

Here follows a reading taken from Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy depicts the sense of hope with which the young Jude Fawley climbs atop a barn to catch a glimpse of Christminster:

Some way within the limits of the stretch of landscape, points of light like the topaz gleamed. The air increased in transparency with the lapse of minutes, till the topaz points showed themselves to be the vanes, windows, wet roof slates, and other shining spots upon the spires, domes, freestone-work, and varied outlines that were faintly revealed. It was Christminster, unquestionably; either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere.

The spectator gazed on and on till the windows and vanes lost their shine, going out almost suddenly like extinguished candles. The vague city became veiled in mist. Turning to the west, he saw that the sun had disappeared. The foreground of the scene had grown funereally dark, and near objects put on the hues and shapes of chimaeras.

He anxiously descended the ladder, and started homewards at a run

[Then the day came when it suddenly occurred to him that if he ascended to the point of view after dark, or possibly went a mile or two further, he would see the night lights of the city. It would be necessary to come back alone, but even that consideration did not deter him, for he could

throw a little manliness into his mood, no doubt...]

Suddenly there came along the wind something towards him-- a message from the place--from some soul residing there, it seemed. Surely it was the sound of bells, the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him, "We are happy here!"...

It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to – for some place which he could call admirable. Should he find that place in this city if he could get there? Would it be a spot in which, without fear of farmers, or hindrance, or ridicule, he could watch and wait, and set himself to some mighty undertaking like the men of old of whom he had heard? As the halo had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way.

‘It is a city of light,’ he said to himself.

‘The tree of knowledge grows there,’ he added a few steps further on.

‘It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to.’

‘It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion.’

After this figure he was silent a long while, till he added:

‘It would just suit me.’