

been seen nor heard of since. And I fancy 'tis the most disgraceful deed what can ha' happened since the creation of the world."

"But he couldn't take the house, nor yet look after it, vor us wasn't going to have him back again after the way he'd used us, and us wasn't going to have 'en letting or selling the place neither, and making money out of our misfortunes," said the Wallower in Wealth. "He tried to ruin us all, he ha' brought the Mudges to awful poverty, and he ha' pretty near drove the Dyers into the asylum, and he stole a musical-box what ha' been in my family vor generations out o' mind. It wur a fine house, sure enough, but 'tis all gone now. There's nought left but foundations, and there's not much o' them, and you can't see 'em, vor they'm covered wi' grass. The trees be all cut down, and the shrubs ha' got moved, and the garden wall ain't there no longer. The house warn't there one day, and gone the next, as some volk say. It seemed to go so gradual that no one noticed it really was a leaving us. Us all knew why it wur going, and how it wur going; but us didn't talk about it much, vor what be everybody's business ain't nobody's business."

"The youngsters started it," said Squinting Jack. "They smashed the windows and got inside. They sort o' took possession of the place and played there every day. They played at soldiers mostly. One