

THE COOK'S BOY.

Our ship was lying in Gibraltar harbor. The day had been a remarkably pleasant one, and hundreds of people from the shore had been on board to examine our specimen of Uncle Sam's naval architecture. After the hammocks had been "piped down," a knot of old ocean's hardy sons collected beneath the topgallant forecastle, which place was their regular "forum." Old Ben Miller, our second Boatswain's mate, had been quite thoughtful during the latter part of the afternoon; and upon being asked the occasion of it, he said—

"It is now fifteen years ago that I was a foremast hand on board the old ship 'Hunter.' She was from New York and bound to India. A man by the name of Adam Warren, who was one of the owners, had taken passage, and with him were his wife and daughter. The latter was one of the sweetest, prettiest little creatures I ever saw, only about twelve years old, and as blithe as a lark. They called her Judith. O, it would really have done your souls good to have seen her skipping about the deck!—now hiding in a coil of rigging; now pulling at some rope, and then clapping her little dimpled hands as she repeated the orders of the captain. Her merry laugh rang through the ship like the notes of our own native robin, and the sun seemed to be envying her brightness. Her father was one of your business men—a right down dollar hunter, who didn't seem to care for much else than the purchase and sale of his cargo; and as long as his child was well and happy, he seemed to take but little notice of her; though, I must say, he was a kind-hearted man when you could bring it out. Judith's mother was a proud, overbearing woman, who seemed to think there was nobody of any consequence only herself.

"We had a boy on board named Luke Winship, only fourteen years old, who had been put in the galley to help the cook. He was a noble little fellow, though we hadn't then exactly found it out.

"One evening after we had entered the southern tropics, Luke was sitting upon a spar that was lashed against the galley, and Judith Warren came along and sat down by his side.

"What makes you look so sober, Luke?" she asked, in a silvery tone of real kindness.

"I was thinking, Miss Judith," returned the cook's boy, and as he spoke he gazed into the face of the girl as though she was one whom he could almost worship.

"Don't call me miss. I don't like it, Luke. But tell me what you were thinking about. If I ever have troubles it always does me good to tell them to somebody. Now tell me yours."

"It couldn't interest you, Judith, to hear the story of a poor boy like me."

"O, yes it could!" the little girl cried, clapping her hands together with much earnestness. "You were thinking of your father and mother."

"Alas! I have none."

"No parents?"

"No!"

"Then you were thinking of your brothers and sisters."

"I have no relations on earth, Judith!" As Luke said this he drew his greasy sleeves across his eye to wipe away the drops that were springing forth.

"The little girl gazed into Luke's face with a look of pity and sorrow, that seemed to make her tender heart bleed.

"Tell me your story. Come, do," she said, and she laid her hand so affectionately upon the boy's arm, and looked so kindly at him, that he began to weep again.

"It is but a short story—a few words will tell it all," Luke returned, as he struggled like a giant to keep back his emotions. "My mother died when I was only four years old, and before my father had taken the mourning weed from his hat, he, too, was laid in the cold grave. They were both of them kind parents, and after my father was buried, I sat upon his grave all night long and cried. O, Judith, you don't know what it is to lose a father or a mother! but to lose them both! Yes, you know something how you would feel. In the morning they came and took me away from the little church-yard, and a man who lived near the cottage my father had hired, gave me some breakfast. My parents were very poor, and after the funeral expenses were paid, there was not a cent left. I knew of no relations; I knew not that I had one, and I was sent to the almshouse! There I staid until I was nine year old, and during that time I suffered more than words can ever tell. It wasn't bodily suffering, for I had enough to eat and drink, and clothes enough to wear; but it was the suffering of the heart. I went to school part of the year, but I wasn't like the other school-boys, I was a poorhouse child, and they shunned me. If they had done no more than this I should have been content, but they taunted me with my misfortune, and made light of my orphanage. If they had known what pain their words gave me, I don't believe they would have spoken them; but they knew not my feelings, and why should they? They had never suffered like me, and they realized nothing of the crushed spirit that was battling against the cold cruelty of their sneers."

"Poor Luke!" murmured Judith, and when the boy looked into her face, he found that she was weeping.

"At length," he continued, after he had wiped his eyes, "an old farmer took

me from the almshouse, and set me to work upon his farm. At first I felt thankful, but I soon found that I was worse off than before, for I was ill treated, and I had to work like a dog. The farmer's wife was a hard-hearted woman, and she often beat me. That was worse than all the rest, for I never deserved it, nor did I openly complain. I staid with the man over four years; but matters grew worse and worse. At length I resolved that I would bear it no longer. One dark, stormy night, I secured a few crusts of bread, and after the folks had retired I stole out from the barn and ran away. For nearly a fortnight I travelled on, and at length I reached the city of New York; but even there I dared not remain, so I went down to the wharves to see if I could not get a chance on board some ship. I found this ship was on the point of sailing. I told my story to Captain Flaton, and he took me on board. I am well treated here, but yet I cannot help, at times, thinking of the scenes through which I have passed. I can see the sweet face of my mother as she breathed her dying blessing; and I can see the pallid cheek and sunken eyes of my father as he took me by the hand, and made me promise that I would ever be honest and virtuous. I have most faithfully kept that promise, and I always will."

"Little Judith wept as though she had herself suffered all she had heard; but she was not the only one who had heard Luke's story, for, as he closed it, Mr. Adam Warren moved carefully away from the other side of the galley, where he had been standing all the while.

"At this moment Mrs. Warren came up from the cabin, in a terrible flurry, in search for her child.

"Where is Judith?"

"Here I am, mamma."

"Mrs. Warren started forward, and saw her daughter just rising from the side of Luke.

"What on earth are you doing here?"

"Luke has been telling me a story," returned the little girl, as her mother led her aft.

"Don't let me see you talking with that dirty boy again. It's horrible, Judith, for you to be contaminated with such low company!"

"Luke heard those words, and I could see the heaving of his bosom and the quivering of his lip as they fell upon his ear. He arose and went into the galley, and pulled the door to after him.

"We doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and were standing up into the Indian Ocean. It was in the afternoon. The old ship was under double reefed topsails and reefed courses, with the wind blowing hard on the larboard quarter. Little Judith was on the poop, holding on upon the weather mizzen topmast backstay. Her father was there, too, and he was