

But suddenly, by what means I know not, except the will of Providence, there arose before me that foul wrong which the Nicodemus-Christian had committed against me some three years back. I had forborne to speak of it till now, wishing to give the man fair ply.

"Hezekiah, do you remember," I asked, with much solemnity—"do you remember your twentieth wedding-day?"

"Davy, my brother, how many times—never mind talking about that now."

"You had a large company coming, and to whom did you give a special order to catch you a turbot at tenpence a-pound?"

"Nay, nay, my dear friend Dyo; shall I never get that thing out of your stupid head?"

"You had known me for twenty years at least as the very best fisherman on the coast, and a man that could be relied upon. Yet you must go and give that order, not to a man of good Welsh blood—with ten Welshmen coming to dinner, mind—not to a man that was bred and born within five miles of your dirty house—not to a man that knew every cranny and crinkle of sand where the turbot lies; but to a tagrag Scotchman! It was spoken of upon every pebble from Britton Ferry to Aberthaw. David Llewellyn put under the feet of a fellow like Sandy Macraw—a beggarly, interloping, freckled, bitter weed of a Scotchman!"

"Well, Davy, I have apologised. How many times more must I do it? It was not that I doubted your skill. You tell

us of that so often, that none of us ever question it. It was simply because—I feared just then to come near your excellent and lamented——"

"No excuses, no excuses, Mr. Perkins, if you please! You only make the matter worse. As if a man's wife could come into the question, when it comes to business! Yours may, because you don't know how to manage her; but mine——"

"Well, now she is gone, Dyo; and very good she was to you. And in your heart, you know it."

Whether he said this roughly, or from the feeling which all of us have when it comes to one another, I declare I knew not then, and I know not even now. For I did not feel so sharply up to look to mine own interest, with these recollections over me. I waited for him to begin again, but he seemed to stick back in the corner. And in spite of all that turbot business, at the moment I could not help holding out my hand to him.

He took it, and shook it, with as much emotion as if he had truly been fond of my wife; and I felt that nothing more must be said concerning that order to Sandy Macraw. It seemed to be very good reason also, for getting out of that interview; for I might say things to be sorry for, if I allowed myself to go on any more with my heart so open. Therefore I called in my usual briskness, "Lo, the water is rising! The children must be at the mouth of the well. What will the good wife prophesy if she sees thee coming up the stairs with thy two feet soaking wet, Master Hezekiah?"

CHAPTER XVII.—FOR A LITTLE CHANGE OF AIR.

On the very next day, I received such a visit as never had come to my house before. For while I was trimming my hooks, and wondering how to get out of all this trouble with my conscience sound and my pocket improved; suddenly I heard a voice not to be found anywhere.

"I 'ants to yalk, I tell 'a, Yatkin. Put me down derekkerly. I 'ants to see old Davy."

"And old Davy wants to see you, you

beauty," I cried as she jumped like a little wild kid, and took all my house with a glance, and then me.

"Does 'a know, I yikes this house, and I yikes 'a, and I yikes Yatkin, and Ickle Bunny, and everybody?"

She pointed all round for everybody, with all ten fingers spread everyway. Then Watkin came after her, like her slave, with a foolish grin on his countenance, in spite of the undertaking business.