

fifty pounds for it, that having some twenty-five shillings in hand after payment of all creditors, and only ten weeks to my pension-day, with my boat unknown to anybody, and a very good prospect of fish running up from the Mumbles at the next full moon, I set the little one on my lap, after a good bout of laughing at her very queer ins and outs—for all things seemed to be all alive with, as well as to, her.

"Will you stay with me, my dear?" I said, as bold as King George and the Dragon; "would you like to live with old Davy and Bunny, and have ever so many frocks washed, soon as ever he can buy them?" For nothing satisfied her better than to see her one gown washed. She laid her head on one side a little, so that I felt it hot to my bosom, being excused of my waistcoat; and I knew that she had overworked herself.

"Ness," she said, after thinking a bit. "Ness, I live with 'a, old Davy, till my dear mamma come for me. Does 'e know, old Davy, 'hot I thinks?"

"No, my pretty; I only know what you are always thinking." And so she was; no doubt of it.

"I tell 'a, old Davy, 'hot I thinks. No—I can't tell 'a; only sompfn. 'Et me go for more pay with Bunny."

"No, my dear, just stop a minute. Bunny has got no breath left in her; she is such a great fat Bunny. What you mean to say is, that you don't know how papa and mamma could ever think of leaving you such a long, long time away."

She shook her curly pate as if each frizzle were a puzzle; and her sweet white forehead seemed a mainsail full of memory; and then gay presence was in her eyes, and all the play which I had stopped broke upon her mind again.

"Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor," she began, with her beautiful fingers crawling, like white carnelian compasses, up the well-made buttons of my new smock-guernsey; for though I had begged my hot waistcoat off, I never was lax of dress in her presence as I would be in Bunny's—or, in short, with anybody except this little lady. I myself taught her that "tinker, tailor," and had a right to have it done to me. And she finished it off with such emphasis upon button No. 7,

which happened to be the last of them, "gentleman, ploughboy, fief," looking straight into my eyes, and both of us laughing at the fine idea that I could possibly be called a thief! But fearing to grow perhaps foolish about her, as she did these charming things to me, I carried her up to bed with Bunny, and sung them both away to sleep with a melancholy dirge of sea.

Into whatever state of life it may please God to call me—though I fear there cannot be many more at this age of writing—it always will be, as it always has been, my first principle and practice to do my very utmost (which is far less than it was, since the doctor stopped my hornpipes) to be pleasant and good company. And it is this leading motive which has kept me from describing—as I might have done, to make you tingle and be angry afterwards—the state of Sker House, and of Evan Thomas, and Moxy his wife, and all their friends, about those five poor rabbits. Also other darkish matters, such as the plight of those obstinate black men when they came ashore at last, three together, and sometimes four, as if they had fought in the water. And, after all, what luck they had in obtaining proper obsequies, inasmuch as, by order of Crouner Bowles, a great hole in the sand was dug in a little sheltered valley, and kept open till it was fairly thought that the sea must have finished with them; and then, after being carefully searched for anything of value, they were rolled in all together, and kept down with stones, like the parish mangle, and covered with a handsome mound of sand. And not only this, but in spite of expense and the murmuring of the vestry, a board well tarred (to show their color) was set up in the midst of it, and their number "35" chalked up; and so they were stopped of their mischief awhile, after shamefully robbing their poor importer.

But if this was conducted handsomely, how much more so were the funerals of the five young white men! The sense of the neighborhood, and the stir, and the presence of the Coroner (who stopped a whole week for sea air and freshness, after seeing so many good things come in, and perceiving so many ways home that night, that he made up his mind to