

LITERARY.

NEARING HOME.

Nearing home! A little longer  
Wait us onward, favouring breeze;  
Sunbeams falling clearer, stronger,  
Light a pathway through the seas.

Nearing home! Oh, fold your pinises,  
Brooding spirits of the storm,  
Till o'er Ocean's wide dominions  
We are swiftly, safely borne!

Nearing home! Ah, cease to wrestle,  
Saucy waves that keep us back;  
Quickly let our bonny vessel  
Leave you foaming in her track.

Nearing home! Bright birds are cling-  
ing  
Midst the swaying sails above;  
They, like we, their way are winging  
To a land and home they love.

Nearing home! Now far behind us  
Countries bright, but strange, we  
cast;  
No fond thoughts to them can bind  
us—  
We are nearing home at last.

Nearing home! No time for dreams  
ing—  
Fancy soon may quit her throne.  
All along the light is gleaming—  
Beams of love to guide us home.

Grey and Gold.

CHAPTER IV.

Continued.

Long did the watchers strain their eyes over the dark waters. The guns had ceased, and no word was spoken. The sea boomed more heavily every moment; the spray dashed in snowy sheets against the rocky barriers, and flooded the little pier, driving the crowd further ashore, while the torches flared in the wind, and moments seemed hours.

Katie gazed anxiously in the direction of the wreck, trying to catch a glimpse of the life-boat, but it was beyond her range of vision; and only from the smothered exclamations of those near her could she discover how the gallant band were faring.

'There she is! Where is she now? Look—look!' she called alongside! and so on, till Katie at last that the first half of the perilous journey had been successfully achieved; and a short time after, when, with its precious freight of saved, the boat reached the shore, amid the ringing exclamations of the by-standers, Katie could hardly restrain herself from rushing forward to join in the thanksgivings to their brave preservers.

But the danger was not over yet; six men still remained upon the wreck, and the noble band went forth again.

Another period of suspense, another shout of triumph as the boat took on board the trembling survivors, then a dead silence as she pulled slowly back to land.

Every moment the wind rose higher, every moment the waves increased in force; the strength of the rowers must be ebbing; and suddenly a wild cry echoed through the crowd, as a huge wave rolled in, swamping the boat, and in the concentrated light of a dozen lanterns and torches, Katie saw it come to the surface bottom upward, and a few dark specks were alone visible amid the seething breakers.

It was an awful moment, and Katie sunk down unconscious on the sand. What passed next she never knew.

Her senses soon returned, however, and with trembling steps, and sick at heart, she dragged herself down to the water's edge, hardly heeding a group of poor women wailing bitterly for those dear to them whom death had called away so suddenly.

Katie stood half-paralysed as one man after another was washed up at her feet; some still unconscious, some whose recovery was very doubtful, some whose feet would never again cross the threshold of the homes they had so lately left.

Trembling Katie watched on still no signs of the doctor. Could he have been rescued, or was he among those whom she heard had been washed out of reach of the hands stretched out to save?

At last, a man came hurrying down to the beach, and a fisherman standing near eagerly inquired:—'Has the doctor come too yet, Tom?'

'Ay, ay,' replied the other. 'Thank God, his life's safe! We can ill spare those poor fellows but to lose the doctor worse. He was a good bit coming round, but he's spoken, and though he's a bit bruised by being thrown against the boat he won't be much the worse in a few days.'

This was enough for Katie. With a passionate thanksgiving in her heart she turned homeward, careless of the lecture she would certainly receive if her aunt had wakened and missed her. This, however, was happily not the case and creeping softly to her room she tried but vainly to lose the memory of the night's events in sleep. But it would not come; visions of the raging sea, the life-boat, Cecil Rayleigh in danger, and she powerless to help, tortured her through the succeeding hours till, just as the day dawned, she sunk exhausted into a dreamless slumber.

White checked, and heavy-eyed, Katie appeared the following morning in her aunt's room. At first Miss Rycroft was alarmed, and questioned the girl sharply, but was satisfied at last to attribute her looks to the cause assigned, want of sleep in consequence of the storm.

'It is singular I should have slept through it all,' said the old lady, a little later in the day, when, with the garrulity of her class, Mrs. Jones had enlarged on the events of the preceding night as they had been detailed by the early visitors to the house. 'It must have been the effect of those soothing pills the doctor ordered me. I did not feel so well and took one before going to bed.'

'Oh, ma'am, I forgot to tell you about the doctor,' said Mrs. Jones. 'Thinking of those poor drowned men put him clean out of my head, but he's very ill this morning, they say. People are saying no one would have gone in the boat last night if he hadn't jumped in first, and they were forced to follow him for shame. The boat upset, as I told you, and all were thrown out. The six men they had brought from the wreck all managed to get to shore, and the doctor was washed up directly, but a great

wave carried him back, and threw him against the boat which was being knocked about and he sunk. He came up again little nearer the shore, and Jim Walker and Tom Harris rushed in as far as they durst, and luckily clutched hold of him and dragged him out. He couldn't have helped himself, for his shoulder was hurt. Mr. Grey was with him directly, but they say he is very bad this morning.'

Katie's cheek grew paler than before, but she waited for her aunt to speak.

'I am grieved to hear this, Mrs. Jones,' she said. 'Can you spare your little boy to go up with my compliments and enquire how he is? I should like to know; and the old lady murmured to herself, 'Poor fellow! poor fellow!'

Katie waited with what patience she could till Robin returned, when the report was found to be exaggerated, and the doctor himself sent his kind regards to Miss Rycroft, and begged to assure her that beyond a blow on the shoulder, which would disable him for a few days, he was not really hurt; very soon, he hoped he would be quite recovered.

A week passed away, and the excitement of the week passed too.

To be Continued.

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