

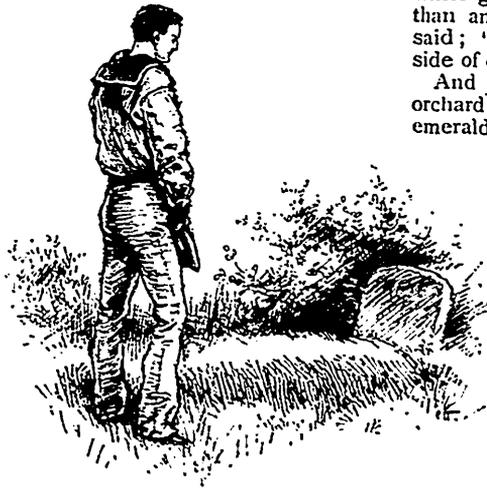
won't do that any more. When my two little ones grow up they'll have as nice a home as needs be, for we don't get poorer year by year, do we, father?"

"No, thank God, we don't," said honest Bartholomew. "Things have gone well with me since I married your mother, Martin my boy; she's a capable, active woman, and she isn't above helping me in my business, and so times and business seem to have got better, and with more mouths to feed more has come to feed them. We've got a good business, and a nice little property and money in the bank, and I hope we'll always have a good home to welcome you to, my boy."

Martin was touched by the little man's kindness and cordiality. "He's as good as he can be," he said to himself as he walked down the lane to the church, and stood beside the smith's grave, "but he isn't you, father, and the children aren't yours. I wonder if I shall ever feel they are my sister and brother."

The atmosphere of home seemed to have brought Martin and Ju once more very close together; old haunts were revisited, old times talked over; and the two were as much together as they used to be in the old days before a sea-going life had laid its spell upon them.

Mrs. Fleet was now quite willing to welcome her son's friend to her house,



"HE STOOD BESIDE THE GRAVE."

for he was no longer the ragged little Ju who had seemed to her to bring such disrepute on her son, but a handsome young man, bright and amusing in his manner, and wearing Her Majesty's uniform with great credit to himself. If Martin seemed almost afraid to touch the baby brother and sister, it was far otherwise with Ju, who would whistle, sing, and dance for their amusement, and seemed perfectly happy and fearless when playing with them. The only member of the family with whom he seemed ill at ease was Ety, whom he appeared to be unable to look in the face, and could only say "Yes, Miss," "No, Miss," in reply to any of her remarks.

"You'll find them all down in the orchard," was Mrs. Fleet's reply to Ju's inquiry for Martin one hot August afternoon; "it's the shadiest and coolest spot about here now, and Ety likes to take the children there."

Ju sauntered through the garden, brilliant now with masses of old-world flowers in the borders, where great clumps of white lilies reared their heads out of a sea of colour, made up of sweet-williams, stocks, and other sweetly scented blossoms; while the lavender hedges which separated the flower borders from the kitchen garden gave off a sweet, delicate perfume from their purple spikes. Then, as he entered the orchard through a little white gate, he paused. "It's better than any place I've seen abroad," he said; "there's nothing like this outside of old England, I do believe."

And Ju was right, the old English orchard was an unique sight, with its emerald turf illuminated by a subdued golden light which drifted down upon it through the interlacing boughs of the trees, their gnarled and twisted trunks varying in tone as the brown bark was dappled with here a patch of moss and there a growth of silvery lichen. Overhead the fruit gleamed through its setting of leaves—the brown of the russet, the gold of the pippin, the more dusky tint of the Blenheim orange, and the rosy cheek of Ribstone were all there, and showed up in turn as the breeze fluttered the foliage