I've been asleep," he replied. "Have you been watching me?"

"And if I have?" retorted the girl with a laugh. "Is there anything wrong in that?"

"You're no ordinary girl of the moors," asserted Caleb.

"Why are you here? Do you wish to speak to me?"

She waited a minute before replying, then she spoke slowly:

"If I were you, I would be very careful."

"Why should I be careful?"

"It is not for me to say, but if I were you I should be very careful. I should trust no one. Perhaps you're surrounded by greater danger than you think. Good night!"

And without another word she sped swiftly across the moors.

For more than a minute, Caleb could scarcely believe his senses. The girl's presence was so unexpected, while her words seemed so strange that he felt nothing but wonder.

"Was there any meaning in her warning?" he asked himself as a few minutes later he made his way towards Spring Farm. "And was she watching me during the time Bunny Joe was with me? Did she hear what we said to each other?"

He felt uncomfortable; perhaps it was no wonder. The thought of being watched at a time when he seemed to be at a crisis in his life was unpleasant.

The next day, Caleb went to the nearest village where there was a telephone exchange. Here, he found the name and number of Mr. Lanivet's steward.

"Are you Mr. Trewhella?" he asked, when the connection had been made.

"Yes, I am Mr. Trewhella."

"Mr. Lanivet's steward?"

"Yes. Who are you, and what do you want?"

"Will you be at home if I call at three o'clock this afternoon?"

"I can arrange to be, certainly. But who are you, and what is your business?"

"It's not something I can tell you over the 'phone," replied Caleb; "but I will be with you at the time I said."

That same afternoon, he reached Bolivick, the little town where Mr. Trewhella lived, and not long after was shown into his presence.

Mr. Trewhella was a lawyer, and acted as steward to more than one landowner in the county.

"My name is Caleb Besowsa," Caleb began.

Mr. Trewhella gave a start. Evidently the name was not unknown to him, but he made no remark. Instead, he scrutinized Caleb closely as though he found his face interesting.

"Just so," he said at length. "What can I do for you?"

"I am given to understand that you act as steward for Mr. Lanivet of Lanivet."

"That's so," replied Mr. Trewhella, and waited for the other to proceed.

"Mr. Lanivet owns a large stretch of the Bodmin Moors, doesn't he?"

Mr. Trewhella nodded his head.

Caleb shuffled uneasily in his chair. Now that he had come to the business he had in his mind, he did not know how to express himself.

"I am interested in those moors," he managed to say at length.

The lawyer was silent for a few seconds.

"Why, may I ask?" and he spoke like one suspicious.

"Of course, I may be wrong, but I believe there is mineral in some of the land owned by Mr. Lanivet."

The lawyer showed no surprise, but sat with an immovable face as if waiting for Caleb to proceed.

"My purpose in coming to you is this," Caleb asserted suddenly. "I want to know if you will give me the mining rights over Mr. Lanivet's land?"

The lawyer smiled.

"Give you?" he repeated.

"You must pardon me if I do not know the exact course of procedure," the young man said, "but I want the right to start a mine on your land, and I have come to you for permission."

"Ah, I see," said the lawyer. "What kind of mineral have you in your mind?"

"Tin," replied Caleb.

"And on what part of Mr. Lanivet's land do you wish for mining rights?"

Caleb found himself in a difficulty, and in spite of himself he found himself thinking of the words which the girl had spoken to him on the previous night. He felt afraid to indicate the exact spot where he had found tin. If he gave away his secret to the lawyer, he might be robbed of something in which all his hopes lay.

"Couldn't you give me mining rights over all your land?" he asked.

Again the lawyer smiled.

"Mr. Lanivet owns something like eight hundred acres of the Bodmin Moors," he said. "Surely you don't want the whole of that?"

"No, but I want a pretty big piece of it!" and he spoke just as any ignorant clown might have spoken.

Again the lawyer scrutinized him.

"It may interest you to know," he said, "that I have only lately heard from Mr. Lanivet concerning a man who also desires mining rights over his land."

"I was quite aware of that," replied Caleb.

"What! You knew that Mr. Lanivet had written to me about the matter?"

"No, I didn't know that; but I visited Mr. Lanivet a day or two ago, and he told me that a man called Adam Sticker had sought such rights."

"Anyhow," replied the lawyer, after a long pause, "I cannot consider your application until I know exactly the piece of land in which you're interested."

Again Caleb shuffled in his chair. The words of the girl he had seen on the previous night again returned to him.

"I suppose you have a map of your estate?" he said suddenly. "If you have, I can show you the piece I want."

Mr. Trewhella went to a drawer in his bookcase, from which he extracted several large rolls of canvas. Then he stopped suddenly.

"Before we go further," he said, "I want some kind of an understanding with you. Granting mining rights is a serious matter, and I should want some guarantee from you that you are in a position—financially, I mean—to start a mine, and to work it."

"I should pay you the usual mining royalty," replied Caleb. "For every ton of tin that's sold, I would pay Mr. Lanivet the amount which is usually paid."

For answer the lawyer opened one of the drawers of his desk, and extracted a letter which he read to himself carefully. Then he smiled somewhat superciliously.

"If you'll consider a moment," he said, "I think you will see the absurdity of your suggestion. If I agreed to what you have just told me, I might be giving you valuable rights over a piece of land which you could not utilize, and Mr. Lanivet might thereby be losing a great deal of money."

"Then what do you want?" asked Caleb.

"Nothing unreasonable," replied the steward. "But before granting mining rights, I should want an assurance that you have sufficient capital to make use of them."

Caleb was staggered at this. He realized that he had no

money, and that although Mr. Bryce of the County Bank at Polgooth had made him a vague promise, nothing seemed certain. Then a kind of passion seized him. He saw how much was at stake. He realized, too, that if the vow he had made concerning Rosalind Luzmore were to be realized, his plans concerning the mine must come to pass, and he burst out like a man in wrath.

"Look here, Mr. Trewhella, I swear to God that I'll work that mine proper; that I'll do everything that can be done, and that Mr. Lanivet shall not lose a penny!"

"That's all very well," replied the lawyer, "but will you find a hundred pounds as a pledge of your good faith? You see," he went on, "I know nothing about you. You may be trustworthy--and again, you may not. But if you placed a hundred pounds in my hands as a guarantee of your good faith, I might be disposed to consider your proposal."

For the first time since his interview with his Uncle Joshua had taken place, he regretted that he had not accepted the sum offered to him. He did not possess a hundred pounds. All he actually owned at that moment was the fifty pounds he had saved during his four years as a farm-servant. Still, as if carried away by a kind of frenzy, he almost shouted, "Very well, sir. On the day the sett is signed, you shall have the hundred pounds."

He did not at all know where he was going to find the money, or what *Deus ex Machina* would appear on his behalf, but he could not help speaking as he did. In a way he could not understand, he felt that the stars in their courses were fighting for him.

Again the lawyer looked at him as though he were more than ordinarily interested. At any rate, here was a man who was in deadly earnest, and who, he felt sure, would die rather than rob anyone of a penny.

"Very well," he said. "Supposing I concede that, I am still in ignorance of the exact piece of land you want."

"Show me the map of Mr. Lanivet's land on the moors and I'll tell you what I want!" cried Caleb.

A minute later a large piece of canvas was unfolded on the lawyer's desk.

"There," said Caleb excitedly, "that is the land I want," and he traced with his forefinger a series of boundary lines.

"I am sorry," replied Mr. Trewhella, "but it is not in my power to grant you mining rights over the land you have indicated."

"But why?" asked Caleb.

"Because it does not belong to Mr. Lanivet."

"But—but——"

"Mr. Lanivet's land does not extend beyond this red line," and he indicated a mark on the map. "All the land on the west side of the line is Mr. Lanivet's, but that on the east side belongs to someone else."

Caleb examined the map closely, and he saw the truth of what the lawyer had said. If he obtained mining rights only on the west side of the red line, the value of such rights would be largely nullified. For that matter the red line indicated by Mr. Trewhella ran along the gorge in which he had first found the stones which had so excited him, and up to the top where he had begun dowsing. Thus, as the lode ran east and west, Mr. Trewhella could grant him only a part of the land he desired.

"And who is that someone else?" he asked, indicating with his finger the land on the east side of the line.

"Sir John Luzmore," replied Mr. Trewhella.

CHAPTER XIV

A KIND of panic seized Caleb. He had no idea that Sir John Luzmore owned any of the Bodmin Moors, and he had hoped to carry out his projects without the baronet being acquainted with what he was doing. Now he saw that, in spite of all he could do, he would have to explain to the owner of Luzmore Hall what he had in his mind.

It seemed like destiny. Ignorant as he was of the ways of the world, he felt sure that Sir John would tell his daughter what he, Caleb, was doing. Of course, Rosalind

Luzmore inspired all his hopes and was the goal of his heart's desire ; but he wanted to keep her in ignorance of everything until his project had become an accomplished fact.

" Sir John Luzmore ! " he gasped.

" Yes, Sir John owns a considerable tract of land on the moors. Surely you knew that ? "

" No, I didn't know. Then——"

" Yes," broke in Mr. Trewhella, " you will have to obtain mining rights from Sir John, as well as Mr. Lanivet, if you want all the land you have indicated."

Some time later Caleb was making his way back to Spring Farm, while a thousand questions seethed in his mind. How should he approach the great man ? More than that, how would his proposition be received ? Was it likely that Sir John would consider his proposal seriously ? Then something else appealed to him. If Mr. Lanivet's steward demanded that one hundred pounds should be paid before granting a sett, would not Sir John, or Mr. Beans, his steward, demand a similar sum ? If so, how was he to find the money ?

When at length he reached Spring Farm, Sam Trethewy was almost frightened at the look in Caleb's eyes, while Gracie watched him like one fascinated.

" I hope you will be able to help us with the harvest to-morrow, Caleb," remarked the farmer. " The ten-acre barley field is rotten ripe, and hands are difficult to get."

" I'll be up at four o'clock in the morning," was Caleb's reply, " and I will work until three o'clock in the afternoon. But after that, I must be off ! "

" Off ! Off where ? "

But Caleb did not reply, instead he went out into the farmyard alone, after which, for more than an hour, he roamed round the meadows which surrounded the house.

The next evening, Caleb found himself at Luzmore Hall park gates. He had, an hour earlier, got into communication with Mr. Beans, who was at the time in the steward's room at the great house, and who had told him that he would meet him there at seven o'clock that evening.

"It was here I first saw her," muttered Caleb as he looked at the scene. "The motor-car was coming down that way, while she came down that lane. She looked like an angel straight from Heaven, and—and——"

He visualized everything in a flash; saw the look of fear in her eyes; remembered every detail of what had taken place.

"Yes," he said aloud, "and it shall come to pass. She shall not marry that young lord; she shall be my wife."

Even as he spoke he realized how mad he was. Away in the distance he saw Luzmore Hall, stately and grand, while between him and the house the broad parklands stretched. Everything told him of his madness; told him how impossible it was for him to fulfil his heart's desire. Who was he, Caleb Besowsa, even to dream of such a thing? Rosalind Luzmore was as much above him as the stars were above the earth, and just as unreachable.

Nevertheless, the grim determination of his face did not relax, while from his eyes shone a steady resolve that what he hoped for should come to pass.

As he neared the great house, however, his heart almost failed him. Every stone in the stately mansion seemed to laugh at him; every tree which waved its branches in the summer sky told him of his madness.

He did not go to the front door; he dared not. Instead he made his way towards the back entrance he had sought when first he came to the great house.

Yes, the servant told him, Mr. Beans was in the steward's room and awaited him.

A minute later he was following the man along the passage he remembered so well.

On entering the room he found not only Mr. Beans, but Sir John, who greeted him kindly.

"Ah, Besowsa," the baronet said, "I am glad to see you! Do you know I have rather expected to hear from you for some days. How are the new buildings getting on?"

Then the baronet gave Caleb a second look, and as he looked he realized that a change had come over his visitor. This was not the superior farm-servant he had seen at

Spring Farm when he had gone there to inspect the new buildings! Then the fellow was in his shirt-sleeves, while his brawny arms were bare almost to the shoulders. He had been nervous, too, and spoke awkwardly. But now he was different; something might have happened to him since he saw him last.

Caleb had, during his absence from Spring Farm, gone to the best tailor in the mining district and obtained new clothes. These clothes, while they would not have satisfied a Bond Street tailor, had entirely metamorphosed his appearance. He was no longer an ill-dressed farm-servant, but a man of the world.

But the change had not been altogether brought about by different attire. There was an air of assurance in his every movement; a look on his face which, although the baronet could not explain it, told of new thoughts, new hopes, new determinations. Sir John had expected Caleb to tell him of his desire to fall in with the suggestion he had made to him while visiting Spring Farm, and to seek the post of assistant steward to Mr. Beans. But as he looked he ceased to expect it. Something had happened to his visitor; something which had somehow changed him entirely.

"What can I do for you, Besowsa?" he asked, almost awkwardly.

"I am given to understand, Sir John, that you own land on the Bodmin Moors," he replied.

"Own land on the Bodmin Moors!" repeated the baronet. "Is that what you have come about?"

"Yes, Sir John!"

Caleb had overcome his fear by this time, and spoke to the great man not as a farm-servant, but almost as an equal. Indeed, as he stood in the steward's room of Luzmore Hall that evening, he felt almost angry with himself for being, a few minutes before, afraid of approaching him. After all, who and what was Sir John Luzmore? It was true he was the owner not only of the great house to which he had come, but a tract of the Bodmin Moors in which he was vastly interested. But somehow—he could scarcely tell why—he looked at him with different eyes.

During the past week he had lived a life unknown to him before. He had visited his one-time home, and while there had learnt something which entered into the very warp and woof of his being. He had been told by Mr. James Yelland that his mother was a lady, and could, if she had had her rights, have taken her place among the great ones of the county. This might seem chimerical, but it had, in a way he could not understand, altered him. More than that, he had learnt that his father, whom he had known only as "drunken old Caleb Besowsa," had in his younger days been reared amidst honourable surroundings, and even although his visit to his Uncle Joshua had not been altogether satisfactory, it had caused new hopes to be born in his heart. After that had followed his conversation with Mr. Polkinhorne, who had bought the farm where his father had been born and reared. It was true that the thoughts which had been born in his mind as a result of that conversation might have no foundation in fact, but they had had the effect of changing him. He was no longer a farm drudge who worked for a farm-servant's wages, but one who might have an importance of which he had not hitherto dreamed.

But that was not all. His visit to Pentewan had been followed by his journey to Lanivet where he had been received into a house just as imposing as Luzmore Hall, and where he had talked with the man who was altogether superior to Sir John Luzmore. For he was superior, and Caleb was not slow to recognize it. Whatever else Mr. Lanivet was, he was a cultured gentleman; while Sir John Luzmore, in spite of his proud name, was essentially a commonplace individual.

Of course, he recognized that the baronet was Rosalind's father, and, therefore, was different from everyone else in the world. Nevertheless, in himself he was only a fussy, proud aristocrat.

"You say you are interested in my land on the Bodmin Moors? In what way?"

"In this way," replied Caleb. "I have been led to believe that a part of your land might pay for mining, and my purpose in coming here is to obtain mining rights."

Sir John laughed like one amused. "But what would you do with mining rights?" he asked.

"Use them," replied Caleb.

Again Sir John looked at Caleb scrutinizingly, and again he felt the change which had come over him. "Over what part of my land do you require such rights?" he asked at length.

"I presume you have a map of your holding there," replied the young man. "If you will show it to me, I will tell you."

Again Sir John laughed, this time a little scornfully. "No," he said, "I am afraid I cannot do this for you."

"Why not, Sir John?"

"Tell me your plans," evaded the baronet. "Mining is a very expensive business. Before a mine can be made to pay, a great deal of capital might have to be sunk. Have you any capital?"

"Such capital might be obtained," replied Caleb.

"In what way? Have you formed a company, or something of that sort?"

"No," replied Caleb.

The baronet remembered him as he had seen him on his first visit to Spring Farm, and the incongruity, not to say the absurdity, of his request appealed to him strongly. Nevertheless, the change in Caleb's demeanour caused him to hesitate before telling him to leave the house. It might be possible that this young fellow had discovered something of value, and as times were not easy for landlords, he would not meet him with a *non possumus*. "Why do you want mining rights?" he asked at length. "What sort of mineral have you in your mind?"

"Tin," replied Caleb.

Sir John laughed again. He knew that the Bodmin Moors had for years been investigated not only by mining, but by clay experts. Indeed, he had a few years before employed a tin expert to examine his property there in order to find out if any mineral lay under the barren wastes, and he remembered how chagrined he had been when this same expert had told him that his land was worth nothing from that point of view.

"Besowsa," he said, "I wish you well, and I do not want you to do anything foolish. It would not be kindness on my part to let you throw away your little savings on a mad scheme. As I told you some time ago, I regard you as superior to the ordinary farm-servant, and I expressed my willingness to help you, but I am afraid I cannot conscientiously do as you ask. What do you think about it, Beans?"

The steward, who had listened mainly in silence to the conversation which had taken place, answered in a language unknown to Caleb.

"Yes, yes, that's all very well," responded the baronet, "but the fellow can only have a few pounds, and it would be madness for him to go digging on my land on the Bodmin Moors."

Again the steward replied in a language strange to Caleb.

A minute later Sir John turned to Caleb again. "No, Besowsa," he said, "I cannot do what you ask; it would not be fair to you if I did. I may tell you that, years ago, I employed a mining expert to examine my land in the hope that mineral might be found there. He found none; and if he, a man experienced in such matters, could find nothing, it would not be right for me to encourage you to waste your savings on such a mad project."

"Is that your final answer, Sir John?" and Caleb looked at the baronet keenly.

"I am afraid it must be," replied Sir John.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you," went on Caleb, "that I saw Mr. Lanivet's steward yesterday and he as good as promised me that I should have the mining rights over Mr. Lanivet's land."

Sir John turned to him in astonishment. "Over Mr. Lanivet's land! His steward promised you this?"

"Yes," replied Caleb.

"Did he have Mr. Lanivet's authority for doing so?"

"I imagine so. I saw Mr. Lanivet a few days ago and I gathered that Mr. Trewhella, in giving me his promise, did so with Mr. Lanivet's consent."

"You saw Mr. Lanivet?" and there was astonishment in Sir John's voice.

"Yes, Sir John."

"What did he say to you?"

"He did not meet me with a blank refusal, anyhow," replied Caleb. "He referred me to his steward, and when I went to see Mr. Trewhella, he, on certain conditions, practically promised me what I asked."

"What were the conditions?" asked the baronet.

"I don't think it would be fair for me to tell you that," replied Caleb.

Sir John hesitated a few seconds before speaking again. "Beans," he said at length, "ring up Lanivet Hall and then connect me with the house telephone."

A little later the baronet went out of the room, leaving Caleb alone with the steward.

"Do you imagine that you have found tin on the moors?" asked Mr. Beans.

"I shouldn't have come here if I didn't think so," and there was a suggestion of impatience in the young man's voice.

"Where have you found it?"

"That would be telling," and Caleb spoke just as a farm-servant might speak when desiring to keep a secret.

Mr. Beans seemed on the point of speaking again, but before he could do so Sir John returned, accompanied by Rosalind.

Caleb gave a start as the girl entered the room. He had been wondering all the afternoon whether he would catch a glimpse of her, and, in a way he could not understand, although he had hoped that such might be the case, he almost dreaded seeing her.

"You remember Besowsa, my dear?" and Sir John looked fondly at his daughter.

"Of course I do," laughed the girl. "He did me a good turn on the day he was here last, and, as you will remember, I saw him afterwards at Spring Farm." Rosalind gave Caleb a quick glance as she spoke, and, like her father, she recognized the change which had come over him.

“ What’s happened to you, Besowsa ? ” and her tones were those of a great lady when speaking to an inferior.

Caleb did not reply ; he could not. His heart was beating too wildly, and his whole being was overwhelmed by the thought of her presence.

“ You have changed since I saw you last,” she went on ; “ in fact you have much improved. What is the meaning of it ? ”

Caleb fastened upon her words of appreciation like a hungry dog fastens upon a bone, and yet he felt almost angry. Yes, she looked more beautiful even than when he had seen her last, and he had never longed for her as he longed now. Never did he believe that such loveliness was possible, and she seemed to him just like an angel come straight from Heaven. The steward’s room was no longer a prosy place of business where the baronet and his steward attended to the working of a great estate ; it was a sacred shrine, a holy of holies. The girl’s presence had changed everything. Her voice was like the music of a brooklet as it found its way over a stony bed ; her laughter made his heart throb with delight ; her eyes shone like stars ; her presence made all things new. Never had he longed for her as he longed now. Never had his determination to win her as his wife been as strong as now.

And yet she angered him. He knew that the poles lay between them. She was as far removed from him as the east is from the west.

“ You do not speak,” went on the girl. “ What have you been doing since I was at Spring Farm ? ” But although he felt delighted beyond measure at her evident interest in him, her words seemed to mock him.

“ Besowsa has broken out in a new place,” laughed Sir John. “ He has ambitions such as I never dreamt of.”

“ Ambitions ? ” cried the girl. “ What ambitions ? ”

“ He aims at being a mining magnate,” and there was good-humoured raillery in the baronet’s voice.

“ A mining magnate ? ” and Rosalind laughed as she spoke. “ I don’t understand ! ”

“ Besowsa believes he has found a kind of El Dorado

on the Bodmin Moors," laughed her father, "and he has come to me asking for mining rights over my land."

"What! Besowsa has?" and Caleb caught the sound of mockery in her words.

"Yes. Lanivet has given him the rights he has asked for over his land, and now he has come to me hoping that I will do the same."

"But you won't, will you, Dad?"

"Why not?"

"Because it would be absurd! Fancy Besowsa doing such a thing! Why, even the thought of it is utterly ridiculous!"

Caleb felt the scorn not only in her words, but in the tones in which she spoke them, and he knew that she looked upon him as a kind of half-witted youth who was carried away by some will-o'-the-wisp of his own imagination.

"I don't know," went on Sir John. "I have just spoken to Lanivet, and he, while of course he thinks Besowsa mad, has decided to grant him the rights he desires. Moreover, he seems anxious that I should do the same."

"But Besowsa has no money!" and still the girl spoke in tones of mocking scorn.

"Perhaps he thinks that you may be disposed to help him," and again the baronet laughed as he spoke. "Wouldn't you like to be Lady Bountiful and help a poor, struggling youth who lives on one of your father's farms?" It was unlike Sir John to speak in this fashion, but he had been influenced by the conversation he had just had with the man he had known practically all his life. Indeed, he regarded Lanivet with something almost like awe, and was anxious to do anything in his power to please him. For that matter it had been whispered, although no one ever knew the truth of it, that the Squire of Lanivet Hall had a controlling interest in Sir John Luzmore's estate, and that he could, if he felt so disposed, place the baronet in a difficult position. But that was mere gossip to which no one paid heed.

"You have told me hundreds of times," laughed the girl, "that I have no idea of the value of money; but I am not so foolish as that."

Caleb felt his heart harden. He had determined to carry out what the baronet had called his mad project unaided, and he had never dreamed of asking Rosalind Luzmore to help him. And yet the way she spoke, in spite of the fact that he was dazzled by her presence, made him mad with rage. But never mind! He remembered what Bunny Joe had told him; remembered, too, the interest that the great mining expert had manifested when Caleb showed him the stones he had found; and he determined to make this proud girl alter her opinion and confess that she had been mistaken.

“Then you are going to let him have the rights he asks for?”

“Yes, my dear, I think I shall.”

It was a strange way to conduct business, especially for Sir John. He was spoken of in the neighbourhood as hard and grasping, as well as one who placed an inordinate value upon anything he had to dispose of. But he had met Caleb's request as I have described, and when, a little later, the young man left Luzmore Hall, it was with the authority to do as he would with the land he coveted.

It was still daylight when Caleb made his way through Luzmore Hall park, although the sun was just setting behind the hills. Excited as he was by his experiences at Luzmore Hall, he felt the wonder of it, the glory of it. Yes, in spite of the fact that Rosalind had laughed his hopes to scorn, he felt that he had taken a step nearer to the fulfilment of his hopes. More than that, he conjured up all sorts of pictures of what would take place when his mine had proved a success, and when he was spoken of as a rich mining magnate. For at that moment he had no doubts about the future; what had seemed impossibilities had become as nothing. He would trample down everything that stood in his way, and rise superior to everything. Then when Rosalind Luzmore had become his wife and he had ceased from being known as Caleb Besowsa, the farm-servant, and had become, not only the possessor of the richest mine in the county, but perhaps the owner of much of the land now owned by Sir John Luzmore, he would be regarded as one to whom nothing was impossible.

As he passed out of the park gates, however, and made his way towards Spring Farm, his feelings of elation passed away, and he felt submerged in gloom. No, both Sir John Luzmore and Rosalind were right. He had been dreaming an impossible dream, and all he had hoped for would end in nothing. He called to mind the mockery in Rosalind's voice, the sneer which was manifest in her every movement, and he instinctively felt that, foolish as they regarded him, it was but a hint of the real truth. He realized the fact that he was certain of nothing but the fifty pounds he had saved as a farm-servant. He could not even meet Mr. Trewhella's demand that he should advance a hundred pounds as a guarantee of his good faith, much less find the money to embark upon a costly adventure. Hadn't he better give it all up and return to the drudgery of the farm?

After he had gone about a mile in the direction of Sam Trethewy's house he left the road in which he had been walking and turned towards the moors. Mad as his fancies might be, the bleak wastes of land drew him like a magnet, and ere long he found himself almost running in the direction of the gorge.

It was dark when at length he reached it, and summer-time though it was, the gully which had so fascinated him in the past, repelled him by its weird desolation. He sat down on one of the huge stones and gave himself over to thought. No, he could do nothing. He was homeless, friendless, moneyless, and, what was worse than all, the girl who was all the world to him, mocked him.

Then something of the feeling which had possessed him on the day he had first seen Rosalind Luzmore surged up in his being. No, he would not be beaten. He was not a weak, backboneless creature who would give up at every difficulty. True he was alone in the world, and was the possessor of practically nothing, but he would fulfil his destiny. He would carve out the position he longed for; he would be a master, and not slave.

He found himself repeating the poem of Henley which, months before, had inspired his imagination, and called forth his admiration:

“ Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever Gods there be
 For my unconquerable soul.”

He started up as he repeated the words and looked around him. Surely he was not alone! Surely the wild moors were peopled by invisible presences!

Leaving the gorge he made his way towards the tor where the dowzing stick had first turned in his hand, and presently came to the spot where, not long before, he had, after his talk with Bunny Joe, fallen asleep.

Throwing himself upon the heather he lay flat upon his back and looked towards the sky, while the stars came out one by one. “ The sport of chance ? ” he reflected. “ No, I am not the sport of chance ! There is Something behind it all ; Something beyond, and greater than those stars ! I wonder what it is ? I wonder if He cares for me ? ”

A new feeling possessed him, a something of which he had never before been conscious, became manifest to him. Supposing he accomplished all he hoped for ! Supposing he won Rosalind Luzmore as his wife ! Supposing even that he lived with her at Luzmore Hall ! What then ? Would he be satisfied ? Would his dearest hopes be fulfilled ? In course of time he would grow old, and his strength would pass away. Then by and by !—— God help him !—— But more than that. What of Rosalind ? Her skin which was now rosy with health and beauty, and was so fair and lineless, would grow wrinkled and old ! Yes, Rosalind's lissom form would become bent ! She would become haggard, too. Great God, it was too awful to think about !

As he looked, the great dome of the heavens, which had become more and more spangled by stars, changed. What had seemed blue-black had a paler appearance, and looking eastward he saw a silver glow. A few minutes later the moon rose, and its silver light lit up the weird moors with a ghostly beauty.

Someone was near him ! Yes, he was sure of it ! He could see no one, and hear no sound, but he knew that he was not alone. Still lying flat upon his back, he waited and listened.

“Caleb! Caleb Besowsa!”

He had heard that voice before, and he recognized it.

“Caleb! Caleb Besowsa!”

Lifting his head he looked around him, and saw standing behind some rocks which formed themselves into a kind of tor the girl who had spoken to him not many nights before. “What do you want?” he asked like a man in a dream.

“I want to speak to you,” replied the girl.

He started to his feet.

CHAPTER XV

“**W**HO are you?” he asked. “Why do you come here?”

“I told you when last I saw you that you were in danger,” replied the girl.

“Well, what then?”

“I have come here to see that no harm happens to you.”

Shaking off the ghostly feelings which first possessed him, he laughed aloud. “Who would harm me?” he asked.

The girl, passing out from behind the rocks, came close to where Caleb was and stood beside him.

“Who are you?” he asked again.

“I am Eve,” was her reply.

“Eve? Eve what?”

“I don't know.”

“Where do you live?”

“Come with me and I will show you.” She turned from him as she spoke and went towards the brow of the hill, while he kept close behind her. “Do you see that twinkling light down there?” she asked presently. “That's my home. I have lived there off and on since I was a child.”

Caleb looked towards the light like one fascinated. Then he said like one thinking aloud: “There's a little farm there; I never saw it before.”

"That's because you have always kept on the other side of the hill," she replied.

"But you don't live there alone?"

"No, I live with my grandfather."

"Who's your grandfather?"

"Adam Sticker," replied the girl.

Caleb gave a start. He remembered what Mr. Lanivet had told him; called to mind, too, that this old man had asked Mr. Lanivet for mining rights over his land.

"My grandfather has been watching you for a long time," went on the girl. "When first he saw you you were picking up stones in the gully down yonder. That led him to discover everything."

"To discover everything?" repeated Caleb.

