

## THE COAST GUARD.

Do you wonder what I am seeing,  
In the heart of the fire, aglow  
Like hills in a golden sunset,  
With a summer sea below  
I see, away to the eastward,  
The line of a storm-beat coast,  
And I hear the tread of the hurrying waves  
Like the tramp of a maddened host.

And up and down in the darkness,  
And over the frozen sand,  
I hear the men of the coast-guard  
Pacing along the strand,  
Beaten by storm and tempest,  
And drenched by the pelting rain,  
From the shores of Carolina,  
To the wind swept bays of Maine.

No matter what storms are raging,  
No matter how wild the night,  
The gleam of their swinging lanterns  
Shine at with a friendly light,  
And many a shipwrecked sailor  
Thanks God, with his gasping breath,  
For the sturdy arms of the surfmen  
Who drew him away from death.

And so, when the wind is wailing,  
And the air grows dim with sleet,  
I think of the fearless watchers  
Pacing along their beat,  
I think of a wreck, fast breaking  
In the surf of a rocky shore,  
And the life-boat leaping onward  
To the stroke of the landing oar

I hear the shouts of the sailors,  
The boom of the frozen sail,  
And the creak of the icy halyards  
Straining against the gale,  
"Courage!" the captain trumpets,  
"They are sending help from land!"  
God bless the men of the coast-guard,  
And hold their lives in His hand.

—St. Nicholas.

## DAVID'S PRIZE.

A STORY OF THE BAY OF FUNDY.

"**W**HEY say there's a skeleton in every house, Almiry; and this is ours. I used to think we didn't have any, though we've always been poor enough, goodness knows!"

"I never minded poverty before, John," said the wife. "We've been blessed with good health, an' have been able to earn a comfortable livin'; if not a bountiful one. But this—this is so hard to bear;" and she laid aside the worn garment she was mending and looked steadily into the fire with that expression of despair that comes, not of sudden grief, but of sorrow growing day by day into the life.

A slight sound from the trundle bed caused the mother to hasten to her little one, bending tenderly over the golden head, and softly smoothed the rumpled blankets. Then, as though there were a mournful pleasure in the act, she thrust her warm hand beneath the bedclothes, and gently caressed the little distorted feet that had never taken a step. This was the skeleton—this the sorrow that brooded over the household; the youngest child and only daughter was a cripple. She was a lovely little creature, now two and a half years old; the fairest, her parents believed, in all Nova Scotia; for this was

"In the Acadian land, on the shores of Basin of Minas."

As Mrs. Hart came back to the fire-side and resumed her work, her husband asked:

"Did Mr. Blako seem very sure about it?"

"Oh, yes," was the quick reply; "he said it had been done in scores of places both in England and America, and he would guarantee that this Boston surgeon could make her poor little feet as right as anybody's. Oh, it seems harder than ever to know she might be helped, while we are so poor and powerless."

"Dont take on so, Almiry," said Mr. Hart, wiping his eyes with a rough hand, for tears were chasing each other down the mother's pale cheeks; "mebbe we can manage to get the money somehow, though it does look dubious just now."

The eldest boy, David, who was sitting near, apparently engrossed with his arithmetic lesson, now looked up and eagerly asked:

"How much would it cost for mother to go to Boston with his little sister and have her feet straightened?"

"I don't know, exactly," replied the father, "but I s'pose the fare both ways, the board bill while there, and the surgeon's fee would amount, at least, to a hundred dollars; mebbe a good deal more."

"A hundred dollars!" was his astonished reply.

A million would hardly have seemed larger or more impossible of attainment.

"I thought," he faltered, "that p'raps you'd let me work out next summer—Jack and Stevie are gettin' big enough to help here at home—an' I could earn enough to send 'em, but I couldn't. 'Twould take a good while to earn that, but I could do it in a few years, mother."

"You're a good boy, Davie," was the gentle reply, and a smile shone through the tear-drops. "But the doctor thinks that to wait, even a year, would make her chances much smaller."

When David climbed the stairs to the little bed-room he shared with his two younger brothers, his brain was full of projects for making money. Half the night he lay awake forming plans and rejecting them, while the wild March wind mingled its roar with the thundering music of the mighty incoming tide.

Nor was this one wakeful night the end of David's planning; he took his brother Jack into confidence, and together they talked over each scheme.

"I'll go without butter on my bread," said Jack, swallowing a sigh; for, like most ten-year-old boys, he enjoyed good things, and butter was his special weakness.

"So'll I, but that won't make so much difference in my case," said David laughing.

"I wish't we could find a gold mine, an' not have to wait to earn the money," suggested impatient Jack.

David shook his head. "There's no use wishin' that; the money's got to come, little by little. Let us get a box an' put in ev'ry cent we can earn, and say nothin' about it to mother till we get a real lot. I'll put in that silver half dollar I got, an' Billy Farham says he'll give me a quarter of a dollar for a little sail-boat like that I rigged for Stevie; an' if he would, don't you s'pose there are other boys who'd do the same? Folks ain't so poor as we be, an' if they was they don't all have little sisters they want to send to Boston."

