

But he was an Asker, to be sure! And the child, catching a sort of resemblance between the words, remembered it. And, referring to her Aunt Steptoe, got it confirmed. It served as a barrier for a time against an insight into the facts.

When poor Jim's speech was so brave of how the day was bound to go by, and he would bide it out, was his whole heart in his utterance? Was there no reserve—no suppressed execration of that mysterious unsolicited Cause that had stunted him down to darkness after a short half-time of light? At that moment he was conscious of none—a moment when he felt the world about him—heard the voices of his fellow-men—felt on his face, without shrinking, the full stress of the mid-day sun, whose rays he should never see again. But how about the darkness of the night, that he had learned to know only by the loneliness and the silence? In its solitude was it not now and again almost his resolve to die, and not await another day? Almost, yes!—but never quite. Always a decision to hear just once again the voice of his little lass in the morning. If it were only this once, and he should fail in strength to hear that other day; still, let it be, for now! Just once again!

But the longest nights led each to its dawn, and poor Jim knew of each dawn by hearsay, and started off early, on all days weather forhade not too grossly, hold of Lizarann's 'and, and takin' good care not to crost only when other parties done the same, actue' like, so you might place reliance, and not get under the 'orses' 'oofs; and throughout each day that followed Jim treasured the anticipation of its end, and looked forward to the coming of his little lass to take him home. He would sit and think of what her small hand would feel like in his when the welcome hour should come for his departure; and each day, as that hour came, and he found his way hack to Vatted Rum Corner to wait for her, came also a short spell of tense anxiety lest he should not hear her voice this time. And then the relief, when he caught the signal he had taught her, through the noise of the traffic and the railway-whistles near at hand.

"Ye shouldn't sing out *Poylot*, little lass," said he, when she turned up at the end of thst day—the day of the two