

and who arranges everything upon a sort of pigeon-hole system, has his brain arranged in a similar way? Certainly, there are some whose wits are really remarkable for tidiness; they, always have a fact appropriate to the occasion and are classed among the well informed. But from having all their facts in pigeon holes they never make the unexpected combinations and startling generalizations that the imaginative and, therefore, untidy intellect rejoices in. What is neat is always admirable: it is rather the abuse of what is methodical that is apt to be unpopular, which "tidiness" proper never ought to be, if, according to its derivation, it is that which fits in at the right time or *tide*.

## GOING ASHORE.

**T**HERE she is, sir; that's she just off the pint there. She's a-coming stem on; and in an hour, if she ain't on Bunk Sands, I'm a Dutchman.

My companion was no native of dam-land, for there was Briton written in every feature of his bronze-red face, as he stood by me in Baythorpe shore, in his canvass trousers, heavy fisher's boots, blue Jersey shirt, and tarpaulin hat, tied on with a bit of oakum band, while the flap behind beat about in the tremendous wind that was raging in our faces.

"Bang!" went the dull smothered report of a heavy gun, and in the shade of the coming night I just caught sight of a faint flash of light. Where we stood, the spray came rushing in like a heavy storm of rain; while the whistling of the wind, and the thundering in of the huge rollers as they curled over and over upon the sands, tearing it out from among the clays, and scraping it away by tons, made standing in the face of such a storm extremely confusing; and yet hundreds were out upon the shore close under the great sand-bank, drenched to the skin with the spray, for the news had spread through the village that a three-master was going ashore.

Going ashore! Simple words to a landsman's ears; but what do they mean? The noble vessel tearing and plunging through the broken water—now down in the trough of the waves, now rising like a cork upon the white crests, and then a shock as she strikes upon the sands, and seems immovable; a shuddering quiver through plank and beam; and then crash, crash, crash—mast after mast gone by the board—snapped like brittle twigs on a dead stem; while huge ropes part like burned twine; then the rising of the apparently immovable vessel, as she is lifted by the waves to fall crashing upon the sands, parting in the middle; rushing billows pouring tuns upon tuns of water over the deck; a wild, wild cry for help; and then the shore strewn with fragments, casks, bodies, as the merciless waves sport with them, tossing them on to the sands, and then curling over to drag them back. Going ashore; not safety from a wild storm, but death.

"Ah," said the old-salt by my side, shouting at me with his hand to his mouth, "did yer hear that gun?"

I nodded.

"There goes another," he continued, stretching out his hand, and pointing to where the flash could be seen, while directly after came another dull heavy report. "Can't yer see her now, sir?"

Mine were not sea-going eyes; and it was no easy task to make out a distant object through the blinding storm of spray which beat dead in my face; but I just managed to make out a dark mass right out amongst the boiling waves, and I shuddered as I thought of the fate of those on board.

"She must come to it," said the man; "she'll come in just there;" and he pointed to a spot amongst the waves where they seemed roughest; "she'll be there in less time than I said; and then, Lord have mercy upon 'em! Amen!"

As he said this, the old man reverently took off his tarpaulin sou'-wester, and stood with the storm tearing through the remains of his grizzled hair; bald, rugged, and weather-beaten, the coarseness of his features for the moment subdued—softened by the feeling within his breast

—as he stood there no inapt representation of a seer of old.

"Is there no chance for them?" I shouted.

The old man shook his head and shrugged his shoulders. "Precious little," he added, "unless them chaps come down with the life-boat; but who'd go out?"

It did look a desperate venture, indeed, to attempt to launch a boat with such a sea on, and having no reply, I stood shading my eyes and gazing out to sea.

"Bang!"

There was another flash, and another dull, echoless report, and as the veil of spray seemed to clear during the lull in the storm, I could perceive a large three-masted vessel about five hundred yards from the shore; and once, as she heeled over, and shewed her deck, I could see that it was crowded with people.

"God help them!" I muttered.

"Amen!" said the old man; and just then, away to our left, we saw the life-boat carriage coming down at a trot, drawn by two stout horses; while a loud and prolonged "hurrah!" welcomed its arrival—as another flash, and its following heavy report, seemed to come from the doomed vessel like a groan of pain in its hour of sore distress.

"They'll never go out to her," said the old man, shouting in my ear, for after the lull, the storm came down with redoubled fury—the wind shrieking and howling past, cutting the crests of the waves off as it came tearing over the hill of waters, and dashing the salt spray in my face till it almost seemed to cut the flesh; while at times the women who had come down were completely held back against the steep sand-bank.

"There! look there!" cried the old man, suddenly seizing my arm. "Catching at straws. Why, there's a boat-load coming ashore. There; don't you see—now a-top o' that breaker?"

I caught sight of a small boat crowded with figures, and then there seemed to be a tall wave curl over it, and I saw it no more.

"Gone!" said the old man, "I knowed it! Nothing could live in such a storm."

