



"THE DOCTOR SAYS NOTHING BUT A MIRACLE CAN SAVE HIM."

heavily bearded; and now, after nearly fifteen months' cruising in those Indian waters, is certainly considerably browned, but, altogether, just the lad of whom a mother or a sweetheart would be proud.

His companion was the very opposite in appearance. He was short, fair, freckled, had very sandy whiskers, and not much of it; little, round, sharp eyes, with eyebrows and eyelashes almost white. The whole was surmounted with a head of bristly red hair, which, in spite of coaxing, brushing, water, or pomade, would insist upon standing almost upright. And yet, between these two opposite-looking men, there had sprung up a friendship of the very closest character. Their shipmates could not understand it, for it lay deeper than they could see or read—it was the Saviour's love. This was the cause that first drew, then bound, them to each other.

But Joe Richards is speaking: "What do you think, Sam, about our having special prayer at least twice a day for Lieutenant Vincent? You know it has been the talk of every one how he is going to the bad very fast; and now the doctor says nothing but a miracle can save him. I don't know who those fast friends of his have to look to, to work miracles; and it seems to me the only way to save him is to ask our God, who has performed a miracle on both of us, by turning us from darkness to light, to save Lieutenant Vincent, body and soul."

"Well, Joe," replied Sam, "I feel more and more every day there's no one but God can help us in all our need, not only our extremities, but in all the very tiniest things of our lives; and, oh, how I wish this sickness of Lieutenant Vincent might lead him to know Jesus. That would settle at once all the difficulties, whether of life or death. By all means let us specially pray for this."

"Away there, cutter's crew!" shouted the boatswain's mate, and Sam had to leave his friend and his sewing to take his place in the first cutter, of which he was coxswain.

A TERRIBLE CALM.

In a splendid bungalow on shore, watched by one of his own men, who, in turn, was waited upon by two native Cingalese servants, lay Ralph Vincent. With a low moaning, and incessant tossing to and fro, a haggard look in his handsome face; dry, parched, cracked lips, he had lain for over a week in deep unconsciousness; and now, on this sultry afternoon, sultry even for this Eastern clime, he is slowly coming back to life. The strange, crooning chant of the punkah man, who, seated just outside the sick room, chants his quaint Cingalese song, as, with hands clutching the punkah rope, he sways backwards and forwards, keeping the great fan in motion over the sick man's bed, and the English-like "caw" of the Indian crows outside,

are the first sounds that strike the waking man's ears.

"Shall I get you anything, sir?" asks his servant.

"Yes," feebly replies the sick man. "A big draught of the coldest water you can get."

Oh, how eagerly the large glass was drained! And then comes the question that seems uppermost in the officer's mind: "Ellis, how long have I been ill?"

"I can't remember exactly, sir; but you have been unconscious just over a week now. Doctor said, this morning, if you came round again you would soon rally—in fact, pick up quicker than you ran down. I must go and get you something to eat, sir. You must eat all you can now, you know, sir; and we'll soon have you back on the bridge again, ready for anything."

As the sick officer lay back, thought was very busy; conscience whispered: "Suppose you had died while you were insensible, what about your soul?" And though he knew little of even the letter—and nothing of the spirit—of eternal things, yet common

sense and his education, with smatches of barely-remembered words, all these things set his thoughts busy. He knew he was not fit to die, and he there and then determined to "start square" when he got well again; and thus he vainly thought he would learn to be happy, and prepare himself for the last change, that must come sooner or later. He shuddered at the thought of how near he had been to death.

Every day he grew more and more quiet and moody, but physically gained in strength, and very shortly his face was seen among his brother officers on his ship, and his voice heard giving orders among the men, though all felt that a change had come over him, and he was not the happy, light-hearted, joyous man he had been.

At last it began to be talked about among the officers and men that Lieutenant Vincent was trying to be religious. No small amount of quiet banter, and almost open chaff, went the round of the wardroom mess about the "new saint." No one seemed pleased, and every one puzzled, by the new turn in affairs.

We can hardly say "no one," for Joe Richards and Sam Harper were pleased in a sense. They felt that there was something in the fact that Lieutenant Vincent was, at least, thoughtful; and they prayed on, that his eyes might be opened to his own need.

