

And murmured back in softest wise, 30
'One more thing, and the charms you prize
Are yours henceforth for aye.

"And swear I will I'll never go
While Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor
To meet the Cornish Wrestler Joe 35
For dance and dallyings.
If you'll to yon cathedral shrine,
And finger from the chest divine
Treasure to buy me ear-drops fine,
And richly jewelled rings.' 40

"I said: 'I am one who has gathered gear
From Marlbury Downs to Dunkery Tor,
Who has gathered gear for many a year
From mansion, mart and fair;
But at God's house I've stayed my hand, 45
Hearing within me some command —
Curbed by a law not of the land
From doing damage there!'

"Whereat she pouts, this Love of mine,
As Dunkery pouts to Exon Moor, 50
And still she pouts, this Love of mine,
So cityward I go.
But ere I start to do the thing,
And speed my soul's imperilling
For one who is my ravishing 55
And all the joy I know,

"I come to lay this charge on thee —
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor —
I come to lay this charge on thee
With solemn speech and sign: 60
Should things go ill, and my life pay
For botchery in this rash assay,
You are to take hers likewise — yea,
The month the law takes mine.

"For should my rival, Wrestler Joe, 65

While Dunkery frowned on Exon Moor,
 And when the river swelled, her fate
 Came to her pitilessly. . . . 140
 I dogged her, crying: "Across that plank
 They use as bridge to reach yon bank
 A coat and hat lie limp and dank;
 Your goodman's, can they be?"

She paled, and went, I close behind — 145
 And Exon frowned to Dunkery Tor,
 She went, and I came up behind
 And tipped the plank that bore
 Her, fleetly flitting across to eye
 What such might bode. She slid awry; 150
 And from the current came a cry,
 A gurgle; and no more.

How that befell no mortal knew
 From Marlbury Downs to Exon Moor;
 No mortal knew that deed undue 155
 But he who schemed the crime,
 Which night still covers. . . . But in dream
 Those ropes of hair upon the stream
 He sees, and he will hear that scream
 Until his judgment-time. 160

1911

(From *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*. London: Macmillan, 1930)