

HEROES OF THE DEEP.

BY HERBERT D. WARD.



THE fishing-fleet is like a large wheel of life, of the three hundred and fifty spokes of which twenty-five pass in and out of the bay every day, a quivering procession, freighted with hope, with gain, with sorrow, and with disappointment. The beautiful harbor of Gloucester stretches from Norman's Woe to Eastern Point, and the fish that enter are daily measured by the hundred thousand weight.

There is no port in this country to which the Naval Department, in case of war, would sooner look for sailors to man the fleets than this old town which, in 1606, Champlain (the first white man to tread the shores of Cape Ann) called "Le Beau Port." For the great fishing-fleet holds nearly seven thousand souls under its gurried decks, and every one of these has faced, as a matter of course, dangers that would give the average reader many a nightmare, if he could experience but a touch of their reality. What novelist would think of sketching the story of a dried codfish? What novelist could do better?

It is always with a vague regret that we read the sagas, and are thrilled by the vikings's exploits. It seems as if the deeds of daring had gone by forever, and as if the heroes of the deep were a myth of the past. Absorbed in the Norse romance, we forget that the vikings were only pirates, and that they dared for slaughter and for booty. If the Gloucester of to-day had only existed then, what heroic saga would it not have inspired! For to risk life for glory, or riches, or rescue, or love is in the heart of every man to do; but to risk life for a bare existence, for other people's profit, and for an anonymous end partakes of that commonplace sublimity which does not form the favorite plot of poets, although once in a while it is the subject of a daily paragraph.

For the vikings are not dead. From Portland to New Orleans, our harbors are full of them. They lounge upon our wharves, and we do not recognize them. They loiter

on our streets, and we know them not. But if there is a more modest, unconscious, or braver fellow than Jack the Fisherman, our eyes have yet to rest upon his face. He is the hardest and most daring, the best sailor in the world to-day. Any Continental kingdom would give its wealth to possess him for its defense. He is the envy of every maritime nation. Has he no value for us, beyond the halibut and the cod, the haddock and the cusk?

In the old days the wharves of Gloucester town were busy with the making of fish. The flakes were white with awnings protecting the drying cod from stain of sun. In the inner harbor the catch is still dexterously weighed, and pitched from dory to dory, till it is washed, and fit to be salted in platoons of savory hogsheads. But, comparatively speaking, the years of the great fares have gone by, and the harvest of "summer boarders" has come. Five women occupy the wharves for one full fare from Georges, or one long trip from the Banks. Too many of the awnings are replaced by the white umbrellas that shelter the aspiring impressionists. Facing the crumbling corner of a once prosperous wharf, you find a lone lady in bicycle-gaiters laying in water colors, not the color of the water, or of the dismantled vessel before her, or of any other dead or living thing. Little our modern artistling thinks that every quavering plank upon which she treads is charged with years of drama from the living sea.

Only the other day, seated upon the edge of a dory, on the deck of a vessel that had just discharged its small fare of fresh fish, I happened to get into conversation with a red, fat-faced Swedish lad. He was not much over nineteen. He had not outgrown blushing when you mentioned shave. He is of the kind that ships a boy and lands a man. Nor did Hans suspect the reason of the change. His was the majority given by experience, not by years. But I drew out his record from him as I draw a refractory charge out of a muzzle-loader. He was lying in a nest of dories, smoking lazily, and rav-

ished by the July sun. He looked incapable of motion or ambition. He was the last fellow your popular novelist would pick out as a hero.

"No," he said, in his broad foreign accent, without deigning to look up; "I never see any one drowned or saved. The most courageous thing I ever did was to get drunk and get sober again. Yes; I saw my dory-mate saved by a plug-strap."

For the benefit of the reader who has not made his trip, it is necessary to explain that every dory has a plug in its bottom. This is like a large bung in a barrel. Through this plug runs a piece of buoy line, which ends in a loop about eight inches or so long on the waterside. This is the plug-strap, which is probably instrumental in saving twenty lives a year.

"Last winter," admitted Hans, reluctantly, "I was off Greenland, and me and my mate was about two mile baitin' up trawls. It was terrible cold, the water freezing where she struck. The dory was almost full of fish. All to once a big wave capsized the dory and threw us into the water. When the dory came up, I caught the grab-line; but my mate was too far off, so I let go, and swam off, and towed him, and we held hands across the bottom. Only one could hold on to the grab-line at once, so I put his other hand in it, and holt on to the other. He was growin' pretty weak. He was washed off twice, and I haul him in each time. They took us off in about an hour; another minute, and I guess we 'd 'a' both gone. It was the grab-line that saved him."

He stopped, and puffed with a languid unconsciousness which it seemed, somehow, bad manners to disturb.

"Don't you remember seeing anything really grand—that is—heroic?"

The questioner floundered helplessly before the young fisherman's puzzled look.

"Naw," Hans smiled contemptuously; "I don't think."

Yet the boy himself had artlessly confessed to what was as much a deed of heroism as that of the engineer in sticking to his throttle for his passengers' sakes at the moment of collision.

But the fisherman considers such an act as a matter of course. The average summer boarder, eagerly gossiping on the hôtel piazzas, and idly watching the white schooners slip in and out of the harbor, is seldom awakened out of that spurious superiority which the pale-faced, well-dressed alien generally feels toward the weather-

beaten, simple "native." Yet once in a while even this fond illusion is dispelled.

It happened not many summers ago that on a calm afternoon arose one of those sudden, virulent squalls that are common to Ipswich Bay and Gloucester Harbor. It seemed as if the barometer had not time to fall. The dory fishermen had long since returned home. Only those were left who go down to the sea for pleasure. All these sloops, large or small, were in charge of experienced sailors who had, at the first signs of danger, scudded for moorings, or had run down the sails—all but one little party. It was the smallest keel of the pleasure fleet, and this time manned by four children. As the squall began to threaten, upon the eighteen-foot jib-and-mainsail boat the eyes of the Point and the Cove were anxiously fixed. The children, two girls and two boys, belonged to two families, and their mothers ran to the nearest point of land to watch them. The clouds were racing like black war-horses, their manes taking frightful shapes. Large schooners were now under bare poles, dropping quick anchors. Alas! in the mouth of the bay that crazy little boat braved the portent with both sails spread, and wobbled like one bereft of reason. Boyish figures were dimly seen rushing frantically to the mast and back to the cockpit. Then a groan of anguish arose from our group; for, without further warning, the squall burst. The foam, the rain, and the spray, with angry teeth, advanced from the west, enveloped the boat, passed on, and hid the tragedy from sight.

When the spray cut our faces, and the wind made ears almost useless, I heard a voice bellowing from windward:

"It 's no use! They 're goners! Nothing in God's heaven can save 'em now! Their halyards are fouled."

Kind hands bore the mothers into the house; for their children were, for them, already dead.

The man who howled at us was one of the "natives." He was an offshore fisherman. He had a trap and a few lobster-pots, and earned a living in the easiest, safest possible way. He stood there, bracing himself against the hurricane. He was "oiled up," alert; he had a new look upon his face: the heavens had fallen, and he was in his own element.

At that moment there was a break in the clouds. To our amazement, by some freak of Providence the crazy craft was still in sight. Now head on, now head off, with her jib blown out, careening fearfully, the tiny

boat still lived. But the worst of the squall was yet to come.

