

A " HEART OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD."

Written for " THE VOICE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD."

" Place on thy heart one drop of the Precious Blood of Jesus and fear nothing."

Words of P. Pius IX.

PART I.

THE SHIPWRECK.

NEVER perhaps in the present century has navigation been more dangerous than during the Autumn of 18. . . Many a gallant ship and crew were then submerged in the angry waves. The incident we are about to relate occurred on the Atlantic, a few leagues off the coast of France.

For several days the rain had fallen in torrents ; yet, on account of urgent business, Captain Redmond was obliged to set on a perilous voyage. All day long the wind blew furiously, dashing the waves about and lifting them to a fearful height. The crew, being all good Catholics and very devout, while doing their utmost to manage the vessel, put all their trust in God, and often the sweet words of the "*Ave Maris Stella*," chanted in their rough but plaintive melody, could be heard above the storm to which the wind and waves replied in sounds of fury.

The captain, worn out with watching, went to take a brief repose, leaving the mate in charge, and asking to be called in a couple of hours. But sleep was impossible, so after tossing in his berth for about an hour, he was on the point of rising, when he saw the door softly open, and an unknown young man enter his cabin. Although of a brave and fearless disposition, yet an uncontrollable fear seized him. Whence did the intruder come? Was he a thief? How could he have been on board without his knowledge?

But the stranger gave no explanation. Without seeming to notice the captain, he walked over to his desk, laid a note upon it, then left the room. The captain, on