

## Chapter I \* THE YEARS BEFORE PUBLISHING, 1801-30

EDWARD MOXON came of a family long established in Yorkshire as workers in the textile trade.<sup>1</sup> His father, Michael Moxon, after some years in Leeds returned about 1798 to Wakefield, in that county. He married, November 30, 1800, Ann Watson, and to them were born nine children, Edward, the eldest, on December 12, 1801.<sup>2</sup> Michael Moxon was a "cropper,"<sup>3</sup> a worker who cut off the rough surface of the cloth with large shears before the material was pressed and finished so that the nap lay evenly.<sup>4</sup> In the early nineteenth century Wakefield was a cloth center; it possessed several "cloth halls" for the sale of woollens. With cloth, however, Edward Moxon never had anything to do, since at nine years of age he was apprenticed to a bookseller.

The town of Wakefield had a long history. With the conservatism of the north country it clung until late into the nineteenth century to picturesque customs and traditions. Henry Clarkson, a contemporary of Edward Moxon who perhaps knew him as a lad, in 1887 recalled that as late as his day the town was walled,

<sup>1</sup> The Moxon genealogy has been fully constructed from the middle of the fifteenth century by the Rev. Dr. R. S. Moxon, headmaster of the Lincoln School, Lincoln, England, in an unpublished account. The writer was graciously allowed to consult this work.

<sup>2</sup> The children were Edward, December 12, 1801; Mary, 1803; John, 1806; William, 1808; Ann, 1811; Elizabeth, 1812; Henry, 1815; Maria, 1818; and, according to Miss Maud Moxon of Brighton, England, granddaughter of Edward Moxon, Alfred, "who was very fond of poetry." "In the register of the Wakefield Parish Church is an entry of the baptism of Edward, son of Michael and Ann Moxon, December 12, 1801. This Edward Moxon I presume to have been the one in question."—Lupton, *Wakefield Worthies*, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> A note, in the possession of De V. Payen-Payne, Esq., London, made by his mother, Mrs. J. Bertrand Payne. The Rev. Dr. Moxon, Lincoln, has the same information. The Rev. J. H. Lupton took some of his information from the Rev. Mr. Clarkson, Wakefield. See footnote 4, below.

<sup>4</sup> Clarkson, *Memories of Merry Wakefield, an Octogenarian's Recollections*, p. 48; Hewitt, *History and Topography of the Parish of Wakefield*, p. 289: "One shear grinder's forge for making and grinding shears such as were then used by the 'croppers.'"