

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.



in peril. A fellow can't go to sea, man and boy for twenty years, without being in real peril a good many times; but the nightest squall I ever had by my life was "one moonlight" night when I was about sixteen."

Simon Dowling, the fisherman who had thus spoken, was a character. I do not think it would be easy to find a handsomer or more picturesque-looking man. He must have been very good-looking in his youth, and I never saw a more expressive face. There was one characteristic which specially recommended him to me, and that was his retiring personal cleanliness.

There was nothing Simon liked better than to get hold of some one to listen to his yarns, and I am quite sure no man could reel off a better one.

"I'll tell you all about it, young master," he went on, "if you would care to listen."

"Do, Simon," the boy replied; "something exciting, you know."

"Oh! as to being exciting, it's all gospel truth. Now listen. When I first went to sea I was apprenticed aboard a smack belonging to Hull, and we used to go trawling in the North Sea. I was born in Hull, and my mother and father had lived all their lives there. At the time I'm going to tell you about there was a strong sea—a haul, and was as good as a swimmer as here, and there one. If it had not been, I shouldn't have been here to tell you this story. As I said, I was only a youngster at the time. We had been out about six weeks, and was bound in for our "setting." We had a fair wind, and the night was fine, the moon was high in the heavens. In my watch below I had been dreaming a lot of strange things about tumbling off a high cliff, and going down to the bottom of the sea among mermaids, and then about being at home with my mother. I and the second hand had the middle watch; this is, you know, from eight to four o'clock in the morning. My mate took the first watch at the helm, and the night being fine and nothing to do, I lay down to do a bit of "caution," which means that I went to sleep, which I ought to have done. How long I had been asleep I don't know, but something woke me, and I started up on my legs. Just as I did so, the main boom swung over, struck me on the shoulder, and overboard I went sense. I was pretty tight stunned by the force of the blow, and for a minute or so I didn't know where I was. I felt almost silly like. After a bit I collected my senses, and sang out for help, but nobody seemed to take any notice of me, but just then I saw the old craft fall up, and the next minute she was all black and shaking. I swam on, expecting then to leave the boat, and came to pick me up; but no boat was just out and there she was, now up in the wind, and then yawing off and going on, scarcely minute getting farther and farther from me. I'd got on my back and I soon found that if I could not get rid of them in any of my clothes, my chance of swimming wouldn't be worth much;

so I turned on my back, and what with flapping and treading water, I got rid of my boots and my jacket and trousers, and was in trim for work. By this time the smack was about half a mile distant, then I heard to wind, and drifting astern. I swam on, every now and then bailing her, but nobody took any notice. I could not make out what had become of my watch mate. I began to get almost angry. Why didn't he rouse up the hands and get the boat out? I knew that my only chance was to get help from the smack, for we were out of the track of coasters, and as to land, there wasn't any within a dozen or fifteen miles of me. Still, I didn't seem to lose heart, and kept swimming on. I made a bit of a prayer—it wasn't a very beautiful one, I dare say—but I said what I meant, and I believed God would hear me. I felt better after this, and

came into my head, and I pulled to mind lots of things I had done that I ought not to have done. At last I thought I'd say, "God help me!" and sink quietly to the bottom; but I had as soon said it than I began to do so, for I was round to have another swim. When I did so I struck out of a lump. About a mile to leeward there was a big lump of ice, some her white sails glowering in the moonlight. The wind coming towards me, but she was further out to sea; so I struck out across her track, hoping to cut her off. As she came on I could see her watch making the deck, and I sprang up and shouted, but they didn't hear me. I shouted again, but still no answer. Nearer and nearer she came, and I was stopping out with all my strength to meet her before she crossed my track. At last she was now fairly abreast of me, and I thought my last chance was gone, so I hailed her once more—"Ship ahoy!"

"You should have seen how the men aboard were started as you hit this time reached them. They thought it was Neptune, or somebody come up out of the sea."

"Ahoy," at last somebody answered, "where away?"

"Here so," I answered. I got overboard and I have been swimming for an hour."

"Aye, my mate, the reply, he had on a little and we'll lower a boat."

"I was so done up with the cold wind, and so overjoyed at the thought of being saved, that I almost went out of my mind. I can just remember seeing the boat lowered and rowed towards me. I was picked up, but I don't recollect anything more at that time. I fainted as soon as they got me into the boat."

"It was very light when I came to myself, and I found I was in a warm bunk with dry clothes and a cheerful-looking man sitting by my side."

"Well, mate, be said, 'you've had a hard touch of it, how did it happen?"

I told him all about it, and I thanked him, and I thanked God for bringing me out of such great peril. I found that I was aboard the *Fenny*, of Whitstable, bound to London, with a cargo of deals. The captain's name was Greenhead, and he was very kind to me. Had he been my own father, he couldn't have been kinder, or more considerate. Of course, I hadn't got a farthing of money, but the captain and the men

clubbed together and gave me money and took. By the time we got into dock, and I was well enough to start home, a week had passed. I recollect, by the Hull coach. I was young and foolish, and not being able to write myself, I never thought to write to my mother, or the owners, to say how I had been saved. I didn't think anything about that, not knowing I was anybody to be supposing I was dead; so when I got home I went thumping into the house. It was just between the lights, and mother was at the window crying. I looked in the window before I went in, and when I opened the door and said softly, "Mother!" Poor old dear, she was started. I can tell you, for she took me for a ghost, struck out, and went off



"I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT, YOUNG MASTER."—See page 63.

