

—for Jim was obliged to make a show of selling matches, to be within the law—and had returned change for sixpence, honourably offered by Jim. “I can’t see you, master,” said the blind man, “and I never shall, not if the sky falls, but I thank ye kindly. And I’ll tell my little lass on ye, home to-night.” It was the only recompense Jim had to offer, and he offered it.

“I should kill myself straight off,” said the other traveller. His speech was quite as consequent on his friend’s as most current speech is on its antecedent; you listen closely when you hear talk, and see if this is not the case! “Stop a bit! Don’t make me split this cigar. I haven’t got another, and nothing fit to smoke is procurable in this neighbourhood... there!—that’s right, now... The little chocket wouldn’t snickle out. Let’s see! What topic were we giving our powerful brains to? Oh, ah!—the blind beggar. You recollect the fellah?”

“Never saw him before, that I know of.”

“Perhaps you haven’t. I have. But you remember the two little girls?”

“Which two?”

“That morning we went to inquire about the railroad arch. Of course, you remember.” His friend assented. “Well!—that little girl is this chap’s kid. She’ll come in the evening to take him home. I’ve seen ’em about together, many a time.”

“I remember two little girls, where we went down that street my mother and sister slum in. Tallack Street. Which was the kid? The bony one with the nostril ajar, and the front teeth, that called you a cure?”

“No—the little plummy modest one, with both eyes stood open, and something to suck. Large dark eyes.” No really nice young man, such as we like, can ever mention a girl’s eyes, even a young child’s, without a shade of tenderness.

“What a sensitive youth you are, Scipio!” His friend sees through him. “The other was a little Jezebel.”

“Came out of Termagant’s egg, I should say. Isn’t there a bird called a Termagant? There ought to be.”

“I quite agree, but I doubt it. Well—to return to the point—you say you would kill yourself, straight off. How