

little housework to do, except what fell naturally to Joan's care, and interference with these duties appeared to annoy the methodical old woman. The knitting was far ahead, there were no nets to mend; and when Denas had made herself a couple of dresses, there seemed to be no work for her to do. And she was not specially fond of reading.

One morning a woman visited the cottage, and the sole burden of her conversation was the lack of a school in St. Penfer-by-the-Sea to which the fisher-children might go in the morning.

"Here be my six little uns," she cried, "and up the cliff they must hurry all, through any wind or weather, or learn nothing. There be sixty school-going children in the village, and I do say there ought to be a school here for them."

And suddenly it came into the heart of Denas to open a school. Pay or no pay, she was sure she would enjoy the work, and that afternoon she went about it. An empty cottage was secured, a fisher-carpenter agreed to make the benches, and at an outlay of two or three pounds she provided all that was necessary. The affair made a great stir in the hamlet. She had more applications for admission than the cottage would hold, and she selected from these thirty of the youngest of the children.

For the first time in many months Denas was sensible of enthusiasm in her employment. But Joan did not apparently share her hopes or her pleasure. She was silent and depressed and answered Denas with a slight air of injury.

"They have agreed to pay a penny a week for each child," Denas said to her mother.

"Well, Denas, some will pay and some will never pay."

"To be sure. I know that, mother. But it does not much matter."

"Aw, then, it do matter, my girl—it do matter, a great deal." And Joan began to cry a little and to arrange her crockery with far more noise than was necessary.

"Dear mother, what is it? Are you in trouble of any kind?"

"Aw, then, Denas, I be troubled to think you never saw your father's trouble. He be sad and anxious enough, God knows. And no one to say 'here, John,' or 'there, John,' or give him a helping hand in any way."

"Sit down, mother, and tell me all. I have seen that father's ways are changed and that he seldom goes to the fishing. I hoped the reason was that he had no longer any need to go regularly."

"No need? Aw, my dear, he has no boat!"

"No boat! Mother, what do you mean to tell me?"

"I mean, child, that on the same night the steamer *Lorne* was wrecked your father lost his boat and his nets, and barely got to land with his life—never would have done that but for Tris Penrose, who lost all, too—and both of them at the mercy of the waves when the life-boat reached them. Aw, my dear, a bad night. And bad times ever since for your father. Now and then he do get a night with Trenager, or Penlow, or Adam Oliver; but they be only making a job for him. And when pilchard time