

glad to sail away to the Dutch coast; but they were not safe there, for we sent fire-ships at them, and they had to cut and run; and then a storm came on, and sunk many and drove others ashore all around our coasts, even round the north of Scotland and Ireland. You will see it all here, boys, and, as you know, the price is only one penny."

By this time the sergeant had let down one side of the box and discovered four round holes, and had arranged a low stool in front, for any of those who were not tall enough to look through the glasses, to stand upon. A considerable number of girls and boys had now gathered round, for Sergeant Wilks and his show were old-established favorites at Sidmouth, and the news of his arrival had travelled quickly round the place. Four years before he had appeared there for the first time, and since then had come every few months. He travelled round the south-western counties, Dorset and Wilts, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, and his cheery good temper made him a general favorite wherever he went.

He was somewhat of a martinet, and would have no crowding and pushing, and always made the boys stand aside till the girls had a good look; but he never hurried them, and allowed each an ample time to see the pictures, which were of a better class than those in most travelling peep-shows. There was some murmuring at first because the show contained none of the popular murders and blood-curdling scenes to which the people were accustomed.

"No," the sergeant had said firmly, when the omission was suggested to him; "the young ones see quite enough scenes of drunkenness and fighting. When I was a child I remember seeing in a peep-show the picture of a woman lying with her head nearly cut off, and her husband with a bloody chopper standing beside her, and it spoiled my sleep for weeks. No, none of that sort of thing for Sergeant Wilks; he has fought for his country, and has seen