

RELICS.

BY LOUISA CROW.

Shut the door closely, let no passer-by  
Our task o'erlook; 'tis only you and I  
Who care with reverent hands to lay aside  
These simple relics of the child that died.

Within this casket lay them one by one,  
Nor let us weeping linger when 'tis done;  
Such tears might breed repining: 'tis not ours  
To grudge the Lord the gathering of His flowers.

They are all here: the toys that she loved best;  
The little pillow that her soft cheek pressed;  
Her pictured books, defaced with frequent touch  
Of tiny hands that prized them over-much.

A tattered leaf, with verses of a hymn—  
Nay, do thou fold it, for my sight grows dim.  
It seems but now she spelt it at my knee,  
"Nearer to God," and asked how that could be.

I see again the look that sought the skies,  
The earnest wonder in the pure blue eyes,  
As the rapt ear my meaning faintly caught,  
Though scarcely comprehending all I taught.

She hath these mysteries solved in soaring  
there;  
And we, too, have drawn nearer than we were.  
Strengthened by faith that heeds nor let nor  
stay,  
Since those child-footsteps trod the narrow way.

AT THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAN.

"My man, do you want a berth?" said he.  
"Aye, aye, Cappen," said I, "I want one  
badly enough. I'm half starved and half frozen.  
I haven't a cent in my pocket, not one. That's  
why you find me here at this time of the night,  
casting anchor on a door-steps. That's why I  
was piping my eye just now, when you took an  
observation of me; and if you've got any berth  
for me that an old sailor with a wooden leg can  
fill, I'm your man, Cappen, though I'm but an  
unlucky fellow."

"I know the signs well enough," said he. "I  
know when Fortune leaves a man, and friend-  
go with her. It's all a bright look-out ahead,  
my man, when we are young; but the cloud  
come, and there is dirty weather before long,  
and the gale that blows you ill luck blows away  
the friendship of Jack the good fellow, and the  
smiles of pretty Poll into the bargain; and by  
the time we're old, my man, we're all ready to  
own ourselves unlucky."

"But you are young enough to be my sor,  
Cappen," said I.

He made no answer, but just a sign to follow  
him, and he stalked away and I pegged after  
him. He was a big man, about forty; his face  
was tanned and weather-beaten, and his eye  
were black, and he had great bushy eyebrows,  
his hair was close cropped and curly; and his  
beard, curly too, was so long that it blew back  
over his shoulder as he walked.

It was a seaport town, one that every body  
knows well, and if I should write the name  
down you'd know the man too, mayhap. He  
kept close along the shore as we walked, and  
for a while he said nothing. At last, however,  
he turned his head and pointed seaward.

"You see that?" said he.  
"The light-house, Cappen?" said I.

"Yes," said he, "I'm the keeper. I want you  
to cook my meals and keep my bachelor's hall  
for me. Now and then I shall want you to row  
in and buy provisions. The work won't be hard.  
I think the pay will suit you. Do you know  
why I chose you?"

"No, Cappen," said I.  
"Because I saw that hope was at an end with  
you," he said. "It's only a man who had come  
to that, who could live with me in a light-  
house."

"I was on a desert island once," said I; "we  
were there three weeks. I was shipwrecked  
another time, and seven souls of us floated  
without meat or drink under a red-hot sky for  
days and days, and only two of us were left;  
and we had made a meal of human flesh before  
we were taken aboard a vessel. After that I  
shan't be afraid of a light-house."

The queer laugh he gave at that made me  
jump, but I followed on, and at last we came  
to where the boat lay, and he took the oars and  
rowed us out to it.

I'd been in a light-house before; it was no  
new thing to me. But after I'd been there a  
few hours I wondered what my master hired  
me for. It was like being pensioned off; there  
was nothing to do.

But, mark ye, when it came night, and the  
wind began to moan about the light-house, and  
the lamps were lit, and all outside was black as  
pitch, and all the sound we heard was the swash,  
swash, swash of the waves, my master mixed  
some grog and called me to sit along with him.  
That looked sociable, but I can't say he did.

He sat glowering over his glass for a while,  
and opening his mouth as if to speak, and  
shutting it again. Then said he:  
"What's your name, my man?"

"Ben Dare, sir," said I.  
"Would you mind calling yourself Brace?" he  
asked.

"I've no reason to be ashamed of my name,"  
said I.

