

Return of the Native

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature – neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony.

Above the plain rose the hill, above the hill rose the barrow, above the barrow rose the figure. Above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe.

'A hundred maidens would have had him if he'd asked 'em'

The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other were not up to her level.

[She first reached] a plot of land redeemed from the heath, and after long and labourious years brought into cultivation. The man who had discovered that it could be broken up died of the labour: the man who succeeded him in possession ruined himself in fertilising it.

'But I don't care personally if it never takes place,' she added, with a little dignity; 'no I can live without you.'

At last she gave up her spying attitude, closed the telescope, and turned to the decaying embers. From these no appreciable beams now radiated, except when a more than usually smart gust brushed over their faces and raised a fitful glow which came and went like the blush of a girl. She stooped over the silent circle

A blaze of love, and extinction, was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years.

The shrivelled voice of the heath did not alarm him

His occupation tended to isolate him, and isolated he was mostly seen to be.

They were as two horns which the sluggish heath had put forth from its crown, like a mollusk, and had now again drawn in.

'I should have cared nothing for him had there been a better person near.'

'I flatter myself that I have some influence over her. She is pliable, and I can be strong in my recommendations of him.'

Misfortune had struck them gracefully, cutting off their erratic histories with a catastrophic dash, instead of, as with many, attenuating each life to an uninteresting meagreness, through long years of wrinkles, neglect and decay.

But he felt this as an economist merely, and not as a lover.

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It was even with a pleasant sense of doing his duty that he went downstairs to her one evening for this purpose, when the sun was sending up the valley the same long shadow of the housetop that he had seen lying there times out of number while his mother lived.

'And I shouldn't have done it, either, only he keeps on bothering me so till I don't know what to do.'

The driver of the fly turned a supercilious gaze upon them; he even treated the wedded pair themselves with something of condescension; for in what other state than heathen could people, rich or poor, exist who were doomed to abide in such a world's end as Egdon?

Some believed him, and some believed him not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of spiritual doctrine; while others remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else.