struck out strong—it was for dear life. At one time I thought I was nearly all in, but then I'd see the jib and furling fill, and she'd go off before the wind, and ran a quarter of a mile before she'd lift up again. The further she got from me the more I began to fear. I was getting frightfully blown, and I began to have a suffocating feeling in my chest. The night was still blowing fully fine, and I looked up at the moon and the stars. It seemed to me that it was dreadful hard to have to die on such a night as this; if it had been rougher it wouldn't have mattered so much. The smack was now quite out of sight, and it was no use waiting my strength, so I barred on my back and floated. I had no longer any hope. I lay there, feeling quite stupid, strange fancies

into a dead faint. I didn't know what to do, so I bolted into the next door, where two young girls who I knew were sitting, and who were pretty near so bad as mother. But at last it was all right, we went in and got her tea, and when she came to herself, she fell lying on the bed making saying I had come back from the grave. I thought she'd never have done laughing me, and as to the neighbours, they was as kind as kind could be. I was a sort of chaperon, and I had to be very careful. I said, if you remember, that it was a puzzle to me why they did not put out the boat and come and help me. Well, I found out the boat was stuck at the bottom of the channel, when the loom swung over, and he had been knocked down, but instead of going overhead as I did, he fell on the back and striking his head against the beam, was stunned, and lay for over an hour unconscious. After a while the skipper waked up and hearing something was amiss went on deck. Feeling as he thought, the second hand dead, he roused up the rest of the crew, the foremast was hoisted to windward, and they began to look about for me. By this time the stoned man had recovered, and for more than an hour they laid to, and the boat was pulled about in all directions to try to find me, but as I was by this time aboard the vessel, there was no chance of that.

"There young man, comforted Simon, "that's the nicest knock ever had of my life, and I don't think anybody was ever sicker than that. It was that time. And I'm never likely to forget how the loom saved me or that moment's night." T. B. SORTAZ.

Little and Good;

Winnies Make the Man.

EMMA MARSHALL,
Author of "Barnaby," "Life's Afraid," &c. &c.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHERRY.

"I sit writing this story of my life, or rather of some passages in my life. I remember the words of the Psalmist, 'We bring our years to an end, and as a tale that is told.' We turn chapter after chapter over had of our life, and I don't think anybody was ever sicker than that. It was that time. And I'm never likely to forget how the loom saved me or that moment's night." T. B. SORTAZ.

My dear friend Margaret Lee was at this time still a very good-looking woman. Her hair was streaked with grey, but she was still under a widow's purple most white up with those lockers—not one of those large floppy things you see when you look at the old women.

"Oh her face was the lines of man and sorrow—sixty-six she had carried her husband with a flourish and a flourish. She was in her best days, and when at last the suffering was over, and Adam was in the soil she had for a time in health from the loss of the object of mourning attention, as well as the loss of her husband and herself, there had never been a shadow of mistrust or riddance.

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times past. Now I cannot now, and now will and streets had extended in all directions, and the little town was still as unaltered as it was in the days of old simplicity. Some fine old shaded groves, and a few more houses, with red tiled roofs, clustered round. Beyond were some large old-fashioned red brick houses with walled-in gardens, inhabited by the gentry, and there was what used to be called a Chapel of Ease near at hand.

To one of the main streets I had come with my friend, the Lee's, after that time of the firm. I was now chief officer at Mr. Colley's and had a fine view of the town. It was my habit to do it most often for the past, and I think I succeeded.

Adam never was able to work again, but he lived some years, and in those years he was quite as useful an example of mankind as when he was strong and active.

His noble services of himself for a neighbour. The old man had brought him into notice. He had many visitors, and was well served. The money that had been old Jonathan's, was put in the names of trustees, into the bank, and of course if my step-father came out of prison, he was the possessor of it, as into his old Jonathan had. But I think I never was his heir.

We know that my step-father had been sent to Australia to work out his time, but my years passed away, and he would come from his work, and I was his heir.

While Adam Lee lived, he and I used to talk of the money, and his advice was that Edward should not be left in the hands of my step-father, but he was little enough inclined to work, and thus these few pounds might be a fine to him and a blessing.

But as Edward was now getting on to twenty, some provision was often in my mind, whether I was to be put in possession of the secret or not. When I say my mind, I mean Margaret's, and mine.

She has been like a dear and honourable mother to me, and Adam had said when he was dying, that he did not leave her without a son, for I was like a son to her, and a brother to her. Margaret and I were as much as I could be to her, but that I should never break her heart in love.

I used not say this long, long before he died, Adam and I were as much as I could be to her, but that I should never break her heart in love.

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a great many people. Anyhow, he was not a mother calls 'Little and Good' (the words) 'Ah! I know you are very fond of him and because you have promised to walk with him this evening, you must go now.'

"Nonsense, Edward, I am not going to drive you over. Let's all go together and see the market to-morrow."

"No, thank you, two is company, three is company."

"Oh, there is Philip," Cherry explained, coming out of the summer-house, with her coat in her hand. "Philip, what lovely flowers!"

"I think them out to her without a word, and she had her face in them. How have you well as I did that I had heard what had passed between her and my brother."

"Edith said, 'I don't say anything,' " that even you made no do not do it."

"Let me see it on," I replied. "Your letter call at the shop, and I'll after it. Will you stay to tea?"

"Mrs. Lee has asked me, already," he said, "and both Cherry and I are going to see the market with the boys to-morrow."

"I am coming, too," I said readily, and Cherry exclaimed, "What right, Philip, and we will sit in the Downs, under your favourite oak tree. Now I must run to and help mother to get the tea."

"I'll have to do it," I thought, as my eyes followed her into the house, and her shining in her way."

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