

as he did how impossible it was for him to exert himself now, and they were wondering how much more room he would take if he went on growing during generation after generation. "This talk," he said, "may do me good. It is a good deed, for I meant to warn you off the island, and I need not have spoken at all, but let you go further inland, and eaten our fruit, and slept in our enchanted air, and then you too would have had to work or grow. Do you think, boy, that my length is less than when you first saw me?"

David did not know what to answer, for though he despised the giant, he could not help pitying him, and he did not like to tell him that he could see no difference; so he said nothing, but turned away, and began weeding a large bed of beautiful flowers that grew near. The giant sighed deeply again, and in a more sleepy manner still beckoned David nearer to him. "Fly, boy, fly this place." Then his eyes closed, and once more every inch of the big giant was sleeping.

Then Uncle Kit told how David, after thinking a little with himself, did leave the island,—not that he was lazy, and feared to grow, though after he had got on board the wreck again he did stretch out his arms to see if his coat-sleeves were shorter,—but because the island puzzled him, and his father was a Scotchman and cautious, and David felt sure that he should be more comfortable on his lonely wreck than on an island where there was even a chance of his hair turning red. The rest of Uncle Kit's tale was soon told, though of course David had some more strange adventures before he found himself again amongst his own friends. It was the first part of the tale that Philip was thinking about this hot August night. His uncle had said that he told the tale for the sake of the moral, and Philip knew that he meant the moral particularly for him, and Philip was wondering if his uncle was right.

I dare say that you have often heard people talk about the hum of the world; but have you ever listened to it? Put your head out of your window some evening, when all close to you is still, and then in the distance, if you live in or near a great city, you will hear a sound, as if all the people in it were speaking to you at once in a whisper. Philip heard this whisper, a whisper of three millions of people,—for, you know, he lived in London,—and it almost seemed to him as a voice inviting him to come too, and with ever so slight a movement of his lips to add to the murmur.

Then this fancy changed into thoughts, and he thought what a grand thing it would be if he could put into his school-satchel

(he was now playing with its lock) a change of clothes, a few pet books, his toy schooner, if the mast would shut in, his writing-case, and a few other odd things, and then if he were to leave home, and soon after write a letter back to them at home, and be able to tell them that he had saved a life, or helped to win a battle, or perhaps been one of the first to discover a new land! Then his thoughts became actions, and Philip did put into his satchel a few clothes. The mast of the schooner would stick out beyond the top of the bag, so the schooner had to be left, and a small tool-box went instead. Then there was another moment of listening at the window, and Philip opened his door, and began to move slowly down-stairs. The stairs would creak so, that he was obliged to stop and take his boots off. He did not like doing this at all, for it made him feel as if he were sneaking, and anything like sneaking went very much against his conscience. However, he had made up his mind to go; so barefooted and slowly he at last reached the bottom of the stairs, and was at the parlour-door. Just then he heard a jingle of glasses, and knew that it was Mary bringing up the supper-tray; so with a bound he was half-way up the flight again, and then he sat down on the stairs as near as he could to the bottom without being seen. He saw the girl bustling in and out to lay the supper, he heard the clatter of the knives and forks, and, waiting impatiently, he rested his head against the balustrade, determining to stay there until the parlour door was shut again. But he could not help noticing how cheerful the small supper-party was, and he heard his father's voice speaking,—“Ah, my boy, Philip! my boy, Philip.” Those three words were equal to the humming whisper of the world, the moral of the tale of the enchanted island, the expected glory of the letter home. Those three words made Philip's eyes smart, and made Philip run up-stairs, not creep this time, to unpack his satchel and hurry into bed.

Do not think, though, my dear little friends, that this was the end of Philip's sad feelings, or the end of his longings for great deeds. No, but from that evening he understood better the last word of that beautiful verse:

“Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour, and to wait.”

He learnt, also, in after years to labour, and believe me he lived a long life in deeds as well as in years; and, believe me too, that as he grew older, his hair turned white, not red.

G. CROCKFORD.