

away with a sob, and pouting her rosy lips; 'and I dhu want to save some one.'

Then she returned to her low seat by the fire, and, pressing her head against the dirty wall, fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER II.

Early in the morning little Nora was awakened by the sound of heavy steps and eager voices. Presently the cabin-door was unlocked. Her mother entered first, carrying in her arms a dead child; then the men came with other bodies, all of which they laid, with a kind of rude reverence, on the floor of the small cabin. A great ship had gone down in the night, and every soul on board had perished.

The woman sobbed as she related the story, and told how she saw, in the fitful light of the torches, the faces of agonized women and frightened little children; and then she added that in all her experience she had never seen the wreck of so large a vessel, or the wholesale destruction of so many human beings. As she spoke she occupied herself busily over the dead whom the sea had given up. But little Nora could not bear to look at the faces of the drowned people, and she ran hastily out of the cabin and down to the shore.

As she clambered up the steep rocks she said to herself, 'Well, well, and I might have saved that little baby!'

Nora, at eight years old, had a great idea of her own prowess. She was almost as much a water as a land creature; she could wade, and swim, and dive, and as to her capabilities for climbing almost impassable rocks, no little kid could be more agile.

To-day she ran fast, trying to escape from the faces of the dead men and women, and the sad thoughts which perplexed her little mind.

At last she came to a rock steeper than any she had yet ascended. This rock, rising high out of the sea, could only be approached at very low tide; and at its farthest base the waves, even on the finest summer day and at the lowest tide, dashed angrily; but at the side nearest to Nora the sand was left dry for about half an hour at every low tide. It was dry now, and Nora's experienced eye perceived that she had the full half-hour to undertake any scheme that might enter her active little brain. She had a scheme already planned—a scheme often thought about, often longed for. She wanted to climb that almost perpendicular rock, and look down on the unknown world of sea and wave at the other side. No doubt it was a dangerous feat, but Nora thought of no danger; here was her opportunity. Should she lose it? not for the world. With her bare feet—feet that had never known either shoes or stockings—she ran swiftly over the tiny bit of dry sand, and began to climb the rock. No boy or girl in all the village of Armeskillig had ever performed so daring a piece of climbing before. Nora knew this, and the thought made her redouble her ardour; panting, struggling, and clinging to little bits of sea-pink and other scant herbage, she still persevered. Such perseverance must bring success. In a very few moments Nora, trembling, but triumphant, found herself at the top. Here she rested for an instant, then looked down with eager eyes at the new and unknown world. For aught she could tell, the very sea might be different here, the very waves of another hue; her blue eyes danced as she looked at them, for what might she not see? What she did see, however, was a common sight enough to her Irish eyes—the very same waves, the very same sharp, cruel rocks, the very same foam, white and creamy; but there was something else

which quite as completely astonished her, as if she had really beheld waves of crimson and rocks of blue, for seated on the sharpest and tallest of the rocks was a solitary human being, a person half-drowned indeed, and shivering, but of a totally different type, and dressed in a totally different manner, from any of the inhabitants of the village of Armeskillig. Nora clapped her hands and uttered a shrill cry at the sight of this unexpected human apparition. Her cry made the man, perched in this dangerous position, look up.

'Who are you?' called the child.

'A drowning man. Quick, child, for the love of heaven, get some one to come and save me!' called back the stranger.

'He was one of the men on the wreck, and they were not all drowned,' thought little Nora. Her heart beat hard and fast at the thought, for here, at last, might be some person left for her to rescue. All her little life, Nora had longed to save some one from the cruel, angry sea, and here at last might be her chance. She put up her two hands to her mouth, and shouted through the tube she thus formed—

'If ye'll plaze to get back inter the water, and swim, as fast as yer life is worth, to the left of ye, there's a bit of smooth water between two rocks, and when ye gets ahint that ye'll find dry land. Go quick, and I'll meet ye down low.'

The little curly head vanished with the completion of these last words, for Nora was

clambering back again as fast as she could to the bit of shingle where she was to meet the stranger.

When she got back there she waited for a moment or two in a perfect turmoil of suspense—would the man come, would he venture? He was perfectly safe if he would only take Nora's advice. But would he trust her? Oh, why had she not waited at the top until she had really seen him enter the water? In her intense anxiety—for the tide was fast returning to the little bit of shingle—Nora fell on her knees, clasped her hands, and prayed—She rose again to find the stranger sanding by her side.

'Now come quick home to mother,' she said, becoming practical in her intense pleasure and relief.

(To be continued.)

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