

"Fifty years! why, that seems a lifetime. I must go and see her. I suppose she is one of your oldest inhabitants? Has she any family?"

"A tidy few, sir,—seven or eight. But some, they're dead, and some, they're married, and only Sam, he's left to her."

"Sam! Sam May! I seem to know the name. I think I must have come across him somewhere."

"Likely as not, sir; perhaps down at the harbour. Sam, he's got a boat of his own."

"Ah well, if we haven't met yet, I daresay we shall. I find the men very hard to get hold of. Of course they are out a good deal; still, I shan't rest content till I know them all—tell your husband as much," and with a pleasant smile and a friendly "good day," Mr. Gwyn went on his way.

"That be the new Parson, Jane," said the woman to an elder daughter, as she turned back into her cottage, "and a nice-spoken gentleman he be, a real nice-spoken gentleman. He thinks he'll get round 'father,'" she added with a smile; "I wish he might, then perhaps the wages would not go so quickly at the Red Dragon. But ah! it baint likely, it baint at all likely, I'm feared," and with a sigh the weary wife and mother bared her arms and dived down once more into her capacious wash-tub. The "getting round father" was a state of circumstance, evidently in her estimation, too blissful to be realized.

Mr. Gwyn's tap found Mrs. May with her spectacles on, poring over her Bible, her usual occupation when the day's work was done.

"Come in," she called; but her apologies were profuse when she saw her visitor.

"I beg your pardon, sir; I humbly beg your pardon," and, rising as quickly as her rheumatism would permit, Mrs. May brought forward a chair. "I did not expect a visit so soon from you, sir; I thought it was only a neighbour."

"And you were right, Mrs. May; I *am* a neighbour, and one with whom I hope you will soon become better acquainted," and taking the chair from the frail old shaking hands, Mr. Gwyn placed it for himself. "I must apologize to you, for I see what your occupation has been," and he pointed to the open Bible.

"Ah, sir, the blessed Book! What should I do without it? When I've tidied up, I mostly sit down and have a read."

"I'm very glad to hear it, my friend; when we take God's word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, that path is sure to end in Heaven." Mr. Gwyn spent a good half-hour with Mrs. May, and she found herself pouring out her heart to the new Vicar in a way which she had not done to any human friend for years: her hopes about Sam, her fears about Tom, her anxieties as to their close friendship; and then she expressed an earnest longing that Mr. Gwyn might be led to speak a word in season to them.

Mr. Gwyn knelt down and in a few earnest words commended the widow and her cares to God; then he fervently pleaded for the members of his flock, that souls might be saved, that hard hearts might be softened, that the faith and hope of God's own dear people might be strengthened, and that from Scard might be garnered a rich harvest of souls.

Barely had Mrs. May and the Vicar risen from their knees when the door opened and Tom Winter stood on the threshold.

Never, thought Mr. Gwyn, had he seen a more splendid specimen of a seafarer. Fresh from a fishing expedition, in his blue jersey, with his bronzed face, and a heavy creel of fish swung over his broad shoulders, Tom Winter looked man enough to do or dare anything.

"Brought ye a fish, Grannie, for supper" (Tom Winter's children always called Mrs. May "Grannie," and he had fallen into the same habit himself); then, with a half-shy, half-bold glance at Mrs. May's visitor, Tom threw the fish on the table and beat a hasty retreat.

"That is Tom Winter, sir," said Mrs. May. Mr. Gwyn gave her a warm handshake, and in another minute he was gone.

"You have a fine haul of fish there, Winter."

Tom guessed who was the speaker, and without taking the trouble to turn his head, grunted out surlily, "Pretty fair!" then, striding on as though wearing seven-leagued boots, with a grim smile he told himself he would soon out-distance the Parson.

Tom's calculations were upset. Swinging round the corner with striding step, and, with a chuckle of congratulation, just turning into his home, out of the doorway, straight across his path, sprang little Jackie, jug in hand for father's beer; in a second Jackie was sent sprawling into the gutter, the jug shattered into twenty pieces, and Tom measured his six feet two inches on the pavement, his fish scattered in all directions.

Tom soon picked himself up; but Jackie howled long and loudly, resisting all his father's attempts at consolation, and refusing to quit the gutter.

"Hurt, my little man? Well, it was a nasty tumble! But let us see—I daresay, after all, there's not much the matter."

It was Mr. Gwyn who spoke; and at the sound of the kind yet firm voice, Jackie took his knuckles out of his eyes and allowed himself to be inspected.

"Ah! here's one nasty cut," and Mr. Gwyn held up gently a small brown leg. "Where's the wife, Winter? It ought to be washed and plaistered."

Tom gave a loud shout, and from the back kitchen Susan Winter appeared, pulling down her sleeves vigorously when she caught sight of the Vicar.

"See here, Sue, Jack and I, we've fallen foul of one another; out he ran, full sail on, straight atween my legs."

"Not very much the matter, though," said Mr.