

and see all the improvements Mary has made in it; only I wish she'd stay on here a bit longer."

But though Mary was mollified by Mrs. Morey's last words, she was not to be persuaded to alter her decision. If 'Liza was coming on a visit to Firs Cross it behoved her to be preparing to receive her guest: there was an old armchair to be covered with a gay cretonne and sundry matters in pickling and preserving to be attended to; clearly it was better she should go at once. So on Saturday morning "good-bye" was said and the travellers prepared to start on the home journey. It was a sad hour for Martin when he ran back from the beach to breakfast and knew that he had said farewell to the beautiful sea; he was consoled, however, by the thought that the crossing from Ryde to Portsmouth was still before him, and that his father had promised to take him to see the *Victory* before they left the latter place.

"Now you'll see the difference between wooden walls and ironclads, my boy," said the smith, as they reached the deck of the famous old ship. "The 'wooden walls' have got their good points, too, though I suppose it wouldn't do to rely upon them entirely nowadays; but any way they are better to look at than the newersort. Why, this old craft is a picture now, and when you think of what she's been through, and how she fought, well, there isn't an Englishman but would sorrow if anything happened to the old *Victory*."

Martin was very quiet as he inspected the ship, walked through the narrow passages, peeped into the little cabins, and read on the wall of the one in which Nelson died the words which had so animated the whole fleet on the morning of the great battle of Trafalgar, "England expects every man to do his duty." How thrilling it was, too, to be shown the very spot on which the hero fell.

"Father," exclaimed the boy, "I shall be a sailor."

"Now what's put that into your head?" asked his mother. "I was afraid it would be turned by all the sights we've seen lately; but please to remember going to sea isn't all smart ships and being dressed out in our best to see the Queen; there's another side to going to sea—at least, so I've often heard."

"It wasn't that, mother," said the boy, his face pale and agitated; "it wasn't what we saw on Wednesday, it was what we saw down there—'England expects every man to do his duty.' I know what Nelson thought about it, I've read it in the book Miss Lina lent me, and I want to do my duty like him and fight for my country."

The boy looked appealingly at his father, he knew that if he was to expect sympathy at all it would be from the parent who had always entered into all his joys and troubles, and whose large heart was filled with a sincere love for his country.

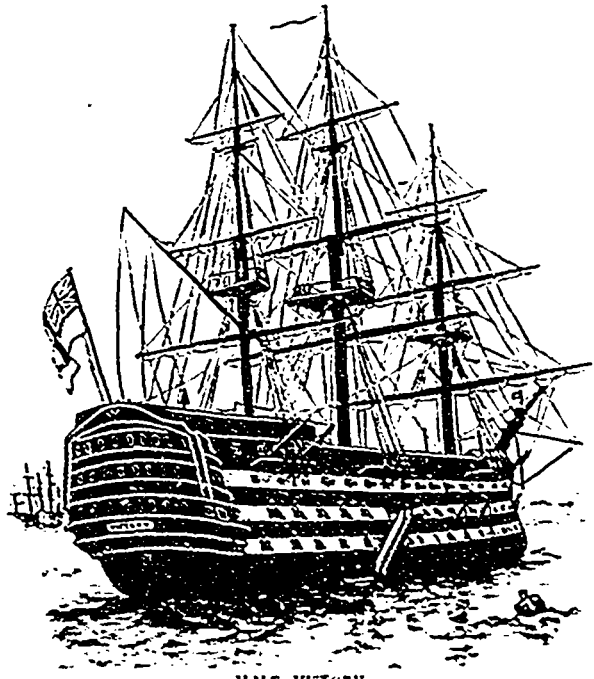
The smith replied to the boy's look and smiled kindly down at him.

"There are different ways of doing our duty, laddie—perhaps some day you'll see that yours lies in a different direction; but if you still stick to the sea, why, I suppose we should have to let you go. It's in the blood, I suppose; you favour your grandfather in more things than your face."

"Don't talk like that to the boy, John, don't," exclaimed the mother; "it's only a whim which will pass away if you don't encourage him by telling him such a fancy is in his blood. I'm sure if it is, the best thing we can do is to get it out. What good did your father ever do by going to sea, I should like to know? He lost a leg, and he never seemed much fit for anything afterwards, if we may judge by the muddle he left in his business—nothing but the hundred pounds for 'Liza, and a forge hampered with a mortgage which 'twill take us a lifetime to pay off. If that's what going to sea does, I hope no boy of mine will ever take to such foolish ways."

"Hush, Mary! don't talk so—it hurts me! Father was an honest man, and you know how the debt on the forge came. Poor Tom was always in trouble, and if father hadn't raised the money as he did, we all know Tom wouldn't have died a free man. At any rate, we were saved from that, and if it pleases God to give me health and strength, I'll soon pay off the rest of the debt."

Martin shrank back in alarm. His mother's angry voice and his father's evident discomfiture aroused



H.M.S. VICTORY.