

was awake, and I dreamed of it each time in twilight, with the sun just set, and the Plough just coming up above the highest bit of the rock.'

'South south-east by south,' muttered the skipper. 'The worst course and the ugliest to find in all these islands; but—the only course we could make the Gouliot by, with the wind where it is.'

He took up his pipe and puffed away at it vigorously, quite unconscious that it was dead out, while his son watched him with anxious eyes.

'Look here!' he said at last, prefacing his blunt speech in the way his son knew so well. 'What's your notion of this af-

for the religion which he had never professed himself to have, but which he believed to be in his son; and on the other, reason and experience and common sense, and the natural feeling that he must know best. If anyone had put the case to him he would have said that he was not such a fool as to think of risking credit and life for a boy's fancy; and yet, now that it came to the point he hesitated. The Bible words were not familiar to him, but the thought that was in his mind was this, 'Lest haply we be found even to fight against God.'

'I believe I'm as crazy as you are yourself,' he broke out at last. 'But this I'll

He stopped, and his son sat silent, his pale, young face growing a shade whiter. He was sure—yes! quite sure. And yet—it was a tremendous risk—he knew that almost as well as his father did. Suppose he should be the fool of his own fancy. Would they ever forgive him? Should he ever forgive himself? In his mind's eye he saw the whole thing happening as his father had said—saw the bare desolate rock and the empty strip of beach where the sea-bird's cry seemed to mock them—saw the wonder of their little crew at the risk and the delay—heard the angry questioning of the owners, and the very words in which they would tell his father that they did not care to trust a ship in the hands of a man who would let himself be led astray by a young fool.

All that on the one side, and on the other only a vision of the night, the picture of the lonely rock under a fast darkening sky, and the faces of five men, all strange to him, looking out over the angry sea as men look who know that only God can save them, and that by a miracle. That was all, but Chris Murchison felt that it would be enough to spoil all his life to come if it was to haunt his memory with the recollection that he had done nothing to respond to the call.

'Why should it come to me?' he said to himself with a sort of passion. 'I'm not the owner of this ship nor the master. I can do nothing. Why should it be laid on me to feel like a murderer if nothing is done?'

And then with a sort of awe it came over him that the decision lay with him after all—that something or someone had so moved his father that he had answered as his son would not have supposed it possible that he would answer—that if Chris was only certain enough, his father was prepared to act upon that certainty.

'I don't know how I dare do anything,' he thought. 'But if we do nothing I shall know that it is because I am afraid. I shall know all my life that God bid me do something and I didn't do it.'

It seemed to the lad that he had been thinking for quite a long time, but it was not really five minutes—the pipe that Captain Murchison had at last remembered to light had hardly begun to draw—when he drew a long, long breath that was almost like a sob, and spoke.

'I'll take the risk!' he said. 'I wish I could take all the punishment if I'm wrong. I can't say what makes me so sure, but if I'd heard a voice from Heaven I couldn't be surer!' and I don't believe God'll let it turn out amiss.'

However sure one may be in one's own mind suspense is none the less trying when much hangs upon the issue. Chris felt sick with anxiety as the 'Lively Lass,' after several hours' beating against the wind—several hours of peril in that rocky channel, during which nothing but the splendid steering of her captain could have saved her—came in sight at last of the Gouliot Rock.

And yet he felt as though his dream were coming over again, and felt the kind of certainty that the dream always brought, as he noticed that sky and sea were taking just the look they had those three times when he had seen them in his sleep.

It was just the time, about one hour after sunset, and—yes! there was the Plough just risen above the square towering cliff with the hind wheels of the waggon just above its highest point, and the north star faint and clear overhead.

'The sea's gone down wonderful this last hour or two,' said the captain in a gruff



I SHALL GO OUT OF MY MIND.

fair? Speak up and let's have no beating about the bush.'

The lad's face reddened through its tan. He would rather have been flogged than have spoken out what was in his mind, even to his own father; but he did speak out.

'I—I believe it's God's sending—the same as dreams in the Bible. I can't say why it was sent to me and not to anyone else, but if it lay with me to go and look for those poor chaps, I'd go if I knew I'd never come back.'

There was silence for a minute, while nothing was heard but the groan and creak of the straining timbers and the dull boom of the waves against the vessel's side.

A struggle was going on in Captain Murchison's mind; on the one side a reverence do, and God forgive if I'm doing wrong!

I'll leave it to you to decide. If we go yonder we may lose the brig, and maybe our lives. If we don't do that we shall, maybe, find no one and nothing there; and the owners will give me the sack, as sure as I sit here, for wasting time on a fool's errand. There are shipowners that would give me the sack for going out of my way even if I knew there was lives to be saved, but I don't say our men are as bad as that. You know what it means to get the sack at my time of life. I should likely never get a ship again. And there's your mother and the girls to think of. It seems to me that we stand to lose all round. But I leave it to you. It's to you and not to me that this has come, and it's for you to decide. If you say "go," I'll go, and as I said before, God forgive me if I'm making a mistake!'