

NICHOLAS TOP

little lights of fun and tenderness and truth twinkling in their depths. I would have you know that as a child I loved the scarred and broken old ape: this with a child's devotion, the beauty of which (for 'tis the way of the heart) is not to be matched in later years, whatever may be told. Nor in these days, when I am full-grown and understand, will I have a word spoken in his dishonor.

Not I, by Heaven!

I came to Twist Tickle, as I am informed, on the wings of a southeasterly gale: which winds are of mean spirit and sullenly tenacious—a great rush of ill weather, overflowing the world, blowing gray and high and cold. At sea 'twas breaking in a geyser of white water on the Resurrection Rock; and ashore, in the meagre shelter of Meeting House Hill, the church-bell clanged fearfully in a swirl of descending wind: the gloaming of a wild day, indeed! The *Shining Light* came lurching through the frothy sea with the wind astern: a flash of white in the mist, vanishing among the careering waves, doughtily reappearing—growing the while into the stature of a small craft of parts, making harbor under a black, tumultuous sky. Beyond the Toads, where there is a turmoil of breaking water, she made a sad mess of it, so that the folk of the Tickle, watching the strange appearance from the heads, made sure she had gone down; but she struggled out of the spray and tumble, in the end, and came to harbor unscathed in the place where Nicholas Top, himself