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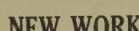
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> A week passed, and he heard nothing; then three more days and still no word from the New Hampshire Meanwhile fresh layers of dust spread themselves over the Whittaker furniture, and the gaudy patterns of the carpets blushed dimly beneath a grimy fog.

The eleventh day began with a pouring rain that changed later on to a dismal drizzle. The silver leaf tree in the front yard dripped, and the over flowing gutters gurgled and splashed. The bay was gray and lonely, and the fish weirs along the outer bar were lost in the mist. The flowers in the Atkins urns were draggled and beaten down. Only the iron dogs glistened undaunted as the wet ran off their

undaunted as the wet ran off their newly painted backs. The air was heavy, and the salty flavor of the flats might almost be tasted in it.

Captain Cy was in the sitting room, as usual. His spirits were as gray as the weather. He was actually lone-some for the first time since his return to had kindled a wood fire in nome. He had kindled a wood fire in the stove just for the sociability of it, and the crackle and glow behind the isinglass panes only served to remind him of other days and other fires. The sitting room had not been lonesome

He heard the depot wagon rattle by and, peering from the window, saw that except for Mr. Lumley it was empty. Not even a summer boarder had come to brighten our ways and lawns with reckless raiment and the newest slang. Summer boarding season was almost over now. Bayport would soon be as dull as dishwater. And the captain admitted to himself that it was dull. He had half a mind to take a flying trip to Boston, make the round of the wharfs and see if any of the old shipowners and ship captains whom he had once known were still alive and in harness.

"Jingle! Jingle! Jingle! Jingle! Jingle! Jing! Jing! Jing!"

Captain Cy bounced in his chair. That was the front door bell. Who on earth, or rather, who in Bayport, would ome to the front door?

He hurried through the grim grandeur of the best parlor and entered the little dark front hall. The bell was still swinging at the end of its coil of wire. The dust shaken from it still hung in the air. The captain unbolted and unlocked the big front door.

A girl was standing on the steps between the lines of box hedge-a little girl under a big "grownup" umbrella. The wet dripped from the umbrella top and from the hem of the little girl's

Captain Cy stared hard at his visitor. He knew most of the children in Bayport, but he didn't know this one. Obviously she was a stranger. Portuguese children from "up Harniss way" sometimes called to peddle huckleberries, but this child was no "Portugee." "Hello!" exclaimed the captain, won-

deringly. "Did you ring the bell?"
"Yes, sir," replied the girl.
"Humph! Did, hey? Why?" "Why? Why, I thought- Isn't it a truly bell? Didn't it ought to ring? Is anybody sick or dead? There isn't any crape."

"Dead? Crape?" Captain Cy gasped. There is probably little excuse if "What in the world put that in your

"Well, I didn't know but maybe that 'years ago."

was why you thought I hadn't ought
to have rung it. When mamma was

> small figure before him. It was a self poised, matter of fact figure for such a little one, and out there in the rain under the tent roof of the umbrella it was rather pitiful.

"Please, sir," said the child, "are you Captain Cyrus Whittaker?" "Yup! That's me. You've guessed it the first time."

"Ves, sir. I've rot a letter for you It's

PLACE

nanet inside my dress. It you could hold this umbrella maybe I could get

She extended the big umbrella at arm's length, holding it with both hands. Captain Cy woke up. "Good land!" he exclaimed. "What am I thinkin' of? You're soakin' wet

through, ain't you?" "I guess I'm pretty wet. It's a long ways from the depot, and I tried to



"HELLO!" DID YOU RING THE BELL?" come across the fields, because a boy said it was nearer, and the bushes

"Across the Jelds? Have you walked all the way from the depot?"
"Yes, sir. The man said it was a quarter to ride, and auntie said I must be careful of my money because "By the big dipper! Come in! Come

in out of that this minute!" He sprang down the steps, furled the umbrella, seized her by the arm and led her into the house, through the parlor and into the sitting room, where the fire crackled invitingly. He could feel that the dress sleeve under his hand was wet through, and the worn boots and darned stockings he could see were soaked likewise.

"There!" he cried. "Set down is that chair. Put your feet up on tha h'ath. Sakes alive! Your folks ought to know better than to let you stir out this weather, let alone walkin' a mile-and no rubbers. Them shoes ought to come off this minute, I s'pose. Take 'em off. You can dry your stockin's better that way. (ff with 'em!"

"Yes, sir," said the chi'a, stooping to unbutton the shoes. Her wet fingers were blue. It can be cold in our village even in early September when there is an easterly starm. Unbutton-ing the shoes was slow work-

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