

# Northern Messenger

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## Stand By!

The lingo of the sailors, which smacks of the salt sea and the vasty deep, contains many short and suggestive phrases, which may have a meaning for landmen.

Among the terse commands which often ring out from the quarter-deck is the familiar order, 'Stand by!' Sometimes it is, 'Stand by to heave the lead!' sometimes,

the long boat while sharp, quick orders were being given on the execution of which might depend the safety of the ship and its passengers.

So on land, as well as at sea, eternal vigilance—a constant watchfulness for the chance to do or dare—is the price of success and fame. Not aloofness but alertness is the motto of the successful man.

The scholar who 'stands by' to mark the

guard, ready alike for defence and for advance against evil.

Life is crowded with golden opportunities of service for God and man. Heed the call of the Great Captain when He commands 'Attention!'—'stand by' to serve as occasion offers and Providence points the way.—The Rev. A. S. Dwight, in 'Friendly Greetings.'

## The Minister's Wife.

(R. W. Jackson, in the 'Examiner'.)

The Rev. Reuben Ellis was the minister of Bethesda Chapel, Oldborough. He had come there as a student fresh from college, with a London degree, and a plentiful supply of hope and inexperience. Bethesda rejoiced in him, and in spite of many attempts at humility, he could not help rejoicing in himself. Twenty-eight years of age, ruddy, healthy, he faced Bethesda congregation at his first service, and was not dismayed. The gallery, save for the choir, was a vast wilderness; and as he looked down upon the array of pews beneath, dotted here and there with human figures, he half imagined himself looking upon an ancient map of Africa. But in his brain there were wonderful sermons, capable of revolutionising Oldborough; and while the congregation was struggling through a lengthy chant, he saw in his dream hosts crowding into the vacant pews, and the £100, which formed his stipend, expanding into more stately and comfortable figures.

Thirteen years had gone by since then. The wonderful sermons had been preached, but only a select few had seen the wonder of them. One or two families, who had had quarrels elsewhere, increased the dimensions, but not the peace of the congregation. The gallery was still desolate, and the salary had slowly and painfully risen to £140, at which point it had long been stationary. The minister never dreamed in the pulpit now. The kingdom of heaven might be taken by storm, but not Oldborough.

Thirteen years make great changes in a man, and in every way the Rev. Reuben Ellis was changed. Soon after coming to Oldborough, he had married the girl who had caught his eager student fancy. No minister's bride ever entered a manse with a sweeter or more loyal heart than Grace Ellis. It seemed to her such a wonderful thing to be a minister's wife, and she believed in Reuben with a belief greater even than his own. Sitting in a side pew near the pulpit, she had a good view of almost the whole congregation; and while the great sermons were being delivered, she was wont now and again to steal a sly glance towards certain persons who were influential and were supposed to be intellectual, in the hope of seeing their admiration of those masterpieces. Alas! she seldom saw any comfort in those hard, impassive faces; it was like trying to reap the golden wheat in January. Insensibly, as the years went on, she



'Stand by to loose the to'-gallant sails!' and again, 'Stand by to get the cutter aboard!' or, 'Stand by the main sheet!'

The phrase as used by the men of the sea, who have no time to lose in round-about expressions, means to keep near to a post of duty and to maintain oneself in a state of attention, ready to execute a piece of important work without delay and without a miss as soon as the next order comes. There is also another use of these words among seamen, as when the captain of one ship 'stands by' another vessel in distress, keeping near it on the high seas so long as danger threatens, ready at a moment's notice to render needed assistance.

In life at large there is constant need of 'standing by' to do the thing that is duty; or to offer the succour that is required by some suffering or perishing soul. To 'stand by' is to be alert and attentive to the duty of the moment. A captain would make short work of a sailor who while on watch should remain star-gazing, or should take a nap in

instructions of a teacher; the clerk who 'stands by' to execute the request of a customer, or the order of his employer, the conductor who 'stands by' to read carefully and obey the telegram from the train-despatcher, the watchman who 'stands by' to guard property from loss by fire or theft, the doctor who 'stands by' the bedside of the sick to save a valuable life, all afford instances of good work done through attention to the task of the hour.

By thus 'standing by' to do the next thing many a man, once in very humble circumstances, has climbed the ladder of success by rounds of effort, until at last perhaps the whole world knows his name and holds him in honor.

The Christian is a man who 'stands by' to hear what God may have to say to him, and to execute the divine commands as they come. 'Standing by' is after all but the modern phrase of the familiar injunction, 'Watch and pray!' The Christian is perpetually on