

'Twixt a Christmas and New Year Over Two Decades Ago.

III.

To pick up the thread of my story, I must take a few steps backward. I must even go as far back as to one of the many, many evenings spent on the deck of the "Bonnie Bessie," when the terrible heat of the day over, my poor friend and myself would sit on deck, talking sometimes, sometimes in silent, sympathetic companionship, and sometimes exchanging an occasional remark with the Captain or the officer of the watch. There would be the southern cross above us, and an outspread canopy, bediamond with stars, reflected in the waters beneath; the sky above and the reflected sky below being as one unfathomable mystery of beauty.

"How near heaven seems," one of us would be almost sure to say. "It is as though we could put out our mortal hands and choose our particular star, and grasp it now, without any revelation," for so it seemed to us, and we indulged our fancies, asked and answered our, perhaps, childish questions, and did not strive to curb our imaginings. Somehow they comforted us, and I think they were surely forgiven us. But on this especial evening our little Captain tried to cheer us, and we gladly listened as he told us of his early days in his home in the village amongst the Welsh hills, of the little maiden who used to sit by him on the form at school, how he had carried her books and slate, and fought her battles, and never thought of any girl but Lizzie as his wife to be some day. "And she is my wife, and she is to come to London to meet me in the docks when I arrive, as this is the first time I have been the captain of a ship." He then passed on to tell of kindness shown him in Natal, a port he had sailed to and from as seaman and mate for some years, winding up with showing us a curious seal which had been given him, in the form of the hock of a horse, with the initials T. M. engraved upon it. Happily we noted this, for this seal has a place in the story which I seem to linger in the telling. The night arrived at last when, in answer to our signals, the pilot came aboard, after many futile efforts. He brought his budget of newspapers, the first we had seen for many a long week, and his tale of casualty after casualty, which had happened from day to day "during storms such as had seldom or never been heard of before." I can recall how we huddled around the little stove lashed to the floor (which had to be watched most carefully to guard us from accident), as we listened to all the pilot had to relate. No one attempted to go to bed, for our peril was great, although not one of us pretended to be aware of the fact. "Here, Miss H.," said our captain, "please read out to us some of the news. 'Take the shipping first.'" I obediently put forth my hand, but column after column seemed full of disaster. "Why, Captain, you'd better leave the shipping news until we get safe into port," but he would not, and so there was nothing to be done but for me to read and for them to listen to such as "The Barque St. Quentin foundered on 30th December," "the 'Saucy Sally' and all hands wrecked off the Scilly Islands," "The Steamer Cassemir broke from her anchorage and went to the bottom," etc., etc. "Don't they give any names of those lost?" queried the Captain. "Yes, there is Thomas Smith, of this, and James Williams, of that, and there's Lawrence Littleton, of the Schooner Sarah Milloy, and many more." "So Lawrence Littleton is gone, is he? He was a mate of mine on the Seagull," said the Captain. "Well, his time had come, I suppose. It's what we sailors have to expect," words which seemed meaningless then, but yet were prophetic, had we but known it.

Without a minute's unavoidable delay we got into the London docks, no one but the Captain at first going ashore, and he had to do so to report to the owners of the "Bonnie Bessie." He returned at the earliest possible moment, but I could see, without any telling, that he had met with some serious disappointment. Seeing my look of sympathy, he placed in my hands one of the most touching letters I had ever read. It was from his wife, telling him in language half Welsh and half English, but almost weird and poetical in its choice of words, "that she had had such a dream, a dream of coming calamity, a dream so direful that until she got word from himself that he was safe in port she could not come—something held her back—but directly she got word of his safety she would take the first train to London." "Well," I said, "you see her dream was all wrong. Your second mate, by right of privilege, is the first to leave the ship, and he goes straight home to your village. He will tell her that all is well, and she will be here at the beginning of the week." On the Sunday he was to have come to our lodgings to dine and go to church with us, for we wanted to mark our sense of gratitude by introducing him to friends who could thank him on our behalf. "You must meet me at the station," he said, "or I'll surely be lost. I could easier find my way back to Natal

in our little ship than to Bayswater by underground railway." On Sunday we waited over several trains, and then resigned ourselves to our disappointment. "Captain E. must have lost his way after all," we said. And so he had, as we afterwards learnt, but not on his road to Bayswater, only in the path of duty, or rather in excess of his duty, impelled by an over-conscientious scruple. On the Saturday the "Bonnie Bessie," having discharged her cargo, was to be taken down to the dry-dock at Rotherhithe for the usual overhauling. The routine rule under such circumstances is always that a Thames River captain should take over the full charge of a vessel, her own captain being free to leave her. But though no longer responsible, Capt. E. could not resist going with his dear little vessel, even if he were not to command her. The chief mate and the cabin boy were aboard of her too. All might have gone well had not a sudden squall caught her, and being emptied of freight, and thus insufficiently ballasted, she was capsized in one moment of time, the mate being the only one able to scramble up into the rigging, from which he was quickly rescued. The bodies of the river captain and the curly-headed little lad who had shared our perils with us were found shortly afterwards, but the search for that of the faithful Captain of the "Bonnie Bessie" brought no results for many a long day.

