

told her what he had seen, asked her to wake up Lucy and send her off for the coast-guard, while he himself ran to the barn, gathered together a lot of good strong rope he knew to be there, and bringing it back to the house, he and his mother tied it together, bit by bit, until they had more than a hundred feet. This they took down to the edge of the cliff, and fastening one end securely to a jutting peak, flung the other over so that it fell into the water nearly one hundred feet below.

But what did all this mean? Of what use was that rope to the imperiled men clinging for life to the battered hull a full quarter of a mile away? Ah, Sam had not lived fourteen years at Start Point Light for nothing. He knew every ledge, rock, and current as well as he did his alphabet, and his quick eye had shown him that if the men were washed off the wreck they would be tossed by the pitiless waves against the foot of the cliff right below where he was standing, and if not rescued at once would perish miserably.

Well, but how did he propose to rescue them? Surely not by climbing down that slender rope in the face of such a storm and helping them when they came within his reach? Precisely. All unexpectedly the chance his mother spoke of had come, and the purposes of his boyish heart were as heroic now as any that ever stirred in the heart of a Nelson.

Presently what Sam expected took place. An enormous breaker swept over the half-submerged hull, and tearing two of the seamen from their place in the rigging, bore them like mere chips toward the cliff.