

"My darling Eva, you may never see your father again; but do not fear—God will guard you, and somebody will find you and take care of you. If you never see papa again, remember he is in heaven with mamma."

"Has she no relatives?" asked the stranger.

"None in this country; I am from England, and am travelling for her health."

"Take that pin from your bosom and fasten it to her clothing."

"Heaven help you for the thought," said the father; and in another moment the square and compass was glistening on the bosom of the child, and the stranger took her from her father's arms, saying:

"I am stronger than you; she must be cast beyond the reach of these poor drowning wretches, or they will rob her of her life-preserver;"

The white drapery fluttered through the air, and sank below the waves; then rising, it floated lightly away.

James turned to the stranger with tearful eyes.

"May God bless you and preserve you, noblest of men. But you, as well as myself, must be lost."

"No, I am a good swimmer, and here is a piece of board with which you can sustain yourself until relief arrives."

The father cast another glance at the white speck floating rapidly away, and with an inward "God preserve her!" sprang into the sea, followed by the stranger; but the two floated in different directions, and they saw each other no more.

Two hours later, James Durant awoke, as from the sleep of death, and found himself in the cabin of a strange ship, with kind and sympathizing faces all around; in a moment he had realized all that had passed, and said, eagerly, though feebly:

"My child, little Eva; is she safe?"

There was no response, and a low moan escaped the father's lips.

"Courage, sir," said a lady with tearful eyes, "some of the passengers were saved by another ship."

The father's countenance lighted.

"God grant that she may be safe."

Mr. Durant recovered his usual strength in a few hours, and sought among the saved for the stranger who had proved himself so true a Masonic Brother, but he was not to be found.

"He must be on the other ship," said Mr. Durant, and he will care for Eva."

Both ships were at port the following day, but although Mr. Durant found the stranger who had befriended him, and who proved to be a Mr. Wadsworth, from a southern city, Eva was seen by no one, and given up as lost.

CHAPTER II.

"Here, wife, is a child that has just been washed upon the beach. She is cold and stiff, but I think she is not dead. Let us have some warm flannels immediately, and tell Thomas to run for Dr. Hunt."

It was long before the quivering lashes and feeble fluttering of the heart gave token that success would crown the efforts of Eva's rescuers; but, by-and-by, the lids parted, and revealed two large, liquid sky-blue eyes that wandered from face to face in a bewildered way, and then closed wearily.