

"BEACON LIGHTS."

BY EMILIE SEARCHFIELD.

STORM AND SUNSHINE.

"Gather thistles, expect prickles."

IT was a dull day in November, and out at sea a fog was coming on. A group of fishermen stood by the door of the Three Bells, some talking, some listening, all interested in the theme of their discourse. Off in the distance, a vessel

had been discerned in the earlier part of the day; it had not then passed a danger point which lay in its course, and the question now was—would it cast anchor and wait for the morning, or would it go on its way—on, to certain death, for with the fog encircling the rocks no other result could scarce be imagined? True, the red gleam of the lighthouse would burn all the night, in fact, it was burning now; but, then, vessels had been lost, and they saw no reason why this one should pass in safety, provided the crew still willed to let her move onward. Opposite the Three Bells stood a tall, red house, a mansion in size and appointments, with trees and shrubs growing in graceful profusion here and there about the grounds which surrounded it.

The sea washed up in front to the very boundary wall, on a part of which a small observatory had been formed, open on all sides to the mighty sea winds, and with only iron chains to protect those who stood upon it from being, in times of tempest, blown down upon the sands below. The left side of the house was very near to the road—the road, I mean, in which the fishermen stood talking—and at one window, which was slightly raised, so that the men's voices floated even into the room beyond, sat a lady, Constance Westbrook, the rightful mistress, as was deemed, of the house itself and its surroundings. There was

something painful in the way in which she listened, something equally painful in the strained gaze of her eyes, as she watched, as it were, the words from the men's mouths. That she was a woman of deep passion you could not doubt, for there was an intensity in her very attitude, which could not be mistaken.

"Constance! Why, you are not even dressed, and the gong has sounded these five minutes or more! I have been looking for you everywhere," and a tall, fair man advanced to where she sat, and raising her head in both his hands, gazed fondly down upon her troubled countenance. Then the light came back into the full, dark orbs, and the colour

flashed upon her cheek; for was not this the husband whom, God helper, she was loving, even better than her own soul?

"Shall I not do as I am?" and rising, she shook out the folds of her heavy velvet robe, and looked proudly into his face.

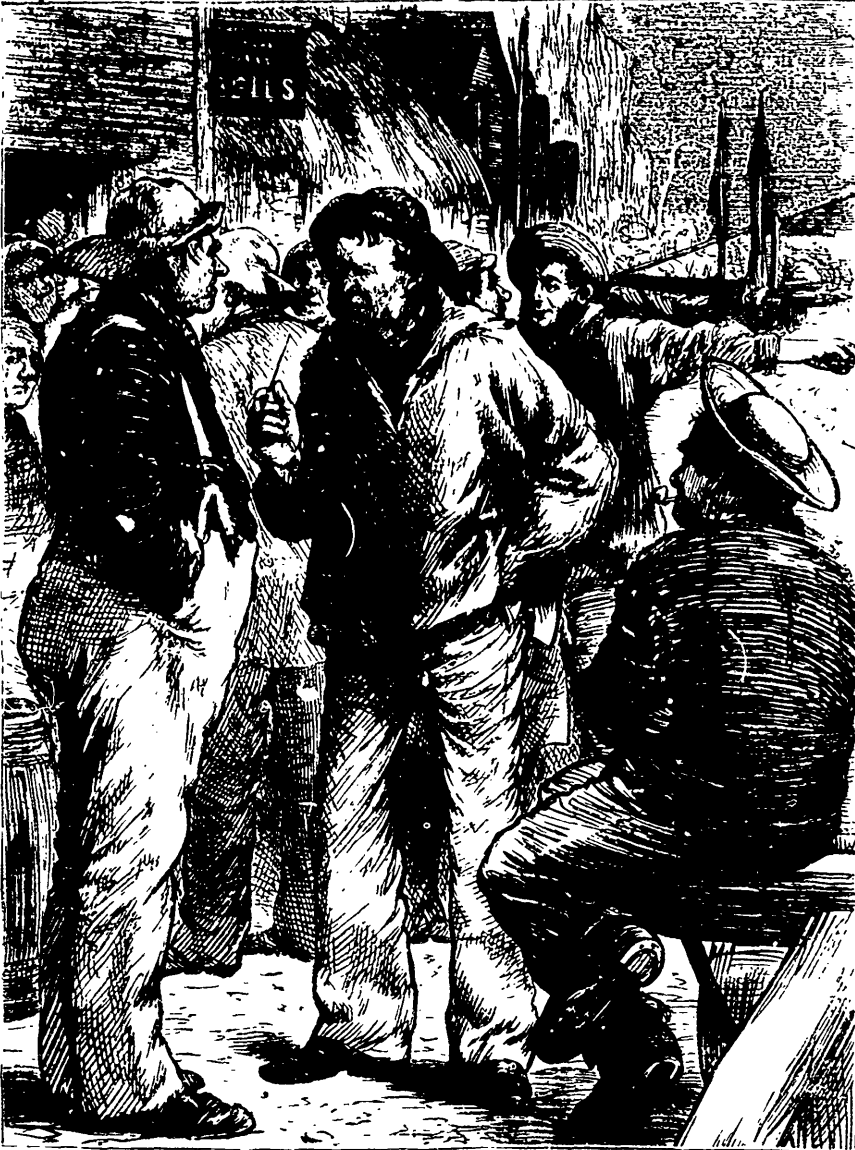
"Yes, yes, come along," and with one arm encircling her waist, he led her away.

Reginald Westbrook was a light-hearted man, and as he chatted on during dinner, he scarce noticed that Constance seemed strange and pre-occupied: true, she did not talk a great deal, but these light-hearted folks, in the main, care only for good listeners, and so her silence passed unobserved by him. But when the servants were gone away, and she stole softly to his side, he fancied

from her manner that there was something amiss. She laid her head upon his shoulder so wearily, and sighed so heavily too, that he was almost alarmed; for, till now, he had fancied her so supremely happy, and, indeed, it had ever been his highest aim to make her so.

"What is it, darling?"

"Nothing," and she laid her cheek against his. He turned her face with his hand towards his own, and kissed over and over again the dainty lips which looked so inviting and sweet, and the colour once more flashed upon her cheek and the light of love and youth shone out from her inmost soul. "Nothing,



"A group of fishermen stood by the door of the Three Bells."