"Yes, he watched you every time you came, and you have reason to fear him."

Caleb laughed again. "What reason have I to fear him?" he asked.

"Because he knows what you have found."

"Knows what I have found?" he repeated.

"Yes," replied the girl. "He has known for years that there is tin here, and all the time he has kept it to himself."

"Why?" he asked like one in wonder.

"I didn't know at first," replied the girl, "but I know now. He has, for years, been saving money whereby he could work the mine. You see, mining is costly. And remember, you are in danger."

Caleb laughed again. The presence of the girl had somehow dispelled his serious thoughts and caused him to look lightly upon that which before was surrounded by difficulty.

"Why am I in danger?" he persisted.

"Because of what you have done, and because my grandfather hates you."

"Hates me! Why should he?"

"Because he believes you have done what he tried to do—and couldn't."

Caleb looked at her in astonishment.

"Yes," went on the girl, "when he went to Mr. Lanivet to obtain mining rights, Mr. Lanivet would not promise

him, and since then he has learnt of your visit to him, and he has found out that he has promised you. That's why he hates you. Do you remember the time you came into this district?" she burst out suddenly.

"The time I came to this district?" he repeated. "Why, that was years ago!"

"Yes, I know! We followed you across the moors!"

"You followed me? I don't understand."

"Don't you remember?" and there was a strange look in the girl's eyes. "You were only a little boy at the time, but grandfather and I, who were at the time walking across the moors, saw you and followed you. I don't think you were very well, for you fell down in a faint."

"Yes, I remember," replied Caleb musingly.

"My grandfather is said to be a wise man," went on the girl, "and that he knows things which are hidden from others. Anyhow, he had a feeling about you that night."

"Had a feeling about me?"

"Yes. I shall never forget his face when you got up and walked away, neither shall I forget what he said."

"What did he say?"

"He repeated the same word three times: 'Destiny, destiny, destiny!' You will be careful of him, won't you?"

Caleb was silent. He did not understand the strange way in which the girl spoke. "As I told you," she went on, "he has known for years that there is a rich lode here, and he has been saving his money in order to work it. He believes there is a fortune in it. That is why he is so angry with you. Has Mr. Lanivet given you mining rights?" She seemed like one wanting to make sure of something which had only been a vague impression. "Tell me all about it. I'll promise that whatever you say to me shall never be repeated."

Again Caleb looked at the girl intently. The moon, which had now risen higher in the heavens, shone so brightly that he could see her every feature plainly. In spite of himself, he could not help regarding her with more than ordinary curiosity; neither could he help comparing her

with the girl in whom all his hopes lay, and from whom he had parted only a few hours before. Not that in his estimation she was worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as Rosalind Luzmore. How could she be? Rosalind was a lady born! She would become the owner, too, of that fine old mansion which he had visited that afternoon, as well as a wide sweep of the moors on which they stood. As for this girl, she was, in spite of the fact that she seemed deeply interested in him, only an ordinary moorland girl, who lived in a lonely farm-house in the near distance. And yet he thought kindly of her. It was twice now that she had suddenly appeared to him and seemed anxious about his safety and welfare. In a way, too, she was beautiful. Her face was finely moulded, while her eyes were large and luminous. She did not look like an ordinary moorland girl either. She wore good clothes which set off her fine figure to perfection. She spoke correctly, too, and her every movement, as well as her every word, suggested refinement.

"Why should I tell you what I have in my mind?" he asked.

"Because I am your friend and want to help you."

"Who are you?" he asked again.

"I am Eve," was the reply.

"So you told me before. But Eve what?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" he asked wonderingly.

"No. Grandad has told me that both my parents are dead; but I never saw them."

"But who were they?"

"I don't know. There is a mystery about them which I can't explain."

"But you say that this old man, Adam Sticker, is your grandfather?"

"He says he is, and I think it's true; and I believe his daughter was my mother."

"Why do you believe that?"

"Because," and the girl looked away in the direction of Brown Willy wistfully, "because he always carries the photograph of a beautiful girl with him. I have seen him

looking at it more than once—and she is like me. Not that I am beautiful,” she added, “and yet I could not help seeing a resemblance. But that is not all. One day when he was taking this photograph from his pocket and was looking at it, I asked him who she was, and he confessed that it was his daughter who had died many years before. That’s all I know!”

Caleb could not help feeling a sense of unreality about everything; perhaps it was no wonder. There are few spots in England more forsaken, more desolate, than the wild stretches of the Bodmin Moors; and lit up as they were that night by the silver rays of the moon, they seemed to have no connection with the workaday world. And yet they had. All his hopes were centred in them. Near by was the gorge in which he had first seen the stones that were shining with tin. Close to him, too, was the spot where the dowzing stick had turned in his hand.

For more than a minute neither of them spoke again. Then the girl turned towards him suddenly. “Caleb,” she said, “I told you that grandfather had for years been saving his money in order to start a mine here. He said that every penny he could get hold of would be necessary. Have you any money?”

“No,” he replied.

“Then what was the use of your getting the mining sett?”

“I was mad,” he replied. “I have been mad ever since I first went to the gorge.”

“Your father was called Caleb Besowsa, wasn’t he?” she asked.

“How do you know?”

“I wish you would trust me,” evaded the girl. “I might help you.”

“How can you help me? And why should you?”

“I know already more than you think,” she went on. “I know that before you came here you lived at Polgooth with your father. I know, too, that he and your Uncle Joshua were reared at a place called Pentewan in Week St. Peter. I know, also, that your Uncle Joshua has robbed you. Now will you trust me?”

"How do you know all these things?" he cried in astonishment.

"Because I was at the lonely farm-place called Polskiddy, on the day you saw Levi Sticker. Levi Sticker and my grandfather are brothers. All the time you were talking with him, I was watching you, and I made him repeat the conversation you had together. Won't you trust me?"

Again Caleb looked at her steadily. He could not understand why she should talk in this way, and yet her words had a strange, compelling power over him. "Yes, I'll tell you. I'll tell you everything," he said in a burst of confidence. "I don't know who you are, or anything about you, but I'll tell you everything. My father was, as you have said, called Caleb Besowsa. The people around Polgooth called him 'drunken old Caleb Besowsa,' and when he was killed I left Polgooth because I wanted to get away from everything associated with him. I was ashamed of him; ashamed of the life I was living! Not long before he died I picked up a strip of newspaper containing an advertisement of someone in these parts who wanted a farm-servant, and as soon as the funeral was over, I came here. As chance would have it, I found my way to the place where I am now living, Spring Farm, where a man called Sam Trethewy lives. Are you interested?"

"Yes, of course I'm interested," replied the girl.

"And you will regard my confidence as sacred?"

"Of course I will."

"Then I will tell you the great secret of my life. I have lived at Sam Trethewy's house as a farm-servant for more than four years. I have tried to educate myself."

"You need not tell me that," interrupted the girl. "I have heard all about it."

"Have you? How?"

"Never mind that now; I have. But that isn't the great secret of your life; I want to know about that."

"Not long ago," went on Caleb, "something happened to me and—and—— But you will laugh at me when I tell you!"

"No, I won't," said the girl. "Tell me!"

Whereupon he described his visit to Luzmore Hall. He told how when passing the park gates he had seen a girl who was in danger of being killed by a passing motor-car; told, too, how he had rescued her.

"Of course," he went on, "you will think I am mad. Perhaps I am, but I could not help myself, and no sooner had I seen her and learnt who she was, than all the world was changed. Have you ever fallen in love, Eve?"

"No," replied the girl.

"I have! I fell in love with her the moment I saw her, and I vowed I would win her and make her my wife. Do you think I was mad?"

She did not reply.

"It would be no wonder if you did," Caleb went on. "Of course, I was only Caleb Besowsa, a farm-servant, while she was the great lady of the district. I am told that she is promised to Lord Trelaske's eldest son in marriage; but that makes no difference to me. I love her. She is more to me than anything else in the wide world, and nothing shall stand in the way of my having her!"

After all, he was only a boy, and knew nothing of the ways of the world. More than that, it seemed an eternity to him since he had determined upon what he had just told Eve; and although he did not know why, he longed for a confidante; someone to whom he could tell the great secret of his life.

"Now you can understand," he went on, "why I want to be rich, and why, when I found the tin lode, everything seemed to be possible."

There was a far-away look in Eve's eyes as she listened, but she did not speak a word.

"Perhaps you don't know it," he went on, "but although the west side of the gully belongs to Mr. Lanivet, the land on the east belongs to Sir John Luzmore. A boundary line between their two holdings goes along the gully and up over that tor." He pointed with his finger as he spoke. "The lode," he went on, "runs east and west, so there is as much of it in Sir John Luzmore's land as there is in Mr. Lanivet's."

Evidently Eve understood it, for while she continued to be silent, she nodded her head comprehendingly.

"I thought all the land around here belonged to Mr. Lanivet until yesterday," Caleb continued; "then his steward told me about Sir John Luzmore. You can see the position, can't you? I meant to do everything unknown to Rosalind, but when I went to see Mr. Beans this afternoon, she was there."

"Who is Mr. Beans?" asked Eve.

"He is Sir John's steward, and Sir John laughed at me when I asked him for the mining sett. So did Rosalind," he added, and his voice was hoarse as he spoke.

"Did Sir John grant you the sett?" asked Eve.

"Yes. He gave Mr. Beans instructions while I was there; but it was all in vain. I can do nothing."

"Why? You have mining rights both from Sir John and Mr. Lanivet, haven't you?"

"Yes, but I can do nothing," and there was a note of despair in his voice. "You see, it is this way. When I went to see Mr. Lanivet's steward yesterday, he told me he could only grant me the mining sett on condition that I paid a hundred pounds down as a guarantee of good faith, and I haven't got a hundred pounds! I was mad at the time, for I promised Mr. Trewhella I would find the money; but I can't do it! I have only fifty pounds, saved out of the four years' wages I have got from Sam Trethewy."

"Then what was the use of your getting mining rights?" asked the girl.

"No use at all," and there was the same despairing note in his voice. "Oh yes, I know I was mad . . . mad, and worse than mad; and yet, at the time I believed I could do it!— And I *will* do it!" he cried passionately. "In spite of everything, I'll do it!"

"But how can you?"

"I don't know. Look here, let me tell you what took place while I was away down west," and thereupon he related his experiences while Eve listened greedily.

"Then you *have* money!" cried the girl when he had finished. "There is that hundred and fifty pounds which

came from the sale, besides—the other things. Have you written to that lawyer in Plymouth? ”

“ Of course I've written him ; but he has done nothing. He has simply sent me a letter saying he will look into the matter. But what is the use of that ? I want the money now. As for that hundred and fifty pounds, my Uncle Joshua will not let me have it unless I sign a paper declaring that I have no further claim on him, and I am not going to do that ! Don't you see ?—everything is uncertain. There may be a lot of money owing to me ; but, even if there is, I may not be able to have it for years. I have learnt a lot about the law during the last few days ! ”

“ But you say that Mr. Bryce, the manager of the bank at Polgooth, promised to help you ? ”

“ In a way he did, but I have found out about banks, too ! Before the Directors would advance me what money I need, they would demand all sorts of things. ”

“ Then, in spite of the fact that you have mining rights both from Sir John and Mr. Lanivet, you can do nothing ? ”

“ No, I can do nothing, *nothing* ! And there is a fortune here, too ! I am sure there is ! Bunny Joe said so. Oh, it is maddening ! Unless I become rich, Rosalind will continue to laugh at me ! ”

After that a long silence fell between them, while Caleb looked gloomily across the wild waste of moors.

“ Caleb,” said the girl presently, “ how much money do you want ? ”

“ Heaps of it,” he replied. “ First of all there is that hundred pounds which I shall have to pay to Mr. Lanivet, and after that there will be wages. I shall have to get mining machinery, too, and I shall have to utilize the water which runs down the gully. Then I shall want a water-wheel and stamps. I shall have to make floors, too, and buddles, and ricks, and all that sort of thing. While I have been away I have learnt a lot about mining,” he added.

“ Caleb,” said the girl again, “ will you tell me how much money you will want ? ”

“ What's the use of telling you ? ” he demanded savagely.

"I have no money, and I may not be able to get any for years—meanwhile, Rosalind will be married to Lord Trelaske's son. But no, she shan't!" and there was a deep note of passion in his voice. "I'll kill him first!"

"Do you love her very much, Caleb?"

"Love her?" he almost shouted. "She is all the world to me! Every bit of me cries out for her, and I shall go mad if I don't get her! And I could get her, too, if I could work the lode; I am sure I could!"

"You did not tell me the amount you would need," said the girl after another long silence.

"If I only had a thousand pounds!" he gasped. "Then I could pay Mr. Trewhella that hundred pounds, and I should have enough for wages and—everything."

Another long silence ensued. Then Eve came close to him and touched his arm. "Caleb," she said, "I will let you have the thousand pounds."

"You!" he almost gasped. "You! Why, you must be as mad as I am! How can you get a thousand pounds?"

"Never mind how I can get it;—I can!" she replied.

"But—but why should you?"

"Because I believe in you," she replied quietly.

"Because I trust you and—because—I want to."

He stood staring at her in open-mouthed astonishment. He could not understand her; he could not believe her.

"I can get the money for you whenever you want it," she went on quietly.

"But how? Where did you get it?"

"It's in the bank at Launceston," she replied.

"But how did you become possessed of so much? You can't be serious, Eve!"

"Yes, I am. The money came to me through my mother. Don't ask me to tell you the particulars about it, but before she died she arranged that I should have it to do as I liked with on the day I was eighteen; and I am more than eighteen. I had a letter from the manager of the bank at Launceston only a few days ago telling me that it was lying there and that he awaited my instructions."

For more than a minute Caleb was silent. He looked like a man who had received a heavy blow, and he rocked

to and fro as if he was on the point of falling. His brain reeled. The girl's words staggered him, bewildered him. "Are you sure you can do this?" he gasped.

"Yes, Caleb, I am quite sure. I will write to the bank manager at once, and in a day or two you will hear from him."

Another long silence fell between them, while Caleb stood still watching her.

"No, no," he cried at length, and his voice was hoarse with emotion. "I cannot allow you to do it!"

"But I am going to do it, Caleb."

Madness was in his eyes. It might seem as though the girl's words had robbed him of his senses. "I wouldn't take it for myself," he gasped. "It is for Rosalind! Everything is for Rosalind!"

"I must be going now," said Eve, without apparently taking any notice of his words. "You will hear from the bank manager in a day or two. But be careful of my grandfather—won't you?—and—don't tell him anything about—how you got the money. Good night."

She rushed away from him as she spoke, and Caleb saw her moving rapidly towards the twinkling light, while he stood scarcely comprehending what she had said.

For a full five minutes he stood there, his whole body trembling with excitement, his eyes shining with an unearthly light. Then he rushed away towards Spring Farm, uttering wild, incoherent words.

CHAPTER XVI

BEFORE the month of September came to an end, strange rumours were rife among the scattered dwellers of the Bodmin Moors. Some said that gold had been found in the Ghost's Gorge; others declared that old Adam Sticker had discovered a treasure, a treasure which had been buried there at the time when Oliver Cromwell caused King Charles to be beheaded. Others still had it that a mining company had been formed who declared

that underneath the barren wastes of the moors a strange mineral had been discovered, to extract which all the unemployed labour in the county would be utilized. Certain it was that many strangers were seen in the vicinity of what was called the Ghost's Gorge, and that operations, the meaning of which was at first unknown to the people, were in full force. A great pit was sunk not far from the gorge, while carpenters were at work erecting a water-wheel. A little later strange-looking castings came from a distant township, and the men who worked there, who came from the west of the county, talked about "stamp heads," "tappets" and "cogwheels." What had been known as one of the most lonely spots in the district became a hive of industry, and presently when something like order had been brought out of the chaos which had at first existed, people began to indulge in strange speculations.

"Why, there be nearly thirty men over there," one farmer said to another. "What's the meanin' of it?"

"Some fool throwin' away his money, I expect."

"Who's fool enough to throw away money there?"

"I d'hear it's that chap Caleb Besowsa who've bin workin' for Sam Trethewy at Spring Farm. People d'say 'ee's found tin there!"

"Where did 'ee get the money to pay for all they men?"

"I dunnaw. 'Ee was always a strange chap. All the same, 'ee is a clever fella. I've bin over to look several times, and 'ee's always there. 'Ee's the man that d'give orders, too; but Lor! it'll come to nothin'!"

"Well, 'tes a good thing for we, anyhow. Every 'ouse for miles around is full of strange men. Gracie Trenbath 'ave got three lodgers, while Sarah Bennetts 'ave got two; for that matter there ed'n a cottage or a farm-'ouse within two miles of the gorge that ed'n chuck-full."

With a dispatch never known in the district before, the work proceeded so rapidly that before Christmas a water-way had been formed which diverted the stream which ran through the gorge to the water-wheel that had been erected; and the noise of stamps was heard throughout the countryside. More than that, a shaft had been sunk and a number of miners were working under-

ground. Great masses of stone were taken to the stamps and ground to powder, while an old man called John Snell, whom Caleb had appointed as "floor's cap'n", spoke freely about the splendid quality of tin which lay at the head of "the drags."

Gossip was rife. People spoke of Caleb as being little short of a wizard.

"I d'hear 'ee's makin' a fortune there," was remarked on all hands by the dwellers in the district. "How in the world did 'a find it out? Why, I've passed the place hundreds of times, but I never dreamed there was tin there."

"I d'hear that 'ee got Bunny Joe to help'n," others declared; "and Bunny Joe d'know more about minin' than any man this side of Land's End. But be that as it may, the floor's cap'n d'say that before Lady Day 'ee'll have ten ton of tin cleaned and ready for the market."

"How much is tin a ton?" many were anxious to know, and when wild and extravagant answers were given, the people were more than ever agog with excitement.

As may be imagined, Caleb became not only the object of wonder, but the subject of much gossip. How did he, a farm-servant, discover tin beneath the barren wastes of the moors? The people recognized the fact that Spring Farm was miles away from the Ghost's Gorge, and it seemed little short of a miracle that a farm-servant, working among Sam Trethewy's fields, should learn of a valuable mineral deposit in a region where other people knew only of sedgy grass and ling.

Still the fact remained. The Ghost's Gorge Mine, as it was called, was believed to promise untold riches to young Caleb Besowsa, and, as a consequence, he became the cynosure of all eyes.

At first, Sir John Luzmore laughed sceptically when he was told that Caleb's venture promised great riches. "Poor fool!" he exclaimed. "He will wake up one day to find himself in difficulties of which he never dreamt."

"I paid the mine a visit yesterday," remarked Mr. Beans, to whom Sir John had been speaking.

“Well, what did you discover?” This was in the early days of the operations.

“I couldn't make it out,” replied Mr. Beans. “Of course, I know nothing about mining, and as it happens, I've never visited the mining districts, so I can't speak with anything like certainty; but everything seemed to me a hotch-potch of confusion.”

“In what way?” asked Sir John. Whereupon followed a conversation which caused the baronet to wonder.

As the reader already knows, Sir John had granted Caleb the mining rights over a certain tract of his land largely because Mr. Lanivet had told him that it might be wise on his part to give the young man a chance; but he had not the slightest faith in his venture. For one thing he had, as we have said, employed a mining expert to examine his land in the hope that mineral might be found there, and when that expert's report came, he had given up the idea as an absurdity. But more than that, he did not believe that Caleb had money to pay the necessary expenses. As far as he was aware, the young fellow was not only practically penniless, but friendless, and when he was told that at least thirty men were at work, not only digging underground but installing machinery, he was astonished beyond measure.

“I'll find out how the young beggar is doing it,” he said to himself. “After all, he couldn't have done anything without me, and, from what I know of him, he will be glad to tell me everything.”

He accordingly made his way to the Ghost's Gorge and found everything as Mr. Beans had described. When he sought to get information from Caleb, however, he was very angry at the young man's reticence. Indeed, as he afterwards said to himself, “The fellow spoke to me as though I were an interloper, instead of the owner of the land which has made all things possible.”

And yet, had he known it, Caleb was longing to tell Sir John everything. He believed that it depended on the success of Ghost's Gorge Mine whether the dreams he had dreamt about Rosalind would come true, and he anxiously brooded over every step that was taken, not so much

because he cared about wealth for himself, as because he longed with an increased longing for a smile from the girl who lay at the heart of his madness. But he told him nothing. He was afraid. Being more than ordinarily sensitive, he dared not make anything known until he reached a stage of certainty. He remembered the mocking look on Rosalind's face when he had visited Sir John about the mining rights, and he determined to be able to show her conclusive proofs of his success before saying anything. He could not bear the thought of Rosalind laughing at him as a failure, especially if he spoke to Sir John of his hopes and dreams. So he told him nothing of what his prospects were, or of John Snell's reports concerning the amount of tin which he would presently be able to put on the market.

"How many men have you got here, Besowsa?" asked Sir John at length.

"Thirty-two," was the reply.

"Many of them are skilled miners I am told?"

"It would be no use having farm labourers except for farm labourers' work," replied Caleb.

"But skilled miners demand a big wage, don't they?"

Caleb was silent.

"How did you get the money to pay them?" demanded Sir John. He spoke as one having a perfect right to know; but Caleb did not satisfy him.

Indeed, although many would have liked to know, Caleb told no one how he got his money. Eve had asked him on the night she had promised him that she would write to the bank manager at Launceston not to say anything to old Adam Sticker, and he determined that, as far as he was concerned, not only should old Adam know nothing about the conversation, but all the world should be ignorant.

"Those stamp-heads and axles and cogwheels must have cost a lot of money," ventured Sir John at length. "Where did you get them from?"

Caleb, knowing that there could be no secret about this, told him the name of the foundry.

"Wilkins & Co. would not give a fellow like that long

credit," reflected the baronet as he made his way back to the Hall, "and, as it happens, I know the chairman of the company."

When he got back to Luzmore Hall, therefore, he rang up Mr. Wilkins and asked to speak to him, personally.

"Yes, what can I do for you, Sir John?" asked Mr. Wilkins.

"I have just been to see the tin mine which has been started on my land," he confided. "The fellow who is responsible for everything was, until lately, a servant on one of my farms, and I was wondering how he could pay for all the machinery he got from you."

There was a tone of satisfaction in Mr. Wilkins's voice as he replied. "I saw young Besowsa when he came here about the castings," he said, "and he has paid ready money for everything he has had."

"How did he pay it?" asked Sir John.

"By cheque," was the reply.

"And the cheques were honoured?"

"Certainly. I took care not to send him anything until everything was right in that direction."

"By Jove!" the baronet reflected. "He paid by cheque, did he? Then he must have a banking account. How did he get a banking account? That fellow is a mystery!"

After dinner that night he informed Rosalind where he had been, and what had taken place.

Rosalind, however, seemed but little interested, although her curiosity was aroused. After all, the fact that a one-time farm-servant was engaged on a successful speculation, made but little appeal to the girl who would one day be the owner of Luzmore Hall, as well as the broad lands which surrounded it. Still, as I have said, her curiosity was aroused, and she asked her father several questions concerning what he had seen.

"And you say he would tell you nothing?" she remarked at length.

"No. He was very reticent. He seemed to regard my questions as impertinent. I had a difficulty in keeping my temper," he added.

“What! Besowsa did?”

“Yes,” replied Sir John.

The girl laughed scornfully. She remembered him as he looked on the day she had gone with her father to visit Spring Farm, and called to mind his appearance when she had asked him questions. How dared this farm-servant who appeared before her in his rough, ill-made farm clothes, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up, speak to her father in such a way!

“You remember we thought him changed when he came here after his visit to Lanivet,” went on Sir John. “If I remember aright, you congratulated him on his improved appearance.”

“Still, he was only a farm-servant in holiday clothes,” remarked Rosalind.

“You wouldn't say that if you saw him to-day,” replied Sir John. “Had I not known who he was, I should have taken him to be a gentleman. Evidently, too, his workmen did not seem to think that he had, only a few months ago, worked on Sam Trethewy's farm. They were very polite to him and called him 'sir.' The fellow has changed almost out of recognition these last few months.”

Perhaps it was well for Caleb's peace of mind that he did not see the look on Rosalind's face as her father said this. The girl evidently looked upon him as a clown, and beneath her notice. Nevertheless, she made up her mind that she would, at an early date, visit the Ghost's Gorge Mine.

Those were anxious days for Caleb. It was true the work was progressing satisfactorily and everything seemed to promise well, but nothing was as yet a certainty. How could there be certainty? He reflected that tin-mining was regarded all over the county as having seen its best days, and he remembered that there was scarcely a Cornish mine that was paying its way. Since his conversation with Mr. Lanivet he had studied the whole question with all the intelligence he possessed. Not only had he read many books, but he had talked with some of the best-known men in the mining world about things generally, and he had been told that there were many cases where

lodes had promised great things when first discovered, but which had been soon worked out. Of course, he had taken every precaution, and, according to Bunny Joe, the one he had discovered was no mere "bunch of tin" but a well-defined lode which went from east to west, and which promised to be as rich half a mile away as near the gorge itself. But nothing was certain, and he was haunted by the fear that after he had sunk the shaft and driven his levels, all would end in nothing. If that were the case he would be penniless, while all hopes concerning Rosalind would vanish into thin air.

He had been disturbed by the course of events, too. Never once had he seen the girl Eve since the night I have described. True to her promise, she had written to the manager of the bank in Launceston, and that gentleman had professed a willingness to place the sum that had been mentioned at his disposal. But the manager refused to give him any information concerning how Eve became possessed of such a large amount of money.

Another thing astonished him, too. Eve had neither demanded nor made provision for the security of the money. There was no contract, no agreement of any sort, and although the manager had hinted that he thought Eve's conduct in the matter was very foolish, no difficulty had been raised in any direction. All he knew was that a thousand pounds had been placed at his disposal and that he had absolute control over it. "How does she know I shall ever be able to pay her back?" he asked himself repeatedly. "For that matter, if the mine is a failure, I shan't be able to do anything, and I shall owe her all that money without a chance of returning her loan. Indeed, from what the bank manager said to me, she did not regard it as a loan at all, but a gift."

Of course, this made him all the more determined to pay back everything at the first possible moment. Nevertheless, it bewildered him.

But more than that, he had, as we have said, never seen her since that night, neither was she to be found in the little farmstead where Adam Sticker lived. Directly he had received his first letter from the bank manager he had

gone to what was called "The Gorge Farm," which lay between half a mile and a mile away from his mine, but she was not to be found there. The old woman who kept house for old Adam was not only deaf, but nearly blind, and although at length he made her understand what he wanted, she would say nothing save that Miss Eve had gone away somewhere, and whether she would return or not she did not know.

But that was not all. Although Eve was nowhere to be seen, he knew that old Adam was constantly watching him and following him. The old man hated him, too; he was sure of that. He had seen the look of malevolence shining from his eyes, and noted the fact that, although the old man was often seen loafing among the workings which were day by day becoming more and more developed, he scarcely ever obtained speech with him. He noticed, too, that old Adam nearly always carried a gun under his arm, and remembering Eve's repeated warnings, he could not shake off the thoughts which constantly haunted him.

One day, it was March now and the mine had been working for more than six months, Caleb saw a motor-car approaching. The chauffeur, who was at the wheel, was driving very slowly. Evidently he realized that the track was very rough, and that he must be careful or the springs of the car might suffer. A few minutes later the young man recognized his visitor, and although he did not know why the owner of such a car should come to see him, he made his way towards it.

A minute later his heart was beating rapidly.

The new-comer was Mr. Lanivet.

That gentleman, on alighting, although he evidently saw Caleb, did not make his way towards him, and the young man, who stood perhaps twenty yards off, watched him curiously.

Of course, in a way, it was natural that Mr. Lanivet should pay him a visit. An important part of his mine was on Mr. Lanivet's land, and thus he might have had curiosity to know how he was progressing. Still, as Mr. Trewhella, his steward, had been there only a few weeks before, and had asked him numerous questions about his

proceedings, Caleb imagined that the Squire of Lanivet would be well informed as to how matters were progressing. He remembered with satisfaction, too, that he had paid Mr. Trewhella the hundred pounds he had stipulated as a guarantee of his good faith, and, although he watched his visitor curiously, he did not fear his presence. And yet, as we have said, his heart beat rapidly. Why he could not tell. Perhaps he was curious to know why he came, for Mr. Lanivet had the reputation of taking little or no interest in the workings of his estate. Mr. Sercombe, the rector of the parish, had told him that Mr. Lanivet was a recluse and difficult to approach. Caleb judged, too, as he remembered the book-lined room in which he had been received, that its owner was a book-lover, if not a scholar.

The owner of the car, on alighting, looked around him like one curious. His attention was not wholly devoted to the mine. His eyes swept over the broad expanse of the moors, towards Brown Willy away in the distance, as well as the objects that lay nearer. He also looked long and steadily in the direction of old Adam Sticker's farm, and then, after seemingly taking note of everything, he walked quickly towards Caleb. "Good morning, Besowsa," he said as he came up to him.

"Good morning, Mr. Lanivet," and Caleb could not help thinking how different he was from Sir John Luzmore. The baronet was not prepossessing, and his very presence seemed to proclaim that he was the owner of all around him. Mr. Lanivet, on the other hand, was tall and looked almost attenuated. He had the scholar's stoop, too, and although he moved quickly towards the young "adventurer," there was nothing in his appearance which suggested aggressiveness.

"Matters are evidently progressing favourably with you, Besowsa," remarked the Squire, first giving a quick glance towards the water-wheel and the stamps, and then looking steadily at their owner.

"I hope so, sir."

"Are you not satisfied?"

"All the indications so far are favourable, sir; but mining must in its very nature be a matter of speculation."

