

# Northern Messenger

Wm. Bronscombe & Co.

VOLUME XXXIX. No. 28

MONTREAL, JULY 8, 1904.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

## How Hard to Wait!

(Joseph Woodhouse, in 'Friendly Greetings.')

It was hard to wait!

But Kitty Hampton could do nothing else. She had learnt the grace of patience, where alone it is to be learnt, in quiet fellowship with Jesus Christ, whom it was her delight to trust. For all that, it was hard to wait.

She had been the contented, happy wife of Reuben Hampton for nearly seven years, and more than once on his fishing trips she had sat and wondered whether he would make his way back in safety. It so often happened that, although the fleet sailed in a fair wind, before the boats could return the weather would suddenly change, and for days together all that the 'wives and mothers' could do was to hope for the best.

Both Kitty and Reuben were familiar with the perils of the sea. Were they not, in the younger days, fishermen's children, living next door to each other? Had they not grown up within sound of the waves ever breaking on the 'cold, gray stones,' and within sight of the changeful deep, both in winter and summer?

There was no mood of the sea which they had not seen—hardly a danger, as children and youths, they had not shared. The vast ocean had a charm for these hardy fisherfolk, which long years of familiarity had wrought into a passion. And the two 'friends' knew it for themselves.

It was a passion with them. They loved the sea; they could not help it. Its very dangers and risks went to make its fascination so keen.

Then, when youth opened out into womanhood and manhood, what could be more natural than that friendship should ripen into the sentiment of a pure love? And Reuben and Kitty found themselves pledged to each other 'till death us do part.'

Never was there a prouder moment in Reuben's life than when he hastened to tell Kitty that he had at last secured a half-share in the famous smack, 'Seabird.'

Soon their cottage was ready, and they began life together. And when there came to their neat home, after two years, a dear tiny daughter, their joy and content were complete.

But now the seventh anniversary of their marriage was near. It was within two days; and the fear was, as Kitty sat at her cottage door, waiting with Jennie dozing on her lap, that Reuben might not be home in time to celebrate it. (That anniversary had always been held sacred by both of them.)

For since the fleet sailed, six days ago, the wind had veered to the stormy quarter, and wind and rain had seemed to combine to do their worst for those who gain the harvest of the sea for a livelihood. It was not that Kitty had lost faith in God that she found it so hard to wait. But what if the 'Seabird' had met with a mishap? What if Reuben in some great effort to bring his boat to harbor in time for the anniversary had 'missed stays,' and the 'Seabird' had capsized, and all hands had perished?

All kinds of fears came to her. Some she dismissed; others tarried. There was the fact to strengthen her alarm, that all the boats that



WAITING, WITH JENNIE DOZING ON HER LAP.

had made the harbor brought the same news, that the weather outside had been 'terrific'—it was almost impossible for any craft to live in it.

All Kitty could do was to wait. But in her secret soul she waited upon God. In her heart there was a quiet hush. So many times before she had been afraid, and Reuben had found his way back at length. 'So,' she said to herself, 'it will be again. Reuben is so brave, so skilful, so tactful; if he cannot weather the gale, I fear almost beyond hope for other wives and mothers, whose husbands and sons have not got back.' Still, the suspense was hard to bear.

It was like a whisper from Divine lips when the words came to her: 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.'

At that moment Jennie awoke from her short slumber, and, without looking seaward, Kitty and her daughter entered the cottage.

The door was shut, and the table for the evening meal soon spread.

Had the anxious wife only looked across the sea she would have seen far away two or three sails, all making for harbor. Perhaps the keen eyes of wifely love could have detected in one of the boats something which would have thrilled the hope that the 'Seabird' was one of them!

So it proved to be. But, oh! the havoc the storm had wrought! Sails had been torn to ribbons, ropes snapped, nets had been lost. It was all but a miracle that the 'Seabird' had come safely through.

The same evening, after Jennie had been put to bed, Kitty Hampton was seated at the table. The glow of the lamp fell upon the Book that was precious to her husband as well as to herself. She meant to recall the 107th Psalm before retiring for the night. Verse after verse had been read of the wonderful