

SHORTENED THAT IT COULD NOT SAVE.

A TRUE TALE.

Very lately there was a wild gale which broke upon the east coast of England, and in many spots the planks and other gear of wrecked ships were strewn upon the beach. Particularly at one point, in sight of a Northumberland village, a trading vessel was seen from the beach making way with great difficulty in the teeth of the tempest. It was obvious that those on board wished to round a cape that stretched some length into the sea, and then to run northward for a harbor of refuge. But both wind and wave lashed with dark awfulness against them, and it was evident to all who looked on—and they were hundreds, alarmed and running with loud cries along the cliff—that the struggle could not last—the vessel was doomed. And by and by, accordingly, those who steered it plainly gave the trial up; so that turning broadside on, it was seen drifting unmanageable before the storm.

In a few seconds, on a long belt of reefs, white with the foam of breakers, the hapless ship struck and began to settle in the waves. Despair and pity were in every face upon the shore. The crew, consisting of five or six men and a boy, were seen to climb into the rigging; while beneath them the big billows made a clean breach over deck and all. It was a terrible grave into which they looked down, and many wept to see them as they lifted up a hand, now and again, wildly for help. Meanwhile some brave sailors had hurried off to the nearest point where a life-boat was to be found; and after delays that seemed an age, at last one was slipped out of its moorings—six or eight stout and noble fellows volunteered to man it, and with shouts of fear, and yet hope, it was thrust into the boiling surf. Long it sunk and rose, a mere shell tossed by the storm; for out, almost as far as the eye could reach, the sea was white with breakers like a field of snow. At length, however, way was made, and presently the gallant little bark was seen holding fast in the roaring gale, but a few paces off from where the wreck was going to pieces. Its crew dared not come nearer, for the masts were swinging and tottering, and had they fallen across it, would have crushed it like a broken reed. By dint of great effort, a rope was uncoiled, and flung to the poor men yet hanging on the rigging, and there, one way or other, was made fast. Along this one or two dropped safely, and were