“ Why ? ”

“ Because the lode, although it promises well, might what we call work out any day.”

“ Yes, I suppose so,” replied the owner of the land reflectively. “ You have spent a good deal of money here, too ? ” he added as he looked at the huge heap of debris which lay in the near distance and at the work-people who stood near the “ ricks ” and “ buddles.”

“ Yes, I suppose I have,” replied Caleb, and although Mr. Lanivet's statement was in the form of a question, he did not resent it as he had resented Sir John Luzmore's remarks on the same question.

“ I hope you will be amply repaid for your outlay,” went on his visitor quietly. “ It would be hard on you if everything should end in nothing.”

Caleb did not reply, but as he remembered from whom his money came, he felt the truth of the other's words.

“ Have you sent any tin to the market ? ” asked Mr. Lanivet presently.

“ A little, sir ; but, of course, it is early days yet. However, I think we are now producing enough to pay the wages.”

“ Didn't you tell me,” went on his visitor presently, “ that you worked as a farm-servant in this district ? I think I remember something about it.”

“ Yes,” replied Caleb. “ I worked for Mr. Trethewy at Spring Farm for more than four years.”

“ But you could not pay for all this out of your savings as a farm-servant ? ”

“ Oh no, sir,” and while he felt Mr. Lanivet's eyes were full of questioning, he was not at all angry at his demeanour, “ I saved only fifty pounds while in Mr. Trethewy's service.”

“ Ah ! You were lucky in having some good friends ? ”

“ I was indeed, sir.”

“ Forgive me if I appear impertinent,” went on Mr. Lanivet, “ but haven't you a well-to-do uncle ? ”

“ Yes, I have, but I have received no help from him.”

“ Indeed ? ” and there was more than an ordinary look of interest in his questioner's eyes.

"No, sir," and then with a burst of confidence utterly unusual to him, Caleb went on: "For that matter my uncle, Joshua Besowsa, has kept back moneys from me which rightfully belong to me."

"Ah! How is that?" and the dark, piercing eyes of the Squire of Lanivet rested questioningly on Caleb's face.

"Well, sir, of course you can have no interest in it, but I think I told you that my father had a little farm down west near a town called Polgooth?"

"Yes, I believe I remember," replied the other like one trying to collect his thoughts.

"He died five years ago," replied Caleb. "He fell out of his cart while coming from a distant town, and was killed. Directly after his funeral I left Polgooth and came here. I did not believe that after paying his debts there would be anything left; but there was."

"Oh! How was that?"

"After the sale of his goods something like a hundred and fifty pounds remained, which my Uncle Joshua appropriated."

"But surely he had no right to do that?"

"No, he had not. I won't trouble you with the circumstances, but I applied to him for the money."

"Naturally. What then?"

"Before he would part with it he wanted me to sign a paper declaring that when he had paid it he had no further obligations to me."

"And you would not sign that paper? Why?"

"Because I was led to believe that he *had* other obligations to me."

"Indeed. May I ask what they were? You see," went on the Squire, "I happen to have met Mr. Joshua Besowsa, and I have some property in Week St. Peter, where he was born and reared."

"Then you know Pentewan Farm?" asked Caleb.

"Yes, certainly."

"I think I have told you before that it was owned by my grandfather, who died without making a Will," went on Caleb. "If I have been informed aright, what my

grandfather left should belong to my father as well as my uncle. Indeed, my father, being the eldest son, ought to have had a greater claim on Pentewan even than my uncle."

"It might be so, certainly," replied Mr. Lanivet, smiling.

"Joshua Besowsa sold Pentewan," went on Caleb, "but I, as my father's only son, have not shared in the proceeds. If I am right in my conjectures, I ought to have shared in those proceeds. That is why, when my uncle wanted me to sign that paper, I refused to do so. As a consequence I have not received a penny even of that hundred and fifty pounds."

"Your uncle has held fast to it, eh?"

"If you have property in Week St. Peter," replied Caleb, "you will have heard something of my uncle's character."

For more than a minute after this, a silence fell between them. A far-away look was in Mr. Lanivet's eyes, and he seemed to be thinking deeply.

"So you have not received anything at all from your uncle?" he said at length.

"Not a penny, sir."

"Ah! I see. So when I stipulated that a hundred pounds should be paid as a guarantee of your good faith, you had a difficulty in finding it?"

"A great difficulty, sir."

"And you say you have not received a penny, in any way, from your uncle?" persisted Mr. Lanivet.

"Not a penny, sir. Indeed, but for a friend who had no knowledge of him, I should have been forced to give it up as hopeless."

"I see. And haven't you taken any steps to recover what you believe your uncle owes you?"

"I wrote to the lawyer in Plymouth who dealt with the sale of Pentewan, but he told me that my uncle refuses to disgorge a penny."

"I wonder you don't force him."

"How can I, sir? There is no other way than by going to law, and I, with this mine on my hands," and Caleb looked around him, "dare not do that. Perhaps in

a few months' time, if things go well with me, I shall do what you suggest ; but at present I daren't."

"I see," replied Mr. Lanivet thoughtfully.

The Squire remained with him for perhaps another hour, during which time Caleb showed him all that had been done during the past few months. He told him, too, how he had at first been led to believe that there was tin there, and what steps he had taken to make certain of his discovery.

"Well, you are a plucky young beggar, anyhow," remarked the Squire at length, "and I congratulate you on the success you have already had. Did you find any difficulty with Sir John Luzmore?"

"In what way, sir?"

"In obtaining mining rights from him. As you know, my property joins his."

"Yes, sir, and I believe I have to thank you for his consent."

"How? In what way?"

Caleb told him of his interview with Sir John and his steward at Luzmore Hall.

"I am glad I was of service to you, Besowsa," Mr. Lanivet said presently; and, as I said, I hope you will succeed here. Of course, that is natural, seeing I have an interest in your success."

When his visitor had gone Caleb was strangely distraught, and seemed to take little interest in the mine, but when, towards three o'clock in the afternoon, he saw a girl riding towards him on horseback, all remembrance of Mr. Lanivet's visit left him.

"Great heavens!" he said to himself. "It's Rosalind!"

CHAPTER XVII

NEVER had Rosalind appeared so fair to Caleb as on that afternoon. The end of March had now come, and the moors, which were often covered by a soaking mist throughout the winter months, were now bathed in

sunlight, and the journey from Luzmore Hall to the Ghost's Gorge Mine had brought such a colour to the girl's face that she seemed a part of that bright, spring day. Her eyes sparkled with excitement, too. She was but a young girl, and doubtless the thought of visiting the spot, which had been so much talked about for miles around, aroused within her more than an ordinary amount of interest. "Hullo, Besowsa!" she cried, as he went towards her. "I have heard so much about your wonderful venture here that I could not help coming to look at it!"

"There is nothing so wonderful about it," replied Caleb.

"But there is!" denied the girl. "When I was here less than a year ago, the whole neighbourhood seemed like the home of the dead, while now it is a centre of life. Are you going to be as successful as people say you are?"

"I hope so," replied Caleb.

"You must show me everything!" cried the girl.

"I am afraid there isn't much to show you," and Caleb looked around him as he spoke. "Mining is a very prosy business," he added, "and you will see little more than stamp heads grinding ore to powder."

He tried to speak calmly, but his heart was thumping like a sledge-hammer, and he could scarcely recognize his own voice.

Perhaps there was little wonder at this, for Caleb had never heard her speak so graciously as now, and never had he so felt the charm of her presence. As we have said, the flush of youth burnt on her cheeks; her eyes sparkled with the joy of living, and her whole being seemed instinct with life.

"Well, where shall we begin, Besowsa?" she asked.

Up to now she had remained on her horse, which had been nibbling at the sedgy grass which grew on the moors.

"If you will allow me, I will help you to alight," said Caleb. "Perhaps, too, I had better call a 'floor-boy' to hold your horse."

"That would be nice of you," laughed the girl, and she prepared to dismount.

The next minute Caleb felt as though the dreary moors were a paradise, while the thumping of the stamps seemed to be the music of the angels. In alighting she had placed her ungloved hand in his, and the touch of her fingers as they fastened themselves around his own seemed to make everything possible. A quivering joy passed up his arm and suffused his whole being. "Why, Caleb," she cried, "you have helped me from Phœbe as though you were accustomed to such work!"

Poor Caleb! He did not know at all what to say, for never before in his life had he felt such joy as he felt now. The dreams of the last few months were being realized. Rosalind, who had always seemed a long way off, had become near. He had touched her hand, and she had called him Caleb. What mattered the months of fear and anxiety now? What mattered old Adam Sticker's evident hatred? What mattered anything? Rosalind was by his side, and she had called him Caleb! He did not reflect that she looked upon him as something far beneath her. It scarcely mattered at all what she said to him; everything was swallowed up in the fact that she was interested in him; that she had ridden for miles to visit him, and that they were together at the mine which was to make impossible things possible.

Scarcely knowing what he was doing, he beckoned one of the boys who were working on the floors to his side. Then, after telling him to hold her horse, he made his way, with Rosalind at his side, towards the stamp heads.

"How clever you must be!" laughed the girl. "Did you know anything about mining when I first saw you at Luzmore Hall park gates?"

He shook his head.

"Then how did you learn so much about it? Tell me how you discovered that tin was here. You will tell me, won't you?"

Tell her! His very life was hers for the asking! Perhaps to the old man who was looking after the stamps that day she was nothing but a commonplace flapper. At best she was simply Sir John Luzmore's daughter, who, because her father had plenty of money, was able to obtain

beautiful clothes and to ride a high-spirited horse ; but to Caleb, who had scarcely passed out of his boyhood, she was something more than human. Her silvery laugh was not simply musical, it was music ; her presence made everything new. He never dreamt that she looked upon him as a farm-servant, who, because he had a little more education than hundreds of farm louts who toiled among the fields and who had been a little more fortunate than they, had made himself interesting. At that moment he was in Arcadia, that land of sunshine and song, where angel presences lit up the world with glory. He had never loved anyone before, and the thought of loving anyone but Rosalind had never entered his brain. From the first moment he had seen her, and had caught the "flash of her eyes' wild fire," he had become her slave. His every thought had been for her ; his every hope had been centred in her. She was not only the great lady of the manor, and more beautiful than a poet's dream ; she was all the world to him, and through her everything would become possible.

"Tell me how you knew that there was tin here," she laughed. "Did you find out by yourself, or did others help you?"

"I don't think anyone helped me—at least at the beginning," replied Caleb. "Not long after I saw you first I came out here on the moors alone, I think it was on a Sunday afternoon, I am not sure now, but I went down into the gorge yonder where the water from the wheel pit is now running. It wasn't a big stream, but it had left a red deposit in its bed, and it set me thinking."

"Thinking about what?" asked the girl.

"Thinking what it meant. I did not know much about mining, but I had been reared in a mining district, and I thought that the red deposit must mean something. I picked up some stones, too, and they sparkled in a way I had never seen stones sparkle before ; so I went to see an old man I had heard about and he told me lots of things."

"What did he tell you?" asked the girl, and to Caleb there was something caressing in her tones.

For a moment there seemed a weight upon his lips, and he hesitated. Something, he knew not what, stood between him and the girl. He remembered all that took place afterwards, and it seemed to him that if he told her all that had happened, he would be betraying a trust. Yet why he felt so he could not tell. "This old man told me lots of things," he went on at length. "Anyhow, what he told me led to my coming here again and again. After all, it was very simple."

"Simple!" cried the girl. "How could finding mineral in such a place be simple?"

"Oh, I got hold of a dowzing stick."

"A dowzing stick! What's that?"

So he told her what it meant.

"Oh, Caleb," she repeated, "you are clever! You are *awfully* clever!" and going towards him she caught his arm.

Again he felt that delicious tingling pass through his coat-sleeve, and find its way through his whole body. Again, too, he was her slave. But he said nothing more just then. They had reached the great water-wheel—or it seemed great to the girl—which in its revolutions turned the axle, and which at each turn lifted the great stamp heads.

"And did all these dirty stones come from underground?" she asked.

"Yes, they came from underground."

"But tell me in what way, Caleb."

"Well, you see that windlass there? That's the top of the shaft, and it's ten fathoms deep. The miners sunk it right down through the lode I had discovered, and it is there that they are working now."

"And what are those men doing there?" she asked, pointing to the floors.

"I will show you," replied Caleb, and he led the way towards them. "You see the stamp heads grinding the ore to powder, don't you? You see, too, that every time they fall there is a splashing of what seems like sand through the sieves there? That sand is rich with tin, and it is coming out into these drags."

"You mean those spaces between the long boards?" cried the girl.

"Yes. Tin is heavier than the ordinary addle."

"Addle! What do you mean by addle?"

Whereupon Caleb entered into a long explanation, and told her that the tin remained at the head of the drags, while the water washed the sand away as so much waste. Told her, too, that the "tin sand" was taken out from the heads of the drags, and that, by means of the "buddles" and "ricks," it was cleaned again and again until only the mineral remained.

"Oh, Caleb!" cried the girl, repeating his name as though it were natural for her to do so. "It is just wonderful, wonderful! And tin is very valuable, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Caleb. "Just now the price of tin is very high, and if the lode continues good it means a lot of money to me."

"May I see the lode?" asked the girl.

"I would gladly show it to you," he replied, "but even if I did it would mean nothing to you. A lode is simply a vein of mineral which runs through the countryside, and to the ordinary onlooker it would mean nothing. Besides, going down a shaft is not easy for people who are not accustomed to it. At present every miner goes down by means of a ladder. Come, and I will show you."

A few minutes later they stood at the shaft head where two men, by means of a large windlass and an iron bucket called a kibble, which hung at the end of a strong rope, drew the ore to the top. He explained to her that in mining districts the shafts and levels were called "underground workings," while all above them is called "grass." Thus the miners, when they left the levels in order to get to the open air, said "we are going to grass."

To the girl this seemed quaint and humorous, and she laughed merrily. "Then are you going to make a fortune here?" she asked at length.

"I hope so," he replied.

"How long will it take you?" and she spoke with all the simplicity of a girl in her 'teens.

"It all depends how long the lode holds out," he explained. "If it keeps on yielding tin as it does now, I shall be making money rapidly."

“And what are you going to do with all your money when you get it?” she asked.

They were some little distance from the shaft's head now and were walking towards Caleb's office, a little wooden hut which had been erected on the spot where Caleb had gone to sleep on the night Bunny Joe had told that there was a fortune there.

It was then that Caleb was on the point of telling her all his hopes and dreams; but he did not. Something happened which caused his words to die on his lips. It seemed nothing of importance; it was only another question which the girl had thoughtlessly asked. “Caleb,” she said, “this must have cost you a tremendous lot of money?”

“Yes, it did,” he replied.

“You must have spent hundreds of pounds in erecting that water-wheel, putting in all those stamps, and what you call the floors?”

“Yes, I did,” he repeated.

“But where did you get all that money? You didn't have any when you came to Luzmore Hall and asked my father for mining rights, did you?”

Quick as a flash, the evening when he had visited Mr. Beans and Sir John Luzmore came into his mind. He heard himself telling the baronet that he wanted mining rights over his land. He heard Sir John's reply, too, and he recalled the fact that Mr. Beans, his steward, had spoken to his employer in a language which he, Caleb, could not understand. Then when Sir John had repeated his refusal to give him the rights he desired, he told him of what Mr. Lanivet had done.

He did not know at all why he should be thinking of these things, yet they were as vivid to his memory as if they had happened the day before. He remembered, too, how, after Sir John had gone to speak to Mr. Lanivet over the private telephone, he had returned with Rosalind by his side, after which Rosalind had taken part in the conversation. In spite of himself, Caleb's heart hardened as he thought of this, for he remembered the look of scorn and mockery on the girl's face. She had seemed to regard his venture as the foolishness of a brainless clown, and he had

vowed again that he would make his dream a reality, and that he would prove to this proud girl that he was not a brainless lout.

No doubt he was foolish. No doubt, too, she had thought him mad, yet such was the case. Sir John had laughingly suggested that she, Rosalind, should be a kind of lady bountiful, who should help a struggling youth, and she had ridiculed the idea.

Even then as the girl stood by his side he could not help remembering these things. To her he was only a helpless fool who was not worth encouraging—— But he had not given up! That very night he had again gone to the gorge, and while there that never-to-be-forgotten conversation with the girl who called herself Eve had taken place. He had never seen her since; and yet the fact burned in his heart and memory that she had offered him money whereby he was able to carry out his desires.

“Have you any rich relations, Besowsa?” And still Rosalind spoke to him as the grand lady of the district would naturally speak to an inferior who had been fortunate.

“None who would help me,” he replied savagely.

“But somebody must have helped you?”

“Yes,” and the word escaped through his set teeth.

“Who was it?”

“Someone who trusted me; someone who believed in me,” he replied.

“Do I know him?”

“No.”

Almost unconsciously he led her past his little office towards the brow of the hill where a part of the country which had hitherto been hidden from them was revealed. Looking, he saw old Adam Sticker's little farm, and he remembered the night when Eve had shown him the flickering light there.

“Who helped you?” she asked.

“Someone lent me money,” he replied.

He did not tell her that, in placing a thousand pounds at his disposal, Eve had stipulated nothing, neither were any contracts signed!

"Then you are still owing money to the person who made it possible for you to start mining?"

"Yes," he replied savagely.

Even then it all appeared strange to him; so strange that nothing seemed real or tangible. That morning when Mr. Lanivet talked with him everything was commonplace, matter-of-fact. It was true that the Squire had questioned him closely about his Uncle Joshua, and he, Caleb, had spoken freely; but there was nothing unreal or unnatural about their conversation. Now, however, all was different, and even while his heart was yearning for the girl at his side, and while, in a way, he wanted to tell her everything, something stood between them.

"Besowsa," she went on, "was this person who lent you the money a friend of yours?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I am curious to know. Who was it?"

"A stranger."

"Did he know about what you call the lode which lay underneath the earth?"

"She does not know who it is," he reflected. "She hasn't the faintest suspicion who my helper is." He felt glad of this because he had promised Eve to keep her identity a secret.

"Caleb," went on the girl without waiting for him to answer the question she had asked him. "I am awfully glad my father granted you the mining rights. You couldn't have done what you have done without them, could you?"

"No," replied Caleb.

"It is all so interesting, so romantic!" she went on. "Just think of it! To own a mine out here on these moors! Oh, it *was* clever of you! You discovered what even the mining experts failed to find! I do envy you!"

"Why do you envy me?" asked Caleb.

"Because of what you have done. I should love to own a mine," she added.

Of course, her words were only the thoughtless remarks of a foolish child. She paid little attention to what she

was saying, but what she said acted on Caleb like a spark on a powder magazine.

"Would you like to own *this* mine?" he asked.

"Wouldn't I just!" laughed the girl. "Why, I would give anything to be able to say to my friends that this mine—about which everybody is talking—belongs to me."

"Then you shall have it!" replied Caleb simply.

"Have it?" she asked in astonishment.

"Yes, have it. I will give it all to you."

"Give it all to me? Why should you?" she asked in astonishment.

"Because I want to give everything I have to you," he cried. "Because I love you more than my own life; because you have been in my mind in everything I have done! Don't you understand, Rosalind?" The last words were drawn from him in spite of himself, for he had not failed to notice the change which had come over her face; a change which, while it had intensified his longing a thousand times, had also caused him to fear. "Surely you must have guessed it," he went on. "Do you remember that first day on which I saw you? I do. I shall never forget it! I was afraid that fool of a chauffeur was going to kill you and— Oh, Rosalind, I have longed for you ever since! I knew you were as far removed from me as the stars; knew that I was only an ordinary lad, but I could not help myself. I love you! love you! love you! I would gladly die to win a smile from you, and it is for you I have done everything I have done!"

He scarcely knew what he was saying, and the words passed his lips rapidly, excitedly. "Don't you understand?" he went on. "That is why I want to give you the mine. But you must love me, Rosalind," and his voice became hoarse.

"Love *you*!" she gasped.

"Yes, love me! Nothing would be any good without that, and you will, won't you? Say you will, and I will give you all I have! Yes, and I will become worthy of you, too! I will work for you night and day! I will— Why are you looking at me like that?" For the girl was staring at him like one afraid. More than that, he could

not help noticing the anger that flashed from her eyes, and the loathing which expressed itself in her every feature.

"Why, you must be mad!" she cried. "Just *mad!*"

"Why should I be mad?" he asked. "But you are right, I am mad. Mad in my love for you! Mad in my desire to give everything I have and am to you! I cannot help myself. And you do love me a little, don't you, Rosalind?"

Again the girl looked at him in astonishment. "Love *you!*—*YOU!!*" she repeated, and there was a world of scorn in her voice.

"Yes, me."

She continued to look at him steadily for nearly a minute; then she burst out into wild, mocking laughter.

"Yes, me," he repeated, for her laughter almost made him lose control over himself. "And you are going to love me, too! And, what is more, you are going to marry me!"

"Love *you!*—Marry *YOU!*"

"Yes."

"You must be mad!" Then, as if the absurdity of his plea became more and more evident to her, she laughed again.

"You may laugh if you like," and now he spoke savagely, "but I am going to have you! And, what is more, you will be glad to have me. Yes, you will! Kiss me, Rosalind!"

Perhaps she realized something in his voice which neither he nor she understood, but stark fear came into her eyes. Then with a little scream she left him and rushed away towards the spot where her horse stood.

He started to follow her, but his feet seemed leaden, and he could not move. Then with madness still shining in his eyes, he watched her until she reached her horse. Without waiting for help of any sort, she leapt on its back, and a few seconds later was galloping madly across the moors.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR several minutes Caleb stood like one stunned, scarcely realizing what he had said. For that matter, all that had taken place during the last hour was unreal to him. And yet everything was changed. The sky, which a few minutes before had been a great dome of blue, seemed to become suddenly black; the mine which had promised him everything was now a mockery. What did he care now that John Snell had told him that very morning that in another week they would have ten tons of tin ready for the market? What to him was the hope that in a few years he would become a rich man? What was anything?

He still stood watching, and while he watched he saw Rosalind gradually fading out of sight. Then she mounted a hill, after which she disappeared.

What was she thinking about, he wondered. Would she tell her father what had taken place? Would it become known throughout the countryside that he had dared to tell Rosalind Luzmore he loved her, and had asked her to become his wife? He imagined the laughter that would spring to the lips of country yokels; imagined, too, the anger which the baronet would feel when he heard Rosalind's story.

But he did not care, and in a way he could not understand he was not sorry that he had spoken. At least she knew the truth now; knew that he had done everything for her.

Besides, he had done nothing of which he was ashamed; rather he had done something which no one had ever done before. He had discovered wealth on a spot which everyone else had regarded as worthless, and he was at that moment an important employer of labour in the district. More than that, he was an object of wonder and envy throughout the whole countryside.

And he was not defeated, either. It was true that the only girl he had ever loved, or ever would love, for that matter, mocked him, derided him, loathed him. She had

looked on him as though he were a poisonous reptile. She had laughed to scorn what he had said. But no, he was not beaten! He had failed in his first attempt, but he would win her. This proud lady of Luzmore Hall should be glad some day at what he had said. The time would come when her answer should be different, and when, instead of mocking him, she would rejoice in the confession he had made.

For a long time he stood alone, heedless of his surroundings. The stamps still continued to clang on the tin ore, while the men on the floors prepared to leave work.

“Caleb! Caleb Besowsa!”

He scarcely realized that he had been spoken to, so full was his mind with what had taken place. Nevertheless, he was startled. It might be Rosalind's voice! But no, it could not be. Only a few minutes before he had watched her as she disappeared behind the distant hill. Turning quickly he saw that he was not alone; saw, too, that a girl was by his side. But it was not Rosalind who spoke; it was Eve, whom he had not seen for months and to whom he owed so much.

His passion had spent itself by this time and he was able to think calmly again.

“Caleb, who was that girl to whom you were talking?” She spoke as casually as if she had parted from him only the night before.

“Eve,” responded Caleb, “where have you been all this long time?”

“I have been in Devonshire,” was her reply.

“Devonshire?” he exclaimed. “What have you been doing there?” Then realizing that his question might be regarded as an impertinence, he went on: “I only asked because I have wanted to see you.”

“Why have you wanted to see me?”

“Surely you are not surprised that I should,” was his reply. “I have never seen you since that night when you said you would lend me a thousand pounds.”

“Did the money come all right?” she asked quickly.

“Of course it did,” replied Caleb. “That was why I wanted to see you. Do you know, Eve, that no proper

arrangements were made about that money? There was no contract either."

"What do you want with a contract?" asked the girl.

"I wanted to protect you," replied Caleb. "If I were to die you have no record of any sort that I owe you all that money."

"But you are not going to die, are you? Are you ill?"

"No, I am not ill," he replied; "but I want to make you safe."

"Safe?" repeated the girl. "I don't want to be safe."

"Of course, that's nonsense! Why did you let me have it if you didn't expect to be paid back?"

"I told you why that night months ago."

"Why was it, then?" he asked like one trying to recall something.

"Because I trusted you and because I believed in you. I am glad to hear that the mine is a success, Caleb."

"It is," he replied, "and soon—I don't know how long—but soon I will pay you back every penny."

The girl laughed merrily. She did not seem to regard his promise as of any importance whatever. "Who was that girl you were talking to?" she asked again.

"What girl?" He was not sure that he wanted her to know.

"I have been watching you for a long time," Eve replied. "I was just coming to see you, when I saw her coming towards the mine on horseback. She looked very beautiful. Who was she?"

"I told you about her," replied Caleb. "She is Sir John Luzmore's daughter, and she came here to see how the mine was progressing."

"What did you say to her?"

"Why?" he evaded.

"Because she seemed angry. Was she?"

Caleb did not speak. In a way he could not explain, he did not want Eve to know what had taken place.

"Caleb Besowsa," went on the girl, "I don't think grandfather feels as bitterly towards you as he did."

"No? Why?"

"I don't know, but he doesn't. More than that, I don't think he minds you having the mine now. As I told you months and months ago, he hated you for forestalling him; but I think that's gone now. It's all very strange, isn't it?"

Caleb looked at her curiously. "What is strange?" he asked.

"That grandfather should cease caring about the mine. At first I thought he meant to murder you, and I told him that if he harmed you in any way I would never speak to him again. But he seemed pleased to tell me, last night, when I came home from Devonshire, that you had been successful. All the same, you wouldn't have had the mine if he hadn't hated Sir John Luzmore."

"Hated Sir John Luzmore!" cried Caleb in astonishment. "Why should he hate him?"

"I don't know. As I told you months ago, it is all a mystery to me. He must have known that the lode ran through Sir John's land as well as through Mr. Lanivet's, but he never said anything about it. I don't understand it at all. He said he would rather die than ask a favour of any Luzmore."

She spoke as simply and artlessly as a child might speak. More than that, she seemed utterly different from the girl with whom he had been speaking a few minutes before.

"Did you anger Miss Luzmore?" she went on.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because you seemed so excited. What did you say to her? You didn't want to anger her, did you?"

Caleb waited a minute before replying. He remembered that on the last occasion he had seen Eve, he had told her all his hopes concerning Rosalind; told her, too, that it was because she was all the world to him and because he had determined to make her his wife, that he wanted to make the mine a success. "Eve," he said, "you told me months ago that you had never been in love, didn't you?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Well, that explains everything. If you had ever been

in love you would understand. I had never dared to speak to her before, but I did this afternoon. I told her all that was in my heart, and I asked her to become my wife; in fact, I told her she must be. She became angry; so angry that I was almost afraid of her."

After all, he was only a boy and knew nothing of the ways of the world; that was why he spoke to Eve so confidently and so freely about what Rosalind called his madness.

"She was angry with me," he went on. "She called me all sorts of names; but I am not one who gives up. When I make up my mind to do a thing, that thing has got to be done. I never allow myself to be beaten."

Eve looked at him like one fascinated. "Don't you think you are very foolish, Caleb?" she asked after a long pause.

"Foolish! Why am I foolish? I told you months ago what I thought about her, and I am not one who changes."

"But surely you do not think that a grand lady like that would ever marry you?"

"Of course I do, and I am going to make her, too. I know it sounds senseless to you, but not all the devils in hell shall stop me from carrying out what I have set my mind on. I am like that, you know," and he spoke through his set teeth. "Eve," he went on after another long silence, "I want to ask you something. Will you answer me?"

"If I can."

"Do you realize that you have made everything possible for me? That night when I saw you last I almost despaired of everything. Mr. Lanivet's steward had demanded that I should put down a hundred pounds as a kind of guarantee, and I hadn't a hundred pounds. Then *you* made everything easy. But for that money you let me have, nothing would have been possible. It seems like a kind of destiny, doesn't it?"

Eve continued to look steadily at him, but spoke no word.

"What I can't understand," he said, "and what I want you to tell me is this: How did you get that thousand pounds?"

"I don't think I would tell you even if I knew," replied the girl. "Isn't it enough that I was able to let you have the money?"

"I don't feel happy about it," and his voice was hoarse. "I made a boast just now. I said that whatever I set my mind on getting, I got; but I could have got nothing without you, and I don't feel happy about it. Of course, you are not like the other girls who live on these moors, but I don't understand how you could get a thousand pounds. Besides, why should you give it to me? You made no stipulations, you did not even make me promise to pay it back."

Eve looked away from him at this, and fixed her eyes on the little farmstead which she called her home. "I thought I had explained that to you months ago," was her reply. "You seemed so hopeless and so despairing that I wanted to help you."

"Yes, but why should you want to help me? I was nothing to you, and never can be anything more than I am now. It isn't as though I were related to you in any way."

"As I told you, I trusted you, I believed in you," she said slowly.

"Of course, I will pay you back every penny," he replied airily. "You shall have interest on your money, too. But why should you do it?"

