

out of a long, weary, troubled sleep—I was surprised to find how weak I had become, so that I could scarcely raise myself in bed. For I was in bed, which, though small, was a comfortable one. The room, too, was one of the smallest, not to be deemed a closet, and if I had not been convinced to the contrary by the immovableness, or rather the motionlessness and stability of the dwelling, whatever or wherever it might be, I could easily have imagined myself shut up in the cabin of a ship afloat.

Everything around me was 'ship-shape.' My bed-place was a sailor's berth, and the room was fitted up with lockers, thus economizing space. The walls declined from the perpendicular just as in a ship's cabin, and were hung with just the sort of articles for use or ornament that might be expected to be found there, and only there. The window, of four panes was composed of thick greenish glass, and had evidently, I thought, at some time done duty in another habitation. So had the door, and the paneled wainscoting, which, small as was the room, was composed of a variety of patterns and fashions; and so had the large and costly looking-glass, now disfigured with a crack, which was let into the wall, and formed one of the larger panels. Ship-like also was the strong smell of tar or pitch which pervaded the room; and ship-like the sound of murmuring waves, which reached me distinctly enough as I lay wondering for what further mysteries I was reserved.

There was not any mystery, however, in any of this. Simply, I had fallen into the hands of a kind, rough, benevolent, half amphibious being, who dwelt when on land—in a wooden tenement close upon the beach, and forming one of a little colony of boatmen's dwellings, having a bleak waste of sand behind and the ocean in front; but whose true home might be said to be on the sea.

Partly fishermen, partly smugglers, I am afraid—I may say this now, for the cottages have disappeared, and the colony has long since dispersed—my rescuer and his companions picked up a scanty, or at least a precarious addition to their 'ways and means,' by salvage from the Goodwin Sands, or as they termed this grave of many a noble wreck, 'the Good 'ens'; but, unlike the wreckers of more inhospitable coasts, they were never known to lose an opportunity of saving life when it was in their power to do so, though to the certain diminution of their gains. Thus, though the

wreck of the General Washington offered, in its breaking up, a tempting prize to Steb or Stephen Bourne, and his two fellow boatmen and partners, and though other boats were hastening to the sands to pick up its waifs and strays, humanity had impelled them to neglect their own interest in saving me, and in attempting to save my poor companion from perishing in the rigging. And when they found that I was rapidly sinking from the effects of cold and exposure to the storm, Stephen Bourne had taken me to his own cottage, and brought back the flickering spark of life.

All this I learned afterwards; but before I had so far progressed as to be able to crawl out to the beach, I asked what had become of poor Ned, and learned that he had vainly battled with his last storm. He, and two or three bodies which had been washed on shore the next day, had been buried in one common grave.

I might dwell long on the homely hospitality I received from my preservers; I could tell how the women of the little colony vied with each other in their kindness to the shipwrecked youth, and how the children of all ages—for almost every cottage had its fair allowance of these—tempted me daily to play with them on the beach. I could say something, too, of the habits of the boatmen themselves—how they lounged about in calm sunshiny weather, smoking their short pipes on the beach, or seated in their boats, drawn up high and dry on the strand, as though neither sea nor boat, nor life itself, was much concern of theirs; but how, in rough and threatening weather, when other folk are glad of a roof to cover them, they were on the alert, and their boats manned in readiness for service, if not already miles out on the boiling waves. I could tell something too, of mysterious trips on dark nights, when their success in fishing was too small, I fear, to account for the exultation expressed on their safe return; and I could repeat the stories I heard of dangers braved and escaped in their hazardous calling, as well as mournful histories of former companions who had perished in it. There was, indeed, as far as I could learn or can remember, scarcely a family in the whole colony of which some member had not, at one time or other, and even recently, been lost at sea; and it seemed to be looked upon almost as a matter of course, that but few of the male inhabitants of the place would die either of old age or on their beds. Yet they did not seem unhappy at the thought. Habit, perhaps, had bred indifference, and the constant

sight of danger, and contact with it had deprived it of its terrors. All this, as I have said, I could enlarge upon, but I must hasten on my narrative.

I had been three or four weeks the guest of my preserver, and had almost recovered my lost strength, when a weekly newspaper, which, after doing duty in the publichouse of the neighbouring town, was circulated among those of the boatmen who could read, was lent to me. And there I saw, in the shipping intelligence, that the 'General Washington,' an outward-bound American barque, had been wrecked on the Goodwin Sands, and 'all lives lost.' That this was incorrect in its last clause, my readers know; but I was not sorry that the error had crept into public print. I had been painfully debating in my mind what course to take for the future; and though no other resource seemed open to me but to return to London, I could foresee the dangers which would beset me there, if it were known that I had escaped from the wreck. Now, however, those who were so concerned in my expatriation would in all probability have obtained the intelligence which had accidentally met my eye, and, believing that I was drowned, would give themselves no further concern about me. It was true that accident might also reveal to them that I had escaped; and I well know that if any of the iniquitous gang of Thiovo's Castle were to light upon me, intelligence would be conveyed to the unhappy man who called himself my father; but this danger would not perhaps be greater in London than in the country; and all events, trusting to the Divine Providence which had, as I firmly believed, watched over me up to that period, I determined to return to the only refuge I had, and the only mart for my future industry, praying that I might be lost in the crowd, and thus delivered from the unprovoked enmity and persecution of unreasonable men.

Perhaps there were other motives which urged me to venture so near the lion's den. Many years had passed away since I saw the last of my kind and motherly protectress, but her image had not faded from my memory, nor affection towards her from my heart; and though all the efforts I had since made had been ineffectual in discovering her retreat, I did not yet despair of finding poor Peggy Magrath, but to attempt this, it was needful for me to be in London, for where else could she have taken refuge?

And then, my interest had not quite faded away as regarded my former little teacher and