

"'They're such wonderful friendly little beggars,  
Skipper Davy!'

"'I never looks up at the stars.'

"'They're friends o' *mine*!'

"'Not bein' very much in favor o' the world!'  
says he, 'I doesn't countenance the stars.'

"An' all at once I turned to un in a sweat an' shiver o' fear. Not countenance the stars! Here, then, another flash o' light upon the big mystery! Now first I glimpsed the end of a path of evil. Not countenance the stars! Could a man truly come t' such a sad pass in God's good world? I knowed evil: all lads knows it, t' be sure—its first gates in the world: not its last places. An' they stand without, in fair meadows, an' peep beyond—an' wonder, an' ponder, an' wish with all their young, eager hearts t' follow the paths an' learn. An' we that are growed forget the wonder an' the wish—an' show no scars that we can hide, an' draw the curtain upon our ways, an' make mockery o' truth, an' clothe our hearts in hypocrisy, an' offer false example, an' lie of our lives an' souls, lest we stand ashamed. 'Tis a cruel fate for lads, it may be, an' a deceitful prophecy. I knows little enough about life, but exhibit my ways, whatever an' all, for the worth they may have; an had I my will in the world, I'd light the country beyond the gates, ecod! an' with my own hands stir up all the beasts! Not countenance the stars! 'Twas a vision again for the lad that was I—first glimpse o' the end of any