"If I only had my dory!" cried the fisherman, with the tears running down his face. But his dory was far out on his hauling-line, and the waves were dashing high upon the rocks. His dory was impossible.

"Take my boat, Joe."

Now that keel tender of mine, well built for its purpose,—that of pleasure-sailing on smooth seas,—was too narrow and cranky for a man to trust his life to in a gale like that, and the fisherman shook his head mournfully. Just then another gust swept down.

"There she goes!" some one cried, in horror. The sail-boat was rapidly drifting down upon the rocks, and in danger of upsetting at any moment. A white, fluttering speck could be seen on the reeling deck. One of the little girls was waving her handkerchief at her father, who was pacing the beach in the helpless, aimless fashion of one dazed by agony.

Then the fisherman looked at me. He had children, too,—a good many of them,—and he loved his wife. But there was a look upon his face that perhaps had never been there before, that might never come there again.

"Get me the oars," he commanded, "and help me to shove her off!"

We started down to the dancing float. He jumped into the cockle-shell, and I shoved him off. Now it seemed as if he would go upon the rocks, but he did not strike. Twenty times the sea smote him, and he looked engulfed, but he rode free. In the jaws of the squall, he got to the driving, careening boat, and boarded her—no one knew how. In a moment the refusing hal-yards, tangled by ignorant little fingers, were in his strong, skilled hands; and before night it was all down the coast that the boarder children were saved, and that there had arisen a new hero.

A few weeks after, the Massachusetts Humane Society, gave him a silver medal, and I have no doubt whatever that the little episode has passed almost out of his mind, and clean out of that of his neighbors, by this time. It sometimes takes a squall to make a hero. Yet perhaps now and then, on a winter's night, he looks at the gleaming white badge of honor within its velvet case, and rubs it up to keep it bright. And his children and his children's children will turn it with wonder in little fingers, and treasure it with puzzled reverence. For by

its argent the fisherman's family are ennobled, and enter the aristocracy of the Massachusetts coast.

This is only one of a few cases where the man gets the medal. But there are a hundred more who have done deeds as brave as this, and braver, whose names have drifted out of easy memories, even as the scud drifts to the lee. A newspaper-file may hold them embalmed, but that is only another proof of their obliteration.

The men who go forth upon the sea to fish have, beyond all other mariners of peace, extraordinary opportunities of showing hardihood. Theirs is the most dangerous calling upon the ocean. Perils of fog are their daily bread. The dangers of drift and collision, when the gale tears them from their shoal anchorage, or when the liner plows through their puny fleet, are the dead reckoning of their calling. Then the squall that heaves the vessel down till her masts lie level with the foam, the lee shore at night in the winter hurricane, the iceberg, and the chance comber—these are fearful experiences to the fishing-schooners of from eighty to a hundred tons. From these causes alone about six vessels and at least seventy-five lives a year are offered up by the Gloucester fleet upon the altar of fish.

But there is one other peculiarity of this vocation, which, I believe, for pure hazard or undiluted danger has not its equal in any other department of labor—that is, the necessity of fishing with trawls. It is bad enough to dare the worst seas in the hemisphere in a vessel the decks of which do not rise more than two feet above the level of the water; but to add to that the hauling and baiting of trawls in heavy-laden dories, in the gale and fog and ice—this is throwing sixes for life, with only the gambler's luck or habit in one's favor.

The dory is the gull among small boats, with its flat bottom, its flaring sides, its movable thwarts, its plug. It is the fisherman's home, his refuge, and often his coffin. It is so light that it takes only a little sea to catch it unawares and tip it completely over. No matter how heavily laden, it will, cat-like, when sunk, turn itself over and rise to the surface. It affords no protection from the sea save through the skill of its occupants; no shelter from the icy gale but the oilskin and mittens of the man at the buoy-line. While it is the fisherman's best friend, it is also a treacherous one.

At least a half a dozen instances are recorded of a vessel having sent out its whole

crew, two by two, in dories, to set or haul the trawls, and not one having returned, and the captain and the cook being left to bring their vessel back home as best they could.

On the morning of January 25, 1893, the schooner *Grace L. Fears* lay at anchor on Burgeo Bank. She had ventured that far north to catch halibut. The crew jumped over her sides into their dories to haul their trawls. In one of these boats were Howard Blackburn and his mate Tom Welch. As they left the vessel's side it began to snow lightly. These men were too used to this kind of sea hazard to mind it at all. Their business was to get fish, and not to worry about the dangers of the process.

So they stuck to their trawls, unmindful of the fact that the storm had grown thick and had long since shut them in a little white circle beyond which nothing could be seen. They knew their peril, but to go back to the vessel without their gear would subject them to forecastle sarcasm.

When they did start to go back, the squall had changed the wind so that now they lay to the leeward of their vessel. This confused the men. They pulled to windward, but the vessel was not to be found. No bell, no horn, no sound but the swish of the wind and snow upon the rising sea could be heard.

As the gale increased, unable to hold their own, they anchored, and lay there till after dark, when the clouds cleared. Far to windward they saw the faint flicker of the schooner's riding-light.

"Now up with the anchor, Tom," said Blackburn, "and one more pull will get us there!"

But the sea, which had arisen as well as the wind, baffled them, and they lost water. Again they threw out the anchor. This time it did not hold, and as the dory rose on crest after crest in her swift drift to leeward, the fishermen caught agonizing glimpses of the flaring torch which is always kept burning at night on the deck of a vessel to guide stray dories back.

There came another gust of snow, a surge of seas, a scramble to bail the water and save the dory from filling; then, when they looked, the flare was gone from their sight.

Now began a desperate struggle for life which has not been surpassed in dory misadventures. A hundred times that night a curler filled the boat. What a wild scurry to bail it out with the little wooden shovel and the hat before the next deluge came!

At last the gale increased so that a drag

became imperative, or they would inevitably swamp. So Blackburn broke in the head of a trawl-keg, tied it to an iron winch known as a hurdy-gurdy, made fast a stout piece of dory-line, and threw it. Just as the drag went by the board, a sea broke clean over the dory. Welch dropped his oars, and bailed for his life; and with the first scoopful, over went Blackburn's mittens. This was a fatal loss.

With nothing to drink or eat, with freezing hands, in a frail open craft, exposed to the coldest and severest of winter storms—here was a situation terrible enough to appal the bravest heart. To hope against despair is the elemental quality of heroism. Such courage is not easy of conception. It is the viking's trait.

Now Blackburn thought and decided quickly. His hands were beginning to freeze. They were already numb and whitening. What were they most useful for, frozen? Without a word of complaint, he bent his stiffening fingers at the knuckles until they curled about the handles of the oars. Whatever might happen, his only chance of life lay in rowing; that he knew. Thus he calmly sat down and waited for his hands to freeze in this position, and began to encourage his dory-mate:

"We'll be picked up; this can't last long."

By this time the wind was so sharp that the men could not look to windward, so that even if a vessel had passed near them they might not have seen it. Ice had formed rapidly on the sides and gunwales of the dory, and the two took turns in clearing the boat of water and ice, which weighted it down.

