

## Heroic Self-Devotion.

AN INCIDENT DURING THE STORM OF THE  
29TH DECEMBER, 1853.

"John, how violettly the wind blows; and the snow, too, how fast and thick it falls!"

"Yes, Mary, this will be a day of trial and sorrow to many hearts."

"I think, John, we shall hear awful tidings after this storm has passed away. Did you hear the rolling up and dashing among the rocks of the surf?"

"Yes, it's fearful!"

With this expression dying away from his manly lips, he sprang to his feet, moved toward the window and thought how many were in danger, and perishing, whilst he was safely sheltered from the driving storm. His heart throbbed, and his bosom beat high with emotion.

"Mary, I'll go down to the shore; perhaps I can be of use to some suffering being. Hand me my overcoat here, and let me be off."

The wife would have restrained him, out of feelings of love to her companion, but she had a "heart which felt for another's woe," and she did not say, "Don't leave me."

He hastily imprinted a kiss upon her youthful cheek, and left the house, feeling anxious to do some act of mercy to a fellow being. He toiled on and hard to reach the bank against which the ocean was in stormy anger dashing its furious waves. The wind howled, and white flakes of snow danced about him, seemingly mocking his strength and efforts to force his way along. But that manly heart was intent upon an object: engaged on an errand of mercy. Its resolutions was stronger than the terrific storm. He struggled on, and at length he gained a position near the Atlantic's awful billows. He strained his eyes, but into the distance he could not see; the thick fog dimmed his vision. He listened, but nothing could be heard save the whistling winds, fragments of timber and merchandise dashing against the rocks, and receding with the waves.

He leaned his ear to the wind again; he fancied he heard cries of distress. Whilst endeavouring to ascertain from whence the piercing sounds came, others, moved by the same feelings of humanity, appeared.

"Did you hear that cry?"

"Yes, there's a ship not far from here!"

"Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!"

After loud and repeated shouts, they heard a rough but commanding voice, forcing itself above the din of storm and sea, saying, "Where are we? Throw us a rope! Haul us ashore."

The response was given, "Aye! aye!" Away ran some for ropes and lines, by which the poor storm-beaten fellows were to be saved, whilst others remained to see if there was any chance of saving them during their companions' absence.

There were but few there, but other hearts were with them. The young wife, in spirit, was by her husband's side, sharing his perils and danger. He was at the ocean's side, she at the throne of grace. Her's was a God of Providence; she trusted in him, and was not confounded—believed that all would be well.

She prayed—her husband labored and suffered. The life lines were soon at hand. By this time, a schooner was descried driven aground by the ferocity of the storm. The captain and crew were in the rigging, clinging to the masts and ropes for safety.

"Schooner ahoy! Is there any water in the cabin?"

"No!" was the reply.

"Then go below till we get ready; you'll perish staying there!"

With care they got into the cabin and rested their weary bodies. In the meantime, those who had come to the rescue, were making all haste to save those whose lives seemed to hang on a very slender thread.

At length all was ready. The effort must be made. Life must be risked to save life. They were at too great a distance to cast a line to the imperilled vessel, for the tide was high and the storm appeared to be maddened—frenzied. They were compelled to wait, trembling with cold, but excited, bold, danger-daring?

They did wait, happy moment to them, and the endangered crew when the tide began to ebb, shouted, "Now is the time! Let us delay no longer!"

The water was entered; he moves on; the waves dash and almost overwhelm him; but on he still tugs, against wind and water. He gains a position. The crew are on deck, holding on to rope, or chain, with eyes fixed on the man attempting to save them.

He shouts—"Are you ready?"