"I don't know," replied Eve, "beyond what I have said. I knew that there was a lot of money that belonged to me in the bank, and that it was mine to do what I liked with; so when I saw the state of mind you were in, I told you—what I did."

"But you said your grandfather had been saving his money for years in order to do what I have done. Why didn't you give it to him?"

"I don't think I will tell you any more, Caleb Besowsa," she replied after another long silence, "and I must get back home. But I do congratulate you, and I am awfully

glad to know that I have had some part in your success." She left him as she spoke.

When she reached Ghost's Gorge Farm old Adam Sticker, who had been watching her from the farmyard gates, asked her many questions concerning her conversation with Caleb; and although she answered him freely, she did not say a word about what Caleb had told her about Rosalind.

As for Caleb, he waited at the mine for a long time. Then, after a conversation with the stamps' watcher, he made his way back to Spring Farm. "It's been a wonderful day," he reflected as he trudged along. "First Mr. Lanivet's visit, and then the coming of Rosalind. I didn't mean to speak to her yet. I have been told that her betrothal to Lord Trelaske's son has been put off, and I thought there was no need to hurry. But, my God, when I saw her, when she called me Caleb, when I caught the look in her eyes, I couldn't stop myself! And wasn't she mad! Why—why——"

He had become oblivious to his surroundings; did not know when he had left the moors and entered upon Sam Trethewy's loamy fields. His whole being was swallowed up in the remembrance of his conversation with Rosalind. As for Eve, immediately after her departure, he scarcely thought of her, and what she had said to him seemed as light as thistledown.

"I am almost glad she said what she did," he reflected presently. "It gives me something more to fight for, and something more to conquer. I'll get her, too! By God, I'll not be beaten!"

On arriving at the field which was called "the calves' meadow," and which lay nearest to Sam Trethewy's farmyard, he stopped and looked steadfastly at the farm-house. "It is five years since the night I first came here," he reflected. "Then I was a starved little urchin, and I fell down in a faint at the back door. I never dreamt then of what would come to me; never imagined——"

A look of wonder came into his eyes, a look which told of strange thoughts; but he did not say a word to Sam Trethewy or his family concerning what had taken place that day.

“ Well, sir,” said Sam as he entered the front kitchen, “ how are things looking at the mine ? ”

Sam had utterly changed in his demeanour towards Caleb during the last few months, and regarded his success as a sufficient reason for speaking to him more respectfully than had been the case in the days of his poverty. Sam, like many other men of his order, judged people by the money they commanded. Thus, while he spoke to Caleb cavalierly enough in the days of his poverty, he now regarded him with a kind of awe. That the starved, badly-clad boy who had come to his house five years before, had, by his own unaided efforts, become the employer of a number of men ; and what was more, was spoken of as one who would die a rich man, was to the farmer a certain proof that he was a kind of favourite of an overruling Providence.

“ Oh, do stop that ! ” cried Caleb a little impatiently.

“ Stop what, Mr. Besowsa ? ”

“ Calling me ‘ sir ’ and ‘ Mr. Besowsa, ’ ” cried the young man. “ I am no different now from the night I first came, and it makes me mad that you should speak to me in such a way.”

“ I can't help it,” replied Sam. “ When I think of what you looked like on the night you first came, and what you look like now, I can't help believing that the Almighty has a special interest in you. I didn't think of it at the time, but now I am sure that you were meant to get on. You will be the biggest man in Cornwall yet, sir. Why, people are saying that you'll soon be making a hundred pounds a month profit. Just think of it ! ”

“ People are fools ! ” replied Caleb irritably.

“ That's all very well, sir, but we can't close our eyes to facts. I am proud that you still remain a lodger here. It isn't for the profit we are making out of you either ; you mustn't think that. It's because you, who, a little more than a year ago, worked in my fields as a servant, have become a great man in the district. I am proud, sir, that's what I am, proud ! Gracie, my dear, you have got Mr. Besowsa's supper ready, haven't you ? ”

Gracie, whose only reply was an angry glance at her

father, prepared his meal. She felt a little ashamed of her father's fulsome flattery, as well as the fact that he almost worshipped anything like success. And yet she, too, looked at Caleb with something like awe. She also remembered the night when he first came there, and she called to mind her mother's words which declared that he was "nothing but skin and bone." What a change had come over their one-time servant! Instead of a ragged, underfed urchin she saw a tall, stalwart form, clad in well-cut garments, and she was glad that in the early days she had lent him books, and expressed her desire to help him.

"I am not going to call you Mr. Besowsa, anyhow," Gracie laughed as she placed his evening meal before him.

"And I am not going to call you Miss Trethewy either," replied Caleb, "although you *have* grown up to be a beautiful young lady."

"Young lady!" she cried eagerly. "I am no young lady, especially to *you*, Caleb. I am just the same Gracie that I always was."

"You were always good to me, and I shan't forget it in a hurry," was his answer. "Of course, I have always looked on you as my little mistress, but you treated me as though I were your brother."

"I am told that Sir John Luzmore thinks the world of you," broke in Sam Trethewy, "and, I must say, since the day you went to see him about the new buildings he has spoken to me different like. He knows which side his bread is buttered, does Sir John, in spite of his proud ways. Do you know, it's common talk in the neighbourhood that you are feathering Sir John's nest as well as your own."

"How can I be feathering Sir John's nest?"

"Why, by the royalty you are paying him on every ton of tin you get out of his land," replied the farmer. "You can't stop people from talking, sir."

"Do drop the 'sir,'" cried Caleb again.

"Why, you wouldn't like me to call you Caleb, the same as I used to!" ejaculated the farmer.

"Of course I would. If you came to the mine you

would call me Cap'n Besowsa, just as the miners do, but while I am here I am only Caleb."

"Somehow it don't seem right," insisted the farmer. "When one day I was up at the mine and heard your men calling you sir, it seemed to me that I was taking a liberty in using your Christian name. I am told that Sir John has taken to calling you Mr. Besowsa, too. Has he been to the mine lately, making so bold?"

"Not for some time," replied Caleb, "but Mr. Lanivet was there this morning."

"You don't mean to say so! He is said to be a very proud man, and never takes notice of his tenants, and, of course, you are a kind of tenant, aren't you? How do you manage about the royalties, so to speak, if I may ask such a question?" went on the farmer.

"It will be time enough to talk about royalties when I have to pay them," replied Caleb. "As a matter of fact, however, I shall pay the same to Mr. Lanivet as I do to Sir John."

"Yes, I suppose you will," and the farmer spoke reflectively. "It do seem strange, don't it, that a half of your mine is on Mr. Lanivet's land and the other half on Sir John Luzmore's? But what do you mean by saying what you did about the royalties? You are turning out a lot of tin, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am doing very well," replied Caleb, "but, up to the present, it has been nearly all outlay and scarcely any income. You see, it is hardly a year since the mine was started, and I have had to pay wages all that time, as well as for the castings and stamps, and that sort of thing."

"Yes, I can see that," assented the farmer. "And that water-wheel wasn't put up for nothing neither. What would happen to you, sir, if your lode got worked out, and the mine didn't turn out any more tin? It's as well to think of things like that, isn't it?"

"The lode isn't worked out yet," was Caleb's confident reply. "The miners are sending up a lot of good stuff every day."

The farmer was silent at this and looked out of the

window like one reflecting. Then he burst out suddenly: "Of course, it isn't my business, so to speak, but where did you get all the necessary money? You couldn't have saved it out of the wages you got from me!"

Caleb was silent.

"Did a bank lend it to you?" persisted the farmer.

"I got it through a bank," evaded Caleb.

"Then your outlook isn't as bright as it might be," ventured Trethewy. "I know what banks are like. Twenty years ago I was obliged to borrow money from the West of England Bank, and, by gor', they let me know it too—but there, I suppose your bank has been different."

"I have had no trouble," Caleb said.

"No, I don't suppose you have. You have had such good prospects, that I expect the directors have looked upon you as such an important customer that butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. But what would happen to you if the lode worked out? A 'skat bal' is worth nothing to nobody!"

Caleb gave no answer to this, but Gracie, who had been watching him closely, could not help noting what she thought was an anxious look that came into his eyes. "I am not troubling, anyhow," he said presently. "John Snell, my floor's cap'n, tells me that we shall have more than ten tons of tin ready for the market in a week or so."

"I have heard about that," replied Trethewy, "and it's wonderful! Just wonderful! Yes, you will soon be a rich man, and then you will be as good as the best of 'em."

The farmer left the room as he said this, leaving Gracie and Caleb together.

"Are you anxious, Caleb?" asked the girl.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because there is a funny look in your eyes. There are no signs of the lode working out, are there?"

"No, it's richer than ever," he replied confidently.

"Father thinks your success is marvellous," went on the girl, "and he believes you will become the greatest man in Cornwall. All the same, he has funny thoughts."

"Funny thoughts? What do you mean by that?"

"Well, he was saying to mother and me, not half an hour before you came home, that everything was uncertain." Gracie spoke hesitatingly and seemed to have a difficulty in finding the words she wanted. "He said, too," she went on, "that the bank directors wouldn't have let you have the money you needed unless you had placed yourself in their power. Are you in their power, Caleb?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because," and she went close to him as she spoke, "I would like to help you, Caleb."

"You help me! How can you help me?"

"Oh, I can," she asserted confidently. "Perhaps you didn't know it, but I have some money, Caleb. My grandmother, that's mother's mother, willed all she had to me just before she died. So I hope you will let me know, Caleb, if ever you are in want of help."

"Do you mean to say," cried the young man in astonishment, "that you would let me have some?"

"All I've got!" replied Gracie eagerly. "And I wouldn't tell anyone about it either. Caleb, do you owe anyone money now?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I don't want you to. I want you to take mine. If you did you wouldn't owe a bank anything, would you?"

"But don't you see, Gracie," replied Caleb, "if I were to do that I should only be owing you money—instead of someone else?"

"Ah, but I am different, Caleb. Owing money to a bank and owing money to me is not the same thing, is it?"

"No," replied the young man, and his eyes were misty as he spoke, "but I wouldn't rob you for anything. You will be getting married some day, and your future husband will expect a dowry with you."

"Nonsense!" laughed the girl. "I shall never get married. Besides, I am sure you would pay me back."

"And if I didn't you would look upon me as a cheat?"

“Of course I shouldn't!” she replied angrily. “And I shouldn't care either! I should know that I had been able to help you, Caleb.”

“I wonder what she would think if she knew how matters stood?” he reflected. “But there, she doesn't know what she is saying. She is only a kid after all, and doesn't know the value of money.” All the same, he felt very grateful to her. “Gracie,” he said aloud, “I think you are just splendid, but I don't need your help.”

“I almost wish you did,” and there was a tremor in her voice. “You see, Caleb, you are different from other people. In a way it is just as if you were my own brother—although I don't think of you as a brother. But do promise me, Caleb.”

“What shall I promise you?”

“That if ever you need help, you will let me know.”

“I will not forget what you have said,” was Caleb's reply. “You are a brick, Gracie! By George, you are a brick!” and with that he rose hurriedly from the table and rushed out of the house.

A few days later he received a letter which made him feel as Aladdin must have felt in the great classic of *The Arabian Nights* when the Slave of the Lamp appeared to him and made his wonderful declaration.

CHAPTER XIX

“**W**HO can this be from?” Caleb was seated in his hut, which, in the vernacular of the miners, was called “The Cap'n's Count 'Ouse.” Several letters lay on his desk which he had opened and read, and which he had not regarded as of importance. They were simply the correspondence which appertained to the mine. But one letter which he had laid aside until he had read the others was altogether different. The envelope, which was composed of a vividly bright green paper, was addressed to: “Mr. Caleb Besowsa, Esq., Cap'n and Owner of the Ghost's Gorge Mine, Bodmin Moors.” It was

registered, too, and sealed with a great lump of green sealing-wax.

This, in itself, aroused Caleb's curiosity, while the handwriting proclaimed the fact that it did not come from any commercial house. It was what was called copper-plate, and was written by someone who was apparently not accustomed to penmanship. On opening it he read as follows :

“ MY DEAR CALEB,

“ I now take my pen in hand to write you these few lines, hoping they will find you in good health as it leaves me at present. You thought I was a bit hard on you, didn't you, Caleb, months and months ago when we were in Polgooth County Bank. Perhaps, too, you thought I was a bit of a cheat and wanting to keep you out of what you thought was yours ; but I am not that kind of man. I had made up my mind a long time before you came here that, if God spared me, you should have everything I possessed. Still, I've been thinking it over, and I have come to the conclusion that money coming to you after my death wouldn't be much use to you if you wanted it now.

“ So, after making allowances for the way you spoke to me before Mr. Bryce, who I don't want to know anything about this, I have decided to be generous. I don't want you to say a word to anybody, not even to your sweetheart—if you've got one. Let this be a matter between you and me and our Maker, and be as secret as death. Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth is a Scripture saying, so don't mention this to anybody, and when I say anybody I mean NOBODY. It is between you and me. The money, as you will see, is in ten Bank of England notes of a hundred pounds each, for I don't believe in cheques, or anything like that, when dealing with my own nephew ! Blood is thicker than water, and that's why I send you all this money. You will see now that I have played fair with you.

“ Your affectionate uncle,

“ JOSHUA.”

Caleb read the letter like one bewildered, and as he read it he became more and more astonished.

Yes, there was a packet of Bank of England notes each for a hundred pounds, as the writer had declared. He found it difficult to believe his own eyes, but the money was real.

A thousand pounds!—The exact amount he had received from Eve! Ten crisp Bank of England notes for a hundred pounds each rustled in his hand.

He read the letter again, and saw that the writing was similar to that of the agreement which was placed before him in the County Bank at Polgooth, in the which his uncle Joshua had stipulated that by paying him a hundred and fifty pounds he would thereby discharge all obligations, and on receipt of which, he, Caleb, had no further claim on his uncle. . . .

Astonishment was too mild a word to express what he felt. The letter he held in his hand was simply miraculous! . . .

A thousand pounds! Surely he was dreaming! But no, the money was there, and he was sure the notes were not of a bogus nature.

He looked out of the window and saw the revolutions of the water-wheel; saw men working on the floors; heard the clang of the stamps. Yes, he was not dreaming; it was all real. . . .

But he could not understand it, and, truth to tell, he felt afraid.

A thousand pounds!—Not lying in the bank at Launceston to be drawn as necessity occurred in driblets, but all in one lump sum in Bank of England notes!

No, he was not being watched. His little hut was at least a hundred yards away from the mine, and no one was near.

Accustomed as he was by this time to think of money in fairly large amounts, the fact of this huge sum in one lump, money which he touched, money which he held in his own hand, was simply staggering. He could now pay Eve what he owed her, and he could, when the batch

of tin, about which John Snell had told him, was sold, pay every outstanding liability, and still have a large amount in hand.

A kind of panic seized him, and opening the safe which he had had installed in his office not long before, he placed the notes in one of the compartments, and locked it. On the following day he would go to Launceston and put it in the bank. He would feel safer then.

He left the hut and walked towards the stamps. He wanted to be out in the open air. While he was inside his office he felt "cribbed, cabined and confined," and he wanted to feel the broad expanse of the moors around him; wanted to feel the bright rays of the sun shining on him. But he did not go far. Before he had covered half the distance between his office and the floors he turned back. He would assure himself again that all was right.

Seizing the letter, he read it again. There was something strange about it; something which had not appealed to him at first. He remembered that the agreement which had been laid before him in the Polgooth County Bank was carefully worded. It was grammatical, too, and might have been the work of an educated man. This letter, on the other hand, suggested illiteracy. It did not ring true either, even although the amount of money sent accorded with what was written.

He called to mind the interview he had had with his uncle at Porthskipton; remembered what he had said. He also remembered what Polkinhorne had said about him. A meaner man than Joshua Besowsa, said the owner of Pentewan, did not live. A man who was always thinking about himself and never about others; one who was everlastingly trying to make the best of a bargain. . . .

There was something behind all this; something which he could not understand. . . .

Joshua Besowsa generous! He was incapable of generosity! For that matter he was incapable of being just, except under pressure. Why, every word he had spoken to him, every suggestion he had made to Mr. Bryce, was

an endeavour to cheat him. Why, then, should he send him a thousand pounds?

Turning to his safe again, he took from it a letter he had received from Mr. Trebilcock, the lawyer at Plymouth. This letter, evidently the work of a careful lawyer, told him that while he, Caleb, certainly had a case against his Uncle Joshua, he would, nevertheless, find it hard to substantiate it, especially as his uncle had declared his intention of fighting him to the last penny he possessed.

No, generosity was out of the question; even justice was out of the question. Joshua Besowsa was incapable of either.

Then why that letter? Why those ten Bank of England notes?

There was something else, too. Why was there such an insistence on secrecy? Joshua Besowsa was not a man to hide a generous act under a bushel; rather he would proclaim it to all the world. And yet he was exhorted to be as silent as death, and to let no one know what he had done— And he had made no stipulations either! For that matter he had not even asked for a receipt! Would Joshua Besowsa ordinarily act in this way?

There was something behind it all. But what? In vain he ransacked his brain for reasons for his uncle's apparent generosity. "I'll find out," he determined at length. "I'll know the reason of everything!"

He turned to the letter again, and this time weighed every sentence carefully. No, his Uncle Joshua was not such an illiterate yokel as this letter seemed to proclaim; he was an educated man. He remembered that his own father, although spoken of as "drunken old Caleb Besowsa," was not an ignoramus. Indeed, Mr. James Yelland had informed him that before the death of his mother, Caleb had held his head high in the district, and was spoken of as one who might have been a gentleman. His Uncle Joshua, too, spoke correctly, and gave no sign of being ignorant of the ways of the world. This suggested illiteracy, therefore, was simply meant to deceive him and to hide something.

But what was there to hide? He thought he knew

all about his uncle's past life. He had learnt that he had farmed Pentewan until five years before, and was spoken of in Week St. Peter in familiar terms. . . .

A thought struck him. Then sitting back in his office chair, he remained with closed eyes for several minutes.

"But of course that cannot be!" he said aloud. "It is too fantastic, too chimerical, too unbelievable! Still _____"

Again leaving his office, he locked the door and went away alone. But he did not go towards the mine, neither did he turn in the direction of Eve's home; instead he wandered for miles among the open moors dreaming, and thinking, and planning.

At length Caleb realized that he was on the main road from Altarnun to Bodmin, and was nearly a mile from the nearest human habitation. He saw, too, that coming along the road was a horse and cart in which was seated one solitary individual.

Caleb could not help being startled, although why it should be so he could not have told. The man in the cart was old Adam Sticker.

When the horse and cart came close to the spot where Caleb stood, Adam Sticker alighted and came towards him as if intent on speaking. Tall as Caleb was, the other towered head and shoulders above him. Indeed, his almost gigantic form dwarfed his own. "We know each other well, although this is the first time I have spoken to you," Adam said.

Caleb did not reply, but he wondered what the old man had to say to him.

"I have looked upon you as my enemy," continued Adam. "Do you wonder at it?"

Caleb, who recalled what Eve had said to him, still refrained from speaking. There was that in Adam's manner of speech, as well as in his whole appearance, which kept him silent.

"I have looked upon you as my enemy," repeated Adam. "Perhaps I do still."

"Why should you?"

"Why should I? Have you not forestalled me? Are

you not doing to-day what for more than ten years I have determined to do?"

"Well, what then?"

Adam hesitated, then he gave a swift glance around him to make sure that they were alone.

Caleb was not a weakling, neither did fear often enter his heart. Nevertheless, a strange feeling possessed him. They were, as I have said, far away from human habitation, neither was there anyone within sight. As far as the eye could reach, there was nothing to be seen save the dreary stretch of moorland, relieved only by the road which coiled its way like a silver thread through the wastes of desolation. More than once Caleb believed that the other meant to do him bodily injury, and although he knew that he could more than hold his own, his muscles unconsciously hardened. For old Adam Sticker, in spite of his age, would be no mean opponent! He stood several inches more than six feet high, and he had the shoulders and chest of a giant. There was no suggestion of age in his movements either. His black eyes shone with the brightness of youth, while overshadowing them were great black bushy eyebrows. These formed such a contrast to his long, flowing, white hair and his silvery beard which hung far down his chest, that he looked positively menacing.

"I have done nothing which should cause you to think of me as your enemy," Caleb could not help saying.

"But you have."

"In what way?"

"What led you to come to Ghost's Gorge?" asked old Adam. "It is miles away from Sam Trethewy's farm. Had you any idea that there was tin there?"

Caleb shook his head.

"What led you to go there in the first instance?"

"I don't know. I simply went; that's all I know."

"What led you to believe that there was tin there?"

And his question seemed like a demand.

"I was brought up in a mining district," Caleb replied, "and I had heard a hundred times that when the bed of a river was discoloured as it was discoloured in the

Ghost's Gorge—that it suggested mineral. After that I picked up some stones that were lying around and discovered what they contained.”

“And no one told you?”

“No, no one told me.”

A far-away look came into old Adam's eyes, while on his face was an expression of wonder, and more than wonder. “I want to be sure about that,” and Caleb knew he was speaking to himself.

“Why are you asking me this?” asked Caleb.

But Adam did not reply. His eyes had in them the same far-away look. He might have been communing with his own soul. “Do you believe in destiny?” he asked at length.

“‘Destiny’? I don't understand!”

“Do you believe that we are the sport of chance? Or is our life marked out by something or Someone greater than ourselves?” The old man spoke as though his mind was still far away, and yet he looked at Caleb as if demanding an answer.

“I don't believe I am the sport of chance,” replied Caleb uneasily. “As for destiny, I don't think I know what you mean.”

“Do you believe in God?”

“Doesn't it depend on what you mean by God?” replied Caleb, wondering at the course the conversation had taken.

“Perhaps it does. But are not God and destiny the same?”

“No,” replied Caleb. “At least, they don't seem the same to me. Destiny is something abstract, something unfeeling, unthinking; but God is personal, thinking for, and caring for, all of us.”

“Do you believe in Him?”

“I can't help believing in Him when I am alone on these moors,” replied the young man.

Adam sighed, while a film seemed to creep over his eyes. Caleb wondered if the old creature were in his right mind. “How did you get the money to start the mine?” Adam demanded harshly, at length.

"Isn't that remarkably like my own business?" asked Caleb, as he remembered what Eve had said to him.

"It's mine too," retorted Adam, almost savagely.

"How?"

"Haven't the dreams of long years been centred in that mine?" he replied. "Haven't I thought of it night and day ever since—— But never mind that. Haven't I worked and slaved to save money for that, and that only?"

"For what?" asked Caleb.

"To work the mine. No wonder I hated you as I watched you come there from time to time. I told myself that you could know nothing, and yet I was afraid—yes, afraid. I who, ordinarily, am afraid of nothing. But you haven't answered my question. How did you get the money to sink the shaft, to drive levels, to cut a water-way, to make a wheel-pit, to erect a wheel, to buy castings and make the floors? How did you get it, I say?"

"Why should I tell you?" asked Caleb. He felt almost afraid again as he heard the savage snarl in the old man's voice.

"And there is more than that," went on Adam. "I have often thought I would ask you; many times when you didn't know it, I followed you for that purpose. Why was it when at length I had made up my mind to go to Mr. Lanivet, I found that you had gone before me?"

"Ask me something else," Caleb laughed. "How can I explain to you what I did?"

"I felt sure I should be in time," went on the old creature like one musing, "and yet when I got there I found you had forestalled me."

"Did you see Mr. Lanivet?"

"Of course I did. I told him what I wanted, and his reply was that a young man called Caleb Besowsa had already made application for mining rights and that he had as good as promised them. Yes, it seems like destiny! Then there is something else. I want to know," and again the old man's eyes swept over the wastes of moors, "why was it that I was afraid of you even when you were a

half-starved boy? I saw you when you first came; watched you as you made your way in the direction of Spring Farm, had a feeling like pity for you when you fell down by the side of the road. All the same, I was afraid of you. I can't tell why, but I was."

"Afraid of me?" laughed Caleb.

"Well, perhaps it was not fear, but I had a feeling which I could not explain; I have it now. You didn't know it, but I tried to find out who you were. I went to Polgooth where you were brought up, and discovered that your father was called Caleb Besowsa. Why should I feel so strangely? Why?"

Again Caleb felt as though he were talking with a madman, and yet in a way he could not understand, he felt sure that old Adam knew more about him than he knew himself. "Did you discover anything about me, besides the fact that my father was called Caleb Besowsa?"

For the first time during their interview old Adam Sticker laughed. "I'll tell 'ee something," he said, and there was a changed tone in his voice. "Levi Sticker is my brother, and he knew your father long before you were born! What do you say about that?"

"Do you know my uncle, Joshua Besowsa?" asked Caleb. He was wondering whether this strange old creature could shed any light upon the letter he had received that morning.

Adam looked at him keenly. "People are telling me that your mine is going to make a fortune for you," he replied irrelevantly. "Is it? Ah! What a fool I was not to have gone to Mr. Lanivet's weeks before! If I had, I might have been in time."

"Perhaps it wouldn't have been any use," replied Caleb.

"Why?"

"Because the lode which is producing tin is as much in Sir John Luzmore's property as in Mr. Lanivet's."

Again a change came over old Adam's face, and a new tone came into his voice. "Would you mind my giving you a piece of advice?" he asked.

"I am always glad of advice," replied Caleb.

“Of course, that is a foolish lie,” and there was a tone of bitterness in his voice. “No young man—and no young woman either, for that matter—was ever glad to receive advice; but I will give you some all the same. Never trust a Luzmore. Perhaps you think because the man at the big house has given you a mining sett that he will deal fairly with you—but he won't! No Luzmore ever did.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Caleb.

“Mean? I don't know what I mean. I am a fool, too, to offer you advice. But mind,” he went on, and this time Caleb was sure he saw madness shining from his eyes, “keep away from my house, and God help you if the one I love more than life suffers through you. I will have no mercy! No, by God, I will have no mercy!”

“What do you mean? And of what are you thinking?” The questions passed Caleb's lips before he knew he had spoken them.

“She is all I have got, and she is all the world to me!” he replied. “She came to me long years ago when—Oh, God, help me to bear it!—And although it tore out my heart-strings to watch her, she has been the joy of my life ever since. I have done my best for her, too. I bought good clothes for her; I sent her to a good school. For that matter, I might have saved money to start the mine long years ago, but I didn't want her to be like the rest of the children who are reared on these moors. And now—I go almost mad when I think of it—is there any meaning in it all? I don't know—but don't trust a Luzmore! Whatever else you do, don't trust a Luzmore!”

Before Caleb had time to ask him further questions, the old man mounted his cart and drove away in the direction of the Ghost's Gorge.

As may be imagined, old Adam's advice had raised many questions in Caleb's mind; questions which had almost destroyed his interest in his Uncle Joshua's letter. But that was only for a time. Again and again he found himself thinking of the ten Bank of England notes which

lay in his safe, and more still did he think of the reasons why his only relative, who he was sure was a miser at heart, had been led to send them.

Forgetful of the fact that he had had no lunch, he continued to tramp the moors, but even when five o'clock came and he again found himself back at Ghost's Gorge, no explanation had come to him of what had taken place.

The next day he went to Launceston and deposited the money in the bank, and although he felt much safer after doing this, he could find no reason which satisfied him concerning what his Uncle Joshua had called "an act of generosity."

Three days later, however, another letter arrived which went far to make him forget everything else.

This letter ran as follows :

"DEAR BESOWSA,

"My visit to your mine interested me very much, and led me to desire a further conversation with you. If ever you are in this neighbourhood and have the time, I shall be glad if you will drop in at Lanivet and see me. Almost any time will do, as I seldom leave the house.

"Yours faithfully,

"HORACE LANIVET."

That same day Caleb, greatly wondering, made his way towards the home of the man but for whose kindness he felt sure he would never have been the owner of the Ghost's Gorge Mine.

CHAPTER XX

IT was with a fast-beating heart that Caleb approached the great house. More than once he had wondered if he were wise in showing such eagerness to respond to what, after all, was by no means an urgent letter. Time after time he had read it, and although he saw, or thought

he saw, the writer's kindly interest in him, it was in no way warmly expressed, neither did it suggest an urgent desire to see him. Still, as he argued with himself, such a man as Mr. Lanivet would not have sent a special letter if there had not been more than a passing desire to again speak to him. Anyhow, it had seemed to him that it was impossible to do anything else than to immediately obey his behest.

When he reached the door and rang the bell, however, his heart almost failed him. The man who answered the door did not seem to remember him, and had evidently received no instructions concerning him. "Is Mr. Lanivet at home?" he asked.

"Yes, he is at home," replied the servant. "Have you an appointment with him?" and then he repeated what he had said on the only other occasion on which he had visited the great house: "Mr. Lanivet seldom sees strangers."

"Will you please tell him that Caleb Besowsa has called," and he scarcely recognized his own voice as he spoke.

The servant gave Caleb a quick, searching glance, and then apparently recognizing him, he said: "I will see. Will you please wait here?"

The man left him as he spoke, while Caleb looked around him like one fascinated. The dimensions of the great hall formed such a contrast to his usual surroundings that he would not have been surprised had the servant returned and told him to leave the house forthwith. He had been impressed when he had been here before, but now everything seemed more stately and imposing than on his first visit. Even Luzmore Hall appeared shabby compared with this! Of course, he remembered that on entering Sir John's house he had been admitted by a back entrance, and that he had seen nothing of the main approach of the baronet's residence. Still, he was impressed in a way he could not understand. Everything seemed so restrained, so impressive. Everything was quiet, too; so quiet that it might have been a deserted mansion. But Caleb knew it was not deserted. Even while he stood there he saw

more than one servant moving noiselessly around, while every article of furniture, every inch of space, proclaimed meticulous oversight and attention. The pictures which were everywhere manifest; the figures in armour which had been placed around the hall; the statuary which even he saw was priceless, told him that he was in a world to which he was a stranger.