On the morning of the second day it had come to be Welch's turn to bail. Blackburn told him to jump to his work so as to keep his blood moving. Welch answered that he could not see.

"Tom," said Blackburn, "this won't do. You will have to do your part. Your hands are not frozen and beaten to pieces like mine." The speaker showed his right hand, with all one side and the little finger beaten off by pounding ice.

But this sight did not encourage Welch, who lay down in the bottom of the dory, absolutely disheartened.

"What is the use, Howard?" he moaned. "I can't live till morning, and I might as well go first as last."

In order to protect him as much as possible, Blackburn lay down beside him so as to keep him warm. Welch's mind began to wander. He thrust his feet over the sides

of the dory, moaned, and begged in the most piteous tone for water. He broke off the ice from the sides of the boat; but it nauseated him, and he threw it away.

Blackburn, in the mean time, must bail busily in order to keep the dory from sinking. As he stopped, he heard his dory-mate whispering and pitifully trying to articulate. Blackburn called, but received no reply. When he went to the bow, in the dark of the morning, and touched his mate, he found that he had, as sole companion, a frozen corpse.

He took the body of his friend, and gently placed it in the stern. His first thought was, "The mittens!" They were too precious to be wasted on the dead.

He pulled one off; but his hands were now so swollen that he could do nothing with it.

Now Blackburn stood up in the middle of the boat, defying the icy storm and the waves with indomitable courage. He would not allow himself even to sit down, for fear that the drowsiness which overtook his mate would slay him. He hauled in the drag, and pulled for his life.

The third day found the sea somewhat moderated. The undaunted man had come up against his last resources of strength and will.

Oh, for one morsel of food, one drop of pure water! But the dory fisherman is provided with neither.

Now that it was possible to do so, the castaway hauled in his drag, sat down on the thwart, and began to row. It was then that the ingenious wisdom of his stiffening fingers began to be apparent. He was able to grasp the oars with firmness. He had no feeling in his hands, and the friction of the oarhandles upon his frozen flesh began to crumble his palms away like powder. He rowed all that day until night. The wind began to rise again. He threw out the drag; the dory did not ship any water now. It was too cold for him to go to sleep; had he done so, he would have been frozen in fifteen minutes. The only way for him to keep awake was to fold his arms about the thwart, and allow the rocking of the dory to lift him backward and forward all night long.

All the next day he clung to his oars, pulling toward the land. On the fourth night he found himself still a long way off.

Sunday morning opened calm, with an unruffled sea. There was a slight rise in the temperature, which inspired the hopeful man to renewed exertions. He determined to reach

the shore, and he put his last strength into a powerful stroke of the oars.

In the afternoon he struck the tide-rip at the mouth of a small river, and landed at a little wharf near a deserted house. The floor of the house was covered knee-deep with snow. He turned over the boards of the floor, and the bottom of the bedstead, in order to be able to lie down on the dry side. He gathered together a few old nets and lines for a pillow, and a net for a blanket. He tried to sleep now, for the first time; but such was the pain from his swollen limbs and from his terrible thirst that he could not sleep. He spent the long night munching snow and walking the floor.

That night the dory swung against a rock and filled. The next morning Blackburn rescued his dory-mate's body, all shrouded in ice as it was, from the sunken dory. He took it in his arms, and tried to lift it upon the wharf. But he was too weak for this, and the body slipped, and fell into twelve feet of water. Lying down upon the wharf, the fisherman could peer to the bottom of the river, and there he could see the cold face looking up at him plaintively, as if begging not to be deserted. Then the living man vowed not to neglect his dead mate.

He spent that day renewing his boat and rowing out again into the open in search of life. He saw no vessel, no house, no sign of life, not even a column of smoke; and almost for the first time disheartened, he turned his sinking dory back to the place whence she had started in the morning.

This was the evening of the fifth day after leaving the *Grace L. Fears*. It is difficult to understand how he survived without food.

As he was struggling up the swift current, he noticed outlines which he had not seen before—the roofs of three houses. It took him two hours and a half, and the last remnant of his strength, to reach the spot. It was moonlight, and the people saw the strange dory coming up, and waited for it.

Then Blackburn knew that he was saved. But even then he refused to eat or drink, or go into a house and be cared for, until they promised him to rescue the body of his mate, sunk beneath the wharf.

Blackburn lost his hands and most of his toes, but came back to Gloucester in safety. The story of his courage, of his unparalleled suffering, of his devotion to his dory-mate, is well known along the old fishing-wharves, and will be told for many a day.

How does such a tale of valor end? Does the heroism "strike in" and last through?

The closing pages in the stirring story are unwritten, but the capacity for bearing hardship is not exhausted, nor is the love of adventure. Captain of a stout crew, rounding

ing and the heroism of the fishermen. Such stories might be multiplied by the score once every year. It is only when a survivor with an instinct for the dramatic tells of his own



DRAWN BY GEORGE VARIAN.

“HE WAS GROWIN’ PRETTY WEAK.”

the Horn on a midwinter voyage, beating up the California coast toward the gold-frosted tributaries of the Yukon, the hero of the Burgeo Bank may be found in the wild current that sweeps to the Klondike.

I have enlarged upon this experience because it is typical of one half of the suffer-

agony, or that of his mate, that we know anything about it at all, except from the tragic head-lines found in the files of the “Cape Ann Advertiser.”

In the face of the appalling proportion of deaths from drifting dories, averaging anywhere from two per cent. to five per cent. a

year, where is the Massachusetts legislature? Gentlemen, pass a law compelling every owner and skipper to provision every dory with at least five days' rations for two men. Such a law would probably save twenty lives a year.

rode heavily, with the breakwater to leeward. A diabolic magnet, it dragged the reluctant victim close and closer. Men watching on shore, seeing that it was only a question of a short time before the boat would break up, started to Rockport to get



DRAWN BY GEORGE VARIAN.

"ALL THE NEXT DAY HE CLUNG TO HIS OARS."

To one of my yachting skippers I owe a story of a practical joke which may help to lift that form of pleasantry out of the disrepute into which it has fallen.

In 1880 a coaster, bound from the eastward to Boston, came to anchor off Pigeon Cove in the teeth of a howling gale. She

a life-boat and rescue the crew. Among the watchers were three fishermen who, by their own experience, knew too well what that lee shore meant to the poor exhausted sailors on the ill-fated coaster. They saw at a glance that the life-boat would never get there in time. So the two brothers Zacharie

and Constance Surette, and George Saunders, started on the run for the schooner *Cora Lee*, tied up safely at the wharf. From her they borrowed a dory, and jumped in. As they began to row out, they talked cheerfully:

"Hurry, boys! We must n't let those fellows in that life-boat get ahead of us."

"Won't they feel cheap! See?"

They had passed the breakwater, and were facing the furious gale. By this time the schooner was riding bows under, and drifting rapidly. The three men could hardly hold their oars; it was difficult to keep the dory from swamping. After almost super-seaman efforts, they reached the vessel. It was so rough that the men on board had to leap into the sea and be picked up. Every one was saved but a dog, which refused to jump. It was none too soon. There was a desperate backing of water, a perilous turning, a pull to the harbor, a magnificent bending to the oars—then came the dull crash upon the rocks; the vessel was kindling-wood in about five minutes after the men were rescued.

