

MISS GREENE'S PRESENT.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

A hearty cheer rolled along the shore as they sprang to their places, and were lifted high on the surf.

"Will they be in time, Matthew?" asked Mr. Graham of an old weather-beaten sailor, who was a great authority in nautical affairs.

"I doubt not, sir. She struck amidships, and the rocks is a driving into her like nails under a hammer."

Just then the clouds lifted, and a cry of dismay ran along the beach as the ship was disclosed lying almost on her side, with heavy seas washing over her. Every now and then, too, the wind and the roar of the waves were lulled for a moment, and then could be heard the despairing cries of the poor people on the wreck. Duncan and Frank stood close together in utmost dismay. Nothing that they had ever read or pictured to themselves had given them the faintest idea of what a shipwreck really is, and they were for the moment quite unconscious of the wind and rain. Mr. Graham forgot them, too, in the excitement of preparations for the unhappy people who would probably be washed or brought ashore before the night was over. It was not the first time he had had to make such provision, and therefore he knew exactly how to set about it.

In the meantime the lifeboat was gallantly breasting the waves, and nearing the fatal rock. No help could be given by those on the shore. Rockets were fired, but the distance was too great, and they failed to reach the ship. And now, as again the moon shone out, it was seen that the ship was breaking up. But the same gleam of light showed the lifeboat to be on her return journey, and two other boats were also struggling in her wake. The excitement became intense, and in a few more minutes willing hands were stretched out to assist the ill-fated passengers to shore, and the lifeboat was once more on her return journey.

One only of the other boats reached a safe landing-place. The other was capsized in the surf some way from the shore, and though several of its passengers were saved by the exertions of the boatmen, the greater part were lost.

It was an emigrant ship outward bound, and the poor people

who were being brought off, more dead than alive, had now lost everything, even the hope of doing better in a new country than they had done in England. Some of them seemed to care very little about their lives, and would have been content to reach an end of their sufferings.

CHAPTER III.

The Sunday broke in the calm loveliness of a summer morning. The sky was unclouded, and the sea came up with a heavy, solemn swell, very different from its raging anger of last night. Little flecks of froth and foam lay about on the shore, and masses of seaweed were entangled with ship-timber, masts, and wreckage.

There was still a crowd on the shore, not now endeavoring to save life, but with a base desire for booty. Wanborough had emptied its worst haunts, and men and women stood about on the beach this Sunday morning, thinking little of the awful sight of yesterday, and still less of the bodies which lay in the lifeboat receiving-house, and of the souls which had gone to their account.

Mr. Graham had only returned to his house in the early morning, when nothing more could be done for living or dead; but he had sent the boys back some hours before, and though at first they felt as if they should never be able to sleep again, they had had a pretty good night.

When Frank woke in the morning it seemed to him that he had been dreaming all night. Now he was on the tops of the waves in the lifeboat, and now he was catching at some object in the water. It was only when he saw Duncan standing at the window, gazing out earnestly towards the sea, that he realized what had happened.

"I'm awfully stiff," said Frank; "I can hardly lift my arm."

"So am I. It was hard work pulling at those ropes."

"I should think it was hard," replied Frank. "They haven't left much skin on my palms, I know. I say, Duncan, did you see that woman's face—the first they took out of the boat, you know? I wonder whether those two poor little children belonged to her?"

"I don't know," said Duncan. "It doesn't matter. They'll be locked after."

The boys came down to breakfast with an air of great importance. They were slightly wounded in the battle, and were proud of their scars, although it must

be confessed that their assistance had been taken little account of by anybody but themselves.

To Arthur they appeared to be heroes of the first magnitude, and the questions which were asked them were bewildering and incessant.

"I say, one at a time!" exclaimed Duncan. "The sea made row enough last night, but you all make ten times more."

"Well then, Duncan," said Arthur, "do tell us. Was she a schooner or a brig? and did she have a pilot? and did she take the White Rock Lighthouse for Newport Point? and is the captain saved, or did he go down with the ship? and will he be washed ashore and buried by the other captain in the churchyard?"

"Oh, I say, Arthur," said Frank "how is a fellow to answer all that? And besides, don't you know that Mr. Graham sent us home before it was all over?" This was said in a slightly aggrieved tone of voice.

"My dear Frank, you were allowed to stay too long as it was. Do you know that when you came home you had not a dry thread upon you, and that you both looked as white as such brown boys can look? I intend to give Mr. Graham a little scolding for letting you stay as long as you did."

"Where is, he?" asked the boys.

"In his study, having a quiet breakfast. He says he trusts he may never again have such an awful night, and he wants some time to himself to think over his sermon this morning."

"Mr. Graham is going to try to get the people to make a little fund for the unhappy creatures who have lost everything in the shipwreck. And of the ten who are drowned two are mothers, and the poor children are saved. Something must be done for them. The wives were going out to join their husbands in New Zealand. The ship was out of her course, and nobody knows yet whose fault it all is."

"Where are the little children?" asked Mr. Graham.

"Two of them are in the kitchen. Willis has given them some food, and has dried their clothes, which is all we can do for them at present."

"And the others?" said Clara.

"The others are older, and are with the old Shaws till tomorrow, when we must settle what is to be done with them."

"How many are saved altogether?"

"Between fifty and sixty, I believe; but some of them have already gone off to their friends, having some little money about them. Those who are left are quite penniless, and it is for them that the collection will be made this morning. I daresay you would all like to give, but I don't quite know how you are off for pocket-money."

"I have got plenty," said Kate, her castle in the air with regard to the present to the baby-sister falling to the ground.

"So have I! lots!" said Frank.

"I think your father would like you to give a little on such an occasion as this," said Mrs. Graham; "and if you have nothing to spare, Duncan and Clara, I can lend it to you." Clara blushed and muttered something about having enough, but Duncan would be "much obliged if Mrs. Graham would lend him half a crown, as he was rather hard up."

For a few minutes the four, brothers and sisters, were left alone. Mrs. Graham went away to get the money, and Arthur followed her for his week's allowance, which he was very anxious to put into the offertory bag. The little Grahams had allowances as soon as they were old enough to go to church, in order that they might learn the true lesson of giving. They were not to offer of that which cost them nothing, but to deny themselves that they might have something of their very own to give.

"Did you really buy the watch then, Duncan?" said Clara.

"I've as good as bought it," he replied. "I went into the shop and asked about it. But he showed me a lot of others, and there's one at four pounds which is ever so much better. I think I'll wait till I can get that."

"But Mrs. Graham thinks you have got no money," said Frank.

"I don't care what she thinks; but she thinks quite right that I'm not going to spend my own money on nobody knows who."

"But what's the good of giving money that isn't your own?" asked Kate.

"And pray, why isn't one half-crown as good as another?" said Duncan. "If you'll just tell me that mine will buy more clothes or railway tickets than Mrs. Graham's, I'll give the subject my best consideration."

"I must say I think the collection is rather a bore," said Clara.

"I want a pair of carrings and