

## Page for the Young.

## ELIZABETH MOUAT:

## A TALE OF PERILS AND PROVIDENCES AT SEA.

ONE of the most marvellous adventures at sea which has ever been recorded happened in the beginning of the present year, in connection with the northern coast of Scotland. It excited world-wide interest, and has written itself deep in the hearts and memories of young and old. An aged woman of the peasant class, Elizabeth Mouat by name, set out on the 30th January to make a voyage from an obscure Shetland port to Lerwick. The vessel was a small smack, named the *Columbine*, which was manned by three persons, the master and two ordinary sailors. During a gale, the master, while performing some operation on deck, was struck by the boom and knocked over-board, and the two men immediately took a boat and went to his rescue. They failed in this endeavour; and when they turned from their fruitless task, they were horror-struck to find that their little vessel had been caught by the wind, and carried far beyond their reach. They then made all haste to the nearest port, in the hope of being able to send a steamer in pursuit of the runaway craft. Two steamers went on this errand, but both failed to catch the faintest glimpse of the lost smack, or to discover the slightest trace of her. When they returned and made their sad report, all hope of the safety of the little fugitive and its solitary passenger seemed to forsake people's hearts, and they beamed in anticipation the dismal fate of the luckless adventurer. But the end was not according to men's fears, though the suspense which everywhere prevailed showed how much the fate of a single obscure individual could, when surrounded with mystery or exposed to peril, awaken and sustain the interest of a whole nation. The vessel drifted on, and the forlorn passenger, sick, lame, and infirm from age, was at first panic-stricken when she realized her desertion and danger. And well she might. She was bereft of the unspeakable support which human companionship and comfort can so powerfully impart in the presence of danger; and her loneliness might, even in less awful circumstances, have overwhelmed the strongest mind, and even driven reason from its throne. If the reader will endeavour to realize what it is to be the sole occupant of an unguided ship, adrift on the great deep, with the wild tempest howling dismally day and night, aggravated by having almost nothing to eat or drink, and deep darkness brooding over the scene the whole livelong night, the power of imagination will be found to exert itself in vain. Poor Elizabeth Mouat was in her case the nearest realization on re-

cord of the loneliness of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner':

Alone! alone! all, all alone!  
Alone upon a wide, wide sea.

And yet reason did not quit its seat, nor did despair quench her hope. She could do nothing to guide the vessel, and little to promote her comfort or relieve her suspense. She had made next to no provision for the voyage, which would, in ordinary circumstances, have been accomplished in a few hours, having with her only a couple of biscuits and a quart bottle of milk. She could not go to bed or lie down, and it was not safe for her to move about. Her only extra warm clothing was a seaman's jacket; and her attempts to keep a light burning during the night were short-lived. Her material comforts were as few as her chances of deliverance would have appeared to a person of wholly worldly mind. Yet she was sustained in a way that was passing strange. With her aching hands she clung to a rope which hung from the roof of her cabin, and in faith she clung to that Almighty Hand which reaches down from heaven. She afterwards told that she 'committed herself entirely to God's keeping, and was thereby greatly comforted. A spirit of resignation took possession of her, and she was not afraid.' Thus she endured her bodily privations, and waited for the salvation which was at last vouchsafed to her. After being thus at sea, nearly all the time buffeted and beaten by an angry sea and a howling tempest, for nine weary days and nights, she at last discovered, on Sabbath morning, the 7th February, that she was approaching some shore, and soon afterwards the tiny vessel was driven, gently and safely, amid the beehiving rocks which abound on the coast of Norway, into a little cove not far from Lepsoe, where she attracted the attention of some boys, who brought strong and willing, but tender-hearted and gentle-handed, men to her rescue. There she was taken ashore, weak and suffering in body, but sound in mind and strong in faith, and nourished into strength; and now she rejoices in being once more at home!

If this thrilling incident does not teach a lesson of the overruling providence of the Creator of all and the Saviour and Friend of man, it has occurred in vain. 'Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.'

SINS BLOTTED OUT.—A little boy was once much puzzled about sins being blotted out, and said: "I cannot think what becomes of all the sins God forgives, mother." "Why, Charlie, can you tell me where are all the figures you wrote on your slate yesterday!" "I washed them all out, mother." "And where are they, then?" "Why, they are nowhere; they are gone," said Charlie. "Just so it is with the believer's sins; they are gone—blotted out—remembered no more. 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.'"