When they were safely landed, one of the three heroes said:

"That's a darn good joke on that life crew."

It was the only comment upon the situation; and, as far as I can learn, no one ever bragged about the exploit, or mentioned it again. The fishermen treated it just as if it were an every-day occurrence. But a few days later the Massachusetts Humane Society sent these plucky fellows twenty dollars each, thus recognizing them as fit men to be enrolled upon its brilliant scroll.

The life-boat, it is just to add, was doing her best. She had too far to go to get there in time.

On April 25, 1895, a fishing-vessel came out from the harbor of Dyre Fiord, Iceland, to bait up and set its trawls. It became calm at night, but in the morning, when the dories went out to haul, it began to breeze up. The gale came up so rapidly that the head dories, in order to save themselves at all, cut their gear and made for the vessel, which was drifting astern so that the men could get aboard. Soon all the dories were in but one, and the skipper was in the rigging, looking for it anxiously. It was not long before he discovered it to windward, bottom up, with the two men on top.

Volunteers offered instantly. By this time the gale was a hurricane, and the sea had made rapidly. The great danger was apparent. One of the men who went to the

rescue as a matter of course, at the peril of his life, was Carl Eckhoff, an indomitable Swede. I have been unable to discover the names of the other two.

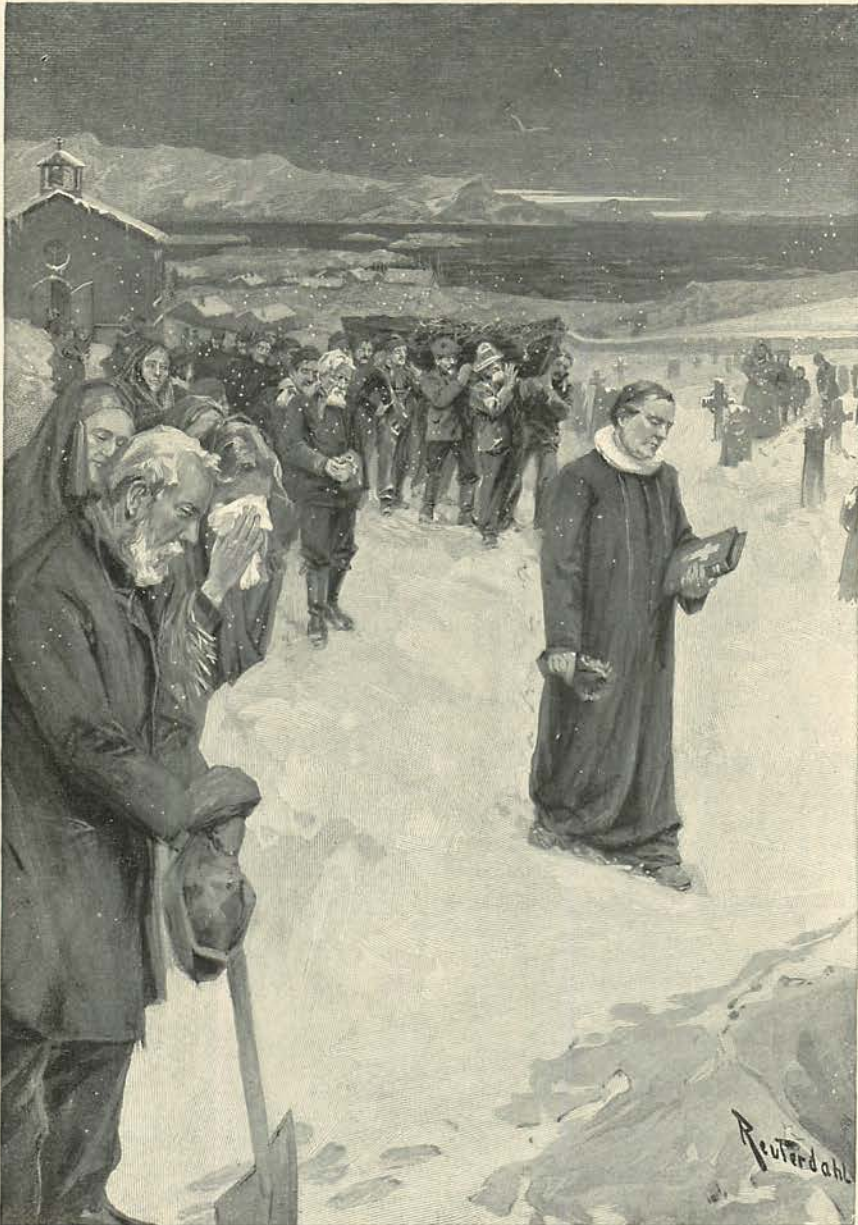
The wind, as well as the tide, was against the rescuers. Again and again they were almost swamped; but rapid bailing and skilful handling carried them on in the white hell. At last, well-nigh spent, they reached the dory just in time to save one man alive. But the other was dead. His head was fouled in the gear where he had fallen over, benumbed by the icy water. They carried him back to the vessel, and worked three hours in vain trying to resuscitate him. Then they made for the harbor.

On the following day a procession of the crews of three vessels wended its way to the churchyard. Uplifted upon the stalwart arms of mourning mates, the dory led the way. It was the assassin dory, and in it, in simple state, lay the man it had killed.

Up through the churchyard, into the plain church, the man was carried in his strange bier. There he was laid before the pulpit while the minister said over him the prayer for the dead. The freezing grave was ready. In it John Jacobsen was buried. No longer will he risk the gale or the ice. The dory that had slain him was his coffin; and the cold earth of warm-hearted Iceland has covered both man and boat in an eternal peace.

It is to be borne in mind that the majority of the fishermen are young men in their prime. Again, the greater part of them have never seen an accident. Theirs has not been the vessel to be "hove down." The memory of seventy-three vessels that were lost or damaged on the Labrador coast during the gale of October 11, 1885, and of the one hundred and fifty men or more who were drowned, has no part in their happy-go-lucky life. In truth, they look upon their lives as happy. To pity a fisherman is to administer the final insult. Precipitous seas, waves the crests of which are as carded wool, are monotonous to them. Thus the idea of rescue, which is, after all, a secondary feature of heroism, becomes to the seaman as much a reflex action as the unconscious tripping of the fingers of a pianist.

It was off the Horn. Waves such as are encountered only there in all the world raced irresistibly. The ship labored mightily through the night. In a lull the cry, "Man overboard!" rang from stem to stern. Without hesitation the helmsman put the wheel "hard up." The watch peered over the sides of the ship into the foam. All at once a man



DRAWN BY H. REUTERDAHL.

AN ICELAND BURIAL.

rushed up the companionway. He was in his night-clothes. Without waiting a moment, he leaped the rail and plunged overboard. There was only death to be found in the boiling, benumbing waters. By some witchery of Neptune, a cross sea tossed the two men to leeward, and the ship dipped them up. They were both unconscious, and the hero had his man clutched by the hair. Even to the old sailors used to miracles of the sea the safety of the two was not so great a marvel as the fact that the man had dared to

jump at all; for he was a timid, seasick landlubber making his first voyage, and his seeming cowardice had been the butt of savage scorn. How, then, had he outdared them all in recklessness? He was asked the question. How could he do it?

