

wave; his sleeves rolled up, showing a famous pair of muscular arms, well knit and strengthened by constant pulling at the oars.

"It's nicely in the shade here, sir, and I'm not so busy but that I might enjoy a bit of chat with you if you could sit down a minute."

"Thank you, Bob; it is very warm walking, and a rest will be grateful. But to tell the truth we should like to know what that means carved with a knife in the stone by the door: 'Praise God, we pulled through.'"

"Ay, it's a long story, and Jim ought to be here to do his bit of it, for he's as much to thank God for as I have, every whit."

"Was it a bad storm which you met at sea, and God helped you through it?"

"Well no, it warn't at sea, and neither was it a matter of wind and wave; but it took place yonder down by the beach, and was a pretty stiff storm, I can tell you."

"Indeed, the story must be worth the telling; let us hear it, Bob."

The fisherman laid down the axe with which he had been splitting some old timbers for firewood, and glancing up at the flag which floated several feet above our heads, he began:—

"That flag as you see up there didn't always fly over my house; there was a time when there wasn't much to fly a flag about, indoors—that is, much happiness and comfort. It was all my fault, for my poor wife she did everything she could to keep me straight, and many a time when I've come home up that street yonder, having spent most of my money and muddled all of my wits at the 'Outward Bound,' she has met me with a kind and gentle word—no nagging or anything of that sort from her. I'rays it was quite as well, nay, it must be all right since He did it, but it pleased God to take her away from me, and I felt the blow awful, that I can assure ye.

"Just about that time when I was very down, and cared even nothing for the public-house, so low and dispirited I felt, a kind gentleman as preached at the Fishermen's Chapel found me out, and 'Stop,' he says, laying his hands on my arm; 'Bob, now's the time, lad, to give your heart to God, and begin a new life.'

"'It's very kind of you,' I said; 'but if only you knew what a lot of fellows I have to deal with, and how they would persecute me if I turned religious, you would not press me, sir.'

"'Nay Bob,' he says, 'that's just it; make a fair stand, lad, and God will give you grace to overcome.'

"Well, he read to me out of the Testament about taking up my cross and suffering for Jesus, and then leaving me a tract, he went away. I just went upstairs to the old room where my poor dear died, and going on my knees by the bed, I cried out from the very bottom of my heart, 'O Lord, if Thou hast mercy for such a wretch as me, save my soul!'

"But the blessing didn't come then, nor for some time after. Perhaps I didn't trust Jesus enough; anyhow, it was two days before the burden rolled off my heart, and I could say, 'My Jesus is my

Saviour, and I am His servant, saved by His precious blood.' Of course my mates soon found it out,—I wasn't the man to keep it from them; and Jim, that's my partner, asked me, on board one night when the fishing nets were waiting in the water, what had made the difference. I told him, and preached Christ to him there and then—a very poor sermon, I fancy, but it sent him to his old Bible, and then to his loving Lord and Saviour. And so we two had started pretty much together in the good way.

"But it wasn't all plain easy sailing for all that. There was the landlord of the 'Outward Bound' who had his say, and did his best to set all the fellows against us; and then the men who worked in one set, and were always ready to lend a hand when wanted, would have nothing to do with us. Somehow or other, too, the fish fell off, and we had some very bad catches, hardly enough to pay for the trouble and the risk we ran with our nets. And now and then things went so bad with us that it was hard work to keep the wolf from the door, and we really thought we should have to part with one of our boats.

"'I knew no good 'ud come of it, Bob; why don't you chuck it up and go with us again.'

"'Nay, Reuben, I'm on the Lord's side now, and there's no drawing back for me. It doesn't much matter, after all, for if things are dark and cloudy outside, my heart's bright enough, anyhow.'

"Well, they wouldn't let us be, and what with hard times, rough words, and cold looks, we had a struggle, Jim and me, to keep our heads above water. But the Lord helped us; and to cut a long story short, we have won the battle by His grace, and can now say that there isn't a fellow in Clifstone as wouldn't help us all he could, and we are not wanting friends."

"So we should imagine, Bob, for everybody speaks well of you in the village, and we are glad to know that you give the praise to God."

"Yes, to His name be all the glory; and whenever a stranger like yourself comes up to that gate, and sees that bit of a memorial stone as we have put up among the marigolds yonder, it pleases Jim and me to tell all about it, and urge people to try for themselves if Christianity isn't a blessed thing."

When we got up to go, and pressed Bob's hand, we looked into the face of this disciple of the Lord, who had found Christ precious to him in many difficulties, and was trying faithfully to serve Him; and seeing his faith and simplicity, we thanked God and took courage. We walked down to the shore again, and sat by an old boat, and could not help thinking, as we gazed at the waves glittering in the sunshine, and saw the men mending their nets on the shingle, of another shore eighteen hundred years ago where One stood and called His poor, hard-working friends to be His disciples.

And we believe that He has stood on this Clifstone beach among these fisherman, too, touching the heart of Bob, and Jim his mate, and through them not a few of the rough, brave fellows who man the ships. God bless those dear strong faithful disciples, and grant that all who read this story may be the happier and better for knowing how Bob and his partner pulled