

"I was sayin' as I'd like to be a Queen," said Fancy. "Queen of England, I mean: none of your second-bests."

"Well, my dear," Cai assured her, bustling down the ladder and staring up at the motto to make sure that it hung straight, "*that* you won't never be: but you're among the many as have done virtuously, and God bless 'ee for it! Which is pretty good for your age."

"You're not," retorted the uncompromising child.

"Eh?"

"'Tis three days now since you've been near the old man, either one of 'ee. How would *you* like that, if you was goin' to hell?"

"Hush 'ee now! . . . 'Bias and me had clean forgot—there's so much to do in all these rejoicin's! Run back and tell 'n we'll be down in half-an-hour, soon as we've tidied up here."

On their way down to visit the sick man, Cai and 'Bias had to pause half-a-score of times at least to admire an arch or a decorated house-front. For by this time even the laggards were out and working for the credit of Troy.

But no decorations could compare with their own.

"That's a handsome bunch, missus," called Cai to a very old woman, who, perched on a borrowed step-ladder, was nailing a sheaf of pink valerian (local name, "Pride of Troy") over her door-lintel. "Let me give 'ee a hand wi' that hammer," he offered; for her hand shook pitifully.

"Ne'er a hand shall help me—thank 'ee all the same," the old lady answered. "There, Cap'n! . . .