

CHILDREN AND FORBID THEM NOT TO COME

PEACE ON EARTH

GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN

CANADA  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
ADVOCATE

SUPPER · LITTLE

UNTO · ME ·

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THE SAILOR-BOY OF HAVRE.

A FRENCH brig was returning from Toulon to Havre, with a rich cargo and numerous passengers. Off the coast of Bretagne it was overtaken by a sudden and violent storm. Captain P., an experienced sailor, at once saw the danger which threatened the ship on such a rocky coast, and he gave orders to put out to sea; but the winds and waves drove the brig violently toward the shore, and notwithstanding all the efforts of the crew, it continued to get nearer land.

Among the most active on board, in doing all that he could to help, was little Jacques, a lad twelve years old, who was serving as cabin-boy in the vessel. At times, when he disappeared for a moment behind the folds of a sail, the sailors thought that

he had fallen overboard; and again, when a wave threw him down on the deck, they looked around to see if it had not carried the poor boy with it; but Jacques was soon up again unhurt.

"My mother," said he, smiling, to an old sailor, "would be frightened enough if she saw me just now."

His mother, who lived at Havre, was very poor, and had a large family. Jacques loved her tenderly, and he was enjoying the prospect of carrying to her his little treasure, two five-franc pieces, which he had earned as his wages for the voyage.

The brig was beaten about a whole day by the storm, and in spite of all the efforts of the crew, they could not steer clear of the rocks on the coast. By the gloom of the captain's brow it might be seen that he had little hope of saving the ship. All at once a violent shock was felt, accompanied by a horrible crash; the vessel had struck on a rock. At this terrible moment the passengers threw themselves on their knees to pray.

"Lower the boats," cried the captain. The sailors obeyed; but no sooner were the boats in the water than they were carried away by the violence of the waves.

"We have but one hope of safety," said the captain. "One of us must be brave enough to run the risk of swimming with a rope to the shore. We may fasten one end to the mast of the vessel, and



the other to a rock on the coast, and by this means we may all get on shore."

"But, captain, it is impossible," said the mate, pointing to the surf breaking on the sharp rocks. "Whoever should attempt to run such a risk would certainly be dashed to pieces."

"Well," said the captain, in a low tone, "we must all die together." At this moment there was a slight stir among the sailors, who were silently waiting for orders. "What is the matter there?" inquired the captain.

"Captain," replied a sailor, "this little monkey of a cabin-boy is asking to swim to the shore with a strong string round his body to draw the cable after him; he is as obstinate as a little mule!" and he pushed Jacques into the midst of the circle. The boy stood turning his cap round and round in his hands, without daring to utter a word.

"Nonsense! such a child can't go," said the captain roughly.

But Jacques was not of a character to be so easily discouraged. "Captain," said he timidly, "you don't wish to expose the lives of good sailors like these; it does not matter what becomes of a 'little monkey' of a cabin-boy, as the boatswain calls me. Give me a ball of strong string, which will unroll as I get on, fasten one end round my body, and I promise you that within an hour the rope will be well fastened to the shore or I will perish in the attempt."

this to my mother, who lives on the quay at Havre; and will you tell her that I thought of her, and that I love her very much, as well as all my brothers and sisters?"

"Be easy about that, my boy. If you die for us, and we escape, your mother shall never want for anything."

"O, then I will willingly try to save you," cried Jacques, hastening to the other side of the vessel, where all was prepared for his enterprise.

The captain thought for a moment. "We ought not to allow this lad to sacrifice himself for us in this way," said he at length; "I have been wrong. I must forbid it."

"Yes, yes," said some of the sailors round him; "it is disgraceful to us all that this little cabin-boy should set us an example of courage; and it would be a sad thing if the brave child should die for old men like us, who have lived our time. Let us stop him!"

They rushed to the side of the vessel, but it was too late. They found there only the sailor who had aided Jacques in his preparations, and who was unrolling the cord that was fastened to the body of the heroic boy.

They all leaned over the side of the vessel to see what was going to happen, and a few quietly wiped away a tear which would not be restrained.

At first nothing was seen but waves of white foam,

"Does he know how to swim?" asked the captain.

"As swiftly and as easy as an eel," replied one of the crew.

"I could swim up the Seine from Havre to Paris," said little Jacques.

The captain hesitated, but the lives of all on board were at stake, and he yielded.

Jacques hastened to prepare for his terrible undertaking. Then he turned and softly approached the captain. "Captain," said he, "as I may be lost, may I ask you to take charge of something for me?"

"Certainly, my boy," said the captain, who was almost repenting of having yielded to his entreaties.

"Here, then, captain," replied Jacques, holding out two five-franc pieces wrapped in a bit of rag; "if I am eaten by the porpoises and you get safe to land, be so kind as to give