He answered simply that he had lain awake nights planning just what he would do if he heard the cry, "Man overboard!" It was so hard for him to overcome his instinctive fear of the water that he had mentally and systematically schooled him-

self to action. Thus, while his body cringed, his soul was heroic. This habit of mind made opportunity impossible to pass by. The intuitive response to his training swept him over the rail before he knew where he was.

In this way nerve is ingrained in many a nature, through self-training, before the man realizes that it is there. Chance does not make a hero: it simply translates him to himself and to the world.

This was well illustrated, a number of years ago, by a veteran fisherman.

Addison Davis was riding on the top of a coach across the old Beverly Bridge. This was in the days prior to the iron road. As the lumbering coach approached the middle of the bridge, Addison's trained ear heard a gurgle below. He bent over, and saw a boy's head disappearing in the water. Without waiting even for the inspiration, he leaped from the top of the coach over the rail, and before the vehicle could come to a stop he had the drowning boy by the hair. When asked later how he dared to do it, his reply was:

"Oh, that 's nothing. I had to do it; that 's all."

To him, as to every other hand-liner or trawler, the instinct of rescue was as simple as that of hunger, and called for no comment.

Even the babies in Gloucester are not without this instinct, although they do not count among their playthings medals from the Humane Society. It happened, this last summer, that a couple of children were playing in a spar-yard. They had ventured out upon the rolling logs floating on the tide. The older boy slipped. He was six. Down he went, head first, of course. The other one, a child of three, ran over to where he saw his playmate disappear between the logs, lay down at full length, and grabbed him by the hair when he came up. But the logs were coming together, so the baby put one of his chubby legs between the closing of the crush, and began to shriek. Without that spontaneous coolness and ability to rescue, which he probably inherited from generations of seamen, there would have been another procession of mourning-hacks in the old town.

A child who is taught, at six months, to sit up in the stern of a dory, and who rows alone at three years, is whipped if he does not show a little common sense upon the water. I saw a rigger send his son, a boy of seven, up to the top of a hundred-foot mast to hook a block, and threaten him

with the rope's end if he tumbled off. Such is the kind of training that made Captain Sol Jacobs the "high-line" of the Gloucester fleet.

At one time, when mackerel were scarce, a school was located from the crosstrees. Captain Jacobs was determined to set the seine before they scattered. He hurried off the seine-boat, and he himself steered her with an oar, standing on the stern thwart. Almost on the edge of the glistening school,—whether it was the response of nature to strong language, or a cross wave, who could say?—Captain Sol was hurled overboard. Now there is no other skipper on the coast more beloved by his crew than old Sol Jacobs, and the men immediately began to back. It was a clear choice between skipper and fish. But the skipper, who came up puffing, all "oiled up" and weighted down, decided for himself.

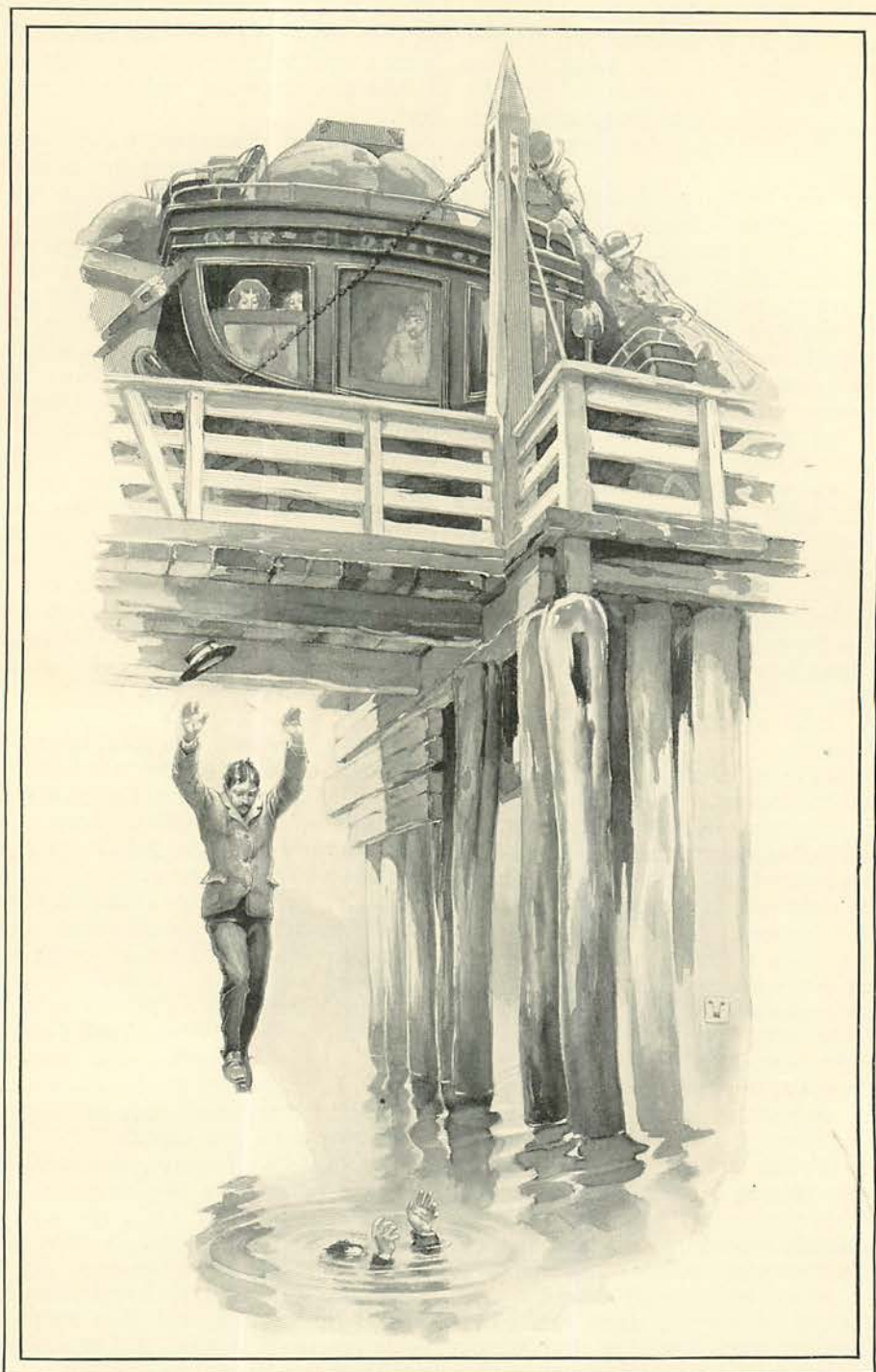
"What do ye think you came out here for?" he cried, with some expressive and, under the circumstances, valuable remarks not intended for print. "Set that seine quick, and don't ye wait for me!"

In about a quarter of an hour, almost dead with exhaustion, the skipper was helped over the side of the boat. But the crew had by this time set and pursed up a hundred barrels. No wonder Captain Sol always has his pick when he ships a crew.

Nothing stirs the blood or the imagination more than stories of promotion on the field of battle. War seems almost worth while, and slaughter expiated, when the general in command rides up amid the roar and smoke, and addresses a private, "Well done, corporal!" Or when, after the successful charge, he singles out the heroic lieutenant before all the regiment, and, saluting, says, "You have done well, captain!"

