

themselves *amongst* such a rough lot; and so we always spoke of 'Dolphy as Chessy Chalk's baby.

That baby really *was* a "remarkable child." I suppose it must have cried sometimes, but whenever it made its appearance in public it was always either sound asleep, or else crowing and capering, and smilingly shaking hands all round. Its fat, knuckle-dimpled little hands made rosy rings round the horny fingers of many a heart-hardened ruffian; and yet the ruffians, though they grinned, seemed to like the tender little touch whilst it lasted, and never said a rude word to the mother.

She, like her child, was a *really* "remarkable character." We had a miserable eight days between Gravesend and Plymouth: squally weather; sodden, lumbered decks; 'tween-decks littered with the muddy shavings and tool-baskets of carpenters, still hammering away at uncompleted bunks; make-shift meals as merry as Mr. Sampson Brass thought Mr. Quilp's moist picnic; a sulky crew, not yet shaken down into order, and only half recovered from the effects of parting glasses on shore; passengers, both cabin and intermediate, in a state of damp *deshabille* and sea-sick despair—the women, for the most part, looking especially limp, draggle-tail, and tallow-faced scarecrows. And yet, even in that dreary time, Chessy Chalk and her baby, on the few occasions on which they did make a public appearance, were comparatively as neat as new pins. When the other women temporarily recovered strength enough to talk, they wasted it in making pathetic appeals to the skipper, the cabin-boy—any one of the ship's company they could get hold of—to be put ashore that minute, or in angrily abusing their nearly equally helpless husbands for bringing them to sea, and still more angrily denouncing, as "selfish pigs," the few bachelors who could still venture on a smoke. Chessy had no husband on board to abuse, but if she had had, I am sure she would not have abused him, even if he *had* looked of all men the most miserable—acting as sea-sick nurse to a sea-sick wife and half a dozen sea-sick small children. When Chessy came out of her berth during those dreary eight days, she busied herself in doing as many quiet little kindnesses to her muddled, melancholy neighbours as the of course paramount claims of Master 'Dolphy would permit. But Master 'Dolphy was so exceptionally "good" a baby that these kindnesses amounted to a good deal; and it was owing to their remembrance of them, and to the frequent renewal of them, that the gene-

rally cantankerous womankind on board the *Gold FINDER* did not grudge the golden opinions which Chessy and her baby enjoyed. The mother, like the baby, was really "good." Of course, she was not perfect. Proper in all points though she was, it is not uncharitable to say that she felt a little pride in the deference which her pretty face and figure and ways won for her from all the men-folk, and the envy which her bonny, daintily-kept baby boy excited amongst her sister matrons. But she *was* really good, for all that. She did not pull long faces and make long sermons, and then go away and make spiteful speeches and do sneaking tricks. It was very little that Chessy said in any way, but all she did say was cheerfully kind, and what she did—which was a good deal more—was of the same sort.

When we had taken the passengers who, with good reason, had shunned the Channel passage, on board at Plymouth, and were just outside the breakwater again, we were overhauled by two boats. One brought a man who had run away from his creditors; another brought officers to apprehend a man who had even better, or rather worse, reason to run away from his. He had hidden himself ever since he left the Thames as well as he could, and had lain quite *perdu* during our stay at Plymouth; but amongst our motley ship's company there was a burly police-officer going out to Melbourne to apprehend some runaway. Burly as he was, a fear of lynching kept him from publishing his errand to his fellow-passengers; but I happen to know that, even when sea-sick, he had kept his eyes open, and that *esprit de corps* led him to give his brethren from the shore a quiet, a *very* quiet, hint as to where their quarry was stowed away. The poor scared wretch was hurried over the side as rapidly as possible by the anxious-looking captors, and their boat pulled off under a shower of maledictions and harder-hitting empty porter-bottles.

Then, for the first time, it seemed to be generally known on board that the captive had a wife and four children who were going out with us. *They*, of course, were not included in the warrant, but were left to make their lonely voyage to Melbourne, and land there penniless and unprotected.

At first, their condition evoked a great deal of genuine pity on board; although, perhaps, in the majority of instances, the pity for the police-captured scamp's belongings was at least *tinged* with the fellow-feeling that makes one wondrous kind. The poor woman was assured that she and her little ones would be well looked after on the voyage,