

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXIV., No. 20.

MONTREAL, MAY 19, 1899.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.



THE RETURN OF THE LIFE BOAT.

Refusing to be Rescued.

(‘Cottager and Artizan.’)

I was once staying for a short holiday at a seaside town. The weather had been oppressively hot, and the storm cone had been hoisted as a warning that heavy weather might be expected. Many of the seamen had taken the warning, and their boats were lying at anchor in the harbor when the storm broke.

I was just about to sit down to breakfast one morning, when a rush of feet outside the house and cries of ‘The lifeboat!’ told me that a vessel was in peril. Rushing into the street, I assisted in launching the lifeboat, and stood among the crowd watching the brave crew hastening on their errand of mercy.

The vessel towards which they were pulling was quite unmanageable, and had drifted across the mouth of the harbor towards a group of rocks. Fortunately, however, a spit of sand interrupted her progress, and and though she bumped heavily upon it, yet it undoubtedly saved her from going to pieces so soon as she struck directly on the rocks.

The crew of the vessel were unaware, on account of the heavy sea, that the lifeboat was on its way to rescue them, and they accordingly made signals of distress to attract the attention of those on shore.

Meanwhile, the watchers in the harbor watched the lifeboat crew with straining eyes. It was frequently hidden from them by the rolling waves, but at last it was seen to reach the doomed vessel. To the surprise

of the spectators, however, the wrecked crew, instead of availing themselves at once of the means of escape from their perilous position, appeared to be parleying with the lifeboat men.

After some time the lifeboat drew off a little and lay to for a short period. Again it approached the wreck, and the parley was repeated. Once more turning away, the lifeboat headed for the shore. The watchers were astounded. What could this singular behaviour mean?

On the return of the lifeboat the mystery was explained. The crew of the stranded vessel, evidently not fully realizing their danger, had refused to abandon their worldly possessions, and had tried to induce the coxswain of the lifeboat to take their goods on board as well as themselves.

He on his part had positively refused to endanger the live of the whole party by so overloading the boat. ‘Our business is to save lives, not baggage,’ he said, and accordingly he lay to for a time, and afterwards approached the vessel again with the offer of rescue. Again the misguided men refused, and accordingly there now seemed nothing else to do but to leave them to their fate.

‘Is there any chance for them?’ asked the harbor-master.

‘None at all, sir,’ was the reply; ‘the ship has broken her back, and is filling with water. She cannot last another couple of hours.’

‘Men,’ said the harbor-master, turning to the lifeboat crew, ‘will you risk another attempt to save them?’

‘Ay, ay, sir!’ was the reply, and in a short

time the gallant boat was again on its way. There was no further parleying on the part of the ship’s crew; their danger had become too manifest. So, abandoning their goods, they entered the lifeboat and reached the shore in safety.

As I witnessed their first refusal of the offer of rescue I could not help thinking, ‘How must God feel, after giving his only Son a ransom for sinners, to hear the paltry excuses men will make for not accepting his salvation!’

But our God is full of love and mercy, and still holds out his offer. If men will turn to him, and in humble faith pray to be forgiven their sins, he will not reject them. But ‘how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’

A Wonderful Career.

(Herbert W. Horwill in ‘The Christian.’)

At thirteen a waif on the London streets; at thirty-five, the pastor of the largest congregation in Australasia—‘Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?’

About five-and-twenty years ago, passengers along the Caledonian road were accustomed, from the lordly eminence of the outside seats, to throw occasional backsheesh to an escort of ragged urchins, whose agility in turning somersaults relieved the monotony of a ‘bus journey. If they had captured and questioned the nimblest and most impudent of the batch, they would have found that his name was William Ready; that he had earned his living in