

fish of a fine high flavor; but now I had some which I would not offer to such kind-hearted gentry.

Hezekiah wanted fish. I saw it by his nostrils, and I knew it for certain when he pretended not to see me or my standing. He went a good bit round the corner, as if to deal with the ironmonger. But for all that, I knew as well as if I could hear his wife beginning to rake the fire, that fish for supper was the business which had brought him across the bridge. Therefore I refused an offer which I would have jumped at before seeing Hezekiah, of twopence a-pound for the residue from an old woman who sold pickles; and I made up my mind to keep up the price, knowing the man to have ten in family, and all blessed with good appetites.

"What, Davy! Brother Davy!" he cried, being compelled to begin, because I took care not to look at him. "Has it been so ordered that I behold good brother Davy with fish upon a Monday?" His object in this was plain enough—to beat down my goods by terror of an information for Sabbath-labor.

"The Lord has been merciful to me," I answered, patting my best fish on his shoulder; "not only in sending them straight to my net, at nine o'clock this morning; but also, brother Hezekiah, in the hunger all people have for them. I would that I could have kept thee a taste; not soon wouldst thou forget it. Sweeter fish and finer fish never came out of Newton Bay"—this I said because Newton Bay is famous for high quality. "But, brother Hezekiah, thou art come too late." And I began to pack up very hastily.

"What!" cried Hezekiah, with a keen and hungrily grievous voice; "all those fish bespoken, Davy?"

"Every one of them bespoken, brother; by a man who knows a right down good bass, better almost than I do. Griffy, the 'Cat and Snuffers.'"

Now, Griffith, who kept "the Cat and Snuffers," was a very jovial man, and a bitter enemy to Hezekiah Perkins; and I knew that the latter would gladly offer a penny a-pound upon Griffy's back, to spoil him of his supper, and to make him offend his customers.

"Stop, brother Davy," cried Hezekiah,

stretching out his broad fat hands, as I began to pack my fish, with the freshest smellers uppermost; "Davy dear, this is not right, nor like our ancient friendship. A rogue like Griffy to cheat you so! What had he beaten you down to, Davy?"

"Beaten me down!" I said, all in a hurry: "is it likely I would be beaten down, with their eyes coming out of their heads like that?"

"Now dear brother Dyo, do have patience! What was he going to give you a-pound?"

"Fourpence a-pound, and ten pound of them. Three-and-fourpence for a lot like that! Ah, the times are bad indeed!"

"Dear brother Dyo, fourpence-half-penny! Three-and-nine down, for the lot as it stands."

"Hezekiah, for what do you take me? Cut a farthing in four, when you get it. Do I look a likely man to be a rogue for fivepence?"

"No, no, Davy; don't be angry with me. Say as much as tenpence. Four-and-twopence, ready money; and no Irish coinage."

"Brother Hezekiah," said I, "a bargain struck is a bargain kept. Rob a man of his supper for tenpence!"

"Oh, Dyo, Dyo! you never would think of that man's supper, with my wife longing for fish so! Such a family as we have, and the weakness in Hezbibah's back! Five shillings for the five, Davy."

"There, there; take them along," I cried at last, with a groan from my chest: "you are bound to be the ruin of me. But what can I do with a delicate lady? Brother, surely you have been a little too hard upon me. Whatever shall I find to say to a man who never beats me down?"

"Tell that worldly 'Cat and Snuffers' that your fish were much too good—why, Davy, they seem to smell a little!"

"And small use they would be, Hezekiah, either for taste or for nourishment, unless they had the sea-smell now. Brother, all your money back, and the fish to poor Griffy, if you know not the smell of salt water yet."

"Now, don't you be so hot, old Davy. The fish are good enough, no doubt; and it may be from the skewer-wood; but they have a sort, not to say a smell, but a manner of reminding one——"