Presently he heard footsteps and Caleb could not help noticing the altered demeanour of the servant as he approached. "Mr. Lanivet will see you at once, sir," he said. "Will you come this way?"

A minute later Caleb found himself in the room where he had first seen the owner of the house. There was a difference in Mr. Lanivet's greeting, however. On the first occasion, the great man had spoken to him coldly, while his attitude towards him had been that of a critical observer. Now, however, he met him with an outstretched hand, and treated him more as an equal than as one coming to ask a favour.

"I didn't expect to see you so soon, Besowsa," he remarked. "Have you had lunch?"

"Yes, sir. I got some down at the village inn."

"You must have started early, then?"

"Almost as soon as I read your letter, sir."

The Squire looked at him attentively as though he expected him to say more.

"You see, sir," went on Caleb, "I thought you might want to see me particularly; and although your letter did not suggest any urgency, I could not help coming right away."

Mr. Lanivet looked pleased at this, although he made no remark.

"I wanted to ask you something, too, sir," he went on.

"Indeed! What?"

"Something has happened since you were at the mine, sir; something which has bothered me a great deal, and remembering the kindly interest you appeared to take in me, your letter seemed to open the way whereby I could seek your advice."

"Seek my advice! In what way can I advise you?"

“Concerning what’s happened. In your letter which was at the mine when I arrived early this morning, you said that, although there was no urgency, you wanted a further talk with me, and I, as soon as I had read it, being awfully puzzled by what has come to me and scarcely knowing what to do, felt that you might help me.”

“I will certainly help you if I can, although I am at a loss to know how I can do so. What is it?”

Caleb had not intended to begin the conversation in this way at all. He had meant to leave it to Mr. Lanivet to tell him what had led him to write to him, after which he hoped for an opportunity to broach the subject he had in his mind. Something in the older man’s presence, however, caused him to forget his determination, and before he knew what he was doing, he was telling him of the letter he had received from his Uncle Joshua.

“When I was here last,” he confided, “I told you of my suspicions about my uncle, and perhaps you will remember how, not only then, but when you came to the mine the other day, you asked me a lot of questions about him.”

“Yes, I do remember something about it,” replied Mr. Lanivet as though he were trying to collect his thoughts. “What’s the matter?”

“Well, sir—and I hope you will forgive me for troubling you, but I don’t know what to do. You see, such a thing has never happened to me before, and I have no one of whom to seek advice. Not long after you left I got this,” and taking Joshua Besowsa’s letter from his pocket, he placed it in Mr. Lanivet’s hand.

The older man read it carefully, after which he returned it to Caleb. “And this has puzzled you?” he said.

“It has. Can you tell me what it means?”

“Isn’t its meaning evident? Perhaps your uncle’s conscience has been troubling him, and, by way of easing it, he has sent you this. Was the money all right?”

“Oh yes!” and Caleb laughed nervously. “There were ten Bank of England notes, each for a hundred pounds, as stated in the letter; and the day after, I took them

to the bank in Launceston. But what I can't understand is this: Why should he, after telling Mr. Trebilcock that he would fight me to the last penny he possessed, and after declaring that he would not even let me have the money which was the outcome of the sale at Besowsa Farm, so suddenly write like this?"

"Have you acknowledged it, by the way?" asked Mr. Lanivet.

"Yes, I wrote the same day, but I have heard nothing from him since."

"Then what do you want to know?"

"There is something mysterious in it all, sir. As you will see, he doesn't even now acknowledge any obligation to me. He doesn't admit that I have any right to the money he has sent, and he urges me not to let anyone know that he has written. What's the meaning of it?"

"Perhaps a sudden outburst of generosity?" suggested Mr. Lanivet, with a smile.

"Generosity! My Uncle Joshua generous! He couldn't be generous any more than a spar stone could! As Mr. Polkinhorne, who now owns Pentewan, told me, he is the quintessence of meanness!"

"And has he never acknowledged to you in any way that you have a claim on him for what he received from the sale of Pentewan?"

"Never, sir. He persisted in declaring that it was all his property; and, as I told you, he wanted me to sign a paper stating that if he gave me that hundred odd pounds which was due to me as the result of the sale of my father's things, he had discharged all obligations to me. Can you throw any light on it?" And Caleb looked at the older man anxiously.

"Your uncle is evidently a very difficult man to deal with," replied Mr. Lanivet. "Anyhow, you have this thousand pounds, so I judge from what you told me when I was at the mine the other day that you are comfortably off as far as money is concerned."

"In a way I am, sir. Of course, I still owe that money which I borrowed when I started the mine."

“How much did you borrow?”

“A thousand pounds,” and there was a far-away look in Caleb's eyes as he spoke.

“And you intend paying it back?”

“Of course, sir. I must!”

“And who lent it to you?”

“Would you mind, sir, if I don't tell you? I promised to say nothing about it.”

Mr. Lanivet gave a quick, searching glance at Caleb's face, but said nothing for nearly a minute. “Have you any particular interest in the person who advanced you this money?” he asked at length.

“No, sir,” replied Caleb. “Of course, I am very grateful, for without it I could not have done what I have done; but I have no other interest.”

Again the older man looked at the other intently, and after another silence he went on: “Your Uncle Joshua does not appear to be the only one who has his secrets. You have yours, too. Isn't that so?”

“Haven't we all our secrets, sir?”

“Have we? Perhaps we have,” and in Mr. Lanivet's eyes was a far-away look. “You are having an interesting career, Besowsa. How long is it, did you tell me, since your father died?”

Caleb told him.

“And you left the neighbourhood in which you were brought up directly after his death?”

“Directly after his funeral,” replied Caleb, and he again told how he had longed to get away from the neighbourhood where he was known as “drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat,” and how, through picking up a scrap of newspaper, he was led to go to Spring Farm.

“And did you have any idea of living any other life save that of a farm-servant?” and there was a new interest in his eyes as he spoke.

“I don't think I had, sir. At least, I didn't know of any at the time.”

“And you were quite satisfied with the thought that you would remain a farm-servant all your life?”

“I have never thought of that, sir; but I don't suppose

I was! I remember soon after I came to Sam Trethewy's house, borrowing books from his daughter."

"From his daughter?"

"Yes, sir. Gracie Trethewy was a little girl when I first went there. She was sharp, and clever, and made me long for knowledge. That led to other things."

"What other things?" asked Lanivet quickly.

"Directly I had earned a little money I went to the nearest market town and bought books," he replied.

"One, I remember, greatly influenced me. It was called *Self Help*, and was written by a man called Samuel Smiles. It seemed to give a new point to my life, and from that time I had all sorts of fancies."

"You were sixteen at the time your father died?"

"About that."

"And now you are more than twenty-one?"

Caleb nodded. "The years have gone very quickly," he said.

"And did you work at your books all the time you were at Trethewy's farm?"

"I read everything I could get hold of, sir. I went to a night school, too. There was a retired schoolmaster called Elijah Clemmow who lived near Mr. Trethewy. I went to him and he taught me a great many things."

"What did he teach you?"

"Mathematics, chemistry, mineralogy, and all that sort of thing, and it has all come in handy."

Mr. Lanivet's interest in the young man seemed to increase. There was something in his eager voice and bright eyes which called forth the older man's admiration.

"That is all very creditable," he said at length. Then, as if another thought seemed to strike him, he went on:

"I suppose you, like all other fools of your age, have fallen in love?"

Caleb did not speak, but a fiery flush mounted his cheeks.

"Ah, I see you have," and there was a touch of impatience in Mr. Lanivet's voice. "I suppose it is that Gracie Trethewy of whom you spoke just now?"

"Good lor', sir, no!" ejaculated Caleb quickly. "I never dreamed of such a thing!"

Again Mr. Lanivet looked at him steadily and appeared to be trying to read his mind. "I am awfully impertinent, aren't I?" he went on; "but, as I told you, I became interested in you after seeing you at the mine the other day. I thought then that you seemed very anxious to get on, and make money. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"'Making money' and 'getting on' are only very small things, my lad," he said, and there was a touch of sadness in his voice. "Why are you so anxious to 'get on' and 'make money'?"

"Why?" and the older man realized that he was getting nearer the heart of Caleb's desire. "Because everything depends on it, sir! Because, without money, one can do nothing!"

"And can you do much with it? At least, I haven't found that one can do much."

At this Caleb forgot himself. "It is all very well for you, sir!" he cried. "You have had money all your life to do as you like with! You are said to be a rich man, and can have everything you want! But think of me! When I came to Sam Trethewy's house more than five years ago I was starving, and fell down in a dead faint on his doorstep. I had to work for a farm-servant's wages for four years. How much do you think he gave me?"

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"The first year he gave me twelve pounds, and although he increased it afterwards, I had, as the result of four years' wages, only been able to save fifty pounds. Then—then when I first saw her I made a vow. Of course, you will say it was madness; perhaps it was, but I could not help myself."

"What do you mean by that?" and there was an interest almost amounting to eagerness in the older man's voice.

"You asked me just now, sir, if I had ever been in love. Up to then I never had. I never thought

about such a thing. But when I saw her—— Great heavens!——”

“Saw whom?”

“I daren't tell you, sir!—that was the beginning of everything!—As I think of it now, I had never lived until then. What was life to me?—simply a matter of getting up in the morning, working on the farm during the day, reading of a night, and then going to bed. Just a matter of eating, drinking, sleeping, dreaming, reading, working—that was all. But when I saw her—beautiful as an angel, and as far above me as the stars are above the earth, I thought I was going mad, and I vowed that I would have her! Of course, she knew nothing about it; no one knew anything about it; it was a secret between myself and the God Who made me. But what could I do? I was only a farm-servant, and she—she was a great lady!”

Caleb had completely forgotten himself by this time. So carried away was he by his passion that he became oblivious to the fact that he was not alone, that a man far older and wiser than he was listening to his every word. And yet he had a consciousness that this man was drawing what he had hitherto regarded as a great secret, from him.

“But what had money to do with all this?” asked Mr. Lanivet, after a long silence.

“Money, sir! Money was everything! How could I go to her and tell her what I wanted without it? In whatever way I looked at it, my vow was madness, and I saw that the only way of making an impossibility possible was to make money. Saw, too, that if the very fact of living was to be anything to me except a great ghastly mockery, I must become rich. So while I—— But there!”

For more than a minute another silence fell between the two men. Mr. Lanivet was watching his visitor closely, while Caleb, his large, dark eyes flashing with passion, and his lips tremulous with the thoughts that were surging within him, seemed to be forgetful of everything save the fulfilment of his vow.

“And that was the reason why you started the mine, I suppose?”

“Forgive me, sir, for bothering you about all this, I didn't mean to. It was the kind way in which you spoke which made me tell you everything.”

“But I am interested. Go on.”

“For weeks after that,” went on Caleb, “—well, I don't remember anything clearly, except that my mind was alternating between passion and fear; sometimes everything seemed possible, then again nothing was possible—until I found the lode.”

“Tell me about it.”

“I can't, sir! I simply can't! Even after I had made sure that there might be a fortune on those barren moors, there was no end of difficulties. What was fifty pounds on which to start a mine? What was anything, *everything*? But I never gave up hope; I never weakened in my vow; I never stopped dreaming! I went down to my old home and learnt things about my father—I learnt things about my mother, too.”

“What did you learn about her?” asked Mr. Lanivet quickly.

“Nothing definite—except that she was a lady born; but concerning that I could get no reliable information. Still, it strengthened me in my determination, and—at length I came here. Now you know, sir, why I was eager to get on, and why making money became a matter of life and death to me!”

“And have you changed in your feelings towards this lady?” asked the older man presently.

“I change, sir? I change! I never change!” and Caleb spoke through his set teeth, while madness flashed from his eyes.

“Then you still mean to win her as your wife?”

“Not all the devils in hell shall stop me!” he said hoarsely. “You don't know, sir.—She is *everything* to me! I haven't a hope, I haven't a fancy but what she is in it!”

“And what will you do if this young lady falls in love with some other man and marries him?”

"She never shall!" cried Caleb grimly. "God help the man who comes in my way!—Please forgive me, sir, I did not mean to tell you anything of this; but, somehow, I have not been able to help myself."

"And have you spoken to her? Does she know—what you have told me?"

Caleb did not speak, but evidently the other read the answer in his eyes.

"And what did she say?" he asked.

"That's nothing," replied Caleb, his hands clenching and unclenching themselves. "It came to her as a surprise; and, as yet, she doesn't understand the kind of fellow I am. But I am going to get her!"

"And then?" queried Mr. Lanivet.

"Then I shall know the meaning of life; then I shall be content!"

"I wonder?" said the other, like one musing.

Caleb stayed at Lanivet for more than an hour after this, while its owner asked him many questions, especially about his visit to his old home, and concerning what Mr. James Yelland told him; but, as far as Caleb could judge, he seemed to have no particular reason for asking them. When at length his visit came to an end and he found himself making his way towards the park gates, he reflected that the Squire of Lanivet had given him no reason for writing to him or suggesting that he should go there.

CHAPTER XXI

SIR JOHN LUZMORE had been sitting for more than an hour in what was called the steward's room at Luzmore Hall. Prior to that he had had a long conversation with Mr. Beans, and had discussed with him many matters appertaining to the estate. The March quarter-day when the main bulk of his tenants had paid their rent, had not long passed, and Mr. Beans had been discussing with him the tenants who were behind with their pay-

ments, and those who had been making serious demands, not only concerning farm buildings, but also a reduction of their rents. His bank pass-book also lay on the desk before him, and he called to mind the statements which a certain bank manager had made to Mr. Beans, and which had been conveyed to him.

Altogether Sir John looked thoughtful, and not a little perturbed. "Hang it all!" he said aloud. "Things are in a bad way! Expenses are going up by leaps and bounds, while my income is decreasing in a most alarming fashion. I was a fool to buy all those shares, especially as I had to borrow money to do so! I bought them at par, too, while now, if I wanted to sell them, those pound shares wouldn't bring me more than half-a-crown!"

He started to his feet as these and similar gloomy thoughts passed through his mind, and began to pace the room.

"I should hate discharging a lot of servants and cutting down expenses," he reflected. "It would soon become the talk of the countryside if I did, and gossips would say that I was on the brink of bankruptcy. They wouldn't be far wrong either! What with one thing and another, things look anything but rosy."

He turned to his pass-book again, and as he noted the figures, first on the credit and then on the debit side, the look which a few minutes before had been apprehension now became positive dismay. "I am like a man in a sack," he muttered presently, "and there is hardly a gleam of light anywhere. Why, I shall soon be glad of those royalties which are due to me according to the agreement I made with Besowsa. What a fool I was to let him have the mining sett on such easy terms! From what I hear, he is making a fortune, while I, who own the moors which is yielding him all this money, hardly know where to turn. But there, I shouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for Lanivet! It was through his advice that I did it. For that matter, I dared not say no after hearing what he had to tell me."

At that moment what was called the steward's telephone, which stood on the desk close beside him, began to ring. Sir John picked up the receiver a little impatiently.

"Yes, this is Sir John Luzmore. Who is it speaking? . . . Oh, it's you, Lanivet, is it? . . . Shall I be at home this afternoon? I can be, certainly. . . . What! You thought of motoring over? By all means, come and stay the night. We shall be delighted if you will!"

"Now, what does that mean?" mused Sir John as he hung up the receiver. "Lanivet hasn't been here for years. Why, then, should he want to come to-day?"

A far-away look came into his eyes as he again threw himself into an armchair.

"I hope he doesn't want his money," he reflected. "I owe him more than I like to think about. And while he has never pressed me for it—heavens! supposing he were to call it in!"

He looked at his watch, and saw that the hands pointed to half-past twelve. "Lunch in half an hour," he reflected. "I hate the very idea of lunch. I feel as though every mouthful would choke me. Still, I mustn't let Rosalind know that I am bothered. She, poor child, thinks that all is well. By Jove! it has been difficult to keep her from knowing. She is as keen as a hawk. . . . She has been acting very queerly of late, too," the baronet went on thinking. "She might have something on her mind. Perhaps she wonders why old Lord Trelaske has put off the announcement. Dash it all, everything seems to be going wrong!"

Just then he heard quick footsteps outside the door, and a moment later Rosalind came into the room. "Hullo, Dad, what are you doing here alone?" she asked.

"Thinking, my dear."

"Yes, but what about?"

"You, for one thing."

"What about me?"

"I was wondering how long I should be able to keep you with me."

"Oh, a long time yet," laughed the girl.

Sir John was silent for a few seconds at this, then he said: "Do you know when Jim Trelaske is coming home?"

"No," replied the girl, "and, what is more, I don't care!"

"It is no use talking like that, Rosalind, my dear. As you know, it was only a temporary postponement."

Rosalind was silent at this. Then she walked towards the window and looked out across the wide-spreading park.

"Is anything the matter with you, my dear?" asked her father, who was watching her closely.

"What should be the matter? Of course, nothing is the matter."

"Then why have you acted so strangely lately?"

"Have I acted strangely?"

"You must know you have. Ever since the day you went to the Ghost's Gorge Mine you have been entirely different. What's the meaning of it?"

"Dad," cried the girl impulsively, "Bill Grigg, the son of the old people who keep the park gates, is a great fighter, isn't he?"

"Why in the world do you ask such a question as that?" asked the baronet in astonishment.

"But he is, isn't he?"

"He has that reputation. His father told me yesterday that he nearly killed the champion boxer from London who came to Plymouth and challenged all comers. But why do you ask such a question?"

"Because," and there was a savage gleam in the girl's eyes, "I want him to get hold of that Caleb Besowsa and thrash him within an inch of his life."

"But why?" asked the baronet in astonishment.

"Well, I haven't told you before because I thought it might worry you, but that fellow insulted me when I went to see the mine last week."

"Insulted you!" cried Sir John. "Insulted you! Why—why, he shall——"

"Don't be foolish, Dad. He was perfectly respectful, and all that, but—but he—— Oh, I can't say it!"

"Can't say what? The young hound! I'll—I'll——"

"Oh, don't!" cried the girl. "He made love to me!"

"Made love? The impudent young blackguard! You don't mean it, Rosalind? He made love to *you*!"

“What's more, he declared that he meant to marry me!”

“Declared that he meant to marry you?” and there was mad anger as well as blank astonishment in the baronet's voice. “Tell me about it, my dear.”

“I can't! I simply can't! But he did!”

“And what did you say to him?”

“Of course, I laughed at him. At first I couldn't believe my own ears, the thing was too silly. Then when he persisted—— Of course, I told him he was mad and ought to be sent to a lunatic asylum.”

“And quite right, too! But what then?”

“He made me afraid. The look of a devil came into his eyes, and so I jumped on Phœbe and rode away. But it has bothered me, and while I have been afraid to tell you about it, I have been—— Oh, I wish Grigg would thrash him!”

For a few seconds the baronet evidently shared her feeling; then the absurdity of the situation appealed to him. “After all, it is a great joke!” he laughed. “Just think of it! Because the fellow who came here a year or so ago on behalf of Sam Trethewy has ceased being a farm-servant and has made a bit of money, he has actually had the temerity to propose to *you*! Yes, it's a great joke; one of the biggest jokes I have heard for a long time!”

“All the same, he maddened me!” cried the girl. “If you had heard him, and seen him, you wouldn't have looked on it as a joke!”

“Yes, I should. I couldn't help it!” laughed the baronet. “Of course, the fellow deserves a thrashing, and I must think of means whereby I can punish him; but you can't really regard it in any other light than that of a joke! Don't worry that dear little head of yours. I'll find out how to deal with him, the impudent young blackguard! Just because I spoke civilly to him when I was last over—but there, it shows what these people are! Because he has made a few pounds, he has actually had the impudence to—but there! It's a great joke after all!”

"It isn't a joke!" cried Rosalind. "I hate him, and—and I am afraid of him!"

"Afraid of him, Rosalind! *You* afraid of a fellow like that; a mere farm-servant!"

"He isn't a mere farm-servant!" cried the girl. "He's—he's—a—— Oh, I don't know what he is! But I am afraid of him! You have no idea what he looked like when he spoke to me at the mine! I laughed at him at the time; but I am afraid!"

"Afraid of what, my dear?"

"Oh, don't you see, Dad! He isn't like ordinary men. He seems a kind of fate—or destiny; he makes me think against my own will."

"Think against your will? I don't understand."

"But you would understand if you were with me that day. His eyes had the look of a devil in them, and I believe——"

"Believe what, child?" cried the baronet anxiously, as the girl ceased speaking.

"I don't know what I believe! You say he is nothing but a farm-servant, and yet see what he has done! Without friends and without money, he has gone out there on those Bodmin Moors and discovered a fortune! He has done it all by himself, too. Nothing seems impossible to a man like that."

"But you must continue to look at it as a great joke," laughed the baronet. "You mustn't think of being afraid of a man like that. Besides, Jim Trelaske won't be so long before he comes home, and then you will be under his protection."

"Under whose protection?"

"Why, Jim Trelaske's. As you know, I fixed it up with old Trelaske nearly a year ago."

"Jim Trelaske!" repeated Rosalind contemptuously.

"One of the best chances in the country, my dear. The peerage goes back for centuries, and according to report, the family descended from the old Cornish kings. We laugh at such things in these democratic days; but they count, my dear, they count."

"While Caleb Besowsa is only a farm-servant," cried

the girl like one reflecting ; “ and yet put the two together side by side ! What would Jim Trelaske have done if he had been in Caleb Besowsa's place ? Why, he is nothing but a nonentity ! ” and the girl burst out sobbing.

“ What's the matter with you, Rosalind ? Come now, you must tell me everything, ” cried Sir John anxiously.

“ There's nothing to tell, ” replied the girl. “ He's a great, strong, overmastering animal ! Send him out of the county, Dad ! I am afraid of him ! ”

“ But you must tell me more. What did he say to you ? ”

“ Nothing, except what I have told you, and—and—I won't say another word ! Let's talk of something else. ”

“ But, Rosalind, my dear—— ”

“ I tell you I won't say another word ! ” cried the girl. “ Let's go for a motor drive this afternoon, shall we ? I can't bear being penned up in the house any longer. ”

“ I would if I could, ” replied Sir John, “ but I am sorry to say it is impossible. I have just had a telephone message from Lanivet telling me he is coming here this afternoon. ”

“ Mr. Lanivet ? ” repeated the girl.

“ Yes, Horace Lanivet of Lanivet, and I judge that he wants to see me about something important. ”

“ But you don't know him, do you ? ”

“ I used to know him very well, and—and you must remember him, too. Why, it is only a year ago since we met him in London. We were staying at the Carlton Hotel, and he was in one of the reception-rooms. Of course you remember him ; you asked me who he was, and said that he was a fine, scholarly-looking man. I told you about him then. ”

“ Oh yes, I remember now ! What's he coming here for ? ”

“ I don't know. I think it is about something important. —I judged so, anyhow, from the way he spoke. He is motoring over from Lanivet. ”

“ That's a long way off, ” said the girl like one reflecting.

“ Yes, it's more than fifty miles. He's a strange fellow, is Lanivet. ”

“ In what way ? ”

“ Well, for one thing, he scarcely ever leaves his house, at least so it is said. I suppose he goes on the Continent sometimes, but I don't know anything about that. I don't think he is a happy man in spite of all his money,” added the baronet.

“ What makes you say so ? ”

“ He has never said a word to me about it, although years ago we were friends ; but it is said that he had trouble with his only daughter.”

“ In what way ? ”

“ Of course, it may be only gossip, but I have been told that he disinherited her and kicked her out of the house ! ”

Up to now Rosalind's mind had seemed a long way off, but at this juncture her interest was apparently aroused. “ But why did he do that ? ” she asked.

“ There is a great deal of mystery about it,” replied her father. “ Some said that she fell in love with a low-bred clown and married him ; others have it that she married a lawyer man who took her to Liverpool ; but I don't know the rights or wrongs of it. Whatever the truth may be, Lanivet has never allowed anything to come to light, and even people in the neighbourhood are ignorant of what became of her. Some say she is still alive ; others that she is dead.”

“ And he is coming here this afternoon ? ”

“ So he says. I have asked him to dinner and tried to persuade him to stay the night, but I don't suppose he will. I was talking with old Sercombe, the rector of the parish there, some years ago, and he told me that he had not been on visiting terms with any of his neighbours for many a year. That's why I can't understand his coming here. I suppose he is the richest man in Cornwall,” he added. “ But he isn't a happy man, I am sure of that ! He has money to burn, but you have only to look in his eyes to see that he is miserable.”

Soon after lunch Rosalind went out into the park alone, and presently she reached the gates where she had first seen Caleb Besowsa. She had not been there long when a large car, containing a single occupant, rolled up.

As it happened the gates were closed at that moment, and the car had to wait for a few seconds while the old keeper came out to open them. Rosalind, who at the time stood close by, looked intently at the occupant. "That looks like Mr. Lanivet," she reflected. "Anyhow, he is a stranger to the neighbourhood. I wonder what he wants to see father about?"

At that moment the eyes of the girl met those of the stranger, and, as she confessed to herself afterwards, a great fear came into her heart, but why it was she could not tell.

She did not continue her walk, however; instead she returned to the Hall.

"Who was that man who came to the house a little while ago?" she asked one of the servants.

"The gentleman who came in the big Rolls-Royce, miss?" replied the man. "He gave his name as Mr. Horace Lanivet. I don't know who he is beyond that."

"Is he in the house now?"

"He is in the study with Sir John, miss."

Meanwhile Sir John and his visitor were closeted together in the steward's room.

"This is a real pleasure," said the baronet directly his visitor had been announced. "It is years since I was so gratified at the sight of anyone."

His visitor did not respond to this, although it was evident that the warmth of the other's welcome pleased him. And yet he seemed like one ill at ease. More than once, even when Sir John was in the middle of a sentence, he got up from his chair and walked abstractedly around the room, or else seemed to gaze idly at the great overshadowing trees in the park.

Sir John did his best to appear natural and to interest his visitor, but as he remembered their financial relations he found it difficult to do so. Still, he did his best to keep on talking, even while the other apparently paid but little heed to him.

"Luzmore," broke out Mr. Lanivet presently, "I've something to say to you which you will wonder at; something which I find terribly hard to put into words."

Sir John's heart sank as he heard this. "It will be about that money," he reflected. "There is nothing else about which he would find it hard to speak to me. Don't be hard on me, Lanivet," he said pathetically; "but, of course, you won't. You, as a landowner, are aware how things are in the country, and know how hard it is to find ready money. But I am hoping that better days are coming soon, and when they do I'll see to it that you shall be the first to be remembered."

A look of relief came into Mr. Lanivet's eyes as he heard this. Evidently he spoke the truth when he said he found a great difficulty in broaching the subject he had in his heart, and Sir John's words helped him to postpone what he had to say. "Are you hard up, Luzmore?"

"Beastly hard up," was the baronet's reply. "Of course, to most people I am regarded as a man in easy circumstances, while my tenants look upon me as a millionaire. But you know how things are. In fact, but for you I should long ago have been in Queer Street. Of course, I've been a fool. Instead of retrenching as any sensible man would have done, I have speculated; and my speculations have proved to be a wash-out. But surely *you* are not pinched? I have always regarded you as the safest man in the county!"

"What do you mean by saying that you hope better days are near?" asked his visitor.

"Of course, it is not an easy matter to talk about," replied the baronet, "and while it is, I suppose, common gossip in the county, everything is so unsettled that I can't speak freely. Still, you are different from others, and I can tell you what is in my heart. You know, of course, that Trelaske's only son, Jim, is awfully fond of Rosalind, and there is a kind of engagement between them?"

"No, I know nothing about it."

"That's strange! Why, it's been the talk of the county! But there, you are such a recluse that you know nothing of what is going on! Anyhow, it's this way. Trelaske and I made a sort of arrangement that if the young people continued to be fond of each other, there should be a

public announcement of what we had done. Rosalind, however, was not keen on it, although Jim was eager to get married."

Mr. Lanivet fixed his eyes on the other, but did not speak a word. Evidently, however, he seemed greatly interested in what was being said.

"I expected that everything would have been settled up before now," went on Sir John, "but whether old Trelaske got an inkling of my financial whereabouts or not I don't know. Certainly he has been very cold lately, and has hinted that the marriage shall be indefinitely postponed."

"Well?" queried the other.

"Oh, Jim is as keen as ever, and although he is out of England just now, I expect, when he returns, that he will want an immediate marriage. If he does, everything will be settled easily. You see, Trelaske is a rich man, and Jim, as his only son and heir, will also be a rich man. If Rosalind marries him, I can see my way to find the money I need. All the same, it would be terribly awkward for me if my present position came to light. I am afraid old Trelaske would want to cry off, and then——" Sir John concluded the sentence with a sigh.

"Is your daughter in love with Trelaske?" asked Mr. Lanivet.

"I don't know. For that matter, I don't believe she knows."

"Does she appear fond of him?"

"I thought she did a little while ago, but lately she seems to care nothing about him. But there! A girl's fancies are as fickle as April weather. Still—— I say, Lanivet, don't tell me you have come wanting to call in your money! It would place me in a devil of a fix if you do!"

Mr. Lanivet was silent for a few seconds, then he burst out suddenly; "Do you know anything about young Besowsa's mine?"

"What makes you ask that?" asked the baronet with a laugh.

"I want to know," and his visitor looked at him keenly.

"I know he's reported to be making money like dirt. As far as I can hear, he will be owing a fair sum to both of us for royalties presently. But, after all, what is it?"