But opportunities for earning were not frequent in that sparsely settled region, and the money came very

slowly. At times David was despairing, and again a stroke of good fortune—for such he considered the earning a few dimes—rendered him hopeful.

Once as he stood on the shore of the Basin watching the tide as it came rushing in, he recalled a story he had heard, how a man had found on the shore a jewelled ear-ring of great value, that had probably been torn from some victim of a wreck.

"Oh, if I could only find such a thing!" exclaimed the boy, clasping his hands tightly; but his homely common sense discouraged such a wild idea, and he added: "Precious little time have I to be searchin' the flats. I might better be at work tryin' to earn somethin' than runnin' on that fool's errand."

Meanwhile little Bessie was growing more and more beautiful and winsome. Though nothing was ever said in her presence concerning her deformity, she was evidently aware she was different from other children. As spring advanced and the boys began to go barefoot, she would sometimes pull off her little stockings and home-made cloth shoes, and gravely look first at the strong sturdy feet of her brothers, and then look at her own so unnaturally bent.

"It cuts me right through to see her do that," said David to Jack on such occasions; an' the awful sorry look on mother's face is jest as bad."

One night, in early June, the brothers lay awake long, talking in whispers of their failures and possibilities, until poor Jack became so sleepy that in the midst of a sentence he was carried away to dream-land. But David was restless and wakeful, his warm heart full of desire to do something for the sister he loved so well, and fear lest he should not succeed. He counted the slow strokes of the clock as they told the hour of eleven, and said to himself:

"I do know as I was ever awake so late in all my life before."

Shortly after this he became conscious that for some time he had been hearing a sound as of the surf beating against the shore. Being so accustomed to the roaring of water—for in this arm of the Bay of Fundy the tide rises and falls from fifty to seventy feet each day—he had thought nothing of it. But just now it flashed across his mind that the tide was high between six and seven o'clock, and therefore must now be nearly run out.

"What on earth can that splashin' mean?" the boy thought; "there's no wind a-blowin', an' the tide ain't coming in, unless I've been asleep an' didn't know it;" and he sat upright in bed rubbing his eyes to assure himself he was not dreaming.

The noise was fast becoming terrific. David thought he had never heard even the wind and tide make such a commotion.

Presently the cloak struck twelve, and then he knew that he had not been asleep, and that something unusual must be occurring along the shore. Noiselessly slipping out of bed, he went to the window; the waning moon was shining faintly and the stars were bright.

"Twin't so very dark, if 'tis midnight," said David. "I'm a-going to find out what all this is about."

It was but the work of a moment to draw on his scanty clothing, and, swinging himself into a low tree, whose branches were within reach of his

window, he was soon on his way to the shore. Rolling up his pantaloons, he boldly made his way down the flat, toward the receding tide and the noise, his bare feet sinking into the mud at every step. But he had not gone far ere terror overcame him, and he went back to sit on the bank to wait and wonder.

"It can't be a ship," he mused; "no kind o' a craft could kick up such a fuss as that; I b'lieve its somethin' alive."

As loud as the report of a small cannon, but sharper, and more like what one might suppose to be the clapping of gigantic hands, sometimes three or four in quick succession, came the sounds.

An hour passed, and the commotion was perceptibly less, long pauses occurring between the noises, after a time all was still except an occasional heavy thud.

Courage and curiosity now triumphed over fear, and David again ventured down the flat. With wide-open eyes and sense alert, he proceeded in the direction of the sounds, and soon was able to see, in the dim light, a dark object outlined against the sky.

"It looks like the hull of a ship, bottom upwards," thought the boy, cautiously going a little nearer. But just then one end of the shape gave a flop that sent the mud flying in all directions.

David made a backward leap that would have done credit to a professional gymnast, saying aloud in excitement:

"It's a whale, sure's I'm alive! an' it's my whale, for I'll have it, I will!"

How to hold possession of it was the next question, for a quarter of a mile of mud lay between him and the bank, and the tide which was already turning would carry away the prize; but with our hero to think was to act, and we shall see whether wisely or not. Running as fast as possible over the oozy ground, he made his way to his father's boat-house, and, hastily throwing into his skiff a gaff hook and a long stout rope, he again started back, dragging the boat after him.

He had not gone far when he bethought himself that his parents might be alarmed at discovering his absence; so, leaving the boat, he ran to the house which was not more than thirty rods from the shore. Going to the open window, he shouted:

"Father! Mother! I've got a whale!" and then darting back without waiting a reply, so fearful of losing what he already considered his own property.

Mr. and Mrs. Hart were both sound asleep when their boy's voice penetrated the room, but they awoke instantly, fully conscious that some one had spoken, but uncertain as to the words.

"Who was that?" questioned the father.

"'Twas David's voice, I'm sure," answered the mother; "an' it seemed as though he was right here in the room."

"David," called Mr. Hart; but no answer came. Going to the stairway, he called again, with the same result.

"It must be he hollered out in his sleep, an' both windows bein' open it sounded pretty plain. Guess I'll see what time 'tis," and he struck a match and held it before the clock. It's a quarter past two; time for another nap;" and, undisturbed, he lay down to sleep.

But Mrs. Hart was more wakeful, and presently said: