

"There, Mr. Whish. That will do," cried Attwater. "From that distance, and keeping your hands up, like a good boy, you can very well put me in possession of the skipper's views."

The interval betwixt them was perhaps forty feet; and Huish measured it with his eye, and breathed a curse. He was already distressed with labouring in the loose sand, and his arms ached bitterly from their unnatural position. In the palm of his right hand, the jar was ready; and his heart thrilled, and his voice choked, as he began to speak.

"Mr. Hattwater," said he, "I don't know if ever you 'ad a mother. . . ."

"I can set your mind at rest: I had," returned Attwater; "and henceforth, if I might venture to suggest it, her name need not recur in our communications. I should perhaps tell you that I am not amenable to the pathetic."

"I am sorry, sir, if I 'ave seemed to trespass on your private feelin's," said the clerk, cringing and stealing a step. "At least, sir, you will never pe'suade me that you are not a perfec' gentleman; I know a gentleman when I see him; and as such, I 'ave no 'esitation in throwin' myself on your merciful consideration. It *is* 'ard lines, no doubt; it's 'ard lines to have to hown yourself