The exploits of peace, generally more heroic because on a less dramatic plane, have a scant gallery, little applause, and result in few promotions. A man, like a cyclone, emerges from the clear sky, but, unlike the whirlwind, performs some great feat of construction, and then melts back again into the firmament that gave him life, and the world knows him no more.

Such is Hans Slate. He has been a common, every-day fisherman for some years. During the latter part of 1896 he shipped on the schooner *Smuggler* with Captain Antoine Courant. On the night of December 30, 1896, the vessel drove ashore in a gale of wind at Cahoon's Hollow, Cape Cod. In an instant



DRAWN BY GEORGE VARIAN.

"HE LEAPED FROM THE TOP OF THE COACH."

the seas began to break over her. The crew had to hurry to the rigging, and it was only a question of time when the masts would go by the board and all be drowned.

It seemed hours to the men, though in

point of fact it was soon enough, before a flickering light on the beach told that the patrol had discovered their peril, and that the life-saving crew was at hand.

The first shot went wild, far over the

vessel. The masts creaked and bent under every onslaught of the waves. Would they hold out? But the second shot was better. The line was caught on the vessel, but far down the preventer-stay, and, besides all that, it was fouled on the hawser. It was virtually useless, for no one could step foot on deck and live. The men gave a groan of despair, for their last hope was gone.

At that moment a dark figure, like a wraith of the storm, slid down the jib-stay from the masthead. The white foam bit at him. The twanging wire threatened to jerk him off at any moment; at every heave of the surf it would come up taut with a jerk, like a gigantic bowstring. Every man of the crew breathed a prayer as Hans Slate reached the bowsprit safely. Then he was lost in a terrible sea. But Hans was imperturbable. With desperate skill and with unparalleled coolness (considering that he was engulfed by iced water every few seconds), he finally succeeded in freeing the life-line from the clutches of the hawser. He tied the rope about his neck, and started back up the swaying stay. This he had to

do hand over hand. Try this on a warm summer day on a motionless boat, and experience what the feat means. Now add numbed and bleeding hands, a drenched body, an icy hurricane, lashing waters, darkness, a wire whipcord, to a swaying mast that is liable to give way at any moment, and you get an inkling of Hans Slate's modest exploit. At last he secured the precious line at the masthead,

and then the breeches-buoy was busy on its merciful errand.

Soon only three were left. Hans was one, of course. Another was a boy, who was helpless on the ratlines far below the masthead. He had no strength to move; so Hans took him in his arms, carried him to the masthead, and lashed him safely to the buoy and sent him over. Now only he and the captain were left, and the captain was a heavy man, I am told. Ominous sounds told that the wreck was fast breaking up under the assaults of the sea.

"You go," said Hans, quietly.

"No," said the captain; "you first, I last."

"By —, no! You go; I stay here."

The skipper tried to go aloft up the rigging. But he could not do it. Then Hans tried from under to boost him up. But that could not be done.

"It's no use," said the skipper, after another futile struggle. "Save yourself; I can't get up there. You'd better be quick! The masts will be overboard in five minutes."

But Hans uttered not a word. He climbed up under the captain, clasped the skipper's hands

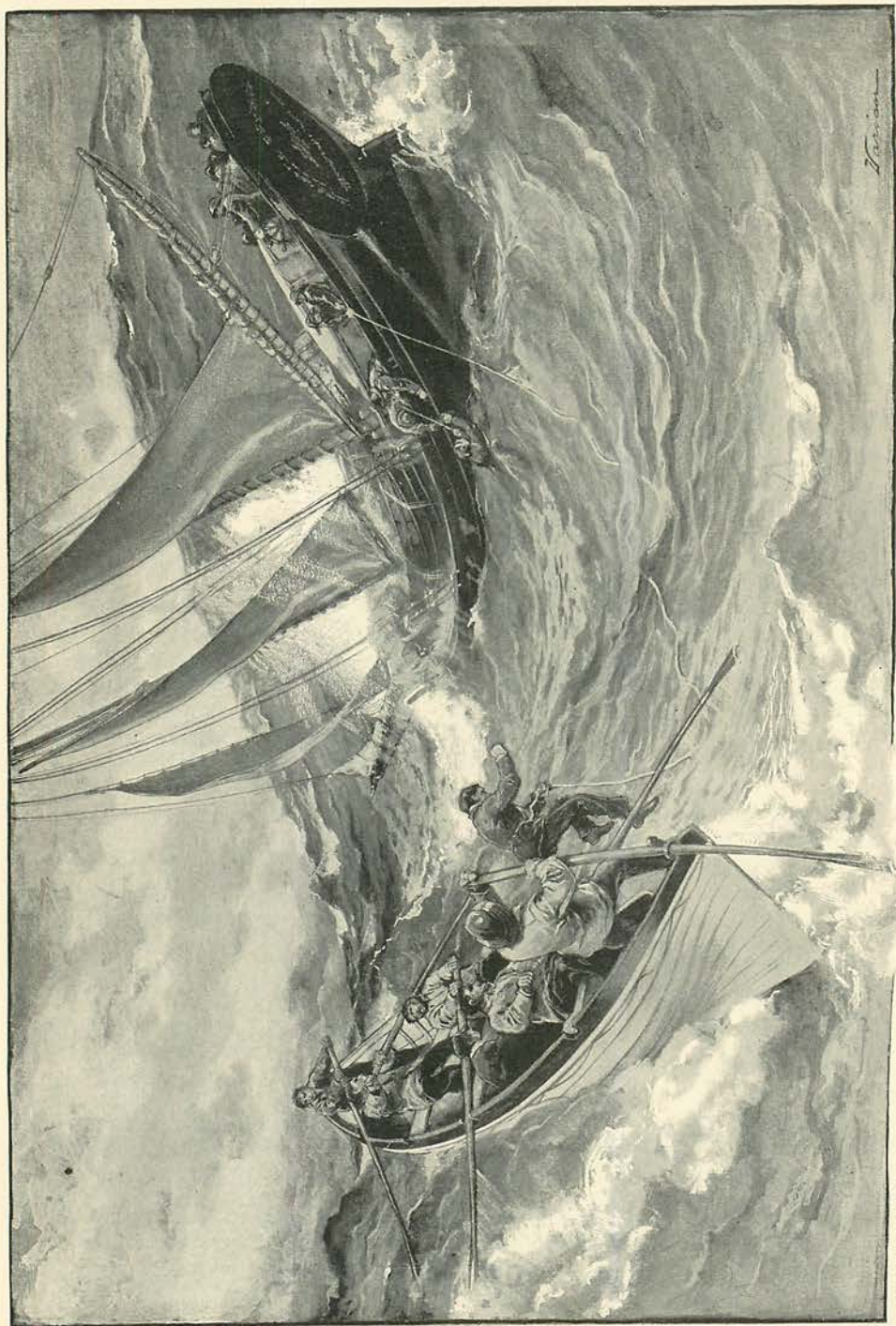
about his neck, and thus shouldering him, carried him aloft. The crew said things about it. They mentioned words like "impossible" and "superhuman." But Hans did it, even with the wreck of his strength, while his hands were raw, his body bruised and bleeding, and when the gale tripped the little strength he had.

