

## *The Cruise of the SHINING LIGHT*

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swagger or slink. Upon occasions 'twas manifest to all the world that following evil he walked in shame and terror. These times were periodic, as shall be told: wherein, because of his simplicity, which was unspoiled—whatever the rascality he was in the way of practising—he would betray the features of hang-dog villany, conceiving all the while that he had cleverly masked himself with virtue.

“Child,” says he, in that high gentleness by which he was distinguished, “take the old man’s hand. Never fear t’ clasp it, lad! Ye’re abroad in respectable company.”

I would clasp it in childish faith.

“Abroad,” says he, defiantly, “in highly respectable company!”

Ah, well! whether rogue or gentleman, upon whom rascality was writ, the years were to tell. These, at any rate, were the sinister aspects of Nicholas Top, of Twist Tickle, whose foster-child I was, growing in such mystery as never was before, I fancy, and thriving in love not of the blood but rich and anxious as love may be: and who shall say that the love which is of the blood—a dull thing, foreordained—is more discerning, more solicitous, more deep and abiding than that which chances, however strangely, in the turmoil and changes of the life we live? To restore confidence, the old dog was furnished with an ample, genial belly; and albeit at times he drank to excess, and despite the five years’ suspicion of the eye in his very own head, his eyes were blue and clear and clean-edged, with