"You know Besowsa, don't you?"

"Know him!" cried the baronet. "The impudent young scoundrel!"

"In what way is he an impudent young scoundrel?"

The baronet laughed again. "Yes, I must tell you! It's one of the greatest jokes imaginable! That fellow, who a year ago was a servant on one of my farms, actually had the impudence a few days ago to tell Rosalind that he was madly in love with her and that he intended to marry her. She rode over to the mine out of curiosity, and from what I can gather, spoke to him civilly, whereupon he came out with his absurd confession. Just think of it! If such a thing had happened a century ago the fellow would be horse-whipped, but it seems that anything can take place in these democratic days!"

Mr. Lanivet did not reply to this, but looked scrutinizingly at the other.

"Still," went on Sir John, "I regard you as partly responsible for such an absurd situation."

"I? In what way?"

"I should never have thought of granting him a mining sett but for you. As a matter of fact, I told him that such a thing was absurd, whereupon he told me what you had done, and when I knew your wishes in the matter, I did what he asked. Had I not done so, he wouldn't have been where he is. As you know, our boundary line runs right through the lode he is working."

"Have you anything against him personally?" asked Mr. Lanivet quietly.

"No-o, except for his confounded cheek. For that matter, the fellow has impressed me favourably. He possesses what is called a personality, and there is no doubt that in many ways he is a fine-looking, as well as a capable chap. But people of that sort should be kept in their own station of life. Of course, I can't help laughing at it; all the same, his confounded impertinence makes me angry."

"And how did your daughter regard young Besowsa's declaration?" asked the other.

"Oh, of course, she was frightfully angry. At first she laughed at him, and told him he ought to be sent to a lunatic asylum. All the same, he frightened her."

"Frightened her?"

"Yes. I don't quite understand it. I didn't think Rosalind knew what fear meant, but she confessed to me only this morning that the fellow made her afraid. She wants him driven out of the county," he added.

"But that is impossible! In fact, scores of people would regard it as a calamity if anything were to happen to him. You see, he is now a fairly big employer of labour, and it would be a bad thing for the whole district if the mine were to stop."

"Are you interested in him, Lanivet?"

"Yes, I am. That's what I came about. I didn't come to tell you that I wanted to call in the money you happen to owe me, but to tell you about my desire concerning that young man."

"What desire?"

"That he should marry your daughter," replied Mr. Lanivet.

CHAPTER XXII

"**WHAT!**" exclaimed Sir John in astonishment. "You wish my daughter to marry that upstart! That fellow who up to a year ago was a farm-servant! Of course, you are joking!"

"No, I am not joking. I was never more serious in my life."

"By gad!" and Sir John spoke in a hoarse whisper. "No, I will never consent to that! Besides, you don't mean it, Lanivet!"

"But I do!"

Sir John's face worked convulsively. "I would rather see her in her coffin!" he ejaculated fiercely.

“What! Rosalind, my only daughter married to a low-bred clown like that! A fellow without breeding, without education, an outsider,—a rank outsider? I tell you, never!”

“Why?” persisted Mr. Lanivet.

“I’ve told you; and I don’t believe you mean what you say either! You *couldn’t*! Why, such a thing is unheard of; it’s the quintessence of madness! But look here, Lanivet, what do you mean by saying such a thing? You must have some reason for it.”

“Put it down to my fancy if you like,” replied the other; “but I certainly mean what I say.”

“Then I reply that such a proposition is an insult to me and to mine. Yes, I suppose you are threatening me, but you may do what you like. You may call in your damned money! You may turn me out of this house if you like, bag and baggage! You may rob me of my old home, the home which has been in the Luzmore family for generations! You may do all that, but I have not sunk to such depths as you suggest! Rather than see my daughter marry a clod-hopper like that, I’ll be turned out of my old home, and I’ll see my girl work for her bread like any dairymaid on my estate! I mean it, Lanivet! Still, you don’t mean it; it is only a joke on your part!”

“No, it is not a joke,” and still Sir John’s visitor spoke quietly; “neither am I threatening you as you seem to think I am. I have simply expressed a wish, but I am not going to use any advantage which I possess over you. Still, I repeat I wish it!”

His words seemed to rob the other of his senses. Always a somewhat choleric man and given to gusts of temper, he was more than ever angry now. Added to that, although he could neither understand nor explain such an unheard-of request, the look on his visitor’s face, as well as the tones of his voice, frightened him. It seemed to him that the Squire of Lanivet was commanding him; and although he had said not a word in the shape of a threat, he felt that he would stop at nothing in order that his desires might be fulfilled. “I’ll never consent to it!”

he kept on repeating. "You can't mean it, Lanivet! You, bearing the name you do, and holding the opinions that you do, can't wish John Luzmore's daughter to marry a low-bred clown like that?"

"Stop!" cried Mr. Lanivet, and there was a tone of authority in his voice. "He is neither a clown nor is he low-bred. His birth, in many respects, is equal to your own!"

"But—— But he is Caleb Besowsa! Up to a year ago he was a servant at Spring Farm, not five miles from here. Do you deny that?"

"No, I don't deny that. Look here, Luzmore, I told you when I came, that I had something difficult to say. You seemed to regard this difficult thing as altogether different from what I had in my mind. You thought I came to demand the money you owe me. Forgive me for speaking so bluntly—I wouldn't have done so but for what you have said—but I didn't come for money at all; I came for something entirely different. I happen to know that Caleb Besowsa's feelings for your daughter are what he declares them to be. He loves her like his own life, and it is the great dream of his life to marry her."

"But who is Caleb Besowsa?" cried Sir John.

"He is my grandson."

"Your grandson!"

"My grandson," and although the words were spoken in a whisper, they were clear and distinct.

"Your grandson!" repeated Sir John like one bereft of his senses.

"He is my daughter's boy. Now perhaps you will understand what I said. I told you that I had something difficult to tell you; perhaps the most difficult thing I have ever had to say to anyone. I am a sensitive man, Luzmore. Perhaps some would call it by a more unpleasant name and say that I am a snob. Perhaps I am. Anyhow, my pride is as great as yours. For that reason I disowned my daughter, my own flesh and blood, when she did—what she did. I disinherited her, I closed my doors against her, and for years I connived at all sorts of lying reports about her!—Don't ask me to give you particulars. I can't

do it. Even to tell you what I have told you is causing me the pains of hell. But I will tell you this much, I had great dreams and great hopes about my daughter, Mary, even as you have about your child. I was always a reserved and autocratic man, and expected her to obey my slightest wish. I guarded her like a miser guards his gold ; I gave her none of the liberties which are supposed to be the right of every young girl in this age. I had her educated in a kind of Protestant nunnery, and when she came home from school, I provided her with none of the companionships which every girl ought to have. And I have paid the penalty. By means unknown to me, she became acquainted with a young farmer called Besowsa, and she married him. I drove her away from home ; I disowned her ; I disinherited her ; and I refused to tell anyone of what had happened. So secretly had everything been done that practically nothing was known to the world outside. All that was known was that my child had left home. A thousand stories were afloat. Some said one thing, some said another. But I contradicted nothing ; I couldn't, I was in hell. All my hopes were dashed to the ground, and life was a great black mockery."

"And this Caleb Besowsa is the son of your daughter, Mary ? "

"Yes. I needn't tell you of all the gossip that was afloat. Some said that Mary married a Somersetshire Squire, others that she went to Liverpool and became the wife of a lawyer there ; others still that she was consumptive and that I had sent her away to a Swiss mountain village where she died. But I refused to discuss the matter with anyone. I denied nothing ; I confessed nothing ; and for years I did not know what had become of the little maid who, in spite of my own devilish pride, was as dear to me as my own heart's blood."

"My God ! " exclaimed the baronet like one astonished beyond measure. "But how do you know, Lanivet, that this fellow is Mary's son ? "

"I only learnt it five years ago," replied the other. "I need not tell you how, but it came to my knowledge that the man, Caleb Besowsa, who had married her, was killed.

I had neither seen nor heard anything of him since the time—but I dare not go into that. Anyhow, I who had refused to know—yes, I say it frankly, I who had refused to know or to try to find out what had happened to my child, and who up to that time had abstained from reading a local newspaper,—saw on the placard of a West of England newspaper that a farmer called Caleb Besowsa had been killed. This led to my making inquiries.

“Great Heavens!” exclaimed the baronet again. “What happened then?”

“I learnt that Mary had died years before, and that the man who had married her had become a byword among his neighbours. Don't ask me to give you particulars. I can't. Then I learnt that there was a child, a boy. It seems like a ghastly nightmare to me now; all the same, I couldn't help myself, and I arranged with the brother of the man who had married Mary that he should pay the boy a certain sum of money each year. I was careful, however, that my name shouldn't appear.”

“Well?”

“This man was a rogue, and he never paid the boy anything.”

“And he—he—the boy?” exclaimed Sir John.

“He left the neighbourhood in which he had been reared in order to escape the stigma of being called ‘drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat’! I knew nothing about it at the time, but he went to one of your farms where he became a servant.”

Sir John continued to utter ejaculations, so much was he carried away by the other's narrative. “Then presently he found his way to you?” he asked.

“Presently he found his way to me,” repeated the other. “I won't try to tell you how, or under what circumstances. He knew nothing of me, neither had he the slightest idea of the name his mother bore before she was married.”

“And why did he come to you?”

“He wanted mining rights over land which belonged to me—— Great God! And he my Mary's own son! . . . I suppose you know some of the circumstances by this time? He had discovered what some trained experts

failed to discover, and—and—— But there!" And Mr. Lanivet looked with sightless eyes across the far-stretching park.

"But how did you know he was your grandson?"

"How could I help it? He told me a number of particulars about himself which coincided with what I had discovered. It was then that I first learnt that his uncle, Joshua Besowsa, had kept for himself the money I had arranged to be paid to him, and—and——" Still Mr. Lanivet kept looking out of the window.

"And did you let him know your relationship?"

The other shook his head. "No, I told him nothing. Even then my heart was embittered by the thought that Mary had disobeyed me, and had married a man out of our own class. I was interested, of course—I couldn't help that; but as for anything else——! I have always been a reserved man, Luzmore, and I had vowed more than once that the name of Mary Lanivet should never again pass my lips. But I had a curious feeling all the same. It was evening-time when he first came—— When the servant told me that a young man called Caleb Besowsa wanted to see me, I felt as though someone had driven a knife into my heart, and I told the man to drive him away. But I was curious, and as he left the house the light from my window fell upon his face—— Then something—I don't know what—seemed to snap within me, and I ordered the man to go after him and tell him that I would see him. By this time I had gained control over myself, and when he came back I was able to talk quite calmly with him."

Mr. Lanivet wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead and after a few seconds' silence went on again: "Although he was a well-grown young fellow, and in the eyes of the ordinary observer bore no resemblance to my family, I saw Mary in him. There was the same look in his eyes, the same peculiarities in his manner of speech, and I felt—God only knows what I felt!"

"And you say you did not tell him who you were?"

"No, I told him nothing. I tried to talk to him casually, and presently, I practically consented to let

him have mining rights over my land. You know what followed."

"And does he know now—who he is?" asked the baronet.

Again Mr. Lanivet shook his head. "He knows nothing; he hasn't the slightest idea."

"But how did you learn that he was in love with Rosalind?" Sir John spoke quite naturally now, and did not seem to resent what a few minutes before he had regarded as the extravaganza of madness.

"I did not sleep a wink during the night of his first visit," went on Mr. Lanivet as though Sir John had not spoken. "I could not. Although I hated the idea that Mary had married his father, and although I vowed that he could never be anything to me, I could not help feeling that I had been talking with my own flesh and blood—Then days passed; weeks passed; months passed, and my heart ached for him. I wanted to see him again, wanted to feel his hand in mine, wanted to look into his eyes, and—Good God Almighty!—I wanted to hear him call me grandfather! Can you understand me, Luzmore?"

"I don't know—— Yes, I think I can."

"But I steeled my heart against him; I wouldn't go near him; I wouldn't breathe his name. At length, however, I decided to visit him. I had been constantly hearing through my steward of his success at the mine, so I went to see him there.

"And you found him?"

"Yes, I found him. He was changed, too. He was no longer the superior farm-servant, but a well-set-up, handsome fellow. He was intelligent, too, and—and I felt proud of him. Yes, I felt *proud* that he was my grandson. But I told him nothing. All the same, when I returned home I arranged with my lawyers to get into communication with Joshua Besowsa and to tell him that he was to pay my grandson the money I had arranged to be paid."

"But you have not told me all yet," and there was an expectant look in the baronet's eyes.

“Not all, but nearly all. When I got back from my visit to his mine, I wrote him a letter. I pretended that I was so interested in our conversation that I wanted a further talk with him, so, without letting him know anything, I wrote him to that effect. He came immediately, and presently he told me all about his hopes, his fears and longings; told me about his love for your girl. He is a fine fellow, Luzmore; he is one of whom anyone could be proud. Handsome, too, in a way, and—— Well, I could not help coming to you. I reflected that but for my devilish pride my Mary might be living even now, and I thought—— Well, you can guess what I thought. Anyhow, I have come, and if it were impossible for him to marry your daughter before, perhaps what I have said will make it possible?”

“And you say he doesn't know the relationship between you?” Sir John asked this question eagerly, excitedly, as though it were of vital importance.

“He hasn't the shadowiest idea.”

“Do you mean him to know?”

“I can't tell you that—— Yes I can, though. I saw your girl at your park gates about an hour or so ago, and I made up my mind that on the day it was arranged for them to be married, I would make it known that Caleb Besowsa was my grandson.”

A silence fell between the two men which lasted for nearly a minute. Sir John spoke first. “What you have told me, Lanivet, has changed everything,” he said. “Of course, I could never have consented for a low-born fellow called Caleb Besowsa to marry Rosalind, but—you have made everything different. All the same, it is no use.”

“Why is it no use?” asked the other sharply.

“My girl has never thought of him save as a low-born clown,” replied the baronet. “We were talking about him just before lunch to-day, and she not only ridiculed what he said to her, but she loathes him; more than that, she fears him.”

“What do you mean by that?” and there was anger in the other's voice.

“If you knew how she feels towards him, you would

understand," replied Sir John. Whereupon he described the conversation they had had together.

"And is that all?" asked Mr. Lanivet after the other had finished his story.

"That is all; but you can guess how impossible it is, can't you?"

"And you say she fears him?"

"Yes, but I can't understand it. I never knew Rosalind to be afraid of anyone before, but she is afraid of him."

Mr. Lanivet did not speak for nearly a minute, then he laughed. "Tell me of their previous meetings, Luzmore," he demanded.

Sir John described the other occasions on which the two had met.

"My grandson shall never marry an unwilling bride," said Mr. Lanivet thoughtfully; "but I do not believe things are as hopeless as you appear to imagine. Your girl has always regarded Caleb"—and although he uttered the name with an effort, there was a suggestion of pride in his voice—"as one altogether outside the ambit of her life. To her he is only a farm-servant who has been lucky, and who, because he has been lucky, has lost his head, and dared to declare his intention of marrying her. More than that, she knows how you think of him; how you would no more dream of thinking of him as a son-in-law than you would invite one of your cow-boys to dine with you. But her fear seems to me a favourable augury. She would not be afraid of him if she only thought of him as a farm-servant who has got on. Caleb has a dominating personality," and this time there was no mistaking the pride in the speaker's voice. "Your girl feels it, too, and the very fact that she compares him favourably with young Jim Trelaske shows that she does not regard him as a clown."

"But what can one do?" asked the baronet, who had been thinking eagerly about his visitor's proposal, and saw the advantages that would accrue to himself thereby.

"Tell her that you withdraw all opposition," cried the other eagerly. "Make her feel that such a marriage might be agreeable to you."

"But she wouldn't believe it ; unless," Sir John hesitated a second and then went on—"unless I tell her what you have told me. May I do that?"

"No," replied the other after a long silence; "not yet. But tell her that Caleb Besowsa has good blood in his veins; let her know that some day he will, perhaps, be heir to a great fortune; lead her to think that he will one day be acclaimed as her equal in every respect. Above all, tell her that you will be proud to welcome him as your son-in-law. Let all this come to her gradually."

"But can't I tell her that you are his grandfather?"

"Not yet," replied the other.

"Why?"

"Because—— It is difficult to explain, Luzmore. Perhaps, too, it is difficult for you to understand my feelings. I don't want the boy to know anything. Up to now he hasn't a shadow of an idea that we are related, and I want him to remain ignorant. But on the day it is arranged for her to be his wife, there must be a meeting of all her friends here, and then I will tell the truth. Up to then he must know nothing."

"Of course, I will do what I can," said the baronet after another long silence, "but I can't believe that Rosalind will consent to what you suggest."

"Try, anyhow!" said Mr. Lanivet, "and see what will happen."

Soon after, and without partaking of Sir John's hospitality, Mr. Lanivet left Luzmore Hall. Although Rosalind more than once asked her father the reason for his coming, the baronet told her nothing except the most ordinary commonplaces. Indeed, when day after day passed by and nothing was said about it, she imagined that only business had brought them together.

Then something happened.

One morning Sir John, who had evidently been much excited by one of the letters he had received, called his daughter to him and said he wanted to speak to her particularly.

"What is it, Dad?" asked the girl when she had followed him into the library.

"Have you seen Besowsa lately?" asked her father.

"Never, since the time I told you about him," she replied, and Sir John not only noted the strange look in her eyes, but the excitement in her voice.

"Ever heard from him?"

"Why do you ask?"

"But have you?"

A deep flush surmounted the girl's face. "Why do you want to know?" she evaded.

"I have my reasons," replied her father. "Tell me!"

"Dad, I hate him!" she cried fiercely. "Can't you get rid of him? Can't you drive him out of the county—the country? He frightens me!"

"How does he frighten you?" Evidently the tone of the baronet's voice was different from that of several days before when he had last spoken of him, for the girl looked at him questioningly.

"I got that from him yesterday," she replied, and taking a letter from the bosom of her dress, she gave it to him.

"Do you want me to read this?" asked the baronet.

"That's why I have given it to you, Can't you do something, Dad? I am afraid of him!"

The letter contained only a few words. Nevertheless, a strange feeling came into the baronet's heart as he read it.

"You will never escape me. In spite of all you think and say now, I am going to have you. Not all the devils in hell shall stop me. You are more than life to me.—C.B."

Accompanying the letter was Caleb's photograph. Sir John looked at it with evident interest, and even as he looked he could not help admiring the tall, broad-shouldered and, in many respects, handsome young fellow. He was well dressed, too, and while he did not bear the hall-marks of a gentleman, no one would have passed him by as a nonentity.

"Isn't it awful!" cried the girl. "Fancy him daring to send me such a thing!"

Sir John did not speak for more than a minute. He gazed long and steadily at the picture. Then he turned to his daughter. "Why did you not tell me about this before?" he asked.

"I was afraid!"

"Afraid of what?"

"I don't know. He seems a sort of fate, a kind of evil destiny, doesn't he?—Oh, how I hate him!"

"Why?"

"Because he insults me!"

"How does he insult you?"

Again Rosalind looked at her father questioningly. She had expected him to be mad with rage, and to vow all kinds of vengeance on the fellow who had dared to send her such a communication. "Isn't the very fact of such a letter an insult? Fancy a farm-servant daring to send me his photograph!"

"It may be that he is different from what we think," replied her father after another long silence. "Perhaps we have misjudged him."

"How have we misjudged him? We know all about him!"

"Do we?" asked the baronet. "Look here, Rosalind, my dear, supposing he were different from what we think? Supposing—well, that he has good blood in his veins; suppose that he belonged to our class. Would you hate him so then?"

"It is not only that I hate him," cried the girl, "I fear him! I can't help thinking of him as a kind of—I don't know what! He seems to carry everything before him."

"He is a wonderful fellow," said Sir John like one musing. "I have among my letters this morning a report of his mine. I am told that he has just sold more than twelve tons of tin. Fancy that! Only a few months ago no one suspected that there was a fortune at the Ghost's Gorge, while now——"

"Yes, but he is only a clod-hopper;—a clown!" cried the girl angrily.

"Are you sure of that?" asked Sir John. "Would

you have the same feelings towards him, Rosalind, if it became known to us that he would one day become the heir of one of the richest men in the county? ”

The girl's cheeks became as pale as paste, and in her eyes was an unearthly light. “What do you mean, Dad? ” she whispered.

“Perhaps I was too hasty in my judgments,” replied her father. “I have had more than one interesting letter this morning. Naturally I have been thinking about what you told me some days ago, and—well, I couldn't help wondering about him. This led to my making inquiries, and— Have you answered this letter? ” he asked suddenly.

“Of course not. How could I think of such a thing? ”

“Then don't. If he is what I am told about him— Look here, Rosalind, would you have the same feelings about him if it were discovered that—that he belongs to our class? ”

“Would *you*? ” asked the girl excitedly.

“I should think differently, at all events,” was Sir John's guarded reply. “But don't say a word about this, Rosalind; don't breathe even a suggestion of what we have been talking about.”

“As though I should think of such a thing! ” was her reply.

But she did think. Evidently, too, her thoughts about Caleb underwent a change, and during the next few weeks she asked her father many questions as to the meaning of what he had said.

Then—it was nearly two months after Mr. Lanivet's visit to Luzmore Hall—Caleb received a letter from Sir John which astonished him beyond measure, and at the same time lifted him into the seventh heaven of delight.

CHAPTER XXIII

THIS was the letter :

“DEAR BESOWSA,

“I have heard so much about your mine that I am anxious to have a further talk with you about it. My daughter and I will be dining alone on Saturday night, and if you can manage to join us we shall be very pleased to see you. I am told that you have become a very busy man, so I shall not expect an answer to this. Just drop in if you find it convenient.

“Yours sincerely,
JOHN LUZMORE.”

Caleb could scarcely believe his own eyes. It was marvellous ; it was more than marvellous, it was a miracle ! Not that there was anything particular in the letter upon which he could fasten ; it was the fact of the letter itself. The great man at the Hall had actually written to him, and, what was more, had suggested that he should come to dinner. The last time he had met Sir John, the owner of Luzmore Hall had treated him cavalierly, spoken to him, in fact, as though he were still a servant lad at Spring Farm. And when he had come to the mine, he had asked questions which he, Caleb, could not help regarding as impertinent.

But this !

It was beyond his fondest dreams. Could it be possible that Rosalind had changed in her feelings towards him ?

No, that was out of the question ! But he hoped with a great hope.

He left his office and went out over the lonely moors. The great waste places gave him a sense of freedom and also gave wings to his imagination. While inside his office he could not breathe freely, but out here he could open his lungs and drink in the free, fresh winds of heaven.

Summer had come again, and there was not a cloud in the sky. Here and there the gorse bushes blazed with golden glory, while the heather gave promise that it would

soon be tinged with a purple hue. What a great, glad thing life was!

Near by the stamps clanged. They were crushing the rich tin ore which was being thrown into the pass behind them; they were stamping out a fortune for him. For him? No, it was not for him that they made their music—for they did make music—it was all for Rosalind! Everything he had, everything he was, everything he would be, all belonged to Rosalind!

Again he took Sir John's letter from his pocket and read it for the hundredth time. The baronet and his daughter would be dining alone on Saturday night, and he, Caleb, was invited to join them! Great heavens, what a change! When last he had been to Luzmore Hall, Rosalind had ridiculed the very idea of his starting a mine at the Ghost's Gorge, and had treated both him and his hopes with a kind of jeer. But now!

Why, to-day was Friday, and he would see her on the morrow! Was this in any way an answer to the letter and photograph he had sent her? If so, she was not angry with him! In any case, a world of hope surged in his heart. Could it be that the time was nearing when his dreams would be translated into reality?

Yes, he would see her to-morrow night, and—and—
Oh, how happy he was!

What had wrought the change? Could it be that the success of his mine had made Rosalind think of him more kindly? His heart became a little heavy as the thought flashed through his mind. But never mind! She *did* think of him more kindly, else she would not have allowed her father to send such a letter.

Everything was possible to him now. The lode had more than fulfilled the promise of a year before, and both the underground cap'n, and John Snell, the floor's cap'n, had prophesied that what had been was only a promise of what would be. The world was altogether different now from what it had been when he had first seen Rosalind. Then he had been only an unknown boy working as a servant among Sam Trethewy's fields. Life seemed hardly worth the living. Even the very knowledge he had been

amassing seemed to mock him. What could he do and be? He was hemmed in on every side. Then he saw Rosalind, and the world had become changed. Of, course, everything seemed like madness. The vow he had made was madness; the dreams he had dreamed were madness; everything was madness.

He thought of the time he had gone down to the west of the county and had his talk with Mr. Yelland. Remembered his visit to his Uncle Joshua; remembered, too, the time he had called on Mr. Lanivet. The great man had been kind to him even then, while since—— Yes, a wonderful change had come over everything. Of course, he was still only “drunken old Caleb Besowsa’s brat,” but he had lived down that, and now the whole countryside treated him with respect.

But all that was nothing. The great fact which towered above everything else was that on the following night he would see Rosalind! Perhaps—— Oh, God, could it be possible!—to hold her in his arms!—to feel her lips on his!—to hear her say——

He found himself near old Adam Sticker’s farm, and looking, saw Eve in the little garden. “Hullo, Eve, how are you?” There was a glad laugh in his voice, and he spoke to her in a free-and-easy fashion.

The girl started as he spoke, and looked up from the flower-beds. “Why—— Why, Caleb!” she cried. “Caleb Besowsa! What a glorious morning, isn’t it?”

“Heavenly!” replied Caleb.

He was glad he had paid her that money back. He remembered the feeling of gladness and pride he had felt in his heart when he handed it to her. She did not seem to want to take it, but, of course, he had insisted. A thousand pounds. Even now that his mine had turned out so well, and he had been receiving large sums of money, since his Uncle Joshua’s letter came to him, a thousand pounds was still a big amount.

“Are you well, Eve?”

“Of course I am,” and the pallor which had overspread her cheeks now turned into a rosy flush. Yes, in many ways, Eve was a charming girl. Indeed, she was no

more like the ordinary girl of the moors than that bright morning was like a murky day in February. She was, in many ways, beautiful. She was refined, too, and doubtless she had repaid all the money old Adam had spent in educating her. Of course, she was not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as Rosalind! She was only flesh and blood, while Rosalind was a dream of delight, a miracle of beauty.

"Eve," he said, "may I ask you a question?"

"Of course you may, Caleb," replied the girl.

"And you will promise to answer me, won't you?"

"If I can, Caleb."

"I owe everything to you, Eve; at least, in a way. I couldn't have started the Ghost's Gorge Mine but for you."

"Nonsense! Of course you could."

"Well, perhaps I could. I should have managed somehow, I suppose. But now for the question. I have asked it before, but you have never answered me frankly."

"What is it, Caleb?" and there was a wondrous light in the girl's eyes.

"Where did you get that thousand pounds which you lent me?"

"I told you all I know," replied the girl.

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

"Then let me ask you something else. How much did you have left after you lent it to me?"

A troubled look came into the eyes which a few seconds before had been shining brightly, while her cheeks became almost painfully flushed. "Why need you know that?" she asked.

"I do need it, and what is more, I insist on knowing."

"I had nothing left," she said slowly.

"Nothing! You can't mean that you let me have all you had?"

"Yes, Caleb," and she still spoke slowly. "I gave you all I had."

"And yet you took no precautions; there was no contract between us?"

"I didn't want a contract, Caleb."

"Why?" he exclaimed in wonder.

"Because I trusted you . . . I believed in you."

"But I might have cheated you of all your money?"

"Oh no, I knew I could trust you."

A silence fell between them, a silence which lasted several seconds.

"Why wouldn't you take the interest which I told you I wanted to pay, as well as the thousand pounds?" he asked.

"Take interest from you, Caleb? No, I couldn't do that!"

Neither spoke a word more after this for nearly a minute. Then, lifting her eyes to his, the girl said: "You seem very happy this morning, Caleb."

"I am," he replied. "You remember what I told you months and months ago, don't you?"

"What did you tell me?" she asked.

"That I loved a great lady," was his reply. "I told you of my dreams, and hopes, and longings—and you laughed at me."

"No, I never laughed at you, Caleb."

"Yes, you did—but I was right."

"Right?"

He nodded. "I am going to see her to-morrow night. Her father has invited me to dinner, and I shall see her! Perhaps—who knows?—by this time on Sunday morning I may be able to tell you that I am the happiest man in the world."

"What will make you happier than you are, Caleb?"

"Happier than I am!" and he laughed as though her question were foolishness. "Why, you know! I told you all about it; told you that I loved Rosalind as no one was ever loved before; told you that I should never rest until I had made her my wife. Oh, it is wonderful, isn't it?"

The girl looked at him steadily, but was silent.

"Perhaps—who knows?—perhaps she is beginning to love me," he went on; "perhaps all barriers which stood between us are being broken down!— Would you like

to look at Sir John's letter? It came only this morning. There—read it. He has asked me to dine at the Hall. There isn't a party of any sort, as you see; he says they are dining alone and I am asked to join them. Surely that means something! Anyhow, I am going!"

He turned and left her as he spoke. He did not see her quivering lips or the strange look in her eyes. He was too full of his own fancies, and hopes, and longings.

How he passed the time from when the letter came until the hour he started for Luzmore Hall, he never knew. Never, surely, did hours drag so slowly. He scarcely slept throughout the whole of the Friday night, and after paying his men on the Saturday and starting for Spring Farm, he scarcely knew what he was doing.

Caleb had bought a little motor-car directly after the sale of his first large batch of tin, but he would not trust to it to go to Luzmore Hall. Something might happen to it; it might refuse to work, or there might be an accident on the road, and he could not bear the thought of anything making his visit impossible.

