

HELENA GRAHAM,
OR
THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.
CHAPTER X.

The storm seemed increasing in fury. The wind howled, raged, and shrieked; the waves thundered with terrific force over the rocks; the thunder roared, peal upon peal, shaking the very island to its centre; the lightning alone lit up for an instant, with its blue, livid glare, the pitchy darkness; and then the crash of the strong trees in the neighboring forest as they were violently torn up by the roots, all mingled together in perfect discord.

But, above all, the minute-gun came rattling once more over the sea. Herbert and Fritz, plunging so blindly through the storm, hastened on as if winged at that saddest of sounds. And, after tumbling, slipping, falling, rising, and hurrying on again, they reached the old castle at last.

A light was burning in the kitchen. Both rushed in there—wet, dripping, and half-blinded by the storm. Mrs. McGregor was on her knees in the middle of the floor, rocking back and forward, and praying aloud in an agony of terror and apprehension; and Evan was walking up and down, groaning and praying, at intervals, with his mother.

"Come, cease that caterwauling!" said Clinton, as he burst in upon them, dripping like a sea-god; "and you, Evan, get your coat and come with us, down to the beach, and see if we cannot save some poor unfortunates from death and destruction."

"Indeed, Mr. Clinton, I cannot go out," said Evan, his teeth chattering like a pair of castanets.

"You villain, if you are not ready in ten minutes, I'll thrash you till you are not able to stir!" exclaimed Herbert, catching and shaking him furiously.

Too terrified by the young man's fierce tone to resist, Evan drew on his hat and coat, and shaking like one in an ague-fit, followed them out into the night, and darkness, and storm.

Once more over the tempest-tossed waves rolled the mournful voice of the minute-gun, like a dying cry.

"Heavens, this is maddening!" exclaimed Herbert, rushing to the beach like one demented. "To think they should perish thus, within reach of us almost, while we are here in safety! Fritz, where is your boat? I will venture out and see if I cannot save some one at least."

"Oh, Mr. Clinton, for heaven's sake, don't risk it!" cried Evan, in an agony of terror. "No boat could live two minutes in these waves."

"You couldn't launch the boat in these breakers," said Fritz. "much less pull, if you were into her."

"And they must perish before our very eyes! Heaven of heavens, this is awful!" Again he listened for the gun, but it came no more. Its voice was silenced in storm and death.

"They have gone down!" said Fritz; "the signal gun will fire no more."

"Heaven have mercy on their souls!" said Herbert, solemnly, lifting his hat.

"Amen!" said Evan, whose fears seemed swallowed up in awe.

"We may soon look out for the bodies," said Fritz, straining his eyes over the black, seething waves.

Even as he spoke, by the blinding light of a glare of lightning, they beheld two bodies, lashed to a spar, thrown violently on the sands near them. All sprang forward and drew them up beyond the reach of the waves.

"Unfasten this rope," said Fritz, "and we will bring them up to the house. Perhaps they may not be drowned yet."

"One's a woman," said Evan, as he cut the lashing. "I can carry her, I think, while you two carry the man along."

"Go on, then," said Herbert, "up to Mrs. Ben's. Be quick."

Bearing with the utmost difficulty their wet and apparently lifeless burden in their arms, they reached the cottage of the widow, and deposited the senseless forms before the fire. Then, leaving them to her charge and that of Jessie, they descended once more to the beach, to rescue any other unfortunate who might providentially be washed ashore.

Towards midnight the storm abated, and the king of the tempest suddenly began to call off his hounds. The dense, thick clouds slowly rolled back, the lightning ceased to flash, and thunder only growled in the distance; the wind abated, and the rain fell more slowly; but though they waited until morning dawned, no more bodies were waited to their feet.

The next day's light showed a scene of ruin and death. The beach was strewn in every direction with fragments of the broken ship, and some half-dozen dead bodies lay scattered on the sands. All were cold and dead, and sad and disappointed, our tired and drenched watchers turned away.

Before going to the castle, Herbert visited the cottage, and learned that the rescued ones were both alive, and might recover. And grateful to have been the means of saving even two of the unfortunates, he sought his own couch, to dream of wrecks and drowned men till noon-day.

MANUFACTURE OF COCOA.—We will now give an account of the process adopted by Messrs. James Epps & Co., manufacturers of diabetic articles, at their works in the Easton Road, London.

See article in *Cassell's Household Guide*, p. 96-9m.

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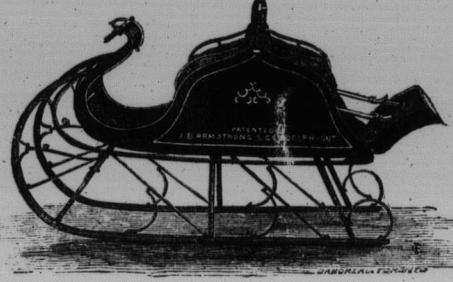
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