

"I'll see," was the pleasant answer. "Don't bother now."

"And, father," shouted Rob, "bring us some popcorn; it's such fun to make cornballs cold winter evenings."

The tide was high and the sea smooth when Mr. Lane put out in his dory for the cat-boat, which was moored a short distance from the shore. The boys waited and watched till the sail was hoisted, and the little boat went dancing over the water. Then they ran back to the lighthouse to help mother. Little Carrie, the two-year-old sister, had been fretful the night before, and mamma had slept but little. So the boys were playing nurse for awhile.

It was very pleasant in the lighthouse kitchen that afternoon. The cook stove was doing its best to bake something spicy and plummy; the tea-kettle sang its cheeriest song; a cod-fish "muddle" was gently simmering itself done. Baby Carrie sat in state on a bit of rag carpet, and her devoted servants, Rob and Ben, were building splendid lighthouses for her out of pebbles from the seashore. So cheery was it, indeed, that nobody noticed when the breeze came blowing up from the south and ruffled the smooth blue sea into a thousand, curly, foamy waves. Mrs. Lane was dozing over her sewing when suddenly the kitchen door was blown open with a great fury and rush of wind. The baby cried, the boys pressed close to mamma with questions about father.

The wind grew wilder; the sea grew rougher. Mrs. Lane stood at the window watching a long time, watching for some sign of her husband's boat. At last she turned away, saying: "He won't come to-night. He knows better than to put out in such a gale. He couldn't possibly land while the waves run so high."

"And the light, mother?" said Rob.

"We must keep it," said the mother. "It is almost time to light it now."

Within an hour the night fell, and the rays from the great light began to stream over the gray, tossing sea.

The family ate their supper. Baby

Carrie went off to By-low Land in her mother's arms. The boys teased to sit up till it was time to trim the lamp at midnight. But the mother said: "No, no, go to bed, and wake up bright in the morning, and help keep house till father comes."

They went up-stairs obediently. As soon as they were in their own room, Rob said: "See here, Bennie, we must keep awake till the lamp has been trimmed. Mother was up with Carrie nearly all last night. What if she should go to sleep and not wake at the right time? Father says we must take care of mother when he is away, and, Bennie, we must."

"We'll take turns telling stories," said Bennie; "and you must pinch me good an' hard when I begin to get sleepy."

It was a difficult task that the boys had set themselves. They had been busy at work or play all day long, and it took sharp pinches and very exciting stories to keep the lips from drooping over the drowsy eyes.

Rob had an inventive turn, and he spun some lively yarns about smugglers and pirates and mutinies at sea. But, after all, the most interesting story was a true one. Mr. Lane was captain of a trading vessel for many years before he became a light-keeper. In the good ship *Esperanza*, he sailed to Spain, France, England, Ireland, Italy, and even as far as Norway.

One day, when the sea was in a calm, blue, shimmering lake, the captain thought he would like a bath. So, with a mighty splash, he plunged into the cool, enticing sea. Some of the sailors stood idly watching him, when somebody's bright eyes spied a terrible danger. "A shark! a shark!" was the fearful cry. A boat was instantly manned. The captain swam for his life, and was saved almost from the jaws of the greedy monster.

This story Rob told with many embellishments, and the words, "A shark! a shark!" spoken in a loud whisper to Bennie's ear, caused the little fellow to open his eyes to the widest extent.

At last the situation became funny, and the boys laughed till they shook the bed. In the midst of the fun, they heard the clock strike

the half hour after eleven. Then they got up and dressed themselves very quietly. No more laughing now. They were on duty.

Downstairs they went with their shoes in their hands, through the kitchen to the warm, cosy sitting-room. Not a sound did they hear. Could it be possible that the tired mother was asleep? "Look!" whispered Bennie, as they reached the open door.

Ah! how glad the boys were that they had kept awake. There sat Mrs. Lane sound asleep, her knitting in her lap. The young light-keepers did not disturb her till the long minute hand of the old clock had travelled to five minutes to twelve. Then they gave her two resounding kisses, that brought her speedily from dreamland. Very proud was the light-keeper's wife of her faithful, affectionate boys. All three hastened up the stairway, that ran round and round up the tall tower. The lamp was trimmed, and they hastened back to the bright sitting room, glad in the thought that the guiding star would shine out over the pathway of the ships, till the sun came up to take its place.

After a little midnight repast, that the boys ate with great zest, the family went to bed and slept sweetly till the morning.

When the boys woke, they heard a man's voice in the kitchen, underneath their room.

"Hurrah! father's got home," shouted Rob. Bennie ran to the window. The storm had cleared away, and there was the lighthouse boat rocking on the gentle waves. In a trice the boys were downstairs. As they ran into the kitchen, they heard the tall clock say, in sharp, clear tones, "Nine o'clock!" No wonder that the father had had time to sail over from the neighbouring island. But what was that soft, little ball rolled up on the hearth-rug? Bennie made a dash for it, and soon discovered that his father had brought him the very darlingest kitten that a boy ever called his own.

After Bennie and Robbie had eaten the breakfast that had been saved for them, they helped bring up the cargo that their father had landed on the rocks. Very inter-