

and daughter seemed inclined to think rather than talk. The big drops of rain beat upon the window panes and the wind whistled around the snug dwelling, making them realize the comforts by which they were surrounded. They thought of the dear one far away, and they wondered whether he was shielded from the pitiless storms, and above all, whether he was save from the many temptations which beset the pathway of the young and inexperienced, when they are out in the cold and unfeeling world, away from the benign influence of home and friends.

Suddenly Lottie exclaimed, "O, mother, do look at that poor man walking in the middle of the road. He must be drenched to the skin. I wonder why he is out on such a dreadful day. Where can he be going?"

"He's coming toward our gate," added Lottie, "and he's dressed like a sailor. I wonder what he can want."

She watched him as he entered the gate and walked up the path to the house. Then a loud wrap was heard at the door, and she ran to open it. There stood the poor man, the wet dripping from his garments, and the cold wind beating the rain into his face.

He made a low bow to Lottie, and said, in a beseeching tone:

"It's a very cold, wet day. Would you please allow me to warm myself by your fire a few minutes?"

Mrs. Maynard was not the woman to refuse so reasonable a request, especially when it came from one who needed so very much what he asked. And since her son ran away to sea, her heart had warmed toward the "sons of the ocean," although it was a rare sight to see one in their part of the country, and consequently it did not often lie in her power to befriend them. So when this poor wanderer came to her door shivering with cold, and apparently so much in need of warmth and refreshment, she was not behindhand in her hospitality. She told Lottie to set a chair for him by the fire, and also to set out some food on the table near him, of which he was cordially invited to partake. After he appeared thoroughly warmed and his hunger satisfied, Mrs. Maynard turned to him, as he sat by the fire with averted face, and inquired, why he happened to be out on such an inclement day.

"Why, you see ma'am," said the stranger

in a respectful tone, "I only landed the other day. I've just returned from a long voyage and I'm on my way to see an old friend, who lives somewhere on this road."

"Have you been at sea long?" asked Mrs. Maynard.

"Well, not more than three or four years. I've made two voyages to China, and this last to the west coast of South America and back, and now I think I shall settle down on land, for I am about tired of following the sea. It's a hard life, and you're treated 'most like a dog."

"It's a hard life, you say?" said Mrs. Maynard sadly; she was thinking of her absent son. "I suppose in your wanderings you never met with a young man by the name of Charles Maynard, did you?"

The stranger covered his face with his hands, while a deep sob heaved his manly bosom. Then uncovering his face, the big tears running down his cheeks, he looked up and said softly, "Mother, don't you know your boy? I am Charlie Maynard!"

A mother's arms were instantly thrown around him. A mother's kisses fell thick and fast on his swarthy face; and, amid the exclamations of joy from herself and Lottie, the poor wanderer felt that he was indeed welcome.

"I knew you wouldn't know me," he said to his mother, after the first burst of joy had subsided; "my beard has grown so unusually for one of my age, and my face is so burned by being in the tropics."

"I hope you will never leave us again," said Mrs. Maynard anxiously.

"No mother, my mind is made up to that. I've turned over a fresh leaf, and I mean to stay, and try to do my duty to you and father. I never forgot your teaching while I was away, and by the blessings of God they preserved me from many snares to which I was exposed. I can never feel too thankful to you, mother, for the kind advice you always gave me. But where is father?"

"He is out in the barn threshing. Sit still; he'll be in presently," said his mother.

"No, I would rather go and speak to him alone. You know I can find my way," he added, laughing.

When he reached the barn he gently opened the door and walked in. The farmer gazed at