

Gallant Lifeboatmen.

(E. A. Moffat, in 'Hand and Heart.')

It may not be generally known that the founder of the English National Lifeboat Society, Sir William Hillary, Bart., lived at Fort Anne, Douglas, and it was the sight of a wreck there that first made him plan means of rescue, and then build the Tower of Refuge on a dangerous rock in Douglas Bay. I do not know, however, at what date it was erected.

On the 20th October, 1881, a great gale was raging, and a large barque, called the 'Lebu,' anchored in Douglas Bay. The wind was an inshore one, and after some time it was feared that she was dragging her anchors. Presently she showed signals of distress. Then we heard the double boom of the life-boat gun, and, after a short delay, saw the lifeboat responding to the signal. It was not long before she reached the 'Lebu,' but the captain had come to the conclusion that it was not necessary to leave the ship, and that the anchor would hold. So the lifeboat returned to the land, and, as one of the widows, told me afterwards, her husband had just sat down to dinner, when again the boom of the gun was heard, and sprang up. In vain did they urge him to take some food. 'No!' he said; "it was his duty to go at once." But now the wind had risen, and much tacking was needed before the lifeboat could reach the 'Lebu,' when the captain and crew (sixteen, including two women) were taken on board, darkness was falling, and the sad, unusual accident occurred, of the capsizing of the lifeboat. In this (1896) year's report of the National Lifeboat Society the following account of the disaster is given:—

'The lifeboat, whose dimensions were only thirty-two feet by seven feet six inches, was returning from a large barque called the 'Lebu,' with twenty-nine persons on board (sixteen of whom, including two women, were from the barque, and the boat's crew numbering thirteen), when she was struck by a heavy sea, whilst running before the wind under her foresail, capsized, and eleven lives were lost—four lifeboatmen, and the captain and six of the barque's crew. It is some satisfaction to note that the two women were among the saved.'

Among the lifeboatmen drowned was the one who had refused to stay one moment at home after the gun was fired. He was a splendid swimmer, but it was morning before he and the captain were found. They had swum to the shore in the dark, and their hands were full of sand, which showed that life must have been in them when they reached the shore, at a spot far from the wreck. Three other homes were desolate, for there was not one of them in which there was not one dead; and I shall never forget the sight of the stretcher on which the last sailor found was placed, as I met it being carried to the hospital mortuary, nor the grief in the four families. The sea had given up her dead, and sorrowing friends carried the poor battered bodies to their homes; but—

'O, for the touch of a vanished hand,

And the sound of a voice that was still.'

After all the 'Lebu,' rode safely through the gale. Many of the crew, and the two women, attended St. George's Church the following Sunday, when thanks were offered on their behalf for their preservation. We had a substantial meal at a coffee-house, provided for all our lifeboatmen. Twenty-two were present, and the coxswain (since dead) requested reading and prayer, as, he said, 'we were all nearly in eternity so lately.' Some of them possessed fine voices, especi-

ally one who sang, 'The Anchor's Weighed,' most touchingly.

But a curious thing happened about the 'Lebu.' Her owners sent a steam-tug to take her away, and the crew of the 'Lebu' went in it; but just before their tug left the harbor, another appeared on the scene—I suppose, a sort of piratical tug—and tried to capture it as a derelict. But though it reached the ship first, not one of the men could get on board. From my window I could see one tug chase the other, and could not imagine what was going on till we heard the explanation. It seems that the dog had been left on board the 'Lebu,' and would not allow any of the sailors from the first tug to board the ship, as it did not know them, and only allowed it to be boarded by the old crew and the men who came with them.

The head of the Douglas Rocket Corps (the late Captain John Caesar Quayle) always most kindly sent us a copy of his official report when any wreck occurred here, so that the next morning we knew the first thing the name of the vessel, etc., number of crew, and whether they were all saved; he knew how anxious we felt about the saving of life at sea, and that when the lifeboat was out we always kept a kind of prayerful watch at home till we saw it return safely.

A Swede's Escapes in China.