After he had secured his captain, the hero



DRAWN BY GEORGE VARIAN.

"HANS SLATE'S EXPLOIT."



DRAWN BY GEORGE VARIAN.

..THE SECOND BOAT."

remained alone upon the wreck, which was now rapidly going, waiting for the buoy to return. He did not expect to save himself, for the mast swayed horribly. Indeed, he had hardly enough life left in him to secure himself. Just as his feet had touched the land, a sound of a mighty crack overrode the thunder of the water and the wind, and the masts crashed into the surf.

"If it had not been for Hans Slate," the captain declared, "not a man of the crew would have been saved. If there ever was a hero, Hans is he." And when a fisherman says a thing like that, you may know that there is no peradventure in his estimate; for he is a judge of valor, and knows what he is talking about.

On the night of December 31, 1896, the British steamer *Warwick*, from Glasgow to St. John, New Brunswick, drove at full speed against Yellow Muir Ledge, Grand Manan. After futile attempts to save themselves in the howling gale, the crew, numbering fifty-two souls, launched the two remaining boats the next morning at daylight, crowded into them, and left the wreck. Ever drenched, ever bailing for dear life, in momentary peril of capsizing, becoming more numbed and discouraged, drifting farther from land, falling off into deeper troughs of the heaving seas, the poor men finally gave up hope; for survival was only a question of minutes, or, at most, of hours. At that crisis, when the tempest was at its height, out of the scud, the seas, and the foam, out of the hurricane, there appeared a savior. The fifty-two frozen men thought the materialization a miracle.

A few days before, when the gale was rising, the *George S. Boutwell*, a fishing-schooner from the port of Gloucester, anchored in a little sheltered spot called Seal Cove. The *Boutwell* was launched in 1869, and had been racked and tossed since the day of her birth. She was old and feeble, and her skipper, Zacharie Surette, was easing her up the coast. She had been creeping from shelter to shelter, escaping the winter storms. When this flurry arose, Captain Surette congratulated himself on his own safety; for the vessel was light, and to risk her in such a storm was sheer suicide, and he knew it. During a lull in the blow, the keeper of the North Head Light noticed the steamer grinding on the rocks. The *Boutwell* was the only vessel within twenty miles or more. The keeper ran down to the cove, jumped into a frail dinghy, and rowed out, with great danger to himself, and told the captain

what he had seen. There was not an instant's hesitation among skipper and crew.

"Don't wait to haul her up, boys! Buoy that anchor! Sharp, now! Lash the jumbo down! Three reefs in her mainsail, and let her go!"

Not a man on deck but knew it might be his last voyage. It was bad enough loaded—but light! A single cross sea would open her ancient seams. An unpropitious comber might sweep her clean. A chance squall would heave the light thing down. But Captain Surette—the same man who played his grim joke on the life-boat crew—stood by his wheel, and, regardless of the old vessel's groans and protestations, whipped her on. He was as careless of the punishing elements as the soldier who furiously, amid shrapnel, spurs his jaded horse into the enemy's trenches.

Steadily blown to leeward, at sea the two boat-loads made preparation to perish. Suddenly the *Boutwell*, like a huge gull, bore down upon them. Fearing she would go by, not knowing that she came to save, the men in the boats stood up, extending their hands, and shouting madly. It took no little seamanship to shoot up near the first boat, which, but for its air-tanks, would have long since swamped. Ropes with slip-nooses were thrown, and the men, one after another, were drawn to the *Boutwell's* deck, and immediately stowed below. Then came another three miles' battle for the second boat, and another rescue, that is simple enough to mention, but hard to accomplish and describe. Now the *Boutwell*, never before so laden, with her fifty-two saved on board, made a desperate fight to get under the lee shore, and for safety, twelve miles away.

The British government, never niggardly in recognizing noble deeds, presented Captain Surette with a magnificent pair of marine glasses, in acknowledgment of his humanity. I am glad that his crew have recently been remembered. It takes followers to make a leader. In reading the records of the last twenty years, I have found but one instance where the crew of a Gloucester vessel did not either initiate or eagerly second and invite the hazard for mercy's sake, although generally there is one man who arises in an emergency, tosses off discouragement like a feather, forgets his empty stomach, his bruises, smiles at his freezing limbs, dares the elements to murder him if they can, and then becomes the commandant of his own fate and that of his mates.

(To be continued.)

HEROES OF THE DEEP.

BY HERBERT D. WARD.

WITH PICTURES BY GEORGE VARIAN.



HEROISM is easily tired out, drowned out, starved out. The extraordinary spirit that suffers all these things, and still has hope and nerve enough left to fight to the finish, while companions despair—that being is as much a demigod to the commonalty to-day as he would have been three thousand years ago. While customs and people change, prowess is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

On Thursday, January 21, 1897, the fishing-schooner *Yosemite*, John McKinnon, otherwise known as "John Shortscope," skipper, was somewhere off Cape Sable. About noon it began to breeze up from the east-southeast, gradually changing to west by north, and later to west. It was freezing, and the vessel was icing up badly. By four o'clock in the afternoon it began to blow strongly, and to snow. At six the jib was triced up and the foresail reefed, and the log was hauled in. By dead reckoning, Ragged Island Light was twenty miles to the north-northwest. At a quarter to seven a white, fixed light was sighted on the lee bow. This was supposed to be a schooner at anchor, riding out the increasing gale. To make sure, the skipper "hove" the lead, and found ten fathoms of water. He then gave the order to haul her off to the southwest by south, and to set the riding-sail. By this time it was a fast and furious gale of wind and blinding snow.

Suddenly the lookout cried, "We 're in the breakers!"

The shout had scarcely left his throat when the sea made a clean breach over the doomed vessel. The *Yosemite* was loaded with herring, even to her cabin and her bunks, all hands being stowed in the fore-castle. "Take to the rigging!" howled the skipper. It was in the dog-watch, and all the men were oiled up. Eight of them jumped for the main rigging. The cook took to the fore, as he had to come up the forward gangway. In a momentary lull the skipper "grabbed the chance" to go forward to get money out of his chest. He got as far as the fore rigging, and had to join the cook.

The vessel began to break up immediately.

The mainmast went first, carrying down the foremast. All hands were hurled into the water, each one looking out for himself. Close by, to leeward, with the sea breaking clean over it, could be seen the shoulders of a rock. Captain McKinnon was washed into the belly of a sail; and therein, like Jonah of old, he prayed for his life. The next sea tossed the sail, like a bit of seaweed, away from him, and thrust him on the rock. At the same time it flung the mast across his leg, and pinned him down. But just in time to save him from immediate drowning, a breaker lifted the mast, and brought within reach of his hand a bit of wire rigging, and then fetched the mast end up on the rock. In his own words, that need no interpretation, he "scrabbled up."

It was now black, and fiercely snowing. The cook never came up. Another man was saved, with both legs broken. The rest had managed to make the rock. And now the sea cast at them bits of wreckage—bolts from the bow, splinters from the keel; and the slimy bodies of frozen fish slapped them like hail in the face. The rock was not over twelve feet in circumference. The nine men held their grip by clawing the clefts. At last a plank was washed up beside them. This they put endwise into the crevasse, and with flotsam rope lashed themselves, man by man, to it. There they lay all that night, expecting every moment to go; for every wave drenched them, and it was only the clutch that saved them.

