

As well as I could, I told him what I know of Christ and his salvation. I cannot recall now—and it does not much matter—the words that I used, I only remember that I spoke of his mercy and his power, his readiness to hear prayer, and his willingness to save.

It is too late now, I reckon,' groaned poor Ned. 'He wouldn't hear me now.'

'No, no, it isn't too late, Ned; there was the man who was crucified along with him;' and I told him of that instance of Divine love.

'Roley, can't you make a bit of a prayer for us both?' said he in a voice half choked with emotion. 'What was it you told the skipper to say?'

'Lord save me or I perish!' that was it, Ned."

Ned repeated the words after me again, and again, and again. Did he know to whom he spoke? What the words meant? Did he pray from the heart? I cannot tell.

* * * * *

Hour after hour passed away, and we were still on our precarious refuge; but all bodily power had forsaken us, with almost all sense of pain; while the yet falling snow gathered around us, and, freezing as it fell, had stiffened not only our clothes about us, but our very limbs. And now I saw why Ned had so carefully and securely lashed me and himself to the rigging; one by one the three unfortunate men who had fled to the mainmast cross-trees, and who had not had presence of mind to secure themselves in like manner, fell from their unsteady footing into the raging water below, and were borne away almost without a struggle or a cry. Meanwhile, either the water had risen, or the vessel had continued sinking deeper into the sand, for the waves seemed to get nearer and nearer, and perpetually dashed over us, half blinding us with their icy spray.

'Roley, I am going, I can't hold on much longer,' he said.

'Try to keep up heart, Ned,' I whispered in reply. Our strongest voice was reduced to a whisper now, and even this was an exertion almost too great for us. It will be morning presently, and then, may be, we shall be seen.'

A sudden thought seemed to strike the sailor when I had said this—at least, he roused himself, and spoke with greater distinctness, and very earnestly.

If they take you off alive, Roley, don't ye go back to that place, if you can help it.'

'I won't, Ned,' said I, readily enough, for I guessed of what place he was thinking.

'They won't be looking after you now, be-

cause they'll think you are safe over the water, and if they hear of this wreck they'll think you are drowned, but if they should know of your being back again, you'll be done for. Oh, may I be forgiven for what I have had to do in that place! Oh, if I thought I would be forgiven!' the poor fellow groaned.

"He is able to save to the uttermost," Ned," I whispered.

'I donno—I hope so,' said he; 'it is very wonderful. But, Roley, you must forgive me too; for I was mixed up in the conspiracy against you.'

'I do forgive you, Ned: don't think any more about that matter but cry for mercy while you have the time.'

He did not reply audibly—indeed, I did not hear him speak another audible word. I heard mutterings, as though he was trying to speak, but presently even these ceased. I roused myself to call him, but no answer came. With the utmost difficulty I stretched out my hand and touched him, but he did not move. I remember little more, only that the noise of the wind and waves around me became more and more faint, and I think I recollect seeing but not noticing, a faint streak of light eastward; and then all was indistinctness and wandering of mind.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RESCUE.

'SEEMS to be a spark of life in this poor lad;'—I heard the words with very little interest, and without attaching the meaning to them. I was too far gone for that.

'Ease him down gently, Steb,' were the next words, and I was made aware that I was being unlashd from the rigging and lowered. With a strong and painful effort I opened my eyes for an instant only, but sufficiently long to see that it was daylight, and that above me, on the cross-trees, was a stout seafaring man, holding to a rope with one hand, and with the other grasping my jacket, while below was another man, in whose arms I was resting. The sea I remember, was still very rough, but my senses were reeling, and I again closed my eyes in unconsciousness.

Presently I know or believed myself to be in a boat, and a friendly arm was supporting my head, while an equally friendly hand was pouring a cordial into my mouth. Then I heard voices again—the same that had before spoken.

Gently, Steb, you'll choke the poor chap,

don't ye see as how he can't swallow more nor a thimbleful at a time?"

It was true enough that the strong liquor which they had poured down my throat nearly took away the little breath that remained in me, but it had the effect of causing me again to open my eyes, and to look round—wildly, I have no doubt.

I was lying along the bottom of the boat, near the stern, wrapped round with a rough coat, and another thrown over me. Two men were at the oars, and another was tending me as I have described. Close beside me was my poor companion of the cross-trees, with his face uncovered. I roused myself, and faintly uttered his name—'Ned, Ned!'

'It's no use,' said my preserver, compassionately; 'he's gone, he is,' and he drew his rough hand across his face; 'he'll never see another Good'en wreck.'

It was what I expected, yet it shocked and distressed me. Roughly as I had been used by him, our night's community in suffering had drawn us together; and his apparent earnestness in seeking for mercy though at the eleventh hour, had left a vivid impression on my mind which still lingers with me.

I had not much consciousness left me. I only remember that the boat seemed to float over the rough sea like a cork; that my preserver was active in his endeavours to call back my flickering life, first by homœopathic doses of brandy from his flask, and then by gently chafing my half-frozen limbs, that the men at the oars pulled with a will; that presently I heard and felt the grating of the boat keel on the shingles; that I was lifted out of the boat and borne I know not whither, that I heard many pleasant and compassionate voices around me, that I felt my clothes removed, and, lastly, that the return of warmth to my body was accompanied by such agonies of pain, that I swooned.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BOATMEN'S COLONY.

If my readers will bear in mind the excitement of mind and body through which I had recently passed, and the hardships to which I had been exposed in that dreadful night on the Goodwin Sands, they will not be astonished that for many days I was very near the grave. I was, as I afterwards learned, in a high fever, and, the greater part of that time, insensible. On recovering—waking, as it seemed to me,