

HIS DREAM.

The accommodating wind that had all along been dallying with her unbound hair, now, by a sudden rush, raised the soft strains and blew them across his mouth, just as she was saying:

"I must go, Barney; every sound seems like a footfall. You mustn't tempt me; you know my father's temper."

"I do know it, Jessie, and that is the very reason that I urge you to-night to say that you will come under my protecting care."

"But he will see differently later, Barney. He can't see no charges against you; it is only ... prejudice that makes you enemies."

Barney thought not, but he could not tell her so. The soft breeze bent like waves against the line of evergreen trees under which they were standing, and those long mysterious "A-h!" were repeated over and over in their nodding tapers.

"Well, then, Jessie," said the insistent young man, "I must bring up my last argument. I am going to leave this part of the coast."

"Oh, Barney! oh Barney!" she said, lifting her hands as if to ward off a blow, "why, where are you going?"

"Down to Morrissy Point—into the life-saving service."

"I thought—I thought that you would not go away from here. I thought you liked—"

"Not the position of coast guard, Jessie. I don't have a taste for hunting my kind, and—there are very disagreeable duties—or there might be, sometime, devolving upon this position. Come with me."

"Oh, Barney, I can't decide yet. My father will outgrow these unreasonable prejudices. I—"

But Barney thought differently. There was likely to be a somewhat lasting prejudice between a coast-guardsmen and a daring smuggler; and this latter he was fully convinced belonged to Captain McDowell. He was sure of this fact, and that his duty, at any time, might bring him into hostile collision with the desperate old man, that he secured a change of place for himself as soon as possible.

"Morrissy Point!—and the town such a little ways inland. Why, Barney, I shall lose you among those gay and polished seaside visitors."

He stopped her reproachful tones with his mouth, and she could only say, "But I will haunt you. In every sea-bird's voice you shall hear my despairing cry," when a heavier and more solemn "Ah-ah" of the firs, and some slight echo sent her slight body shivering against his heart. He held her there and they listened. No sound, only that thick, weird sighing overhead.

"Meet me here to-morrow night and decide to go with me," he whispered.

"Yes, if I can," she replied, returning his embrace with a convulsive caress, and then sped down the cliff to the cottage.

The next night Lieutenant Barney Lester hastened to the trysting place, only to meet the old housekeeper, Susan, who put into his hand a crumpled and meagre little note, which he deciphered by the waning twilight.

"Oh, Barney, I cannot come. He must have been near us, and he is in a fearful rage. I—"

That was all, but old Susan, with a wary glance around, supplemented the information.

"The cap'n's gone on a vige, and hez took Miss Jessie with him. Sailed at daybreak on this flood, this mornin'."

A combined emotion of anger and dismay surged over Barney's spirit. Fate or the furies had played him a trick, and he was helpless. With a stern and gloomy brow he began his night's beat.

Before morning a dishevelled mass of clouds were racing over the heavens. There were plumes and spirals, and clots of condensed or sifting vapors, and the ocean, as if shaken out of its dozing state, began to roar with rage.

"A storm!" he said, and stronger came that chilling foreboding of trouble. This was his last night there. In two or three days' time he would be down farther. Already he could distinguish the hollow, melancholy boom of the breakers to the south of Morrissy light—the boom whose monotonous jar and rumble was broken once in a while by the thunder of a higher incoming roller.

And Jessie, his Jessie, far out beyond the harbor bar—what dangers might assail her with this coming Atlantic storm? Oh, if he had only known last night he would not have let her leave him.

At daylight he was relieved, and went to his quarters, where he threw himself down without undressing, and almost instantly sank into a state of incubus.

He seemed to be standing by the water's edge, his weight partly raised by some rocks. The sea was calm and nearly noiseless, only sobbing to itself like a grieved child half asleep.

He thought that he stood spell-bound looking at a broad, white path out over the waves, and in that belt of light something beat and throbbed, rose and fell with the pulse of the sea. And the swallowing sound, and the sobbing and the heart beat of the tide made him shudder with nameless dread; and then the moon came up out of the sea and shone with blazing power into his face. He raised his hand to shade his eyes.

The action at least was real, and awoke him in a cold perspiration. The sun, for the first time breaking through the vapor, had struck with a full blaze upon his face.

He instantly sprang up, with an undefinable feeling of calamity in his heart. So vividly could he recall that piece of wreck, with the body lashed to it, throbbing in the water, that he did not try to sleep again.

All the earlier part of the day he watched the ominous clouds, so influenced by the upper currents, stranded, coiled, curdled; belts passing through loops, wisps blowing out between mimic colonnades, and the buzzing and humming of the breakers, beat back by a counter current nearer the earth.

His duty as guardsman was done, and some days would elapse before he would take his place actively in the life-saving service; but he could not rest.

Every heavier gust of the gathering storm brought him to his feet. By noon the sun had ceased to struggle to be seen. The clouds were being blown up in

banks and heaps, like rocks around a quarry.

At noon he started off on foot for his future field of labor, and sunset found him clambering over the rocks near Morrissy Light.

What an infuriated sunset it was! Low-down, long, blood-red gashes in the clouds; above these were purple bruises, and near by, coppery braziers burned ghastly vapors.

The brave fellows belonging to the service stood where the gale, in wild, hilarious gusts threw the spray over them; but not until midnight did the tempest gain its height, and for a few hours drove everything before its uncontrollable fury. Soon the shrieks of the gale, the thunder of the breakers and the splash of the water flying against the lighthouse created a deafening uproar.

Then short, sudden lulls occurred, as if the elements were weary and panting, and the full moon, riding high, floated her bright glance through every opening crevice.

The grey summer dawn at last, and the strained, expectant eyes upon the cliff descried what they have been watching for. A wild cry, and the stalwart fellow leaps along the rocks. He knows no boat can live in the sea, but with the shout—

"A wreck! a wreck!" he begins walking out through the surf.

They call to him, and he permits them to fasten the lines about him, and holding an oar in his iron grasp he begins his perilous advance. He holds a precarious footing on projecting rocks, for it is best to advance thus. Where the breakers are below the surf, the water shoots with fearful velocity, and makes irresistible whirlpools with tunnel-like centres. His valiant struggle is opposed by gigantic forces. The water in jets, in coils, in wedge shape, buffets him. He sways, he totters, he recovers his balance amid the hoarse shouts of those assisting and watching the uneven contest. Now an enormous roller strikes him in the breast. He is thrown backwards into the surf, but with a quick movement of the oar he keeps himself from striking his head upon the rocks. For full a minute he is down, jounced and shaken, and other brave fellows are coming to his aid; but with a herculean effort he once more regains his feet, and again his comrades' shouts mingle with the roar of the surf.

But the light spar is nearly in—tossed from wave to wave, and kneeling on a rocky ridge and partly sustained by their oar—Barney and another brave fellow grapple it before it is driven against the reef. The spray bursts around them; it pours in cascades from their devoted heads. They are thrown upon their knees, but their exhausted strength is renewed and sustained by others toiling to meet them.

Lashed face downward, soaked and apparently dead, the woman was carried beyond the rocks, cut from the spar and borne into the station. She had not been long in the water, and she was alive. The small, buoyant vessel had not foundered until after midnight, they afterwards learned.

When Jessie McDowell was fully resuscitated, the sky was blown clear of every rag of cloud, and the moon was poisoning over the western forests.