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## A Wreck and a Rescue.

On a wild night in the month of March, 1882, the British barque 'W. J. Stairs,' from Liverpool to New York, struck on the beach at Long Branch, directly opposite Bath-avenue. A strong north-easter was blowing at the time, and a great swelling sea was breaking with tremendous fury on the shore.

It was nine o'clock at night when the vessel first struck, and the sails were immediately hauled round to try and drive her off shore. It was of no use. No power on earth could save her in such a position, on such a night, with such a sea. One great monster billow broke over her and away went boats, bulwarks, masts, spars, rigging and all in one fearful crash into the ocean.

Then began the fearful struggle for life on the part of the helpless crew. Thirteen men and a cabin boy were clinging to the wreck. At first they had tried to launch a boat, but it was crushed like an egg-shell. Then they gathered on the poop deck, holding fast to anything that would save them from being swept away.

Then, seemingly all together, they lifted up their voices in one long, loud, bitter cry of anguish and despair for help. Above the roar of the tempest, above the crash of the breaking timbers, above the shouts of the life-saving captain and crew on the bluff, you could hear that heartrending shriek out from the dark black whirlpool of death: 'Help, help, help!'

The captain of the life-savers said to me

in the morning: 'I have passed through some wild scenes in my life, but never anything like the voices of those men on the wreck while for the time being we were helpless to save them.'

The pitchy darkness of the night was too great to permit the wreck to be seen from the shore. The first imperative duty of the savers is to get a line shot from the shore to the ship. This is effected by making a line fast to an eye-bolt of a shell or cylinder which is fired from a mortar over the vessel so as to fall directly on some part of the wreck.

To this line is secured a tally board with directions printed in different languages, so that the perishing men may know instantly just what to do. But, alas, through the long terrible night there was no light possible for the poor sailors on the doomed ship. And so those on the wreck and their rescuers on shore awaited with unspeakable suspense the blessed breaking of the day which meant life or death to so many.

And at last it came! The merest, feeblest, faintest streak of light, far away yonder over the angry ocean, but what a messenger of mercy it was to all those watchers for the morning! It was an awful sight that greeted them. The strong, stately ship of the night before was literally a 'total wreck.'

The ceaseless pounding of the sea had broken her into three separate sections. The bow section had been driven one way, the stern another, while the middle part had careened over on its beam ends. On this middle section thirteen men were clinging with a

death clutch to such scraps of rigging or rope as were left.

The little cabin boy had lost his grip during the night and perished in the surf. Now came the supreme moment they had all waited for so long. Through the dim haze of the early morn, and the blinding spray of the sea, the gun was aimed, the shell fired, and the line fastened to the wreck. Then the stronger hawser was fixed and tightened by the windlass, and the life-saving buoy sent over. Then, one by one, each in the same way as every other, captain and coxswain alike, were saved.

My memory never goes back to that scene of wreck and rescue without thinking what a striking picture it was of the way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take that hopeless vessel in the breakers as a picture of our poor humanity, wrecked by sin, and the sailors clinging to the wreck, even while it was splitting in fragments about them, as a picture of multitudes of men clinging to self and sin and perishing things, even while they know they are perishing.

And take the life-saving buoy, provided by the government for just that purpose, as the fitting symbol of God's provision for a lost world in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Taking all this together we have almost a perfect picture of salvation by grace.

## The Evil of Taking Offence.

To give offence is a great fault, but to take offence is a greater fault. It implies a greater amount of wrongness in ourselves, and it does a greater amount of mischief to others. I do not remember to have read of any saint who ever took offence. The habit of taking offence implies a quiet pride which is altogether unconscious how proud it is. The habit of taking offence implies also a fund of uncharitableness deep down in us, which grace and interior mortification have not reached. Contemporaneously with the offence we have taken there has been some wounded feeling or other in an excited state within us. When we are in good humor we do not take offence.

Is it often allowable to judge our neighbor? Surely we know it to be the rarest thing possible. Yet we cannot take offence without, first, forming a judgment; secondly, forming an unfavorable judgment; thirdly, deliberately entertaining it as a motive power; and, fourthly, doing all this, for the most part, in the subject-matter of piety, which in nine cases out of ten our obvious ignorance withdraws from our jurisdiction.

A thoughtless or a shallow man is more likely to take offence than any other. He can conceive of nothing but what he sees upon the surface. He has but little self-knowledge, and hardly suspects the variety or complication of his own motives. Much less, then, is he likely to divine in a discerning way the hidden causes, the hidden excuses, the hidden temptations, which may lie, and always do lie, behind the actions of others.

Readiness to take offence is a great hindrance to the attainment of perfection. It hinders us in the acquisition of self-knowledge. No one is so blind to his own faults