

The Farmer's Daughter.

Oh, I know the world is a weary place
Of suffering, and care, and woe,
And that every heart has the deadly trace
Of the sin that makes it so;
Yet I see the promise of heaven gleam
On this sorrowful earth of ours,
That God's sea will whiten life's darkest stream,
God's sun will open life's flowers.

'Mid the Western forest I sit me down
Where the church bells never ring;
My hands are rough, and my brow is brown,
And the woodman's song I sing;
But yet, when the work of my day is done,
And I rest on the mossy sod,
Then my heart grows soft with the thought of one
Who has been ten years with God.

Just a little lass, who was fair to me—
I may not be over wise—
But what can the beauty they talk of be
If not God's light in the eyes?
When I hear of maidens whom good men love,
They are just like her, I know;
When I think how the angels sing above,
I think how she spoke below!

She lived in a quiet country place,
With womanly duties round;
Where even God's dumb things loved her face,
And came at her footstep's sound.
No earthly pride save her mother's praise,
The blessing the farmer gave;
Then at last a break in the happy days,
A name on the household grave!

And I dare not ask them—for what was I?—
For sight of the holy dead;
I looked on her bier as they bore it by,
And I hid the tears I shed.
'Twas long since I joined in a godly work,
Or gone where God's people meet,
But next Sabbath morning I went to kirk,
And gazed on her empty seat.

For I could not carry her in my heart
To haunts of ungodly men;
But when in God's service I took my part,
Her soul seemed nearer me then.
And she's nearer me now, as I sit alone
In the Western forest dim;
And she soothes my heart like a mother's tone
Singing the evening hymn.

So in many a quiet place, I trow,
God's servants may dwell unseen,
Like the little streamlets that hidden flow,
Except that their grass grows green;
For we see the evil, we hear the cry,
Of this sorrowful earth of ours,
But in loving patience God sits on high,
Because he can see its flowers.

—Selected.

On the Banks.

THE PERILS AND HARDSHIPS OF OUR BRAVE FISHERMEN.

A DRIED codfish is in itself neither an interesting, beautiful nor attractive object, and yet there is hardly an article of food that is got at such an expense of human life, of human exertion and of human suffering. The cod of commerce is principally caught upon the great banks of Newfoundland, not by netting but by the hook and line. The Newfoundland cod fisheries are called, are, with the exception of the "mackerelers," the finest fishing vessels that float. They are, generally speaking, large keel schooners, say of sixty to ninety tons, and are not only well built but well modelled and well found.

Fine ships as the banking schooners are, they have to face work that is so dangerous as to be in many cases the last of them. In the first place they have to face the terrible gales of autumn and spring in the open sea, either under sail or at anchor on the fishing grounds, and on their way to and from the banks they have under their lee the most dangerous of coasts. Small wonder is it then

that a gale strews the North Atlantic coast of this continent with wrecked fishing schooners, and that many a schooner is written down as having "never again been seen" after such a cyclone.

But the chances of shipwreck by stress of weather in their staunch schooners is only the first of the dangers which the men who go to sea to fish for cod have to encounter. They are upon the banks all winter, engaged in fishing during the season that the conflict between the polar current and the Gulf stream, which has created the banks, is at its height, and when the fog banks hang over the waters almost constantly. Through these fog banks comes the great ocean greyhounds, the ships that cover a mile in three minutes, and which cannot turn from their path within a third of that distance. Down upon the banker, lying with her long hemp cable keeping her up to windward and her reefed mainsail slatting to keep her head from paying off, come the great ocean steamer. The schooner's feeble riding light hardly illumines a ball of fog twenty yards in diameter, and the tin fish-horn which "the boy" is supposed to blow as often as he can raise the wind, can only be heard a few hundred yards away.

The steamer's look-out, perhaps, catches a note from the horn; he glances about to see whence it comes; out from the white fog leaps the spectral spars of a schooner; a wild yell of mingled despair and rage from the fishermen, a crash, a shudder runs through the great steel structure, but she sweeps on with unabated speed, her paint hardly injured, and the "J. T. Smith," of Gloucester or Harbor Grace, Yarmouth or Eastport, is never heard of again, and nothing but widows and orphans are left on earth as memories of the twenty or so brave, skilful, simple and honest fellows that made up her crew. Hardly a year passes without one or two cases of this kind being reported, but the fishermen say that for every incident of this description reported two are never heard of. It is not often that any one but the officer of the watch and his quartermasters and the look-out know what has taken place, and they lock their lips. Whether this be true or not, there are quite enough reported collisions on the banks to make this a very certain danger.

