

An' I'd my hand fair on the knob o' Mary Land's door—an' was jus' about t' push in—when Skipper Davy all at once cotched me by the elbow an' pulled me back t' the shadows.

" 'Hist!' says he.

" 'Ay?"

" 'Did you—tell her outright—that I'd *take* her?"

" 'Ay, sure!"

" 'No help for it, Tumm?"

" 'God's sake!' says I.

" 'I—I—I won't!' says he.

"An' he fled—ay, took t' the heels of un, an' went stumblin' over the road t' Rickity Tickle in the dark. I listened—helpless there at Mary Land's door—while he floundered off beyond hearin'. An' 'twas hard—a thing as bitter as perdition—t' tell Mary Land that he'd gone. T' break her heart again! God's sake! But she said: 'Hush, Toby! Don't you mind for me. I—I'm not mindin'—much. I'm used—t' wə'tin'.' An' then I made off for Davy Junk's spick-an'-span cottage by Blow-Me t' speak the words in my heart. Slippery rock an' splash o' mud underfoot—an' clammy alder-leaves by the wayside—an' the world in a cold drench o' misty rain—an' the night as dark as death—an' rage an' grief beyond measure in my heart. An' at last I come t' Davy Junk's cottage by Blow-Me, an' forthwith pushed in t' the kitchen. An' there sot Davy Junk, snuggled up to his own fire, his face in his hands, woebegone an' hateful of hisself an'