"Look here," said he. "I am a gentleman  
born and bred. I never came to earning my  
bread before. I'm ashamed of it. This is what  
I mean. If any strangers come out here and  
ask for William Brace, why, you say you are  
the man. You claim to be light-house keeper.  
It's easy. I don't suppose much company will  
call; but I choose not to see them, if they do.  
That's what I hired you for."

"Oh," said I.  
"You see," said he, "I got this place through  
a rich man who has influence. Those who give  
it me never saw me. If I die some day, why,  
here you are in the place. If I go off, and I  
may, here you are still. Until then I'll pay you  
well, and you know your duties."

"Well, it's shamming," said I; "but, after all,  
what does any one care what my name is?  
Number three or four hundred I might have  
been on some alms-house books, I suppose,

up to the lamps alone; and he'd look over his  
shoulder and turn white as we stood there  
together.

Once I said to him:  
"Cappen, what are you looking for?"  
And he answered:  
"Nothing. It's a way I've got, that's all."  
It wasn't a pleasant way, I tell you.  
At last he took a new turn. He sat staring at  
a corner for a while. Then he spoke to me, in  
a low voice:

"Brace, do you believe in ghosts?"  
"I han't considered the question," I an-  
swered.  
"Well," said he, softer than before, "look  
into that corner;" and he pointed.

I looked.  
"Don't you see anything?" he asked.  
"No," said I. "No, Cappen."  
"Ah," he muttered, "very well, very well.  
I'm glad you don't."  
"Begging pardon; did you?" said I.

are skeersome even on shipboard, and you can  
guess what they'd be in a light-house.

I might talk on forever—telling you how the  
cappen, as I called him, got to be worse and  
worse every day; how he got thinner and  
thinner, like a skeleton, as you may say, his  
cheeks sucked in, and his eyes staring, until at  
last he lay flat on his back half the time, just  
able to crawl up to the lamps one day, and not  
able to stand the next. I wanted to go ashore  
and fetch the doctor, but he would not hear of  
it. He raved if I tried to leave him. So there  
I sat nights, and heard the waves wash and the  
wind blow, and heard him groan and mutter to  
himself, and stumped up to the tower and  
trimmed the lamps, and sat down by him again,  
and now and then spelt out a bit of the Bible.  
It didn't seem to do him much good though. I  
don't think he listened, but then I did my duty.

At last there came a hot, hot night in June.  
It was burning hot all day, and a dead calm at  
night. About dark the cappen went to sleep,  
and I went and sat where I could see the water  
and the lights ashore. The big bright signals God  
sets in the sky every night shone up aloft. The  
waves caught 'em like so many looking-glasses.  
It was so still that I could hear the sailors in a  
Spanish ship moored not far away singing in  
their foreign lingo. And I was sort of quiet and  
dreamy like, when something happened that  
waked me mighty wide and sudden. Something  
was standing on the steps below me—something  
white. Something came toward me. It was  
a little slender figure, with long hair all about  
its shoulders. I couldn't see its face. I don't  
think I really saw it plainly at all. But it went  
past me softly while I looked, and I knew it  
was a woman in a white ruffled gown, and that  
she had gone to the room where my master lay.  
I shook too hard for a moment to move; but  
as soon as I could, I started up to go to him.  
Just then a voice cried:

"Light-house aho!"  
I answered, "Aye, aye," and stopped a bit.  
Duty first of all things with a sailor.

A boat lay at the foot of the steps, and four  
men jumped out of it.  
"We want William Brace, keeper of this  
light-house," said one, a big man in a fine  
overcoat.

"I'm one that answers to the name," says I.  
He swung a lantern over my head.

"Search the place, my men," said he.  
There was no use saying anything, but I did  
try to stop them.

"I've got a sick friend aloft," says I. "Don't  
disturb him. I'm afraid the woman will skeer  
him any how, he's so low."

"What woman?" said he.  
"The one that came aboard with you, sir,"  
said I.

"No woman came with us," he snarled.  
"Stand aside, my man. Men, do your duty."

They went up stairs. I followed. I saw them  
walk into the cappen's room. I heard them cry  
out, and stand still. When I got to the door,  
they stood in a row looking down on the bed. I  
knew what they saw; their faces told me that;  
but I looked too. Man nor woman couldn't  
frighten the cappen more. He was dead. But  
I think he saw her before he died, by the look  
in his wide-open eyes.

"What had he done?" I asked of the officer,  
when I came out of a kind of faint the sight  
sent me into.

"Killed his wife," said he; "that's all. No  
doubt she deserved it; but it's not allowed by  
law when they do."

