

very doubtful indeed whether he could ever be moved there at all, or whether he might survive above a few months.

“Home is anywhere that my own family live with me,” said Frank, in a tone of resignation, when he heard a journey to Scotland pronounced impossible. “It is not where I am, but who I see, that signifies; and this meeting with you, Uncle David, did me more good than an ocean of physic. Oh! if I could only converse with grandmamma for half an hour, and speak to dear Harry and Laura, it would be too much happiness. I want to see how much they are both grown, and to hear their merry laugh again. Perhaps I never may! But if I get worse, they must come here. I have many, many things to say! Why should they not set off now?—immediately! If I recover, we might be such a happy party to Scotland again. For grandmamma, I know, it is impossible; but will you write and ask her about Harry and Laura? The sooner, the better, Uncle David, because I often think it probable——”

Frank coloured and hesitated; he looked earnestly at his uncle for some moments, who saw what was meant, and then added,—

“There is one person more, far distant, and little thinking of what is to come, who must be told. You have always been a father to me, Uncle David, but he also would wish to be here now. Little as we have been together, I know how much he loves me.”

Frank's request became no sooner known than it was complied with by Lady Harriet, who thought it better not to distress Harry and Laura by mentioning the full extent of his danger, but merely said that he felt impatient for the meeting, and that they might prepare on the following day to embark, under charge of old Andrew and her own maid Harrison, for a journey to London, where she hoped they would find the dear invalid already better. Laura was astonished at the agitation with which she spoke, and felt bewildered and amazed by this sudden announcement. She and Harry once or twice in their lives caught cold, and spent a day in bed, confined to a diet of gruel and syrup, which always proved an infallible remedy for the very worst attacks, and they had frequently witnessed the severe sufferings of their grandmamma, from which, however, she always recovered, and which seemed to them the natural effects of her extreme old age; but to imagine the possibility of Frank's life being in actual danger never crossed their thoughts for an instant, and, therefore, it was with a feeling of unutterable joy that they stood on the deck of the *Royal Pandemonium*, it having been decided that they should travel by water, knowing that they were now actually going to meet Frank.

Nothing could be a greater novelty to both the young travellers than the scene by which they were now surrounded; trumpets were sounding, bells ringing, sailors, passengers, carriages, dogs, and

baggage, all hurrying on board pell-mell, while a jet of steam came bellowing forth from the waste pipe, as if it were struggling to get rid of the huge column of black smoke vomited forth by the chimney. Below stairs they were still more astonished to find a large cabin, covered with gilding, red damask, and mirrors, where crowds of strange-looking people, more than half sick, and very cross, were scolding and bustling about, bawling for their luggage, and trying to be of as much consequence as possible, while they ate and drank trash, to keep off sea-sickness, that might have made any one sick on shore—sipping brandy and water, or eating peppermint drops, according as the case required. Among those in the ladies' cabin Laura and Harry were amused to discover Miss Perceval, who had hastened into bed already, in case of being ill, and was talking unceasingly to anyone who would listen, besides ordering and scolding a poor sick maid, scarcely able to stand. She wore a bright yellow shawl, and had taken into the berth beside her a little Blenheim spaniel, a parrot, and a cage of canary birds, the noisy inhabitants of which sung at the full pitch of their voices till the very latest hour of the night, being kept awake by the lamp which swung from side to side, while nothing could be compared to their volubility, except the perpetual clamour occasioned by Miss Perceval herself.

“ I declare these little, narrow beds are no better than coffins! I never saw such places! and the

smell is like singed blankets and cabbages boiled in melted oil! It is enough to make anybody ill! Mary, go and fetch me a cup of tea; and—do you hear?—tell those people on deck not to make such a noise—it gives me a headache! Be sure you say that I shall complain to the captain. Reach me some bread and milk for the parrot, fetch my smelling bottle, go to the saloon for that book I was reading, and search again for the pocket-handkerchief I mislaid. It cost ten guineas, and must be found. I hope no one has stolen it! Now do make haste with the tea! What are you dawdling there for? If you do not stop that noise on deck, Mary, I shall be exceedingly displeased! Some of those horrid people in the steerage were smoking too, but tell the captain that if I come up he must forbid them. It is a trick to make us all sick, and save provisions. I observed a gun-case in the saloon, too, which is a most dangerous thing, for guns always go off when you least expect. If any one fires, I shall fall into hysterics. I shall, indeed! What a creaking noise the vessel makes! I hope there is no danger of its splitting! We ought not to go on sailing after dusk. The captain must positively cast anchor during the night, that we may have no more of this noise or motion, but sleep in peace and quietness till morning.”

Soon after the *Royal Pandemonium* had set sail, or rather set fire, the wind freshened, and the pitching of the vessel became so rough, that Harry and Laura with great difficulty staggered to seats on