



(she was some relation of the cap'n's wife) that she'd married a "mis'erable land hubbin' lubber." But she didn't care a grain, bless you. She set everything by Dode an' got along with him first rate.

After Christy's mother died, leavin' her the house, Dode borrowed some money an' set up a "slop shop"—all kinds of clothes and things for sailors, you know. Father lent him what he could, and persuaded the rest of 'em. That was one thing made him feel worse. He knew Dode was honest an' would pay 'em if he had time, but the way they was acting they would lose most all they'd put in. The shop was in the front part of Christy's house, so they hadn't no rent to pay, and they might have done real well, for they was both of 'em pleasant to trade with. But they was queer. Like's not if a man went in to buy a hat he'd find Dode playing the fiddle to Christy and the baby, an' the man would set an' listen, too, an' have a chat an' a little drop of rum maybe, an' ten to one he'd forget what he'd come for an' go off without spending a cent. "I wasn't so at Quinn's, up the street. A body couldn't so much as look in the winder but what they was out trying to sell somethin', and the consequence was Quinn was makin' money, and Dode he failed up. He wasn't nobody's enemy but his own, you understand, an' he was honest, but shif'less—just shif'less.

By littles an' littles father told me that he an' some of the rest—there were five of 'em—said they'd wait, but Cap'n Zach, he said no—Dode Avery had more chance than he ever did, an' he hadn't no opinion of folks' honesty that was too white-livered to earn their bread by the sea as their fathers did afore 'em, an' he

wasn't going to throw good money after bad, keepin' that shop afloat no longer. "I was over-persuaded in the fust place by you, Jonas Stiles," he says to father, "but the end has come. It's goin' to stop." The rest of 'em turned right round then an' said they held with Cap'n Zach. Father told me that all the time he was talkin' he see the calico curtain on the door from the shop into the kitchen wavin' an' blowin' as if the door was held open a crack, an' after Cap'n Zach spoke out so, the door shut to, an' he could hear a woman sobbin somewhere.

Well, I felt awful. To be sure, there was two sides to it. The men had earned their money hard, an' they was poor enough, an' couldn't afford to lose it, but it seemed as if it might have been fixed up so as to benefit them all if Cap'n Zach hadn't been so fierce.

"I suppose they can sell the house," says I, after father got through, and set there drawin' at his pipe that was cold as stone, only he didn't sense it.

"That's the worst of it all, Ad'line," says he, "for the house is mortgaged up to the handle—to old Zach—an' he's going to foreclose."

"Good Lord a' mercy! What'll become of 'em?" says I, an' father sort o' groaned. You see, he would have helped 'em quick as look at 'em, an' been glad to; but what with buying his own house, an' losin' two voyages a'ready with rheumatiz, an' doctors' bills coming in besides, we couldn't have raised \$50, I don't believe, to save us. We could take 'em in an' do for 'em some, but that was about all.

So there they was, three of 'em, and not a thing really belonging to 'em but a tumble-down shed where boats was kep', and their old white horse, Bess. She was about Dode's age, an' half-blind, but they thought as much of her as if she was a human bein', an' I declare for't she could all but talk, she was so knowin'.

But of course she wouldn't fetch nothing, even if they'd had sold her, which they wouldn't, not for no money.

It was a hard look-out for 'em—now wasn't it? We felt so blue we didn't eat no dinner scarcely that day, and after settin' awhile, father said he'd go out and fix up around, for if he was any judge there was bad weather comin, and fast, too; but I knew all the time it was a good deal to get away from hangin' round worryin' over what couldn't be mended, an' I felt the same as he did.

Well, sure enough, after dinner it begun to cloud over, an' by four o'clock you couldn't hardly see your hand before your face without

a lamp, an' such rain an' wind an' lightnin' I never see before. I've lived through many storms, first an' last, since I've been on the cape, an' if father's ashore they all seem pretty much alike to me, but that one was different somehow. It hailed, an' I don't know but it thundered, though I don't remember of hearin' it, an' I don't suppose I could have anyway for the noise of the wind and water. The surf was bad enough on the bay shore, but on the ocean it was like cannons, for all it was near two miles off.

From noontime the vessels kep' a comin' into the bay, an' when father come to supper, he said there was mor'n a hundred, an' we felt glad, hopin' everything along the coast was out of danger. From supper time on it grew worse steady. The house shook and rocked like a bird's nest, an' sometimes bricks would come falling down the chimney. I blessed the rheumatiz, I tell you, lookin' at father safe by the fire, for if he'd been able to walk a deck, I'd have been worryin' my heart out like many a poor woman in town that night.

Well, there we set quiet enough by the kitchen stove. We didn't feel like talkin'. I knitted an' every once in awhile father'd get up an' go to the winder and listen against the pane, and then he'd come back and set down again as mum as a fish. I knew he was oneasy and I knew well enough why. An' what he was fearin come in time. We mostly get to bed by nine o'clock, but that night we never so much as thought of it till the old clock up there behind you struck 11. Then father says, "We might as well get some sleep, Ad'line," an' I was puttin' away my knittin' work when I heard the church bell "clanketty clank, clanketty clank," an' then in a minute Cap'n Zach's coneshell horn, that the boys used to call the "last trump," blowin' like mad.

Father was into his rubber coat an' boots before you could wink. There wasn't no thought of lameness then, an' I didn't try to hender him. "I wouldn't have been no use, an' land! I didn't wanter if he might do a mite of good to the poor shipwrecked cre'tur's that bell was a-ringin' fur.

He says to me when I handed him the lantern an' his flask of spirits: "You needn't worrit, my woman, fur I ain't agoin' to be rash, an' you keep the fire up an' the kettle on. We may have company before mornin'." An' he went off into the dark. I held the door open after him a minute, an' I see someone with another lantern wait for him at the gate, an' heard him say, "North beach," but that was all, an' I went back to the kitchen alone.

I filled up the stove, an' put the kettle over, an' then set there nervous as a cat, wishin' I had somethin' more to do, an' suddenly the door flew open, an' in come Matt Cook's 'Lizbeth, all drenched with rain. She had a lantern, an' she begged me to go along with her, for she couldn't stand it to home another minute. I was willin' enough, you can believe, as I tied an' old coat of father's round me an' a hood, an' we started. Out by the gate we run against Mis' Nelson an' her sister an' old Granny Ely, so we all clung together an' went on. 'Taint likely we could have gone alone, some of us. It was awful. Quick as we got to the top of the hill we was up to our ankles in loose sand. The witch grass tangled round