"God help him," said I.  
"God help us all," he softly said, bowing his  
head. "We need it."

Then they went away.  
I was the only mourner at the dead man's  
funeral, and I don't know to-day who he really  
was.

I keep the light-house now. I told 'em the  
truth, and they gave me the place. I'm not  
afraid that I shall ever see the woman again.  
She came after her husband, but it wasn't all  
fancy and she really came at all, and I don't  
think she'll ever bother an old fellow like me  
that never did her any harm. Ghosts know  
too much for that. They always haunt the right  
people.



"NAY, DO THOU FOLD IT."

without bothering any one. I'll call myself  
what you like; and what shall I call you?"

"Call me nothing," said he. "Call me cap-  
tain, as you did when I met you, but never  
speak of me to any one. You see," he said, with  
a sort of quiver all over him, "I don't want to  
be known as light-house keeper. I'm a gentle-  
man."

"Some folks are proud," said I. "Of course,  
every man would be cappen if he could.  
Sarvice to you, Cappen."

Then I drank my grog and watched him  
sitting with his back against the wall, now and  
then looking off sideways in a queer sort of way,  
until he told me at last to go to bed, if I wanted  
to. And I turned in. And so the life began. A  
queer one, I warrant you.

Gentleman or no, he wasn't lazy. He did it  
care how he worked. The lamps were as bright  
as jewels. There wasn't a speck of dirt in the  
whole tower. When he was doing nothing else,  
he'd saw away at the wood I brought in the  
boat, or cook his own meals and mine. But let  
any boat come nigh us, away he went and hid  
himself, and came out with a white, scared  
face and a shaking hand.

'Twasn't long before I saw that there was  
something on the man's mind heavier than  
gentility. I didn't believe that bothered him.  
He was no dandy; a big fellow, like a soldier in  
his walk; a fierce fellow, with a grip like iron.  
The last man, either, to hide himself in a light-  
house out of choice, or to be afraid of owning to  
anything he chose to do.

But for all that, at night he was afraid to go

"Oh, no," said he. "Why did you think so?"

It wasn't comfortable, for my belief was that  
he neither had the horrors or saw an apparition.  
And he wasn't drinking to any great amount.  
And a man at mess with you that sees ap-  
paritions over your head, makes you know  
what nervous means.

But that wasn't nothing to what happened  
the very next night.

We slept in two bunks nigh each other, and  
naturally, when he woke up with a yell, I woke  
too.

He was shrieking and shaking, and wringing  
his hands.

"The woman! the woman!" he said. "She  
stood here just now. Her breast was all red  
with blood. It dripped down the white ruffles.  
It dripped on her hands. It was horrible!  
horrible! horrible! Stop her—stop her! She  
has gone to call them. Stop her! stop her!"

"Where did she go?" I asked.  
He stared at me with his wide-open eyes, all  
the whites showing, below and above.

"She couldn't have been here," said he. "It  
was a dream."

"Lord love you, yes—a nightmare," said I.  
So we went asleep again. I did, at least. But  
I heard of the woman so often after that, that I  
grew used to her. I made up my mind that  
what the doctor used to call delerium tremen-  
dons came out in the shape of snakes to some  
folks, and in the shape of bloody murder to  
others.

I got in the habit of taking it in that light,  
and it was pretty well I did, for genuine spooks

The surgeon of a ship of war used to prescribe  
salt-water for his patients in all disorders.  
Having sailed one evening on a party of plea-  
sure, he happened by some mischance to be  
lost overboard. The captain, who had not heard  
of the disaster, asked one of the tars next day  
if he had heard anything of the doctor. "Yes,"  
answered Jack; "he was drowned last night  
in his own medicine-chest."

The Troy Times says:—"Here is a true dog  
story: A family down town having a false grate  
in one of the rooms of the house placed some  
red paper behind it to give the effect of fire.  
One of the coldest days this winter the dog be-  
longing to the household came in from out of  
doors, and seeing the paper in the grate de-  
liberately walked up to it and laid down before  
it, curled up in the best way to receive the  
glowing heat as it came from the fire. He re-  
mained motionless; feeling no warmth, he  
raised his head and looked over his shoulder at  
the grate; still feeling no heat he arose and  
carefully applied his nose to the grate and  
smelt of it. It was as cold as ice. With a look  
of the most supreme disgust his tail curled  
down between his legs, every hair on his body  
saying "I'm sold," the dog trotted out of the  
room, not even deigning to cast a look at the  
party in the room who had watched his move-  
ments."