

but for a slit of a few inches out of which a white mutch was thrust and a withered hand, tremulous with the palsy of age and suffering.

'Dost du no see da boats, lassie, canst du no speak,' again querulously demanded the broken voice.

'No, granny, the boats will not come this nicht,' answered Maggie, and crossing over she took the withered hand into her own.

'How are du noo, granny—ready for du's supper?'

The old woman sank back and shut her eyes. 'I've been awfu' bad, just stangin' and burnin', it gies me a heap o' trouble: da Lord gie me patience!' and she wiped her eyes with the string of her mutch.

'Let me put da little Malcom beside du, granny,' and Maggie tucked her babe beside his great-grandmother and sat down to her spinning till supper time. Low wailing of wind mingled from time to time with the hum of her wheel and she knew that the weather had changed. Suddenly the flimsy front door burst open and a cold blast searched the room; Maggie looked up with amazed concern and setting aside her spinning-wheel stepped out and shut the door behind her. It was quite dusk, too dark even for the practised eye of a fisherman's wife, to detect objects at sea. The wind was steadily rising and sweeping upon the hamlet in boisterous gusts, the lapping of the water upon the rocks could be heard, and the sea-gulls were screaming. More than she were at their doors gazing seaward. Even after the night had thickened into an inky blackness, without one star, the women came to their doors, time after time, turn by turn, upon any or no pretext, and peered seaward into the mirk. The wind was awake now without doubt, and they sighed and prayed as each gust blew more stubbornly upon them. Inside the house, however, nothing was said. The oldest generation had sunk into weary sleep and the youngest dreamt and smiled in their dreams.

Maggie and blind Isabel sat by the peat fire long after their supper of potatoes and dried fish had been eaten. Sometimes the baby whimpered in his sleep and the mother went over to soothe him, but she would not lie down herself. Outside the wind whistled and forced its way at the many crannies in the unplastered cabin. The dog growled as the storm moaned and howled, and the fickle sea now abandoning its insincere gentleness, thundered on the rocks below.

Maggie was restless and fearful, but blind Bell, so used to long lonely spells sat moodily silent. At length she grasped her young sister's hand, and said, 'Wull du no' lie down, Maggie?' A tightening of her clasp was all the answer she got, and she knew too well the agony that was tearing the young wife's heart.

It was far into the night when shrill voices, contending with the shriller wind, passed the window, and Margaret hurried out. The women and few men were going to save the curing plant which had been left on the beach. The wind was fierce and the sea furious, throwing itself far beyond its customary tide mark. Grimly they hauled the curing tubs and small boats up the steep shore. Many a fearful look was cast into the murky depths beyond, many a sigh was lost in the hurricane's blast, many a tear mingled with the salt spray. Yet little was said.

Old Elspet Sinclair, who had three sons out, said all that could or need be said when she cried, as a huge green wave chased them up the beach, and shattered itself upon the shingle, 'May da Lord protect his ain dis nicht!'

For three days and nights the hurricane swept the treeless islands and the pathless sea. From many a 'voe' and 'wick' did anxious eyes, nipping with salt sea and biting wind, continue to behold with fear the surly sea at their doors, and the seething caulron of wind and water beyond.

Then bits of wreckage began to be thrown up, and they knew that some of the watchers were now watching in vain. They could only wait and wonder how many, and who, of the brave lads would see home again. At length news came that some of the boats had made Scalloway, in a sore shattered state, and with sad gaps in their crews. Others, too, found themselves, as if by a miracle, in some friendly 'voe' far from home, and whole families of women folks breathed freely again. But many a tidy boat and gallant fisherman never came again.

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The storm has run its course, and the sea is once more a placid pond, and the wind as a zephyr.

Blind Bell, seated on a low chair by the peat embers, is gently swinging the orphan's cradle, for Maggie has again gone to the hill with her stocking and 'keshie.' Though she has company, even widow neighbors, and the needles flash faster than ever, talk there is none. Old Eric has crawled along, and is carrying armfuls of peats into the house. As he stumbles at the door the old bedril starts up and cries:

'Are dey no hame yet, da braw lads.'

Then after a bit, 'Puir chields.'

But nobody answers her. Neither withered granny nor blooming Maggie, nor tottering Eric saw their braw lads any more.

Well may they dread the moody ocean, for wind and wave are laden with bitter memories for them. Yet they would stifle if they were away from its fresh breezes and wide fields of blue.

Why He Gave You Just Weight.

In a small village there once lived an industrious little lad who was desirous to earn his own spending money. So he began the gathering of bones and old iron. One day a buyer came, and as the colored man was weighing in his balances, the boy's merchandise, a by-stander said:—'Now, old man, don't cheat the boy.' 'I certainly won't,' he replied, 'as I am not going to stay here long.' 'Where do you propose going?' he was asked. 'I am going to judgment. As I weigh here, so shall I be weighed there, and in that balance I do not want to be found wanting.'

Old Country Friends.

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How Tom Weaver Saved Number 204.

(Frederick E. Burnham, in 'Wellspring'.)

The skating on Winuchus River had been excellent for several weeks, and the young men of Lonsdale had made the most of the sport, scores of them being on the ice nearly every evening in the week. One feat of daring had led to another, until some of the more venturesome had taken a flying start and leaped across a narrow channel of deep water through which the Winuchus Ice Company had been poling their ice from the centre of the lake.

Tom Weaver, the station agent at Edgewood, a small town on the west bank of the Winuchus River, was considered one of the best skaters for miles about. There were few tricks of the steel runners of which he was not master, but when it came to running into needless danger, he was too sensible a young man to take part in the sport. When he refused to leap across the open water in the river, there were those who called him a coward, but the time came that he proved their words false, and demonstrated the fact that he could leap farther than any of them.

The tracks of the H., S. & B. railway ran nearly parallel with the river for several miles, commencing with Edgewood Station and ending with the bridge at Seekonk, where the railway crossed to the east side of the stream. It was eight miles from Edgewood to the bridge, a winding route that made high speed out of the question.

The river had been running pretty strong for several days, as indicated by the rising of the ice and consequent breaking at numerous points along the banks. The initial force of the spring freshets from the north was beginning to be felt, though it was not believed that the ice in the river would break up for several days.

Weaver was seated in his office just after dark, waiting for the south-bound express to pass through ere he went to his supper. An hour previous he had received a despatch stating that the dam at Berwickford had given way, and that there would be a consequent decided rise in the river.

The ice in the river rose four feet in fifteen minutes, but so solidly was it frozen that, aside from breaking away from the banks, it held together.

The express had just passed the station, its rear light yet visible, when a despatch came over the wires from Seekonk that caused Weaver's hair to fairly stand on end:—

'Flag 204; bridge gone!'

Weaver stared helplessly after the retreating red lights for perhaps three seconds; then he acted. His skates were in the corner where he had dropped them the previous evening, and in less time than it takes to record the fact he had seized both the skates and a lantern and was out of the station. As he ran down to the river, he was disengaging the strap from the skates, and by the time he had reached the ice he had succeeded in strapping the lantern about his waist.

Reports that sounded almost like the reports of cannon came from scores of points along the river, as the ice cracked under the great pressure to which it was being subjected, but Weaver did not hesitate. He knew that ten coaches of pas-