

Did the reader ever see the interior of a Shetlander's fishing-boat? If not, just follow me in imagination, while I give you a description of it,—at least, that part connected with the cooking department. The sum total of culinary utensils is a "three-legget pot." Master cook has just commenced operations. Yonder, in the bow of the boat, lies a "bing o' stanes," with a hollow in the centre, in which lies a live peat-coal covered with ashes. The ashes the cook soon scrapes off with his hands, more dexterously than you could have done with a fire-shovel; then breaking up some dry peat, he piles the fragments on the "bing o' stones"; next calling into use a powerful pair of lungs,—an excellent substitute for a bellows. There is soon a fire "that'll mak' the pot bile." He then "gangs and gets some tauties," half filling the pot with them; he fills the other half with fish, covering the whole with a draught from the "ocean wave." By the influence "o' a guid fire," the contents of the pot are soon boiling and spluttering away, much to the satisfaction of both the cook and his companions. But I must have done with this. Suffice it to say, that the whole crew are soon doing ample justice to the fish and "tauties," and quenching their thirst from the bung-hole of a keg of watered butter-milk. This mode of drinking approaches something near the ludicrous. Imagine a good stout fellow, with legs stretched from side to side of the boat, so that he may be well braced in one direction, and swaying to and fro to balance himself the other way, with face upturned, and mouth covering the bung-hole of the butter-milk keg, drinking with all the eagerness of a thirsty man, and the picture is complete.

The day wears on; night falls, and our friends the fishermen are still busy at their task; for they intend to continue their labors until to-morrow's dawn. There is no foreboding of danger. True, the sky begins to be overcast with clouds, and a brisk breeze has sprung up from the north-east; but the like they have often seen before. Ah! little they dream of what is before

them. Night passes on, the "mornin' hale" (a quantity of lines) is set; and as the first gray streaks of dawn spring up in the east, the breeze increases to a gale. The little crew, looking uneasily around, commence hauling the lines into the boat, preparatory to a start for home. Before the last of the lines are drawn in, the gale has increased to a hurricane; wildly it whistled through the shrouds of the tiny bark, sending her like a thing of air over the wide, wide sea! Sad thought! It is driving them further and further from their native shore. Fiercer howls the fearful blast! higher rise the surging waves, until the fishing-boat looks like a miracle on the turmoil of waters. Storms the crew have seen before,—one like this!—never! In their manly breasts Hope struggled for the mastery, against the odds of wind and wave, until two mighty billows rise in awful majesty above each gunwale. Up, up piles the fearful wall of waters! Hope flees from these terror-stricken sons of the ocean, as they gaze on the yawning gulf into which they have run. Oh, who can tell the agony of that moment! Confronted by the King of Terrors, they think of the loved ones at home,—of that lone mother bowed down with grief for the loss of that faithful son,—that tender wife wringing her hands in despair, as she lists to the wail of the little ones calling for their father.

They all stand aghast, as they behold the expression of awe depicted on each other's countenance, and the despairing cry of one is heard:

"Ah, boys, we'll soon be gone!"

But the eye of a kind Providence was watching over the tempest-tossed. An Almighty hand appeared to grasp those mighty waves, and stay their natural course until the frail bark had sprung up from the fearful valley, high on the crest of another wave, freed once more from the jaws of destruction.

Hope revives again; and, O joyous sight! there's "land a-head!" On, on they dash over the warring waters. At last, they near the land. Again dismay seizes them; for,