

some variety, and something interesting, compared with what there is on a farm. You better pull up stakes when we get our money, sell your old farm and go to sea along with me."

"Well," said Jonathan, "I'll tell you what 'tis neighbour, I'll leave it out to Mr. Sampson here to say which is the best and pleasantest business, farming or going to sea. If he says farming, you shall pay the toddy at the next tavern, and if he says going to sea, I'll pay it."

"Done," said Bill. "Now, Asa, give us your opinion."

"Well," said Asa, "all I can say is, if going to sea isn't pleasanter business than farming there isn't much pleasure in it, that's all."

"But that ain't deciding anything at all," said Bill; "you must tell us right up and down which is the best business."

"Well, if I must say," said Asa, "I should say going to sea was the best and the pleasantest."

"There, I told you so," said Bill. "Now how fur is it to the next tavern? I want that toddy."

"It's jest to the top of this hill," said Jonathan; "and bein' the hill's pretty steep, we'll jump out and walk up, and give the old horse a chance to breathe."

So out they jumped, and Jonathan drove the horse up the hill, while Bill and Asa loitered along a little behind.

"How upon arth," said Bill, "come you to decide in favour of going to sea? Did you ever go to sea?"

"I? No I never set foot aboard a vessel in all my life."

"Then how come you to know so much about going to sea?"

"Poh!" said Asa, "all I knew about it was, I knew Mr. Rider had some money, and I knew you hadn't, and I wanted the toddy. How *could* I decide any other way?"

"True enough," said Bill, "you was exactly right."

When they reached the tavern, Mr. Rider paid the toddy, and, after giving the old horse a little provender and a little time to breathe, the trio pursued their journey with renewed spirits and livelier hopes. When they reached the sea-shore at Falmouth, the sun was about an hour high. They immediately hired a small row boat for two or three days, leaving their horse and wagon in pawn for it, and prepared to embark for Jewell's Island, which was about ten miles distant. Jonathan was a little fearful about being out upon the water in the night, and was for waiting till next morning and taking the day before them for the voyage to the island. But Bill said no, "they could go half the distance before sunset, and as there was a good moon, there would be no difficulty in going the other half after sunset; and he was determined to be on the island that night, let the consequence be what 'twould."

They accordingly put their baggage on board, and jumped in, and rowed off. Bill first took the helm, and Jonathan and Asa sat down to the oars. But being totally unaccustomed to a boat, they made sad work of rowing, and in spite of all of Bill's teaching and preaching, scolding, and swearing, their oars splashed up and down alternately in the water, resembling more in their operation two flails upon the barn floor than two oars upon the ocean. Their little bark made but slow headway, and Bill soon got out of patience, and told Jonathan to take the helm and he would row himself. Jonathan, however, succeeded no better at the helm than at the oar; for the boat was soon heading in all directions, and making as crooked a track as was ever made by the veritable sea-serpent himself. So that Bill was obliged to call Jonathan from the helm, and manage to keep the boat as straight as he could by rowing. The slow progress they made under all these disadvantages brought it to midnight before they reached the island. They however succeeded at last in gaining the little harbour,

and it being about high water they drew their boat upon the beach, and walked up on the island towards a fisherman's hut, which Bill had frequented upon his former visit to the place. The moon had set, and the night was now somewhat dark. As they wound their way along through the bushes and under the tall trees, not a sound was to be heard, save the low sullen roar of the ocean, which came like delicious music to the ears of Bill Stanwood, while to Jonathan and Asa it added a still deeper gloom to the silence and darkness of the night.

They had walked but a short distance when a dim light glittered through the trees, and told them that the fisherman's hut was near.

"Ah," said Bill, "old Mother Newbegin is up. I believe she never goes to bed; for go there what time of night you will, you will always find her paddling about the room with an old black night-cap on, putting dishes to rights in the closet, or sweeping up the floor, or sitting down and mending her husband's clothes. She looks more like a witch than she does like a human creature, and sometimes I've almost thought she had something to do about guarding the money that's buried on the island."

"Well, ain't there some other house about here," said Asa, "that we can go to? Somehow, it seems to me I shouldn't like to get quite so near that old hag, if there's any witchcraft about her."

"There's no other house very near," said Bill; "and, besides, I think it's best to go in and see old Mother Newbegin. For if she is a witch, it's no use to try to keep out of the way of her; and if we keep the right side of her and don't get her mad, maybe she may help us a little about finding the money."

They approached the house, and as they passed the little low window, they saw by the red light of a pitch knot, that was burning on the hearth, the old woman sitting and roasting coffee, which she was stirring with a stout iron spoon. They stopped a little and reconnoitered. The glare of the light fell full on the old woman's face, showing her features sharp and wrinkled, her skin brown, and her eyes black and fiery. Her chin was leaning on one hand, and the other was busily employed in stirring the coffee, while she was talking to herself with a solemn air, and apparently with much earnestness. Her black night-cap was on, and fastened with a piece of twine under her chin, and the tight sleeves of her frock sat close to her long bony arms, while her bare feet and bird-claw toes projected out in full view below the bottom of her dress.

"I swow," said Asa, "I believe she has got a cloven foot. Let's be off; I should rather go back and sleep in the boat than to go in here to-night."

"Poh!" said Bill, "that's only the shadow of her foot you see on the floor; she hasn't got any more of a cloven foot than you have. Come, I'm going in whether or no."

"With that he gave a loud rap at the door."

"Who's there?" screamed the old woman.

"A friend," said Bill.

"Well, who be ye? What's your name? I shan't open the door till I know who you be."

"Bill Stanwood," said the sailor.

"Oh, is it you, Bill? Come in then," said the old woman, unfastening the door, and throwing it open.

"So you're after money again, aint ye?" said the old woman, as they entered the house; "and you've brought these two men with you to help you, and that's what you are here for this time of night."

"I swow," said Asa, whispering to Bill Stanwood, "let's be off, she knows all about it."

*(To be concluded next week.)*