It is surely bad enough to be compelled to fight the tempest in a small ship and near a dangerous shore—it is not a life of safety, that in which a man hardly knows when he lies down in his bunk whether he may not be awakened by the crashing of the great steel chisel of a steamer's bow through the planks at his side. But there is a worse danger than that of shipwreck, either by tempest or collision which the cod fisher must face. At one time either because the fish were more plentiful or the desires of the fishermen were more easily satisfied, enough fish could be caught from the deck of the schooner to satisfy all concerned. Now, however, the fish are caught from dories. Every schooner carries a certain number of these dories, roughly but strongly built little open boats, which bear a certain resemblance to the raftsmen's "pung," and every morning these boats, with two men in each, are sent out from the schooner. It is but seldom that they carry more water and food than the men will need during the day, and the men are expected to stay out as long as the fish bite.

If a sudden fog springs up which prevents the dorymen from finding the schooner—if the sea and wind rise to such an extent as to prevent them from pulling against it back to her, these men are lost at sea. Then begins for them that agony, which, even if their lives are saved, is worse than death itself. They suffer from hunger, thirst and cold; yet there is always the chance of speedy rescue, of the relief of every ill that then afflicts

them—but that chance never comes! Men go mad under this strain, leap overboard, and leave behind them nothing but the empty dory and the evidence of their suffering. Stronger men die of starvation and long afterwards the rotten boat carrying their bones has been picked up at sea. Then, again, men have rowed and drifted for ten whole days without food, without fire, with no water but that supplied by the rain that seemed to pelt the life out of them until they reached the shores of Nova Scotia, and so saved their lives.

The sea about the banks is a populous one, and although many of the lost dories are never heard of again, a very great number are found. It may be that hope, nay life itself, has almost died out in the minds and hearts of the crew of the lost dory. About them the gray fog hangs like a pall, below them rises and sinks the gray and pitiless sea. The salt spray freezes upon them and their boat, and dropping their oars they throw themselves down to die. Pain and weariness and that awful mental distress occasioned by the battle for life, has almost destroyed consciousness, and their faculties have been so strained that they can hardly determine whether sight or hearing are still theirs. Yet hope is not quite dead; they still strive to listen, strive to see. There is a new note in the splashing of the seas, their constant murmuring at the burden of the frail boat, but the exhausted men do not notice it, or if they do they do not heed it. Again it comes, and one of the men raises his head and stares at the other with a fearful intensity. Yes, the other has heard it; it was no figment of the brain. Pain, weariness, the sickness of hope deferred, all that has gone, and they listen—listen only as men can listen when on their hearing hangs their life. Again it comes sounding through the fog, like the wild, fierce cry of some gigantic creature tortured to death, and the weary men in the dory know it now—it is the whistle of an advancing steamer, and their lives hang on a thread. If she comes near enough to hear their feeble fish-horn, and will stop, they are saved, if not.

Again comes the wild cry, and then behind it looms up the huge black hull of a great liner, cleaving her way through fog and water, at the rate of seventeen knots an hour. Now comes their chance for life. If they can make the officers of the watch hear them and see them before that whistle sounds again, they are saved. They blow a blast from that tin fish-horn—such a blast as only men in their position can blow, and then, as the great hoarse roar of the steam-whistle bursts out again, throw up their arms in expostulation—in despair. The officer of the watch, warmly clad, wrapped in oilskins, standing there upon the bridge, gripping the rail with his hands, has his teeth clenched, and every nerve a-tingle. He fully realizes what it is to drive a great ship such as this through such a fog and such a sea, but the reputation of his line for fast trips must be sustained. What was that? The note of a fish-horn. He peers into the gray blank before him, and sees just a dark shadow on the water—the misty outline of a man's uplifted arm. It is enough, however. A word to the anxious-eyed ship-master, who has not been in his bunk for eight-and-forty hours.

"Stop her!" flashes to the engine-room, and a great hoarse roar bursts from the steam-pipes to tell the lost ones they are saved.

A life-boat is swung out, its crew get aboard, and as steamer men are not expert boatmen, this takes time; and before the boat gets away from the steamer, slowly out of the bay comes a dory, pulled with difficulty and pain by two woeful-looking objects, who, nevertheless, manage to bring their egg-shell alongside the mighty steamer, and they are saved.—*Montreal Witness.*