

out to sea rather than Christian burial. At any rate, none of them came near me, kindly disposed as I felt myself, and ready to tuck up my Sunday trousers at the very first sight of a woolly head. But several came ashore, next tide—when it could be no comfort at all to them. And such, as I have always found, is the nature of black people.

But for me it was a sad, and, as I thought, severe, visitation to be forced on a Sabbath-day—my only holiday of the week—to meditate over a scene like this. As a truly consistent and truth-seeking Christian (especially when I go round with fish on a Monday among Nonconformists), it was a bitter trial for me to reflect upon those poor negroes, gone without any sense at all, except of good Christians' wickedness, to the judgment we decree for all, except ourselves and families.

But there was worse than this behind; for after waiting as long as there seemed good chance of anything coming ashore, which might go into my pocket, without risk of my pension, and would truly be mine in all honesty—and after seeing that the wreck would not break up till the tide rose higher, though all on board were swept away—suddenly it came into my head about poor Bardie and Bunny. They were worth all the niggers that ever made coal look the colour of pipeclay; and with a depth of self-reproach which I never deserved to feel, having truly done my utmost—for who could walk in such weather?—forth I set, resolved to face whatever came out of the heavens. Verily nothing could come much worse than what was come already. Rheumatics, I mean, which had struck me there, under the rock, as a snake might. Three hours ago all the world was sweat, and now all the air was shivers. Such is the climate of our parts, and many good people rail at it, who have not been under discipline. But all who have felt that gnawing anguish, or that fiery freezing, burning at once and benumbing (like a dead bone put into the live ones, with a train of powder down it)—all these will have pity for a man who had crouched beneath a rock for at least three hours, with dripping clothes, at the age of two-and-fifty.

For a hero I never set up to be, and

never came across one until my old age in the navy, as hereafter to be related. And though I had served on board of one in my early years, off La Hague and Cape Grisnez, they told me she was only a woman that used to hold a lantern. Hero, however, or no hero, in spite of all discouragement and the aching of my bones, resolved I was to follow out the fate of those two children. There seemed to be faint hope, indeed, concerning the little stranger; but Bunny might be all alive and strong, as was right and natural for a child of her age and substance. But I was sore downcast about it when I looked around and saw the effect of the storm that had been over them. For the alteration of everything was nothing less than amazing.

It is out of my power to tell you how my heart went up to God, and all my spirit and soul was lifted into something purer, when of a sudden, in a scoop of sand, with the rushes overhanging, I came on those two little dears, fast asleep in innocence. A perfect nest of peace they had, as if beneath their Father's eye, and by His own hand made for them. The fury of the earth and sky was all around and over them; the deep revenge of the sea was rolling, not a hundred yards away; and here those two little dots were asleep, with their angels trying to make them dream.

Bunny, being the elder, and much the stronger child, had thrown the skirt of her frock across poor little Bardie's naked shoulders; while Bardie, finding it nice and warm, had nestled her delicate head into the lap of her young nurse, and had tried (as it seemed), before dropping off, to tell her gratitude by pressing Bunny's red hands to her lips. In a word, you might go a long way and scarcely see a prettier or more moving picture, or one more apt to lead a man who seldom thinks of his Maker. As for me, I became so proud of my own granddaughter's goodness, and of the little lady's trust and pure repose therein, that my heart went back at once to my dead boy Harry, and I do believe that I must have wept, if I could have stopped to look at them.

But although I was truly loath to spoil this pretty picture, the poor things must be partly wet, even in that nest of rushes,