They had now been out from Trincomalee some days, and were working slowly southwards, having received orders to cruise on the slaving ground, and chase and catch any doubtful dhows. In the minds of most of the men there were visions of prize-money, and the thrilling excitement of the slave chase. Except the burly, red-faced Jenkins, who could boast of seventeen years' service, they were mostly young men. He had had one cruise on the slave coast before, and he at once became a sort of oracle, to be consulted again and again on a hundred points about the "traffic" by his younger and eager shipmates.

To day there was little to do. Just after sunrise the ship lay becalmed, and the fire of question and answer was kept up between the oracle and his consulters.

Our two friends—Joe Richards and Sam Harper—were leaning over the ship's side, watching the sea-birds, and talking together. We have said the ship was becalmed, and there had come an almost painful sense of hush. The ship lay like a log on the water, only rocking sluggishly from side to side, as she was moved by the long and regular ocean swell; the creak of the yards, grinding against the mast as she lurched over; the dull, hollow flap of the sails, as they hung useless; the click and twitter of the reef-points against the canvas; and an occasional scream of a wild sea-bird; together with the strange, deep purple appearance of the distant horizon—all lent an almost uncanny feeling to the quietest of quiet moments. So striking was its quietude, that Joe Richards—

after several moments silence, said to his clam: "I don't see what a type of peace this is. If I were a painter I would paint this ocean, ship, sky, birds, and call my picture, 'Peace!'"

Just at this moment the captain came on deck, mounted the bridge, and, casting one hurried glance towards the purpling horizon, he shouted "Boatswain's mate!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Call all hands! Hands, shorten sail!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" And then there penetrated into every distant recess of the ship the shrill whistle, followed by the hoarse cry of the boatswain's mate: "All hands! Hands shorten sail! Hurry up. Now then, lads, cable up, scup."

As Richards and Harper each turned to go to their own posts, they heard Jenkins say, with an oath: "Why, what's the skipper doing of that? He must be a fool, taking in sail! Why, the cat's paw moving!"

But the captain had sailed these seas too often to be deceived, and in less than half-an-hour a tremendous squall came down upon the vessel, and, but for the timely preparation, danger and death would have followed.

All night it blew very hard, and as the two friends paced, sailor fashion, backwards and forwards on the deck of the ship, they talked over all these things.

"I don't believe I shall ever forget the day and its lesson," said Joe Richards.

"Nor me, Joe. Do you remember what you said, just before the skipper came on deck, about it's being a type of peace?"

"Yes, Sam. That is where I feel I have learnt such a lesson. A peace which had in it all the stuff that goes to make up a frightful storm; and that but for the skipper's coming up when he did, and taking in sail, we might all have been at the bottom now, as far as our bodies are concerned; and though our souls would have been safe, what about all these poor fellows? And it just seems to me that it is a true type of thousands, and of what I was before I came to Christ. I thought I had peace. Well, so I had, come to that, but it was a peace like this afternoon's ocean's peace: a peace that had the storm wrapped up in it, ready to burst out, and swallow up at any time."

"Thank God, Joe, he is our peace, and amid all storms we are safe in his arms."

"Yes, Sam; but I was just trying to think of that verse which says something about peace and—and—safety—"

"Oh, I know what you mean, Joe! 'For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.'

"God help us to help some of our fellows to see the true peace, Joe. But I must turn in—I've got the middle watch. Good night!"

"Good night, my hearty!"

(To be continued.)

THE BABY KING.

THE anecdotes current about little Don Alfonso are simply innumerable, and appealing as they do to every mother's heart, go far toward measuring the popularity of the throne throughout Spain.

He is exceedingly frank and ungratified in the expression of his opinions, especially when it concerns the personal appearance of his lieges, and although extremely disconcerting to the parties immediately concerned, they constitute a source of delight to everybody else. It was only with the greatest difficulty that his mother was able to impress upon him the necessity of abstaining from making remarks of this character in an audible tone of voice at church. The king manifestly took it for granted that the instructions to remain quiet and silent during divine service applied to others, as well as himself, for shortly afterward, when the royal family and the court attended mass in state at the Atto Church, little Don Alfonso suddenly interrupted the preacher in the midst of one of his most majestic and eloquent perorations by commanding him, in a shrill and piping tone of voice, to be still, and not to make such a noise in church.