Soon after three o'clock he commenced dressing himself with meticulous care, and no girl attiring herself for her first Ball ever paid so much attention to her finery as Caleb did as he dressed himself for his visit to Luzmore Hall.

By a little after five o'clock he commenced his journey. It was only a little more than four miles, and he could easily have covered the distance in an hour; but he would not be late for worlds. Every step he took seemed to him a step nearer to the fulfilment of his vow, and when at length he reached the park gates and saw that he was far earlier than he ought to be, he went away into the woods and dreamt of Rosalind.

Sir John greeted him kindly when, soon after seven, he made his appearance at the great house; welcomed him, in fact, as he would have welcomed a visitor of his own class. To Caleb it was something past belief that he who on his first visit there had been treated as a farm-servant, should now be treated as a welcome guest.

"As I told you, we are dining alone," Sir John said.

“Rosalind has not yet appeared, but she will be here in a few minutes.”

The room into which Sir John led him made him afraid. He had never been in such a room before. It was true the library at Lanivet was quite as spacious and, in its way, more imposing. But here all was different. The walls were not lined with books, and there was no statuary on the top of the well-filled book-cases; but there was a daintiness unknown at Lanivet. Indeed there were signs of a woman's hand everywhere. Vases filled with rare flowers met his gaze; the air was laden with perfume, and on every hand a woman's care was manifest.

At length he heard light footsteps coming towards the room, and he knew that his head was swimming; that he was scarcely master of himself. Then Rosalind appeared.

He had never seen her in such attire before, and never dreamed that even she could be such a picture of loveliness. This was the first time that Caleb, unsophisticated as he was, had ever seen a woman in evening attire, and, as it seemed to him, her presence enhanced the beauty of the room.

Sir John, who doubtless knew of Caleb's ignorance concerning the usages of the world, had purposely refrained from dressing for dinner; but Rosalind looked, to Caleb, like a bride adorned for her husband. He noted the gleam of her smooth skin; saw the jewels with which she had bedecked herself; noted the flash of the diamonds she wore, and while, to him, her adornments did not add to her beauty, he was glad of them. That rope of pearls around her neck, for example, would have been more befitting if she had been ten years older, and yet it was surely right that Sir John Luzmore's only daughter should display so much grandeur!

To this day Caleb never remembered what happened during the dinner-hour. He was utterly ignorant of the viands which were placed before him. He only knew that he was feeding on the nectar of the gods; that he was in a world far removed from anything he had known before. He was in Rosalind's presence, and felt her bright eyes flashing upon him!

And yet he made no mistakes. Even the most fastidious person alive could not have accused him of being boorish or clownish, while the servants who waited at the table never thought of him as a one-time farm-servant who had "got on in the world." Even Sir John could not help reflecting on this, and he drew his conclusions accordingly.

"He can't hide the fact that he came of good forbears," he reflected. "Never once since he has been in the house has he done anything *gauche* or in bad taste. After all, the fellow is instinctively a gentleman, and would be recognized as such anywhere."

Much to his surprise, too, although Caleb spoke but little, what he said revealed a quick intelligence and a well-stored mind. Indeed, Sir John, for purposes of his own, led the conversation into channels which had to do with Caleb's daily life, and he quickly realized that this young fellow knew far more about mineralogy and the science of mining than he knew himself. He was amazed, too, at his knowledge concerning literature. For while his reading was, undoubtedly, limited, he showed a quick and genuine appreciation of what was good in the world of letters. He knew his Shakespeare well, and more than once, although he did it unostentatiously, he corrected him in some of his quotations of the world's greatest poet.

After dinner was over, Sir John, in the old Victorian fashion, led his guest into the drawing-room, and after coffee had been brought, began to question Caleb concerning his early life. In answering these questions, however, Caleb seemed taciturn, if not reserved. Perhaps the reason for this was that he did not wish to speak in Rosalind's presence of the time when he was known as "drunken old Caleb Besowsa's brat."

But there was another reason more powerful than this. Unsophisticated as he was, and utterly unused to the ways of the world, Caleb felt a kind of shock when he saw Rosalind take a cigarette from a box and begin to smoke it. Somehow, he did not know why, he wished she hadn't, and when at length he saw her sipping from a tiny liqueur glass, he felt somehow as though his ideals had been

shattered. Of course, there was nothing wrong in it. Indeed, it seemed natural in the world in which she lived ; but he, with his primitive notions, felt as he might have felt had he seen the delicate bloom ruthlessly brushed away from a flower. Still, it was all right. This was Rosalind, and whatever Rosalind did was right.

In spite of the strangeness of everything, too, he was in heaven. What wonder ! He was in the light of Rosalind's presence, and more than once she had smiled on him. It was true she had said nothing wonderful, but her voice was like music, and her eyes shone like stars.

Great God ! Would the time ever come when he should possess her, when her rosy lips would be pressed against his, and when his arms would be around her !

Dinner had been over more than half an hour when a servant entered the room with the information that Sir John was wanted elsewhere. And then, as it seemed to Caleb, his dreams were about to be fulfilled.

He was alone with Rosalind.

Even then he could not help remembering when she had visited him at the mine, and he had made his mad confession to her. Called to mind, too, the hauteur, the scorn, the mockery of her voice.

But all was different now. Her lips were wreathed with smiles ; her eyes shone, not with anger, but with something far removed from anger.

What had wrought the change ?

He was in dreamland, in Arcadia, in heaven ! This girl was not the angry aristocrat who had mocked him ; she was a Circe who charmed him with the witchery of her presence ; her smile stole away his senses and made him forget mundane things.

Yes, he was alone with Rosalind whom he worshipped from afar, and to possess whom he had been ready to give his immortal soul.

" Caleb," she said, and her voice was honey-sweet, " have you forgiven me ? "

" Forgiven you ! " The words came through his set teeth, and his voice was hoarse with passion.

" Yes, you know. You made a confession when I saw

you at the mine ; and—and—— Have you forgiven me, Caleb ? ”

Caleb was silent. Her presence seemed to throw a spell upon him.

“ I have never forgiven *myself*,” she went on.

“ Never forgiven yourself ! Then—— ? ”

She nodded—and smiled at him.

His head swam ; his pulses beat madly ; his whole being was shaken to its very foundations.

What did this mean ? Here was he, Caleb Besowsa, in the home of the man he had regarded with awe ; here was he alone in the room with the girl whom he had vowed to make his wife, and for whom he would gladly have died.— And she bestowed honeyed glances on him ! More than that, she had told him !—— No, she had told him nothing, but if looks, shy looks, meant anything ; if broken sentences meant anything, she had told him that what he longed for was his for the asking.

Then—he could never understand it—but he experienced a great revulsion of feeling. She was no longer a Circe, no longer something which he desired more than all else in the wide world ! She was just the empty-headed daughter of a proud man ; just a chit of a girl who no longer attracted him. Something, he knew not what, had changed her.

He had changed, too. He was not the ardent youth who on his way to the Hall felt that he would soon enter the gates of Paradise.

He did not want her !

The fact bewildered him, made the room swim around him ; but it was still a fact. He did not want her.

He thought of the time he had been lying alone on the heather near the Ghost's Gorge before his dreams began to be realized ; remembered how he had been shocked by the thought that Rosalind would grow old and withered, and when he would see her face, not a dream of loveliness, but a grinning skull !

Now he understood. He had loved the Rosalind of his ideals, of his fancies, of his fond hopes. The girl who sat near him was not the Rosalind who had haunted his dreams,

and who had appeared to him as the epitome of all that was good and angel-like! He had loved, nay, almost worshipped an ideal, a dream; while this girl was only a common, ignorant, empty-headed thing not worth the having! More than that, the something which had changed her in her demeanour towards him was, he was sure, although he did not know it at the time, something poor and mean.

No, he did not want her!

But he was alone in the room with her! More than that, she had invited him to make love to her, and was waiting for him to do so! And he had nothing to say to her! She no longer had any charm for him. He felt uncomfortable in her presence; he wanted to be alone!

Then, to his infinite relief, he heard footsteps outside the door, and a minute later Sir John entered, accompanied by Mr. Lanivet.

The thought came into his mind like a flash of light. All this was pre-arranged. Something, of which he knew nothing, had not only changed Sir John's attitude towards him, but had made Rosalind say what she had said. There was something poor and mechanical about it all. He could not explain why he knew; he was only sure that he did know it.

"You have met Mr. Lanivet before, I think?" It was Sir John's voice that he heard; then he saw Mr. Lanivet coming towards him with an outstretched hand.

"Forgive me, but I must be going. I—I have forgotten something! Good night," Caleb exclaimed as he rushed towards the door.

What happened after that he could never remember. He had a vague idea of finding his way to the cloak-room; of hasty questions which the baronet asked him; of a strange look in Mr. Lanivet's eyes; but nothing was clear to him. All he knew was that after he had made foolish, blundering apologies, and had uttered incoherent words, he found himself breathing the pure, cool air outside, and was rushing towards the park gates.

CHAPTER XXIV

CALEB had gone more than half the distance which lay between the house and the park gates before he realized where he was. Then he stood still and heaved a great sigh. He felt as though he had thrown a great crushing incubus from him. "Am I in my right senses, or am I dreaming?" he gasped.

At length the events of the evening became more clear to him. He remembered Sir John's welcome; remembered the appearance of Rosalind; remembered, too, the girl's changed demeanour—remembered everything. "I don't want her!" he gasped. "I don't love her!—What's the meaning of it?"

He strode on again until he had nearly reached the park gates. Then he called to mind how, near this spot, Rosalind had first burst upon his gaze like some being from another and a brighter world. And she had changed everything! From the moment he had first seen her his thoughts about the world had become different; everything had become different.

"But I was blind, blind!" he almost shouted. "It was not she I saw, it was someone entirely different. What I saw was my own hopes and longings, the dearest dreams of my life. But I never loved *her*! For a time she symbolized all that I hoped for, all that I longed for; that was all!"

He was calmer by this time, and realized what he had done; realized, too, something of what not only Rosalind, but her father must be thinking. "I must write a letter," he reflected. "I must apologize, I must blame myself for acting like the clown I was; but I must not let them know the truth. No, they must never know that!"

He heard the sound of wheels; saw a bright light flash upon the roadway, and a moment later a car stopped by his side. "Is that you, Besowsa?" It was Mr. Lanivet's voice.

Wonderingly he gazed as the occupant of the car stepped from it and stood by his side.

"Can I give you a lift?" and he saw his interlocutor's face in the light of the dying day.

"No, thank you, sir; I can easily walk."

"I want a chat with you; I want to tell you something."

"Yes, sir." In spite of the fact that he had grown calmer, he was still under the influence of what had taken place, and he could not understand why the older man wanted to speak to him.

"Will you get into the car?" asked Mr. Lanivet.

"Your road and mine part here, sir," Caleb replied. "I must go back to Spring Farm."

"Why should you?" asked the other. "Why not come back to Lanivet with me?"

"Back to Lanivet with you!" cried the youth in astonishment.

"Yes. I can easily put you up for the night, and you have no need to be at the mine in the morning, have you?"

"But go to Lanivet with you, sir!"

"Yes, I wish you would. There is much I have to tell you; much I have to explain."

"But Lanivet is many miles from here, and I must be at the Ghost's Gorge to-morrow—I promised I would!"

Caleb scarcely knew what he was saying. He had a strange longing to do what the other suggested. For that matter, the suggestion was almost like a command, and he wanted to obey.

"That can be easily managed, and I want you to go with me to-night. Get in, will you?"

He could not understand at all why he did it; but a few seconds later he found himself seated in the car with Mr. Lanivet by his side. Nothing was real; nothing was natural, and yet in some mysterious way he felt he was doing what was right.

The car sped on. Up hill and down dale it went, moving rapidly all the time. But he did not speak. Indeed, speech, at that moment, seemed to him impossible. An hour later he stood at the door of Lanivet. He heard the owner give some orders to a servant, and then he found himself in the room he remembered so well. "Sit down,

will you ? ” and the owner of the house indicated a huge armchair.

Caleb obeyed. In some mysterious way everything had changed. The room, instead of being strange and forbidding, seemed like home. The proud man before him who, when he had been there before, had been like a stranger, now appeared to him as one whom he had known for a long time.

“ Caleb,” said Mr. Lanivet, and there was a new tone in his voice and a new light shone from his eyes.

What did the great man mean by calling him by his Christian name ?

“ Caleb, don't you know who I am ? Tell me again what you remember about your mother.”

“ Why should I ? ” and he looked at the other in astonishment.

“ Because she was my only daughter ; because—God forgive me—you are my grandson.”

A hundred things were explained in a second. The meaning of what had been troubling him for months flashed like lightning before his mind's eye.

“ I want to tell you everything, my boy,” went on Mr. Lanivet.

For more than an hour they sat, Mr. Lanivet talking and Caleb listening.

“ Then you acted like a cad,” Caleb burst out at length. “ You thought more of your pride than you thought of my mother ! ”

“ I was worse than a cad,” replied the older man. “ But try to understand, Caleb. ‘ To know all is to forgive all,’ and I have told you these things because I want you to know everything.”

Caleb looked steadily at the man before him, and as he looked, not only a great yearning, but a great pity came into his heart. He saw lines of suffering on his face ; saw untold longings in his eyes.

“ Yes, I have paid ! Great God ! I have paid ! ” and there was agony in the voice of the man whom he had looked upon as self-controlled and reserved. “ I thought I was justified in what I was doing ; thought I had a right

to demand obedience. That is why I closed my heart, and acted, not only like a fool, but a wicked fool. As I remember now, I hoped and believed that something would happen to your father, and that Mary would come back to me repentant. Great God, what a tragedy it was! But I have paid, my boy, I have paid!"

Then he told Caleb how at length he heard of his father's death; related to him how, through the inquiries he had made, he had learnt that he, Caleb, had left home and gone out into the world, no one knowing where. Told, too, how, conscience-stricken, he had, by means of his agents, got into communication with his Uncle Joshua, and had given him a sum of money which was to be used for Caleb's benefit directly his whereabouts was discovered. And then he described his own feelings when Caleb found his way to Lanivet. "But I would not give in even then," he declared. "After I had heard your story I knew that you were my grandson, but I tried to close my heart against you; tried to act as though you did not exist; but I could not. Old memories came rushing into my mind, old hopes, old longings were reborn. In a word, I began to realize that you were my own flesh and blood, and I wanted you—longed for you."

"But you told me nothing?" urged Caleb.

"No, I was afraid."

"Afraid! Afraid of what?"

"Of you. Yes, I admit it. You were my own flesh and blood, and yet I was afraid of you. But I watched you, and I caused inquiries to be made about you. Presently I went to see you, and then my longing to own you as my Mary's boy—as my grandson—became stronger. You remember my visit to the mine, don't you, and the letter I wrote you afterwards? I was still anxious to keep you in the dark, and yet I longed more than words can say to have you near me, to know what was in your mind. I wanted, too, to atone for the past; I wanted you to be happy—and I learnt your secret!"

Caleb started to his feet and began to walk around the room. "Look here, Mr. Lanivet," he said, and there was anger in his voice, "was it through you that Sir John

changed towards me? Was it through you that that——” He tried to put into words his hopes and dreams about Rosalind, but could not.

“I could see what you wanted,” said the older man, who seemed to read him like a book, “and, knowing Sir John, I tried to make it possible. I wanted you to be happy, my boy!”

“And you told Sir John that I was your grandson?”

Mr. Lanivet nodded. “I knew that however you might succeed at the mine, that neither he nor his daughter would ever dream of thinking of you in the way you wanted to be thought of, while they regarded you simply as a farm-servant who had been fortunate. So I told them who you were, and in what way we were related.”

“And it was you who arranged for this meeting to-night! You had it all planned, all cut and dried!” And Caleb laughed excitedly.

The other remained silent.

“I wondered at the change,” Caleb went on; “wondered why Sir John and that girl received me so kindly. Of course, I was a blind fool! But after all, perhaps it was no wonder!”

A silence fell between the two men which lasted for more than a minute. Then Caleb burst out like a man in wrath, “But directly I saw that she was willing to give herself to me I didn't want her,” and he almost shouted the words. “I saw her as she really was! I had thought of her as something more than human; as an angel sent down from heaven; but to-night my eyes were opened. She is just a commonplace, empty-headed chit of a girl, and now I care no more for her than I care for the girl who feeds the pigs at Spring Farm! All the same, they must know nothing of the truth,” he added.

Mr. Lanivet looked at him questioningly.

“You see,” cried Caleb with flashing eyes, “Sir John is a snob, and his daughter is a snob!—but I must let them know that I am a gentleman!”

“How can you do that?” asked Mr. Lanivet with a smile.

“I must never let them know that I have found out the

truth about them," replied Caleb. "I must make them think that the reason I left their house was something entirely different from what it really was."

"So you don't love her any more?" the older man queried, looking at him keenly.

"I never loved her! What I loved was a phantasm, a dream; something which had no existence save in my own mind and heart!"

"And now you are heart-free and heart-whole?" queried the other.

"Yes," replied Caleb. "I—I—— But I can't understand it!"

"What can't you understand?"

"I don't know," replied the young man after a long silence.

"Caleb!" said Mr. Lanivet.

"Yes, sir." His mind was far away.

"Do you think you can ever love me, ever regard me as——?"

"Stop!" interrupted the young man. "It's all too strange, all too unbelievable!"

"But it's true, my boy, and I want to atone. Will you let me make amends? Will you let me make it known that you are Mary's boy—that you are my grandson?"

"Not yet, sir," and there was a new look in his eyes. "Up to the present I have done everything unaided and alone, and—— But perhaps you will understand, sir."

It was far past midnight before Caleb went to bed, and when he did so, he was for a long time unable to sleep. Perhaps the reason for this can be easily understood. Hitherto he had lived in a humble farm-house without ever thinking of his destiny, while to-night he was housed in a stately mansion, the owner of which wanted to proclaim to the world who he really was. "But not yet, not yet," he determined as presently he felt sleep coming to him.

The next morning he was motoring rapidly to the Ghost's Gorge.

"Why are you in such a hurry to get away, Caleb?" Mr. Lanivet asked while they sat at breakfast.

"I promised, sir."

"Promised whom?" asked the older man.

Caleb did not give a direct answer to this. There was a peculiar glitter in his eyes, and his hand trembled as he held his coffee-cup. "I must go at once, sir," he said. "I wouldn't be late for worlds."

"Will you be at the mine all the day?" Mr. Lanivet asked.

"I don't know. Oh, what a fool I was!"

The older man looked as though he would like to ask further questions, but something in Caleb's face forbade him.

"Thank you for asking me here, sir," Caleb said presently, as he rose from the breakfast-table, "and please forgive me if I am rude."

"Why do you call me sir?" asked the older man, and he laid his hand affectionately on Caleb's arm.

"I don't know you yet, sir," the young man had responded.

"Don't you realize that I am proud of you, my boy? That I am happier than I have been since Mary left me?"

"Proud of me! Perhaps that may not be for long. Good morning, sir," and he made his way to the car which stood outside the front door.

He could not have explained his thoughts as the car rolled away; could not have told why a thousand voices seemed to urge him to hurry back to the mine. He only knew he must go at once.

Rapidly as the powerful machine swept over hill and dale, it did not go as fast as Caleb desired. Indeed, although the well-trained chauffeur made no protest at his evident desire to break all speed limits, he could not but help a feeling of resentment coming into his heart. Why should this masterful young stranger want to do more than fifty miles an hour? Why, when everything on a peaceful Sunday morning seemed to tell them that, not speed, but restfulness was the spirit of the day, should he wish to travel so fast? But he said nothing, and at the end of the first hour, narrow and crooked as many of the roads were, they had covered nearly forty miles.

Presently the sweet pastoral country was left behind them, and they entered upon the great sweep of the Bodmin Moors. "You need not go farther," Caleb commanded him, when they were within sight of the mine. "I will do the rest of my journey on foot."

"Thank you, sir," replied the chauffeur, "but my master told me that I was to hold myself at your disposal for the rest of the day."

"I do not want you any more," was Caleb's reply. Then, as if a sudden thought struck him, he said: "What would Mr. Lanivet do if I kept you here all the day? He may want the car."

"Oh, there is another one in the garage at home," the chauffeur replied, "and neither Evans nor I have half enough to do. You are sure you do not want me any more, sir?"

"Sure," replied Caleb, pushing a note into the man's hand.

A few minutes later the great Rolls-Royce by which he had travelled was out of sight, while Caleb made his way towards the mine. During the journey he had not at all realized the spirit of the Sabbath day; he was too excited, too much wrought upon. But here, with the wide stretch of the moors around him and the quietness which everywhere prevailed, it seemed indeed a day of rest. The water-wheel at the mine no longer revolved, the stamps no longer clanged; the whole place seemed a sanctuary.

But he only gave a passing glance at the mine. His eyes were eagerly turned towards Ghost's Gorge Farm, where he saw, standing by the little farmyard gate, a horse and trap.

Caleb began to run towards the farm.

When he had gone perhaps a little more than half the distance he saw someone emerge from the farm-house, while a man climbed into the trap.

He increased his speed as though the furies were at his heels, and came up to the farm just as Eve appeared. "Eve!" he gasped.

"Why, it is you, Caleb!" and there was a strange light in her eyes.

"Where are you going?"

"I am going away."

"But why? You told me nothing about it on Friday!"

"I am going away," repeated the girl. "I ought to have gone an hour ago."

"But why?" he repeated again. "I cannot allow it!"

The strange look in the girl's eyes still continued, but her only answer was: "I am going away, Caleb."

"No, you are not," he replied. "At least, you are not going until I have told you something."

CHAPTER XXV

TAKING her by the arm he led her away, while the man who was on the driver's seat watched them like one wondering. She made no effort to resist him, although the light of battle was in her eyes. "What do you want to tell me?" she asked presently.

"What I ought to have told you long ago," was his answer.

The girl scrutinized his face, and the look of defiance which had shone from her eyes changed to fear. "I am afraid, Caleb!" she whispered.

"Afraid! What are you afraid of?"

"You. Where are you leading me?"

"Where no one can hear us speak," was his answer.

A minute later they had reached a great rock, around which a quantity of bracken grew. They were still close to the farm-house, although sufficiently far away to be unheard.

"Are you happy, Caleb?" and there was a peculiar intonation in the girl's voice. "You remember what you told me, don't you? You said that when we saw each other again you would be able to tell me that you were the happiest man in the world. Are you?"

"I don't know," he replied. "But I shall know in a few minutes."

"What do you mean, Caleb?"

"Mean? Oh, Eve, forgive me!"

"Forgive you for what? Aren't you happy, Caleb? You went to the great house last night, didn't you? Did you tell her what was in your heart?— Of course you did. And she——?"

"Eve," he protested, "I am not mad, although I may seem so. I have been mad, but now I have come to my senses."

The girl looked at him half in amazement, half in fear.

"Yes, I mean it," he went on, "and—and I am going to tell you everything. I owe it to you, Eve."

He looked at the girl like one fascinated; noted her quivering lips, her every movement. "Oh, Eve!" he cried. "She is not worthy to tie your boots! She does not live in the same world! She does not know the meaning of life, or beauty, or anything, while you—you are the angel, not she!"

Eve's face became crimson, while her great dark eyes burnt with an unnatural light.

"Oh, you are beautiful, Eve!" he cried, like one carried away by his own thoughts, "more beautiful than I believed anyone could be! And you are good, too! You are better than any angel in heaven! Good God, how blind I've been!"

"Caleb, what's the matter with you?" cried the girl. "I'm—I'm frightened! What do you want to say to me?"

"Eve," cried Caleb, "I promised to tell you everything. As I said when I spoke to you on Friday, I was invited to the great house last night, and I hoped that all I had been dreaming and longing for for months was coming to pass. I have never kept it a secret from you, have I? I believed that what I told you was true. I regarded her as beautiful beyond thought, but as far removed from me as the stars! I was mad, but I could not help myself! I told myself, again and again, that until she told me she loved me, and would become my wife, I should never have a minute's peace, a minute's happiness! That's true, isn't it?"

"I neither know nor care!" replied the girl angrily.

“What is Rosalind Luzmore to me? Well—well, I suppose you found her, and I hope she told you what made you happy!”

Caleb laughed a strange, mocking laugh. “I told you just now that you should know everything,” he cried, “and so you shall. It is your right. Although everyone else must be ignorant, nothing must be hidden from *you*. I went to Rosalind Luzmore’s house last night, and sat alone with her!”

“And she?” gasped the girl. “What did she say to you? What did you say to her?”

Caleb laughed again. “She smiled on me,” he said. “She as good as told me that she was mine for the asking; but I didn’t know then!”

“Know what? Leave me, Caleb Besowsa! Go to the girl you love!” and there was concentrated fury in her voice.

“Wait a minute,” and his own voice hardened. “She had been told something about me; I can’t tell you what it was now, but she had! Anyhow, it made her smile on me; it made her say things which up to yesterday I would gladly have died to hear! But I didn’t reply to her! I never said a word; I couldn’t! Directly I knew that she was mine for the asking *I didn’t want her!* I realized, too, that she was not the girl I had longed for, prayed for, and besought God in agony to give to me! Eve, don’t you understand? *I never loved her!* I only loved something which I imagined she was. No, I never said a word to her! I rushed out of the house and left her!—Do you know why, Eve?”

“Caleb!” gasped the girl hoarsely. “Have you gone out of your mind? You can’t mean what you say!”

Caleb laughed again. “I am quite sane, Eve,” and this time he spoke quietly. “I came to my senses suddenly, but I came to them all right. Do you know why I didn’t want her?”

The girl gave him a strange, searching glance.

“It came to me as I sat there close to her! I knew it as truly as if God Himself had spoken to me! It was not she I wanted; I wanted *you!* You, Eve!”

"Me, Caleb?"

"You," he replied. "I thought all the time in my madness that I loved her, but I didn't. As I told you just now, directly I discovered that she was mine for the asking, I didn't want her! I didn't even see her! Another face, another form rose before me! It was yours, Eve! I saw your dear eyes shining on me; saw your dear face; saw you altogether, and I knew then that it was not she I wanted, but you!"

"No, no, Caleb!" cried the girl with a sob. "You can't want me!"

"But I do, and—and I owe you everything!"

"But, Caleb——!" protested the girl.

"Wait a bit," and Eve felt the spell of his personality. "I asked you a question on Friday. I asked you how much you had left when you gave me that thousand pounds, and you told me you had given me all you had. Won't you give me something more, Eve?"

"I don't know what you mean, Caleb."

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" he cried, and a sob came into his voice. "You told me you had given me all you *had*! Won't you give me all you *are*? That's what I want! For, Eve, you have all I am! I knew when I left Luzmore Hall last night that I could keep back nothing from you, that everything I had, and everything I was, was yours! Will you have me, Eve? And—and—oh, Eve, will you give yourself to me?"

For some seconds she did not speak. Then, like one suddenly making up her mind, she cried out fiercely: "Let me look at you! There! Look me straight in the eyes! No, don't move, keep on looking at me!"

She gazed at him intently, fiercely, for nearly a minute. Then she laughed. "What do you want?" she asked.

"You know what I want! I want your love! I want *you*!"

"You have my love, Caleb, but you can never have *me*."

"Tell me again," and all the passion of his life seemed to be contained in the demand. "Do you love me?"

"But of course I do," she replied. "Ever since I saw

you dowzing for tin over yonder I have loved you! Every beat of my heart, every longing of my soul has been for you! But I cannot be what you ask, Caleb!"

He laughed loudly, exultantly, but for more than a minute neither of them spoke. Then, looking hungrily into her eyes, he said: "Eve?"

"Yes, Caleb."

"Will you kiss me?" Why he made the request he did not know. He only knew that he longed to hold her in his arms, and feel her lips on his.

"No, Caleb, I cannot. As I told you just now, I can never be yours."

"But you told me you loved me!" he protested.

"Yes, I know, but I can never be yours! I am not worthy!"

"Worthy!" and he laughed again.

"No, I am not worthy, Caleb. *I have no name!* My mother was the daughter of the man you know as Adam Sticker, but I do not know my father. As you know, I have been only known to you as Eve—I have no other name!"

Caleb laughed again. "As though I care about that!" he almost shouted.

"But I care, Caleb, and I would not disgrace you for worlds. Many and many is the time I have asked my grandfather about my father, but he would never tell me. *I am a child of shame*, Caleb, and thus if I were to do what you ask, I should only blight your life, and I wouldn't do that for worlds!"

"That, of course, is nonsense!" cried Caleb. "Nothing is of any importance to me, save the fact that you love me! I don't care who your father was, or who your mother was! *You* are all I want, and now that I know you love me!——"

"Forgive me, Caleb," the girl broke in, "I did not mean that you should know. I determined that we should never meet again. I have been thinking about it ever since—what you told me on Friday, and so I made up my mind to go away. I was preparing for my journey all day yesterday. I had a terrible battle with grandfather

about it, but, you see, I had made up my mind, and I was just leaving when you came this morning! I am afraid I waited a long time in the hope that you would come; but I meant to go, all the same."

"Did you tell your grandfather why you were going?" asked Caleb fiercely.

"No, I did not tell him! I dared not!"

"But you are not going away!" cried the young man masterfully.

"But I must! Indeed I must, Caleb!"

"You are not going away, I tell you," he repeated. "Would you leave me alone, Eve? Would you leave me to eat my heart out here on these wild moors? Why, the loss of you would kill me! . . . Where is your grandfather?"

"He's in the house. What—what are you going to do?" For he had caught her arm again.

"I am going to take you back to him," he cried. "I am going to tell him the truth! I am going to tell him that all the devils in hell shall not take you away from me! Now then, come."

