

detained in Liverpool, and there may be a letter waiting for us. I think you had better go and see."

"Why, Mother! we were stupid indeed, and I will go right off," I said, the hope which had entered her heart taking possession of mine. Mother then went down to see about breakfast, a thing she had not done for the last two weeks. But we were all too anxious to eat much, and, after sitting in silence for some time, we rose. I went up stairs again to put on my hat, and when I came down Mother was waiting for me in the hall. She put her arm around my neck and kissed me, but her heart was too full to speak.

"Good-bye, Mother; I will walk very fast and be back in a short time," was all I said, for I feared to say anything that would raise her hopes.

The post-office was some distance from our house, but I was not long in reaching it. When I got near I began to lose hope, and by the time I reached the door I was too agitated to go in. How long I stood there, longing and yet fearing to enter, I know not, but the thought of Mother at home roused me, and without waiting to think further I mounted the steps and opened the door.

There was no person there, and I stood inside for a minute, feeling unable to go and ask for what I wanted. But a man came to the opening and looked at me, so I was obliged to go forward.

"Will you please see," I said, trying to clear my throat of the lump that was choking me, "if there is a letter for Mrs. Captain Dailey?" He went to see, and that minute of agony was the worst of all. I put my hands over my face and prayed God to help us to bear whatever sorrow he thought fit to lay upon us. When I raised my head the man had come back and was looking at me. Seeing, I suppose, the tears with which my eyes were brimming, he seemed unwilling to give me my answer; and when he did it was merely with a

shake of the head, as if he thought that that was a kinder way of breaking the news to me.

I was walking quickly home, for I knew that each minute of suspense would make it worse for Mother in the end, when, just as I reached the corner of our street, a girl without hat or shawl of any kind, and carrying a dust-pan, rushed around it, almost knocking me down in her hurry. In a moment I recognized Mattie.

"Oh, Miss Robina, the doctor!" she gasped. "A letter came for your mother a little while ago, and in a few minutes I heard Master Stewart scream, and when I went into the room she was lying on the floor, like as if she was dead."

I waited to hear no more, and in a few moments was beside her on the floor. Stewart was there, too, with his arms around her neck, calling to her, and begging her to speak to him. "Stewart," I said, "move away quickly; she is not dead, but you will kill her if you do that."

By the time that I had loosened her collar, and tried to restore her by every means in my power, the doctor arrived with Mattie. He looked at mother and felt her pulse; then he looked at me, and I saw by his face what he thought.

"Your mother has received a great shock and you must keep her very quiet," he said. "We will lay her on the lounge, and when she comes to give her a little wine. I can do nothing now, for it may be some time before she recovers; but I will come back this evening. Let her eat anything she cares for, but, above all, keep her very quiet. Don't forget that, my poor boy," he said, patting Stewart's head and looking into his pale face as he went out after helping us to lay her on the sofa.

When he was gone I picked up the letter, which was lying on the floor. It was from the owners of the missing vessel, and told us in few but kind