'China's Millions' relates that when one of its missionaries from Sweden and a native evangelist were on one occasion itinerating, they came to a village where the people seemed very hostile. The landlord of the inn in which he had taken lodgings, pleaded with them to move on, as a band of robbers meant to come and destroy his place to get the foreigner's money, and the poor man knew not what to do. 'I will tell you,' said the Swede, 'what we will do: we will have a prayer-meeting and pray to God, and he will deliver us.'

They called the inmates together and prayed to God for deliverance, and he heard and answered, the robbers being too scared to attack them. For two weeks they stayed in that place, having a prayer-meeting every night, and not a hand was raised against them, but souls were awakened.

They visited another village, and while asleep some one stole the Swede's shoes, and none could be bought. Again he called the friends together to pray for the restoration of his shoes, and while they were praying, first one shoe and then another was thrown through the window; while a voice called out, 'Here, take your shoes and stop praying—I am afraid your God will beat me.'

At another inn he was robbed of all his money and some of his clothing. He told the people of his loss, and said he must get it back as he had about two hundred miles to go ere he could reach the nearest station to get any more. 'Now,' he said, 'my God knows who has done it, and we will ask him to get it back for me.' So they began praying, and prayed on till someone said, 'Let us search every one in the inn,' and it was found sewn up in a man's clothing who had stayed the night there, and who said he had tried to get away, but could not manage to do so; therefore he must confess that their God was indeed a great God. While travelling, the Swede came to a much swollen river filled with blocks of broken ice, which must be crossed. There was no bridge or ferry-boat to be seen, but the Chinese said they would carry him over if he gave them a lot of silver. He said, 'I have no silver, so cannot give it; only copper cash.' As they refused, he boldly went into the water, and his assistants followed him. The water

was up to their necks, but they trusted in God, and he failed them not. In safety they reached the other shore, where they praised God with grateful hearts. His testimony is that simple trust in the Lord can do all things.—'Christian Herald and Signs of our Times.'

An Infidel Band Converted.

In a certain town where the pastor was holding gospel services, there was a club mainly composed of infidel young men, numbering altogether about forty-five. One day the president of this club met the pastor, and said: 'Your meetings are having a good moral influence on the community, and I would like to see some of my young men going to them. To be honest with you, some of the young men in our society are getting pretty far away from the path they ought to walk in, and I would like to have them take any kind of moral tonic to set them right again.' The minister undertook to reserve a row of seats for the club, and the president promised that he and his young men should attend if the preacher would announce from the pulpit that they were not there because they had ceased to be infidels, but because the president considered the movement a good moral work.

On the first night five of the young men were converted, and the person who seemed happiest over it was the infidel leader. The next night several others decided for Christ; and, as the days went by, the club attended in a body, and the man most interested in getting the young men to confess Christ was the infidel president. He began to feel that his responsibilities towards these young men were beginning to roll away. He did not believe he had led them astray, but he was proud to think they were getting better. He did not have to worry any more about the young men going to saloons, and gambling-hells, and places of evil repute. He began to be very much relieved, and he seemed happy when one after another took a stand for Christ. Finally, at the concluding meeting of the series, the infidel leader stood up and made a confession of Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He afterwards gathered his young men into the Sunday-school, and became the teacher of a large bible-class.—'Christian Herald.'

Love For Mother.

When gruff old Dr. Johnson was fifty years old, he wrote to his aged mother as if he were still her wayward but loving boy: 'You have been the best mother, and, I believe, the best woman in the world. I thank you for all your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness for all I have done ill, and for all that I omitted to do well.'

John Quincy Adams did not part with his mother until he was nearly, or quite, as old as this: yet his cry even then was: 'Oh, God, could she have been spared yet a little longer! . . . Without her the world seems to me like a solitude.'

When President Nott, of Union College, was more than ninety years old, and had been for half a century a college president, as strength and sense failed him in his dying hours, the memory of his mother's tenderness was fresh and potent; and he could be hushed to needed sleep by a gentle patting on the shoulder and the singing to him of the old-time lullabies, as if his mother were still sitting by his bedside in loving ministry, as she had been well-nigh a century before. The true son never grows old to a true mother.—'Adviser.'