

# Northern Messenger

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## In Peril on the Sea.

(J. Macdonald Oxley, in the 'Children's Friend'.)

'For those in peril on the sea'—Hugh Bond sang the words over and over again to himself and almost unconsciously, and yet they were particularly appropriate to his present situation.

'What's that you're sayin'?' came in a gruff tone from the stern of the dory. 'If yer want to talk, why don't you speak out!'

'I wasn't sayin' anything to you, Ned,' responded Hughie mildly. 'I was just singin' to myself something I know.'

'What was it? Give us the whole of it,' demanded Ned, rousing himself from the state of semi-stupor he had been in for some hours past.

Hughie felt the color coming into his cheeks, for despite his rugged appearance, he had a vein of shyness in his nature, and he would much rather not have complied with his companion's request, but he knew better than to refuse, Ned Condon being a wilful man, and apt to be heavy of hand when met with opposition.

Accordingly, in a voice that, although utterly untrained, was not displeasing, he began to sing that splendid hymn which has brought comfort to so many anxious hearts:—

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep;  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.

'Where'd you learn that?' growled Condon, upon whom the words and music were making an impression that he resented and resisted.

'At the Mission School,' replied Hughie in a hesitating way, as if the statement might not be pleasing to his questioner.

Condon grunted sardonically, but instead of the jeering oath that Hughie expected, relapsed into the sullen silence from which the boy's singing had aroused him.

The little dory rocked aimlessly upon the leaden-hued seas which stretched away on every side to the utmost limits of vision, and so far as its occupants could tell, they were the only living creatures in the world, save an occasional white gull that swept by them on graceful wing.

Two days had passed since Condon and Hughie set out from the 'Cod-Seeker,' with a full complement of lines and bait, to draw a dory-full of codfish from the opulent waters of the great Banks.

At first they had fared well, and their boat was rapidly filling with fine big fish, when suddenly a storm swept down upon them, and drove the light dory before it for many hours, during which they were in constant danger of being swamped or overturned.

All their catch had to be thrown back into the sea, and only by incessant bailing could they keep their frail craft afloat,

The strain upon nerves and muscles was fearful, and even the shaggy, sinewy Condon felt his strength failing him, while poor Hughie could hardly hold up his head; when at

last the violence of the gale abated, and ere the next day dawned only the heaving billows remained to show how furiously it had striven for the lives of the two hapless dory-men.

But although this one danger had passed, they were still in no slight jeopardy. Tortured by thirst, faint with hunger, and weakened by exposure, unless they soon had the good fortune to be picked up by a passing vessel, they were inevitably doomed to a terrible death.

And now the second night was darkening down upon them without bringing any hope of their succour.

After a long silence, during which Hughie's own thoughts were busy with what he had learned at the little Mission School, Condon, lifting his haggard face, said in a gentle tone curiously unlike him:

'Sing that again, Hughie, the whole of it.'

Right glad now was the boy to comply. He knew every verse of the beautiful hymn, and



this time he sang it fervently, finding comfort for himself in the doing of it.

Condon listened intently, and when Hughie had finished, made him sing it yet once more.

Then he began to ask questions about God, which the poor boy, whose whole knowledge of divine things had been gained in a brief attendance at the Mission School, found it very hard to answer. But the seals of his companion's silence having once been broken, he was not to be gainsaid, and at last Hughie said earnestly.

'Pray to God, Ned, now. He will answer you. He always does.'

'But I can't pray. I don't know how,' replied Condon, with a groan that showed how deeply he was stirred. 'You pray for me.'

'I can't do that,' Hughie responded. 'But,' he said gently, 'Let us pray together.'

And so out in the midst of that wild waste of heaving waters, upon which the strayed dory was so insignificant a speck, with the stars as their only witnesses, this novel little prayer-meeting was held, with a mere lad who knew no more about God than that he thought

of him as the leader, and a rough fisherman hitherto utterly indifferent to all matters of religion, for congregation.

Strange and simple as it was, it proved the turning-point in Condon's life.

Soon after daybreak the dory was sighted by a passing vessel, and its occupants rescued from their perilous plight.

On returning to his home Condon made no secret of his resolve to henceforth serve God. He even accompanied Hughie to the Mission School, and became a humbled learner at the feet of the devoted missionary, whose heart was greatly cheered by such a recruit. Not only so, but both by example and influence he sought to lead others into the fold of Christ, and thus became a power for good in the little fishing hamlet on the bleak shores of Newfoundland.

## Gum and Missions.

John R. Mott, of the Student Volunteer Movement, is authority for the statement that thirty millions of dollars are spent annually in this country for chewing gum. 'The Christian Guardian,' commenting on this statement, remarks: 'Think of all the jaws that wag in the aimless, senseless, vulgar and unwholesome grind of so many tons of chewing gum! Apart from the vulgarity of the practice, and its serious damage to the salivary glands and the general digestion, is the utter waste of money that might be turned to better personal use, or used for the glory of God.' If all the money now wasted in the world on foolish, not to say injurious, personal habits were expended in philanthropy or for missions, the daily papers would begin to publish prophecies that the millenium was just at hand—so improved would be the material and moral aspect of country and society. —'The Religious Intelligencer.'

## Why He Did Not Go.

(Edgar L. Vincent, in the 'Standard'.)

It was in the time of the great revival. Many were coming to the Saviour and finding peace. One night I happened to sit near a young man who was evidently much interested. I had noticed his uneasiness, and when the time came for making an open expression of purpose to serve God, I expected to see him rise with the rest. But although visibly affected, he still did not rise. At last I turned to him and said, as well as I could: 'Will you not come to-night? I believe you are ready.'

For a moment he smiled, and thanked me for my interest in him; then said: 'I shall feel different about it some time. To-night the excitement is high. The atmosphere is different outside.'

'But do you not feel that this is the right thing to do?'

'Oh, yes; I suppose so.'

'Then why not do it?'

He made other excuses, but I saw that none of them was really at the bottom of his hesitancy.

'Now I will tell you,' he said, at last. 'You have been kind to me, and I thank you for it. I want you to look at that man up yonder in the choir. He takes an active part here every