

our feet, an' the rain an' hail was just like needles in our faces. We headed for the North beach as well as we could by waitin' for the lightnin', and then gettin' our bearin's, an' pretty soon we see a dull red glow, an' we knew they'd made a fire there, an' we aimed for that. You know what walkin' on the dunes is even on a pleasant sunshiny day, so you can guess some what we had to get over. Howsomedever, we done it after awhile, an' come down on to the beach where the fire was built. It was in the shelter of the big dune where you was paintin' last week—by Scarred Rock, you know—an' it was middlin' quiet there. At first we couldn't see nothin' but the surf, but pretty soon our eyes got used to the firelight, an' then we see the wreck. You ain't never see one? An' I hope you won't have to, for it makes you feel different all the rest of your days—you get to hate the ocean, an' be afraid of it when it's quiet and peaceable even.

The breakers was fearful—as high as a house they looked to me, an' through 'em when they'd kind o' open you could get a sight of Scarred rock. The wreck was there. It was a schooner—French she was—an' her masts was hangin' over her side all tangled up in the riggin', an' clingin' to her was four or five black things that we knew was men. It was horrible to see 'em. Every once in awhile the waves would lift the vessel up an' smash her down on the rock for all the world like I've seen the Portugee children tryin' to smash a cocconut. It made me feel weak an' sick all over.

There was consider'ble many folks on the beach, some of 'em throwin' driftwood on the fire, an' some had axes, an' was choppin' at the timbers of an old boat that had been there for years an' years.

Father an' Cap'n Zach was side by side close to the water's edge, shoutin' an' tryin' to get a word to them poor fellers out on the schooner, an' the rest of the men was standin' with ropes ready to run into the water if any of 'em should be washed ashore.

When father turned round an' see us, he come back to the fire, an' he says to me. "What on earth brought you here? 'Tain't no sight for women," an' just then there was a kind of lull in the storm, an' I could hear them poor wretches shriekin' to us for help that we couldn't give. My! My! My! Many's the night since then that I've waked with that sound in my ears! Our men give a yell in answer, an' us women burst out a-cryin', all but Granny Ely. She grabbed father by the arm an' shook him. "Why don't you do somethin'? Be you men, or be you chickens?" she says. You see, her husband an' two sons was drowned off that same beach, an' she only had her grandchild left, an' she was kind of loony at the sight.

Father knew how she was, an' he answered her kindly. "There ain't a single boat this side of the cape," he says, "an' the beach road's six feet under water an' will be for an hour to come. An' no mortal could get a boat over the dunes. Dumb critters wouldn't head into no such storm even if they was able to haul a cart through that sand. An' if we had 20 boats, granny, he says, "we couldn't launch 'em in that water."

"Where's the lifeboat?" says granny. "Over in Avery's shed," answered father, real patient. "It's no use thinkin' of it—she can't hold out 10 minutes longer, I don't believe."

"God help us then," says granny, pullin' her shawl over her head so's she couldn't see nothin'; an' then we kept on a-cryin'.

"I wouldn't take on so, Ad'line," says father to me then. He hated to see me cry the worst way. "When she goes to pieces, the men'll wade out with ropes—we've got plenty—an' like as not we'll get 'em ashore safe," but he was only sayin' it to quiet me, for I'd often heard him tellin' how the undertow was worse off Scarred Rock than any place along the coast. Then he went away, an' we huddled up

together, an' waited fur what we knew had got to come.

Every time he turned to the fire I could see Cap'n Zach's mouth openin' an' shuttin' reg'lar as clockwork, and knew as well as if I heard him that he was ravin' an' cursin' like a pirate. Father he was quiet, but white as a dead man, an' old Cook, standin' close up to 'em, was shakin' all over like the ague.

By an' by 'Liz'beth an' I couldn't stand it no longer, an' we crept close to where father was, an' just then there come more of them terrible wailin's from the wreck, an' old Cook he says: "She'll go any minute now. It's like watchin' by a death bed," he says. "I wisht the minister was here to pray for 'em." He was a Seven Day Baptis', old Cook was, an' dreadful good.

"Drat the minister," says the Cap'n, ugly as sin; "catch him out a night like this! He's under the bed covers same as all the rest of them d—d land lubbers!" He was hittin' out at Dode, you know, an' father he hadn't no word to say. Bein' September, a good share of our men was to sea yet, an' a time like this everyone counted, 'specially a great tall fellow of Dode's build. An' father was dreadful out of patience with him for stayin' in-doors. Why, most times he'd been the first man on the beach, but of course he was feelin' pretty sore over the way Cap'n Zach had spoke about him, an' I didn't blame him so terrible much for stayin' to home, even if father did. The minister didn't count the one way nor the other. He come from inland, an' was sort of bindin' an' timid. But old Cook liked him, an' he spunked up, an' says he, "Minister hollered at me out of his window where was the wreck as I come by."

"Yes, an' then he went back to his bed," says the cap'n. "Oh! I know that breed! Let 'em stay to home, and may the roof fall in on 'em!"

While he says this I heard above the storm a sound that makes my blood creedle up this very minute just telling you about it. It was a woman's voice, singin' out clear an' loud: "Good old Bess! Go 'long, old Bess!" An' round the dune onto the beach come the old lifeboat on a cart drawn by one of Ben Farnham's oxen an' Dode Avery's old Bess, an' behind the cart, pushin' like crazy creturs, was Dode an' the minister. Christy Avery was drivin' the team. She had a lantern in one hand an' the other was hitched into the horse's mane, an' she never let up hollerin' at her a single minute. I ain't never see a horse in a yoke before nor since, an' I don't want to, for it cut her shoulders terrible, an' the blood was streamin' down her white legs, but for once it was a splendid sight to me. Every time Christy'd sing out her name Bess would buckle down till she was most on the ground, an' strain forward as if she was comin' clean through the bow. Don't tell me that she didn't sense

what she was doin'. She was makin' that ox work, now I tell you.

For a half minute every one stood starin' as if they see a ghost, an' then they give a shout, an' you couldn't wink your eye hardly before that cart was unloaded an' we had the yoke off'n them creturs. They was so beat they dropped right down where they was, an' no wonder. Why, there ain't been a loaded wagon over them sand hills more'n once or twice in all the years I've lived here, an' always in bright daylight. But that old horse would foller Christy anywhere, an' naturally the ox had to come along, an' he done noble, I won't deny. Christy she set down by Bess on the sand, an' I see it wasn't no time to speak to her, for the first man into that lifeboat was Dode yellin', "Volunteers!" An' the minister on top of him. But father he took him by the arm. "Lord love you, no, sir," he says very respectful. "You ain't a sailor, sir. You'd hender more'n you'd help." An' I always held that it showed just as much spunk in that young man to step back as it done to come forward—he done both.

Well, the boat filled up in no time. When Toby Ely stepped up, Dode says: "No, boy, you're all granny's got. Stay back." But the old woman come up brave as an Indian. "Go, 'long, child," she says, "an' may the Lord bring you back!" an' down she set again, coverin' up her head.

Somehow or other them poor souls on the schooner got knowledge of the boat, an' as it pushed off the first time they set up a kind of a cheer, an' we answered it loud an' hopeful, but I tell you we didn't feel that way. There wasn't much chance of their ever gettin' back alive, an' our men knew it, too, but they was keen spirited. It cut father up not to go, but he wouldn't have been no more use than the minister, for his legs was stiff as wedges, what with the cold an' wet.

Three times that boat drove back, an' three