Shall I ever forget the sad-faced little woman who came to London too late to see him whom she so dearly loved? It was my privilege to be with her each day for the first week or so of that long waiting time. Science found a means of raising and restoring to use and beauty the dear little barque which had been for so long our home, but for the shipwreck in the home in that hill-surrounded village, of which we had heard so much, science was powerless and sympathy could do but little. But the one earnest wish of her heart was at last granted to the widow. "If my



BEHIND THE WIND-BREAK.
A beautiful drive near Virden, Manitoba.

Evan can be found, and if you will find a resting place for him in some God's-acre near by, I think I can be brave to fight the battle of life single-handed for our three bonnie boys. A few weeks later I was away from London, when the owners, who had been generous and kind to poor Mrs. E., sent me the sketch of a seal, a horse's hock and the letters T. M. engraved thereon, saying: "A body had been found in the Thames below Gravesend. The pockets had been emptied, evidently by river thieves, but in the lining of the coat was the seal as described. Could I tell them if I knew if Captain E. ever possessed such a seal, and had he worn socks with such and such stripes above the ankle." To both of these questions I could answer "yes," for had he not shown us that seal on that star-light night in the southern seas, and on another occasion had brought out of his cabin a pair of socks with just those stripes, saying, "My Lizzie knitted them for me. I have plenty like them, for she never lets me want for anything which her fingers can supply." All this happened nearly five and twenty years ago, and from time to time letters come to the writer, telling of the ups and downs of the strenuous life which this brave little woman has lived since then, which is indeed another story, but one well worth the telling, one which some day I may be able to record in simple fashion in the pages of the "Farmer's Advocate."

H. A. B.

H. A. B. has again occasion to thank a friend who sends her the following kind message regarding her short articles from the Cotswold Hills: "Although I have not heard directly from you for a long time, you seem to have been addressing me in your interesting letters from Birdlip. My husband's family lived for years in Painswick, and I have often heard him speak of it. How I should like to have been with you in your rambles."

One Thing and Another.

Many housekeepers use the tea leaves that are left after making tea to scatter over carpets when they are swept, but the leaves will stain very delicate carpets. Wet newspapers, wrung nearly dry, and torn in pieces, collect the dust and lint, and do not soil the carpets. A dark floor covering often looks dusty and dim after an ordinary sweeping. Put a few drops of ammonia in the water which you use to wet your newspapers, and it will brighten and freshen the colors wonderfully.

IN THE LAUNDRY.

One housekeeper, noted for her success in matters domestic, puts the garments to soak the night before the washing, keeping the body linen by itself. She declares that it saves work, clothes, time and trouble, and she has not the least dread of wash-day. She makes a washing fluid of a gallon of water, a bar of soap cut into shavings, and a pint of naphtha. This she keeps in a safe place, using a large stone jug for the purpose, and filling it up as soon as it is emptied.

The contents are shaken before use. With it she rubs all the soiled portions of the clothes, rolls each piece tightly after the rubbing, and packs it into the tub. Towels and other pieces very much soiled are kept by themselves and are saturated with the liquid.

Then the clothes are covered with hot water, and the tubs are covered with thick cloths to stand until morning. This work requires scarcely more than half an hour.

In the morning the pieces are rubbed out, thrown into suds as hot as can be borne by the hands, washed lightly through them, and put into a boiler of scalding water to which a pint of the washing fluid has been added.

Here is really the nice point of the operation. The clothes must not boil—they require scalding only, and must be taken out when the water has reached the boiling point. READY FOR THE LINE.

Two rinse waters and a quick wringing make them ready for the line, where the air and sunshine are expected to do their work. Colored pieces should not be exposed to the direct rays of the sun, but ought to be protected by some white garment hung over them.

Careful housekeepers have a piece of white oilcloth to lay in the bottom of the clothes basket. It must be kept scrupulously clean, or the wet clothes will bear unsightly marks.

Washing fluids that contain substances that weaken the fibre of the cloth are to be condemned. Still, I prefer tender clothing, which does not do service half so long as it ought, to stained and unsightly pieces, which wear much longer than is desired by fastidious tastes. Kerosene and gasoline are not injurious, so I do not hesitate to name them as whiteners. A cupful of each is put into the boiler and mixed thoroughly with the water. The half hour of boiling removes all odors, and the rinsing will leave them clean and sweet.

RECIPE FOR A HAIR WASH.

A useful hair wash, especially for those people who easily catch cold, is made by taking five cents' worth of camphor and borax (both should be powdered) and pouring over them a pint of boiling water. Let this stand till cold and then bottle. When washing the hair add a tablespoonful of this to the warm water.

EGGS BOILED TO PERFECTION.

If you wish eggs boiled to the very point of perfection, bring some water to the boil in a small saucepan, drop in the eggs (lift the vessel to a cool part of the stove and let it stand covered ten minutes by the clock). The eggs will have a pearly transparency, yet be perfectly cooked.

A BABY'S TITLES.

Some careful investigator of babydom tells what titles an infant may claim:

The prince of wails; an inhabitant of Lapland; the morning caller; the noonday crawler; the midnight bawler; the only precious possession that never excites envy; a key that opens the heart of all classes, rich and poor alike, in all countries; a stranger with a remarkable check; that enters a house without a stitch to his back, and is received with open arms by every one.