

like so many children, each perceiving something which was worse to those who perceived it not, Hezekiah carried on as if we were a set of fools, and nothing ever could frighten him. To me, who was the bravest of them, this was very irksome; but it happened that I knew brother Perkins's pet belief. His wife had lived at Longlands once, a lonely house between Nottage and Newton, on the rise of a little hill. And they say that on one night of the year, all the funerals that must pass from Nottage to Newton in the twelvemonth go by in succession there, with all the mourners after them, and the very hymns that they will sing passing softly on the wind.

So as we were just by Longlands in the early beat of the stars, I managed to be at Perkins's side. Then suddenly, as

a bat went by, I caught the arm of Hezekiah, and drew back, and shivered.

"Name of God, Davy! what's the matter?"

"Can't you see them, you blind-eye? There they go! there they go! All the coffins with palls to them. And the names upon the head-plates:—Evan, and Thomas, and Hopkin, and Rees, and Jenkin, with only four bearers? And the psalm they sing is the thirty-fourth."

"So it is! I can see them all. The Lord have mercy upon my soul! Oh Davy, Davy! don't leave me here."

He could not walk another step, but staggered against the wall and groaned, and hid his face inside his hat. We got him to Newton with much ado; but as for going to Bridgend that night, he found that our church-clock must be seen to, the very first thing in the morning.

CHAPTER XVI.—TRUTH LIES SOMETIMES IN A WELL.

The following morning it happened so that I did not get up over early; not, I assure you, from any undue enjoyment of the grand Crowner's quests; but partly because the tide for fishing would not suit till the afternoon, and partly because I had worked both hard and long at the "Jolly Sailors;" and this in fulfilment of a pledge from which there was no escaping, when I promised on the night before, to grease and tune my violin, and display the true practice of hornpipe. Rash enough this promise was, on account of my dear wife's memory, and the things bad people would say of it. And but for the sad uneasiness created by black Evan's prophecy, and the need of lively company to prevent my seeing white horses, the fear of the parish might have prevailed with me over all fear of the landlord. Hence I began rather shyly; but when my first tune had been received with hearty applause from all the room, how could I allow myself to be clapped on the back, and then be lazy?

Now Bunny was tugging and clamouring for her bit of breakfast, almost before I was wide-awake, when the latch of my cottage-door was lifted, and in walked Hezekiah. Almost any other man would

have been more welcome; for though he had not spoken of it on the day before, he was sure to annoy me, sooner or later, about the fish he had forced me to sell him. When such a matter is over and done with, surely no man, in common-sense, has a right to reopen the question. The time to find fault with a fish, in all conscience, is before you have bought him. Having once done that, he is now your own; and to blame him is to find fault with the mercy which gave you the money to buy him. A foolish thing as well; because you are running down your own property, and spoiling your relish for him. Conduct like this is below contempt; even more ungrateful and ungracious than that of a man who spreads abroad the faults of his own wife.

Hezekiah, however, on this occasion, was not quite so bad as that. His errand according to his lights, was of a friendly nature; for he pried all round my little room with an extremely sagacious leer, and then gazed at me with a dark cock of his eye, and glanced askance at Bunny, and managed to wink, like the Commodore's ship beginning to light poop-lanterns.