



PERIL AND DELIVERANCE.

"**I** HATE old Waugh! I hate everybody and everything, and life itself into the bargain!" was Harry Fairley's by no means wise speech, as he bounded out at the great school doors, down the steps, and into the midst of some half-dozen of his schoolfellows who awaited him.

"Whew! you old croaker! we know better than that," spoke one named Wells; while another waggish little fellow, called Daldy, drew near with the remark, "Listen, Fairley:

"Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but a hateful dream,
For the soul is dead that grumbles,
And things are not what they seem.

"Life is real, life——"

"Shut up, Daldy!" cried one of the merry crew, putting his hand over the other's mouth, "and let's come at the root of the matter, not stay mooning here all the afternoon."

"I didn't want you to moon here for me," said Fairley, ungraciously.

"Don't excite yourself, my dear sir: your nerves are unstrung with long study and confinement. Come and sit with us, Fairley; that's what we've been waiting here for, to get you

"Sailing on life's solemn main;
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother
Sailing may take heart again."

"Will you shut up?" asked Fairley, playfully taking him by the jacket and giving him a shake.

"Will you go for a sail? To be or not to be? that's the question," queried the other, freeing himself.

"Yes, I'll go."

"Let us then be up and doing
With——"

But the quotation of the merry fellow was cut short by their all laying violent hands on him, and away they went, a rollicking party, down to the shore. The sea was glorious, many-coloured, radiant, and changeful as the thoughts of the lads themselves. Now it beckoned, now it called; now frolicsome little waves ran races with one another, and now they seemed to hold out shining fingers, tipped with emerald, amber, and gold. Once out of sight of the school, Harry, for the first time, perceived that a little fellow of nine, with dark curling hair and wistful eyes, was following him. This was his brother. The child laid his hand on the other's arm.

"Harry! Harry!" he said, in a low voice, his face flushing with earnestness.

"Well, Archie, what is it?" The boy spoke half petulantly.

"Do you know what mamma said in her last letter?"

"No; what about?" Perhaps he knew what, for he coloured in turn.

"About—about—I'll tell you by-and-by," was the faltering reply.

"Very well; now run along." But the child trotted by his side till they were at the starting place. There was Dan, their favourite boatman, free to take them whither they listed.

"Here we are, Dan, ready for a trip! Be quick now; time is on the wing." Thus admonished, the old man soon had his boat ready. The six elder lads leaped in, Archie looking on wistfully the while.

"Take me, Harry," he pleaded, as they were about to shove off without him.

"No, we don't take such sprats as you," cried Harry.

"There isn't room," acquiesced Wells.

"I wouldn't take up much room, I wouldn't indeed; and I'm not heavy," urged the child.

"Here, let him go in my place," said good-natured Daldy, standing up.

"No; sit down, Daldy. He must learn not to spoil other folk's pleasures," dissented Harry. "Go, for a walk with Bigwood and Clare, Archie."

So Archie pleaded no more, but, after watching them glide away on the sunlit waters, strolled along the shore in the direction the boat was taking.

They were bound for some famous ruins, lying at some distance along the coast. The ruins made a beautiful picture on that fair autumn afternoon, flooded with the mellow light, which seemed to soften all that was rugged and unsightly. How the boys enjoyed this half-holiday trip. But Harry only made pretence of enjoying. He was ill at ease; everything had gone wrong with him at school for some time past. He had fallen into idle ways, and was in bad repute with the masters, and much that was lovely and generous was dying out of his character. What would his father and mother in India say if they knew only the half? Poor little Archie! whom his pale trembling mother had given into his care to love and cherish. Had he done this? Had he guarded him from evil? No, no. The thought troubled him greatly; even this afternoon he had denied the child an innocent pleasure. He wished he had given up his place in the boat to him. He wished, he wished surely a good angel was whispering to the lad!

He stole away from the rest and crept into a cave, a marvel of beauty and a geological wonder at low water, but where the waves rioted at will when the tide was in. He threw himself down and wept over his misery, nobody missing him, and, as others have done before, fell asleep, heavy with sorrow.

It was time to be away; the boys shouted, the boys