She did not resist him, and together they went back to the house.

They found old Adam seated with his back to the window, looking into an empty fireplace. His figure was as motionless as if he were dead, and he appeared utterly unconscious of what was happening.

"Adam, Adam Sticker!" Caleb's voice was loud and vibrant.

"I have nothing to say to you," replied the old man, still looking with sightless eyes into the empty fireplace.

"But I have something to say to you; something which you must hear, too!"

"I have nothing to say to you," repeated the other.

"But, grandfather——"

Old Adam started at the sound of Eve's voice, and looked eagerly towards her. "I—I thought you had gone!" and he spoke in a bewildered fashion. "Why are you here?" he went on. "Why is young Besowsa here?"

“ I have come to ask you to try and persuade Eve——”

“ I have tried,” broke in the old man ; “ but she will not listen to me.”

“ But you must make her listen,” and Caleb spoke peremptorily. “ I want to tell you something, sir. I love Eve, and I want to marry her ! I will marry her, too, only she has some foolish thought in her mind about her father ! ”

The old man, who had seemed in a half-comatose condition up to this time, rose to his feet, and a minute later his eyes were flashing fiercely. “ What is that you tell me, young Besowsa ? ” he asked, like one in a frenzy.

“ I love Eve, sir, and she loves me, and I want you to give your consent to our marriage. You will, won't you ? ”

With a quick glance old Adam turned towards his granddaughter. “ Is this true, child ? Do you love this man ? ”

“ Haven't you found out, grandfather ? ” she replied simply. “ Of course I love him, but I can't do what he says.”

For more than a minute Adam stood gazing from one to the other. “ Do you want to marry him ? ” he asked peremptorily.

“ I would give my life for Caleb,” she replied, “ but I can't disgrace him ! You have told me a hundred times that I have no name, and I can't marry Caleb—without a name.”

Still the old man kept looking at them. Evidently he was fighting a great battle. His lips were quivering, and his eyes were shining like the eyes of a basilisk. His hands, too, were clenching and unclenching themselves as though he were in a passion. “ What is that you say ? ” and he turned towards his granddaughter again.

“ I cannot disgrace Caleb, grandfather,” replied the girl.

“ Disgrace him ! *Disgrace* him ! *You* disgrace any man ! ” Then turning towards the window he looked out over the wide stretch of the moors.

Eve did not understand him. Although she was a child

of the age and had read a great deal of modern literature, she still held fast to the ideals of fifty years ago. To her marriage was a sacred thing, and she thought of everyone being born out of wedlock as being disgraced. Perhaps the fact that she had been reared in a lonely region with a strange old man accentuated her beliefs. Thus she felt the stain upon her life. Thus, too, it was that what she had told Caleb half an hour before had a terrible meaning to her, and made her ready to sacrifice the love he had offered to her. Whether she was right or wrong in thinking as she did, I will not for the moment argue. I will only say that to the writer of these lines, at all events, Eve was beautiful in her thoughts, even although she might have been foolish in determining to renounce all that was dear to her because of her beliefs.

"Yes, grandfather," she said, "I should disgrace him, and I would rather die than do that."

Adam did not seem to take any notice of what she said, but turning to Caleb he cried out with a quivering voice: "Do you believe she would disgrace you?"

"I could sooner believe that the purest angel in heaven would disgrace a man than Eve!" was his reply.

"And do you really mean to tell me that you love her?"

"Like my own life," he almost shouted.

"And does what she says make any difference to you?"

"Difference to me!" laughed Caleb. "I am going to have her, whatever she says!"

"No, you will not, Caleb. There is a stain upon my name which no one can eradicate. You may not think anything of it now, but afterwards you will remember, and you will be ashamed!"

"Ashamed of *you*!" and there was a snarl in old Adam's voice.

He was still looking across the lonely moors. Away in the distance he could see the heights of Rotor and Brown Willy lifting their rugged peaks towards the heavens, while all around the sunlight illumined that lonely realm with a new radiance.

"Listen to me!" cried Caleb. "What Eve says is as

nothing to me! I don't care who her father was, or who her mother was! He might have been a blackguard, and she a slut! It is all nothing——"

"Silence!" cried old Adam. "Her mother a slut!—— Don't speak another word. I want to think."

The vehemence of his tones frightened even Caleb, while the look in his eyes kept him from speaking further. Both he and Eve felt that the old man was fighting a great battle, such a battle as, perhaps, he had never fought before.

For more than a minute he stood staring out of the window with sightless eyes. Then, turning towards the young man again, he spoke as if in rage: "My little Eve a slut!" he cried madly. "My only daughter an impure woman! Yes, you shall know the truth! I had taken my oath that not a word of what happened to my daughter should ever be known. For nearly twenty years, even when my heart was crying out in agony that justice might be done to my little granddaughter, I have kept silent. But now the truth shall be told!"

He left the spot where he was standing, and went towards a heavy safe that stood near the chimney.

"Yes, you shall know the truth!" he cried.

He unlocked the safe as he spoke, and seizing a bundle of papers, he brought them to the table which stood near the window. But he did not speak further. At that moment there was a hasty step outside, followed by a peremptory knock at the door. "Who are you? What do you want?" snarled old Adam.

For answer an inner door opened, and Mr. Lanivet entered the room.

CHAPTER XXVI

"AM I intruding?" asked the new-comer.

Adam recognized his visitor the moment he saw him. Saw that he was the owner of the farm which had been his home for many years; saw something in his

face, too, which silenced the angry words which rose to his lips.

Caleb, on the other hand, took no pains to hide the anger he felt. In spite of what the visitor had told him within the last few hours, a great rage filled his heart. Eve was more to him than anything in life. "We were discussing family affairs, sir," he said, "and do not wish to be disturbed."

"Silence, young Besowsa!" cried old Adam. "Now that I have made up my mind that the past shall be resurrected, it *shall* be resurrected, and this man," nodding to his visitor, "shall know the truth as well as you. Look, Mr. Lanivet, you see these two young people. The girl is my granddaughter; the young man——" Then turning to Caleb, he went on: "Are you ashamed for me to tell this man everything, young Besowsa?"

"No," replied Caleb. "Mr. Lanivet, how or why you have come here I don't know, but since you are here, I will tell you how matters stand. This girl is this old man's granddaughter. Her name is Eve, and I have learnt that I love her. I have told her so, too! What is more, she loves me! Yes, she does!" and Caleb spoke like one who had lost all control over himself. "I want to marry her," he went on, "and she will not. She says there is a stain upon her birth—as though I care for that!——"

Mr. Lanivet evidently took in the situation at a glance. What he knew of the truth I do not pretend to say, but the understanding look which he gave to those in the room was plain. "I see," he said quietly, as he glanced first at Eve and then at Caleb. "You wish to marry this young person, do you? Don't you think, after what you learnt last night, that you would be making a great mistake?"

Caleb hesitated a second before replying. "I see what is in your mind, sir," he said, "but all that is nothing to me. Her grandfather was on the point of telling us something when you intruded, and——"

"Caleb," interrupted Mr. Lanivet quietly, "I was afraid of this when you left me a few hours ago. I saw you were in a strange mood; perhaps it was no wonder! Anyhow, I saw you were in danger of doing a foolish thing, and I

came after you, hoping that I might be in time to dissuade you. You have as good as told me that there is a stain upon this young lady's birth, and——”

“For heaven's sake stop!” broke in Caleb. “What do I care about her birth! All that sort of thing is as nothing to me! Suppose she has no name! Suppose she was born out of wedlock! It is not her fault, and I do not care a fig about it! I love her, and she loves me—don't you, Eve?”

“Silence!” cried old Adam again. “Look at this, and cease cackling about that which you know nothing!” He spread out a document on the table as he spoke, and each saw that it was a marriage certificate. “Now look!” he went on. “Don't you see?”

Each took a step nearer to the table as he spoke, and read what appeared thereon.

“Look at it!” snarled old Adam. “‘Roger Luzmore—Eve Sticker’—are you satisfied? God forgive me for breaking my vow, but I can't help it! My little maid demeaned herself, disgraced herself, by marrying this sprig of the aristocracy! A more contemptible cad never breathed the breath of life than he, and I vowed that this should never become known! But the time has come to break that vow. Now, Eve, are you satisfied, my dear?”

Eve did not speak a word, but involuntarily she clasped Caleb's hand.

“Yes, I have been silent through the long years,” old Adam went on. “What wonder! Roger Luzmore was the brother of Sir John Luzmore, of Luzmore Hall. I had a farm thirty miles from here. My wife was dead, and my little daughter, Eve, was everything to me. Young Luzmore came into the neighbourhood. Why, only God knows! But he did; and he pretended to fall in love with my girl. I knew nothing about it, and when one day my girl told me that she loved young Luzmore and had wedded him, I ordered her out of the house. I was right in my estimate of the fellow, too. He, a sprig of the aristocracy, was a mean, contemptible cad. Within six months he tired of her, and left her. Left her in misery; left her in trouble. Within six months! Just think of it!

Although he had slocked her away from her father's house and had gone through a marriage ceremony with her, he, with the connivance of his family, left her! He told her that his cursed family would never recognize her, and that his only chance of obtaining forgiveness from them was that he should leave her. The marriage had never been made known except to the Luzmores and myself, and then he—oh, God, I can't bear to think about it!—gave her a thousand pounds! He thought it was enough, I suppose, to heal her broken heart and to atone for the misery he had caused! Gave her a thousand pounds, and told her to go back to me! I can hardly believe that such a thing can be true, but my little maid, Eve, too proud, on the one hand, to stay with the man who wanted to get rid of her, and, on the other, loving him too much to be what she regarded as a burden to him, took the money and came home to me."

For some time old Adam ceased speaking, but the great sobs which shook his great frame revealed how deeply he felt. "My little Eve died," he went on presently. "She gave her life for *this* little Eve, and I—I vowed that she should never know who her father was; never know that her mother had been the wife of the most poisonous reptile that ever crawled on this earth! I would a thousand times rather that she had married a farm labourer if he were a good, clean-minded, honest man, than that she should bear the name of the unclean beast to whom she gave herself! But there it was! I brought little Eve here. It was the most lonely place that I could think of, and here she has lived with me. No one has known the truth, and no one dreamt that my little granddaughter was closely related to the people who live at Luzmore Hall."

Caleb was the first to recover himself. Astonished as he was at the narrative, and almost overwhelmed by the meaning of it all, his practical mind fastened more avidly upon one sentence which old Adam had spoken than on anything else. "What became of that thousand pounds, sir?" he asked.

"I wouldn't use it!" snarled the old man. "I would have buried it with my daughter, if she had not besought

me to keep it for Eve—— So I hid it until a little more than a year ago. Then I realized that I was robbing my little girl of what was rightfully hers, so I took it to a bank in Launceston. I placed it there in Eve's name, and told the man there that he was to let Eve have it when and how she should want it."

"Then it was that thousand pounds which enabled me to start my mine!" exclaimed Caleb. "It was Eve who made the Ghost's Gorge Mine possible!"

For a few seconds old Adam looked at the two like one uncomprehending. Then in a flash he understood all. "It was destiny!" he said in an awe-stricken whisper. "I had known of that lode for years, and I had been saving up money to work it! I said in my heart that I would make Eve a rich woman, and that I would burn the money she had inherited from her mother!—But it was destiny!"

"How? I don't understand!" gasped Caleb.

"When I took steps to obtain the mining rights from Mr. Lanivet here, I learnt that it would be impossible to work the lode without going on the Luzmores' land, and so—I hated you!" went on old Adam with a fierce glance towards Caleb. "When I learnt that you were working the mine, and that it was turning out well, I hated you! I regarded you as an interloper who had stolen away what was rightfully mine—and Eve's. But it was destiny!"

"Destiny or not," cried Caleb, "you will give me Eve, won't you? Nothing now stands in the way of my having her!"

Old Adam did not reply, instead he looked long and closely at his granddaughter. "Is it true, Eve?" he said. "Did you give him that thousand pounds?"

"It was all I had to give!" replied the girl quietly. "He told me he needed it, and so I couldn't keep it back. I will give anything I have and am to Caleb!" she added.

"And you will marry me, Eve?"

"Of course I will. Oh, Caleb, you will never know how hard it was to say what I did!"

"Wait!" cried old Adam. "I will not allow my little maid to be married into poverty! And listen, Caleb

Besowsa! Within three months from now you will be a pauper!"

"Pauper!" and Caleb laughed loudly. "Ask my underground cap'n; ask John Snell, the floor's cap'n, whether I shall be a pauper in three months!"

"I repeat it," said Adam. "In three months from now you will be a pauper, and your mine will be worthless."

"But, Adam——" protested Caleb.

"I have not been called 'the wise man of the moors' for nothing!" was the old man's reply, "and although it may seem boasting, I know more about Cornish mines than any man alive. I thought months ago that there was a lode here, but yesterday afternoon after the miners had left and the whole place was deserted, I examined everything, and tested everything afresh. Your so-called lode will be worked out in less than three months from now. After all, it is nothing but a bunch of tin, and when that bunch is exhausted all is exhausted. And it will be exhausted in less than three months! I will stake my life on it!"

"It doesn't matter a bit, Caleb," said Eve quietly, as she took hold of the young man's arm. "You are all the same to me whether you are rich or poor; and, after all, grandfather may be wrong!"

"I am not wrong!" snarled the old man.

"In any case," interposed Mr. Lanivet, "I have something to say here." After which they talked long and earnestly.

"Caleb," said Mr. Lanivet as, late that afternoon, they left the farm kitchen and went out on the moors, "you will come with me to Lanivet to-night, won't you?" They had partaken of a simple meal in the farm-house an hour before, and, at Mr. Lanivet's request, they had come out alone.

"I don't know," replied the young man. "I am wondering."

"What are you wondering about, my boy?"

"About the future. Old Adam said it was destiny. Do you think it was?"

The older man was silent for some seconds. Then he asked: "What would you call it, Caleb?"

The day was still bright, and the sky was still cloudless. Everything seemed forsaken, too; but away in the distance were to be seen the four pinnacles of an old church tower, and both of them heard the bells calling the people to church.

"I think I call it God," replied Caleb reverently.

Mr. Lanivet looked at his watch. Then, looking towards the church tower, he said: "We can get there in time for the evening service, I think, my boy."

Two days after the events just narrated a small two-seater car drew up in front of the lodge gates of Luzmore Hall. It contained but one occupant, and he, instead of making his way towards the great house, took his foot from the accelerator and put the machine out of gear. "My word, it's a fine place!" he ejaculated as he looked.

It was Joshua Besowsa who spoke, and he had motored a long distance that morning in order to obtain an interview with Sir John Luzmore. He had during the last few days picked up scraps of information which he trusted might be valuable to him. There was a ferrety look in his eyes; a look which suggested not only cunning, but cupidity. Joshua Besowsa had thought a great deal before taking this journey, and while he hoped much from it, he was, nevertheless, afraid.

"There ought to be money in it," he reflected, "and if I play my cards carefully, I ought to make a goodish bit out of it. It is true Sir John is not well off—that fact has come to me in a wonderful way—still, a place like yonder must mean a lot."

He laughed as this thought passed through his mind, while his eyes became more ferrety than ever. A moment later he put the car into gear, and drove towards the great house.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" asked Sir John, when Joshua Besowsa was shown into the steward's room.

"Perhaps you didn't catch my name," Joshua said ingratiatingly. "Besowsa — it's a good old Cornish name."

Sir John's face did not move a muscle. Nevertheless, he looked steadily at his visitor.

"You have heard of it before, of course," went on Joshua. "The Ghost's Gorge Mine—you know?"

"Well, what have I to do with the Ghost's Gorge Mine?" he asked.

"Part of it is on your land," replied Joshua, "and if reports speak truly, the mining rights have not been properly conveyed to the present so-called owner."

"What do you know about the present so-called owner?" asked the baronet.

"What do I know! Isn't he my nephew! Don't I know everything about him!— Yes, *everything*, Sir John! I know not only who his father was, but perhaps," and he looked cunningly at the other, "I could tell you who his mother was. Besowsa may not be a very aristocratic name, Sir John, but perhaps his mother's maiden name was. It's just as well to bear everything in mind, isn't it? Of course, Sir John, a man bearing a name like yours wouldn't wish to be mixed up with a man bearing a name like mine! But there might be reasons. I say, there *might* be reasons," and Joshua laid peculiar emphasis on the word, "which would make you willing even for that."

"Tell me what you mean, my man," said the baronet haughtily.

"Blood is thicker than water, isn't it?" laughed Joshua nervously. "Some people may say that I haven't been a very good uncle to my nephew, especially as I am supposed to be a warm man. But the old saying is true, all the same. Of course I don't want my name to appear in any way, but—but—— You know what I mean, Sir John?" and again he leered knowingly towards the baronet.

"I don't know in the least," replied the other, and there was a touch of anger in his voice.

"I think you do," said Joshua. "I have a curious way

of picking up information, and I know what I know. Still, you wouldn't think of Caleb as a son-in-law without strong inducements, would you? It wouldn't be enough for you to know that he was making a fortune out of the mine, unless he had something else to back it up, would it? But I may tell you this, Sir John, he *has* something to back it up. It's a secret as yet, but although Caleb is a Besowsa, he is also linked up with one of the greatest families in the county."

Sir John Luzmore was not a fool, and he read Joshua Besowsa like an open book. Perhaps if this man had come to him a few weeks before his answer might have been different; but Mr. Lanivet's visit had opened his eyes to many things, and seeing the kind of man Joshua Besowsa was, he understood his purpose in coming. Still, he played his hand carefully. "What do you want to tell me, my man?" he asked peremptorily.

"I wouldn't take liberties for the world," whispered Joshua; "but I have my nephew's welfare at heart. He doesn't know what I know, and, if I may say so, his ignorance is keeping him from being bold. Perhaps he hasn't said as much to you, Sir John, but my nephew worships the ground on which your daughter walks." He drew closer to the baronet as he spoke. "He will be a rich man some day," he went on. "No, I am not thinking of the mine; I am thinking of his grandfather on his mother's side."

"Well, what of that?" asked the baronet.

"Can't I tell him to be bold?" whispered Joshua. "Can't I tell him that not only riches, but happiness is waiting for him? Oh, I know what I am talking about! His grandfather is one of the greatest aristocrats in the county, and, and——"

"Look here, my man!" cried Sir John, "what you mean by all this rigmarole, I don't know. As for my family being in any way linked up with yours,—it's too absurd even for thought!"

"But—but your daughter, Sir John! Isn't——?"

"The announcement of my daughter's engagement with Lord Trelaske's eldest son will appear in to-morrow's

papers," replied the baronet haughtily. "I don't know at all why I am giving such as you this information," and there was contempt in his voice, "but perhaps it is just as well for you to know."

"Heavens!" cried Joshua as a few minutes later he motored away from Luzmore Hall. "What's the meaning of it? I have made a false move somehow, but I am not too late even yet! I must see Caleb right away."

Passing through the park gates he turned in the direction of the Ghost's Gorge, and although the road was bad, he, in due time, heard the clanging of the mine's stamps. "Is Cap'n Besowsa to be seen?" he asked one of the men, when he reached the mine.

"He is up in his office, I expect," was the reply.

Joshua alighted from his car, and looked nervously around. As far as he could judge, everything in the mine was being worked at high pressure. The great water-wheel was revolving rapidly; the men and boys on the floors were busily engaged, while a new whim which had been lately erected was drawing the tin ore from underground. "If I had been a wise man," reflected Joshua, as he watched all the signs of activity around him, "I should have had my finger in this pie—— But how could I know? And who would have thought that he would have done all this?"

He looked away across the wide stretch of moors as these thoughts passed through his mind, and it was evident that he was much perturbed. "I don't understand it," he reflected presently. "For months I have been asking questions about him, and have been using all sorts of means to find out the truth. That detective man from Plymouth told me that Sir John Luzmore's daughter was a safe card to play. I wonder if there isn't something in it after all?"

He did not go at once towards the office, but stood looking in the direction of Routor and Brown Willy. "He has been very quiet of late," he reflected. "I don't understand him. It's months now since he had the letter from the lawyer man in Plymouth, but——"

Like one who had suddenly made up his mind, he made his way towards the hut which was designated the "Cap'n's Office," and knocked at the door.

Caleb went to the door and opened it. Evidently his surprise was great on seeing his uncle.

"Hee! hee! hee!" laughed Joshua nervously. "You didn't expect to see me, Caleb, my boy, did you?"

"At any rate, take a seat," and Caleb pointed to the only vacant chair in the room.

His mind was working rapidly. He had learnt enough of his Uncle Joshua by this time to be sure that he had not come to see him without a sufficient reason. It was some time now since he had received the roll of notes from him, and had been waiting for a visit.

"I hear you are doing well, Caleb," his uncle said presently.

"We are kept fairly busy," replied Caleb.

"I don't pretend to know the mining world myself," ventured Joshua, "but I hear of what's going on. People say you are doing well, my boy."

"We are managing to pay our way," replied Caleb. Then remembering what old Adam Sticker had said on the previous Sunday, he went on: "But there is no knowing how long it may last."

"Ah! but you are safe enough whatever may happen," replied Joshua, and again he laughed nervously.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the young man. He was still wondering why his Uncle Joshua had come to see him.

"Caleb, my boy," said Joshua, "you have had unkind thoughts about me in the past, haven't you?"

Caleb did not speak.

"But you mustn't, Caleb. I have thought a lot about you, I have; and if the truth is to be told, I came here this morning to do you a good turn. You will not forget that, will you, my boy?"

"What's in your mind, Uncle Joshua?" and again the young man looked at his uncle keenly.

"Things have been going badly with me lately," ventured

Joshua. "Yes, my boy, ready money is very scarce, and I have been wondering whether you cannot help me."

Caleb did not speak. He was wondering what was in the older man's mind.

Joshua hitched his chair closer to Caleb's office stool. "There's that thousand pounds, now," and he seemed to be speaking with difficulty. "I suppose you couldn't let me have it back, could you, Caleb? I was a bit 'flush' at the time when I sent it to you, and knowing that you must have need for ready money here, I said I would send it to you, Caleb. I gathered from what you said, too, that it came at the right time. But I had a terrible job in scraping it up, Caleb my boy, and I have been wondering if you couldn't let me have it back?"

"I am sorry you are hard up," replied Caleb, looking at his uncle intently.

"Yes, times are very hard," replied Joshua. "The fact is, I ought not to have sent you that thousand pounds. I simply robbed myself in order to do it, and if you could let me have it back, Caleb"—and Joshua fixed his eyes intently upon his nephew.

"I thought you came to do me a good turn?" was Caleb's rejoinder. He was still trying to look into his uncle's mind, and to understand the reason for his visit.

"I have," and Joshua spoke eagerly. "I do want to do you a good turn," and Joshua wriggled as though he were in pain.

"Well, don't look so miserable about it, anyhow. What is it?"

"I have something to tell you, my boy; something of great importance; something that will make you rich for life."

Caleb looked at his uncle inquiringly, but did not speak a word.

"And here comes my difficulty, my boy," went on Joshua. "It may seem mean on my part to mention it at such a time, but as I told you, I am hard up. Things have gone very badly with me, and I need a thousand pounds more than I can say. I hate to seem like making a bargain with you, but if you could let me have that

thousand pounds back, Caleb, as a kind of *quid pro quo* for the news I have to tell you, it would come in handy."

"Let me understand," said Caleb quietly. "Do you mean to tell me that you sent me that thousand pounds as a personal gift?"

"Yes, I did, my boy; that was it! I had hard work to scrape it together, but I said, 'Caleb is my own brother's boy, and he shall have it.' But I ought not to have sent it. I really couldn't afford it. In fact I am wanting the money badly now. If you could return it for the great news I have for you! Wonderful news, Caleb!" and Joshua laid his hand upon his nephew's sleeve. "What do you say to it, my dear?" he urged ingratiatingly. "Of course, everything I have will come to you when I die; but just at the present, Caleb, I am very poor."

"But what about the other money that was placed in your hands to give me?" asked Caleb quietly.

"Other money!" cried Joshua hoarsely. "Other money! There *was* no other money!"

"My lawyer tells me that there is still five hundred pounds that you ought to have given me," and Caleb continued to speak quietly. "I am advised to take steps at once about it."

"Caleb! Caleb!" cried the older man. "You are joking, my boy!"

"I am not in the least joking," replied Caleb. "There's also another matter I want to speak to you about. What has become of my part in the sale of my grandfather's farm? You sold it without consulting me, and——"

"It's a lie! It's a lie!" cried Joshua. "Surely you don't want to rob an old man who is on the brink of the grave!"

"Perhaps you will be interested to hear," went on Caleb, "that I had a letter from Mr. Trebilcock of Plymouth this morning. He says he has proofs up to the hilt that you have been robbing me for years, and has asked for my permission to take proceedings against you forthwith. I was just on the point of writing him when you came!" he added.

Joshua looked as though he had received a death-blow.

"But, Caleb! Caleb!" he wailed. "You can't be in earnest!"

"I am. I am in deadly earnest. You see, that thousand pounds which you sent me was only a part of the sum which was placed in your hands to be sent to me. For five years my mother's father has been sending you money on my behalf, and instead of the thousand pounds being a gift from you, it was only squeezed out of you because of a threat. If I were you, Uncle Joshua, I would say no more about your generosity to me. As for the great secret you pretended you were going to speak about, I think I know all about it!"

"But—but you won't be hard on me!" cried Joshua after many protestations. "I am getting to be an old man, my boy."

"I only want justice from you," replied Caleb sardonically.

"Justice!" screamed Joshua, almost carried away by his own frenzy. "Justice would ruin me! Besides, you can prove nothing, nothing! I defy you to prove anything!"

"Of course, we shall begin by demanding to know why you changed your name on selling my father's old farm," laughed Caleb. "There's not so much difference between Beziza and Besowsa; but there is a difference; and, of course, both judge and jury would want to know the reason. Then again, my father died more than five years ago. On his death a sum of money was placed in your hands for my education and welfare. The judge and jury will, of course, want to know why it was diverted from its proper course. After that——"

"Caleb! Caleb!" pleaded Joshua. "It's all a mistake, my boy! Every penny I possess will be yours when I die! I have willed it to you, willed it to you; and for God's sake don't take proceedings against me!"

That same afternoon Caleb and Eve were sitting in the farm-house together. He had been telling her of his Uncle

Joshua's visit, and they had been laughing together at the old man's discomfiture.

"But you will not be hard on him, will you, Caleb?" pleaded Eve, when she had heard his story.

"No. I only wanted to frighten him," he replied.

"I am glad of that, Caleb! I shouldn't like us to begin our new life by even a suggestion of what might be called cruelty."

"Eve," said Caleb, "I have been thinking a great deal about your grandfather's story, and I have spoken to my grandfather about it. Mr. Lanivet thinks that if you cared to put in your claim a great deal of the Luzmore property would come to you. Will you put in that claim?"

"Do you want me to, Caleb?" and her eyes grew humid.

"Would you if I did?" he asked.

"Caleb," cried the girl, "I long to prove to the world that you will not be marrying someone who is nameless! I hate the thought that people may say that there is a stain upon my birth; but I should hate more the idea of resurrecting my mother's story, and knowing that thousands of gossiping tongues were wagging about her!"

"Let us go out," said Caleb. "It's past five o'clock, and nearly all the miners will have left work. Besides, it's a glorious evening, and I love the moors at this time of the day."

They left the farm-house as he spoke, and made their way towards the spot where Eve had watched Caleb dowzing long months before. Before they had reached it, however, they heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and turning they saw a youth and a girl riding towards them.

"I say," cried the youth as he came up, "is this Besowsa's show?"

"Yes," replied Caleb.

"By Jove!— Excuse me for asking, but are you Besowsa?"

"Yes, I am," and Caleb turned keenly towards his interlocutor. He was a young fellow, little more than a boy in his early twenties.

"I hope you have no objections to us looking around the mine?"

"Not the slightest," replied Caleb. "I shall be delighted if you will. May I show you what there is to see?"

"Please don't bother." It was the girl by his side who spoke. "You see, Mr. Besowsa, I have seen it all before. Don't you remember?"

"I remember perfectly," replied Caleb. "Things have changed since then, haven't they?" But Lord Trelaske, who was watching them closely, took no notice of the double meaning in his words.

"He is a jolly fine-looking chap, Rosie," exclaimed young Trelaske a minute later, when they were out of ear-shot. "I heard it rumoured this morning that there was some romance about his birth. Anyhow, he must be a wonderful fellow to create a show like this," and he looked around the mine.

"Romance!" cried Rosalind Luzmore. "Romance with such a name as Besowsa!"

Nevertheless, she was very quiet as they rode back to Luzmore Hall that night, and more than once she sighed deeply.

"Caleb," cried Eve, as the two watched the couple on horseback until they were out of sight. "Is that the girl you loved?"

"It's the girl I thought I loved," replied Caleb.

"But you never did?"

"No, I *never did!*" and there was something savage in the way he spoke.

The girl was silent for more than a minute. Then she burst out suddenly: "I wonder?"

"Wonder what?" asked Caleb.

"I don't know," replied the girl. "It seems strange, doesn't it?"

"I think it is because she is your cousin that I thought of her as I did," replied Caleb. "After all, the same blood flows in your veins, and in a way you spring from the same stock. But oh, I am glad!"

"Glad of what, Caleb?"

He laughed aloud, a great full-throated laugh. "For months she had been the dream of my life," he said presently, "and then when I knew that she was mine for the asking, I didn't want her. No, I didn't want her. Shall I tell you something more, Eve?"

"What do you want to tell me more, Caleb?"

"It was then that I knew I loved you," he replied.

THE END

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