"Let's go to the life-boat, and see if they are going off," said I; but the old man was intently gazing into the sea.

"There; just as I said," he shouted hoarsely, "just in the place. She's struck." And then, above the yelling of the storm, we could hear a crash, and a wild shriek, that seems to ring through me now upon a stormy night, when far inland I listen to the howling wind.

"It's now or never!" said the old man, as he ran down towards where the life-boat stood upon its carriage, with a crowd of men and women around, the women hanging on to their husbands, and apparently begging that they would not dare the perils before them.

The sea had looked fearful enough from where we stood before; but here, as close as we dared go to the breakers, to launch a boat seemed absolute madness. It was evident that the men thought so too, though, as we came up, one sturdy fellow shouted: "I'm ready, mates, if you're going;" a remark that elicited no response, for every one stood stolidly gazing out towards the doomed vessel.

Just then, in the dull haze seawards, a blue light shone out over the water like a dull star; but still no one moved. All at once, the old man by my side laid hold of my arm, and whispered: "Give me a lift, sir;" and before I knew hardly what his object was, he had climbed by my help into the boat. "Now, then, you boys," he shouted wildly; "I can't stand this! Stand aside, and let some of the old ones come!"

The spell was broken. Women were hastily thrust aside, and a boat's crew was soon made up, amidst the shrieking and wailing of sweethearts and wives, who ran about the beach wringing their hands.

"Hurrah for old Marks!" shouted a voice at my elbow, and the crowd loudly cheered the old man. Then oars were shipped and all made ready, the old sailor seizing the steering-oar as he stood up in his place with a life-belt on and his hat blown off—looking nobler than ever.

"Now, are you all ready?" he shouted.

"No, no," was the cry; and in the hush of

expectation, two men rose in the boat, dashed off their life-belts, and amidst half-muttered groans, leaped out from their places, and ran up the sands to the bank, where they disappeared.

"Two more!" shouted old Marks, and for a few moments, so dread was the peril, not a soul moved; then two stout lads came rushing towards the boat, pursued by an elderly man—a perfect giant.

"Stop them!" he roared. "Yer shan't go lads."

He came up to them by the boat-side as they were climbing in, and endeavoured to stop their progress; but in his turn he was seized from behind by a couple of men, and the new-comers were in half-a-minute equipped for the dire struggle before them and in their places.

"Let me go!" shrieked the man; but the others clung to him, as the signal was given, the carriage backed down into position, the time accurately chosen, and with a wild "hurrah!" heard above the storm, and the life-boat was launched.

My attention had been so taken up that I had ceased to look upon the man who was struggling to regain his liberty; but just as the boat was leaving its carriage, a bystander was driven violently against me, and the moment after I saw a figure dash across the intervening space, and seize the side of the boat; and then came the roar of the storm and the rush of spray; while for a few minutes the life-boat was invisible. Then a short distance off, she was seen rising upon a wave, and then disappearing again into the dull haze, which, mingled with the coming night, soon shut everything from our gaze but the foaming water.

"Over seventy, sir," shouted a voice in reply to a query. "Old man-o-war's-man. Been in many a storm; but this here's awful."

Awful it was; for so wild a night had not fallen upon that part of the coast for many years; and as the folk upon the shore gazed in the direction the boat had taken, they shook their heads, and shouted in each other's ears.

There was a long and awful pause, only broken by the shrieking of the wind, and then came a loud shout: "Here she comes!" and in another minute, obedient to their steersman, the rowers timed their strokes to a second, so that the boat, heavily laden, rode in upon the summit of a giant wave so for that twenty willing hands were at her side, and she was run right upon the sands, and fifteen shivering, half-drowned fellow-creatures lifted out and hurried up the shore.

"Now, my lads," cried old Marks, "on to the truck with her, and we're off again."

The boat was soon mounted, and every man at his post, the father of the two lads taking his place by the side of the old cocksawin; for no amount of persuasion on either side could effect a change.

There was another cheer, rising above the storm, and again the gallant crew were launched into the surf, that seemed to curl round the boat as though to fill it in an instant. It rose and fell a dark mass amid the white foam for an instant, and then seemed to plunge into a bank of foggy blackness, for night had fallen.

I could not drag myself away from the stirring scene around me, for I seemed held to the spot by a strange fascination. All at once a lurid light shot up, for a quantity of straw had been set on fire, and the flames roared and crackled as dry sea-weed and pieces of wood were heaped up to increase the glare, which appeared to gild the crests of the waves, and threw into bold relief the figures on the sands—some gazing out to sea; some watching eagerly the fringe of breakers, ready to rush down and secure anything that might be washed ashore from the wreck.

More straw was heaped upon the fire, and the flames and sparks rushed inland, as they rose with the mighty current of air, and darted across the sand-bank. Out seaward all seemed black darkness, and the eyes strained after the life-boat were for a while strained in vain.

All at once there was a cry of "Here she comes;" but it was prolonged into a wild wail of despair; for by the light from the fire the boat could be seen broadside on, and close inshore;