

spirit of bravery and self-sacrifice is not dead amongst the women of our seafaring communities.

Some of our readers may perchance have visited Aberdour Bay, on the rugged and picturesque Scottish coast. It is a pleasant spot enough during fine weather. The sea then lies hushed into tranquillity; the air breathes the very spirit of repose; and one can scarcely imagine that an ocean so calm, and a shore so peaceful, can ever be disturbed by tempest or ring to the cry of the drowning mariner. But appearances here, as elsewhere, are deceitful. There is another side to the picture. Visit the same coast during the storms of winter, or in an equinoctial gale, and the magnificence and terror of the scene can scarcely be exaggerated. The long impetuous swell, as it flings itself against the rugged cliffs, and the wild roar of the billows as they dash onward and break in thunder on the cruel rocks, are full of majesty and strength.

By the side of the sea on Aberdour beach lives a certain Mrs. Whyte, the wife of a farm-servant employed in the neighbourhood. On the morning of October 28, 1884, there was a terrible gale, and Mrs. Whyte, peering from her cottage through the blinding shower of sleet and wind, saw a vessel in imminent danger of coming ashore. To strike the rocks in such a gale, and at the spot to which the vessel was approaching, was to come to sure destruction.

Rushing from her cottage, and standing alone on the rugged beach amidst the foaming billows, the brave woman signalled to the crew of the distressed vessel where was the safest place to take the ground. Providentially her meaning was understood, and soon the vessel was run ashore at a spot where the sailors had some chance for their lives. But the crew of the *William Hope* were not yet out of danger. They were, it is true, within measurable distance of the land, but unless that space of boiling surge could be bridged they must drown, and drown in sight of the shore.

It was while the crew of the *William Hope* were struggling with the elements, and striving for very life in the grip of death, that Mrs. Whyte's prompt and energetic action brought about their rescue.

The crew of the doomed vessel had thrown a rope into the water, in the hope that by some means a communication could be effected with the shore. Exposing herself to the dangerous seas which were breaking wildly on the beach, and which seemed sufficient to bear away in their deadly clutches a far stronger thing than a frail woman, Mrs. Whyte waded into the surf and seized the rope. Passing it round her body, and planting her feet firmly on the ground, with the hungry waves washing around her, the brave woman brought the rope, inch by inch, ashore, and fastened it to a rock.

One by one the drenched sailors landed on the beach, and were in safety, and we may be quite sure were full of admiration for the heroine who had dragged them from the jaws of death and restored them to the light and joys of life. During all this time Mrs. Whyte was wholly unaided in her self-imposed task of mercy.

But the work was not yet ended. The shipwrecked crew were safely on shore, but they were cold, weary, and hungry. Mrs. Whyte's cottage stood near by, and here she led the saved men, supplying them with such refreshment and dry clothing as were at her command, and attending to their wants as best she could.

Making every allowance for her familiarity with the coast, and with the details of seafaring life, it must be admitted that this was an action worthy of the spirit of Grace Darling; and it is difficult to speak in too high terms of the cool judgment and courage displayed by this noble woman, through whom the crew of the *William Hope* were succoured.

It is pleasing to know that this great service was not allowed to go unrewarded. The owners of the *William Hope*, grateful for the timely succour extended to their servants, made her a handsome present. She received also gifts from persons in the neighbourhood who were best able to appreciate the value and extent of her action. Public societies, too, took the matter up warmly. The Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, feeling that she had really performed a work for which that institution was founded, recognised the deed in a suitable manner. The most gratifying gift of all, perhaps, came from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. At a meeting of the committee of that noble society, it was resolved "That the silver medal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and £10 be presented to Mrs. Whyte, in recognition of her very brave services in saving, by means of a rope thrown from a vessel, the crew of the *William Hope*, of Dundee, in Aberdour Bay, in a gale and heavy sea, on the 28th October, 1884." This resolution was endorsed on vellum.

The medal has the following designs and motto. On the obverse is a portrait of the Queen. On the reverse side, three men of a lifeboat crew rendering assistance to a shipwrecked sailor, with the touching words, "Let not the deep swallow me up."

The gifts were handed to Mrs. Whyte at a public meeting held at Fraserburgh, in the district where she was well known. The local secretary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution made the presentation before a crowded audience. In doing so he remarked "that the medal of the Institution was only granted for distinguished services, that the prize was national in its character, and coveted and appreciated by all ranks of society as an emblem of a truly noble act—that of saving human life." It may be added that the modest demeanour of Mrs. Whyte and her husband at this gathering confirmed the good impression made by her deed of bravery.

In this sea-girt isle of ours the warmest sympathies of all are constantly excited on behalf of those who suffer from shipwreck; but it only falls to the lot of few, especially of women, to render such important services to humanity as we have narrated. All, however, even the humblest amongst us, may do something to point poor sinners to that haven where alone rest and peace may be found in the bosom of that blessed Saviour who has promised, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." H. C.