Next morning found them all there. Across a channel only seventy-five feet wide there seemed to be the mainland. In reality it was an island. But the tide swept fiercely past the rock, carrying wreckage far out to sea; and besides that, the surf itself was such as not one of those experienced sailors had ever seen.

At ten o'clock the man with the broken legs died, and each one wondered, as he looked into his mate's cold, calm face, how soon the same fate would befall him. Not a soul was visible on the bleak shore. In the meanwhile a log-line, caught somewhere, tantalizingly swished near the rock, but

would not be seized. With it some one might get across, and so save the rest. Without it, the attempt to swim even that narrow channel seemed the sheerest suicide.

By afternoon despair set in. The little strength left after that terrible night of exposure was rapidly sapped by the loss of hope. Each one of them knew that not one of them could survive another night, when the thermometer came to its depth and the tide to its height. At four o'clock in the afternoon it was low water. No man spoke. The fate that could not be escaped cast a sullen silence upon all except the skipper. He knew that it was now or never. But what could he do, with his jammed legs? As it was, he was nearly dead. But he called Pat Rose to his side, and whispered to him:

"Another night means death, Pat; you know that."

Pat nodded solemnly. He did not say a word, but he crawled to the edge of the rock, carefully noting the action of the waves, the eddies of the tide, and the possibility of a landing-place on the other side of the leaping water. Then he arose, took off his oilskins, and stripped himself to his underclothes. He stood straight up, shaking with the result of twenty hours of exposure. His freezing legs scarcely supported him. His face was fiercely resolute. He gathered the last remnant of his courage, and held it in hand.

"It's no use, boys," he said simply, "to stay here and die. I'll take the chances for you. If I get there, I reckon we'll pull through all right."

The men roused themselves from their fast-increasing stupor, and watched their hero with fearful anxiety as, without another word, he leaped into the waves and struck out for the opposite ledge. Now he was on the top of a breaker, now he was swirled under, and disappeared. Twenty-five yards do not appear to be much, but it seemed to the poor frozen watchers on that rock that it took the actor ages of effort to play his part to the triumphant end. When his mates, whose lives absolutely depended upon this supreme effort, saw Rose hurled upon the rock, clutch it, and then drag himself beyond the ravenous breakers, they gave a feeble shout of joy. With a hopeful wave of his hand, Rose started, in his now freezing underclothes, to run for help. He ran fully half a mile, and then came back in despair. No living creature was to be seen, and it was fast darkening. He hurried back to the ledge.

"I can't find help!" he shouted. "You'll

have to swim for it. Come on, and I'll swim out and help you all!"

These were his brave words. It would take much freezing to daunt such a man. Carlyle would have loved him. Now Providence stepped in, and helped the huddling group on the rock. Peradventure, for the sake of one man's pluck, the ten were saved. For suddenly came within their reach the log-line, that had evaded these hapless men all day. John Hickey grasped it, made it fast to the rock, and tied the other end around himself. Rose's example had fired him; he needed just that to put him on his mettle. With a shout, he plunged in, and struck out. As he neared the ledge, Rose met him, and helped him up.

It now took only a few minutes to haul over a stouter rope and make it fast. On this the men came, hand over hand, and all were saved.

It was afterward known that the people on shore had seen the signal of the shipwrecked men upon the rock; but as it was impossible to launch the boat, they could not go to the rescue. Too rough to launch a dory; and yet Rose, exhausted, freezing, hungry, plunged in, and Hickey, too! The Spartans are not all dead. It honors our whole land that our Gloucester fishermen do such deeds so grandly, so uncomplainingly, so naturally, and so often.

Talking about it on the wharf, one day, when fish were scarce, John McKinnon told the writer, with tears furrowing his sad face, and in a voice toned to the deepest emotion:

"I can't imagine a more heroic act. If there's a man who's one of a hundred thousand, Pat Rose is that man. If it wa'n't for him, we'd have all gone, sure."

Cool-headed inventiveness when others are paralyzed with terror is no less a mark of heroism than the instinctive acceptance of personal risk. The real hero in a great conflagration may be the one who, at the instant of panic, keeps his head, and orders the crowd, imparting to it his own imperturbability. Such a one might have saved scores of lives in the horrible Parisian bazaar disaster. Add to this rare quality of calmness in danger the ability to devise instantaneously the unusual and only means of rescue, and you have a man indeed.

Perhaps the best instance of this rare gift that I have heard of occurred in February, 1862. The schooner *J. G. Dennis* was running home to Gloucester with a full fare from Georges, when she met a heavy gale of wind right in her teeth. Her master, Thomas

D. Dench, one of those elemental souls whom nothing could daunt, made up his mind to drive her right through. In a February gale the wind and the sea are about as cheerful opponents as a madman and a razor. In this struggle the *Dennis* had the worst of the encounter, and she was razed. She lost her sails,—all but the jumbo, I believe,—and her boats, and, besides, was blown offshore into the Gulf Stream. There she found a favorable southerly wind, and so pointed her nose again for home, having set her staysail and an old mildewed summer foresail. The sea was still very heavy, and the breeze was not a zephyr. Just at daylight, on the 2d of March, the lookout sighted a water-logged vessel, and bore down upon it. The skipper came on deck, and soon spoke the wreck, which proved to be the schooner *Life-Boat* of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, loaded with lumber, and bound to the West Indies. The only thing that preserved her name from travesty was the lumber that kept her afloat, most of the deck-load of which had been washed off. Her masts were gone, her boat was gone, and her cook and one man had been washed overboard. When the *Dennis* came within hailing distance, the captain and the three hands left were lashed on top of the after deck-house, expecting to go down any minute.

"For Heaven's sake," they begged, "don't leave us! Three big vessels have spoken us, and deserted us. For God's sake, save us!" they cried in desperation.

"Cheer up!" Captain Dench called back. "This time you're dealing with men, not cowards. We'll stand by."

Then came the problem of rescue. It was a wreck saving a wreck. It was the blind leading the blind. For neither vessel had a boat to put off, and to approach near in that sea was to risk a fatal collision. Besides, the wind was beginning to rise again, and the icy sea was running viciously. So Captain Dench, handling his vessel, with her flimsy sail, as best he could, lay to leeward, and ordered the men on the sinking wreck to throw overboard all the lumber left upon the deck. He then picked up what loose boards he wanted, and wrenched his gurry-kid from the deck. A gurry-kid is a big box, without bottom or top, that is fitted in the deck, in which fish is thrown. He then sawed the boards with his own hands, and made a bottom to the kid. This he calked with rope-yarn and pieces of rope. Then he patched up the seams with canvas junk. He then lashed two empty water-casks to each end of the box, and took two reaches to windward. This brought

the wreck under his lee. Then the men on board the *Dennis* launched their nondescript boat, and attaching to it a strong line, paid it out until it reached the water-logged schooner. They saved the men, of course; and besides that, they took off a gaff-topsail that was washing about the deck. This they bent for a jib, using their own jib for a mainsail. By this time their own foresail was pretty well exhausted. The rescue and the patching up took all of that day. That night, instead of making for Gloucester, Captain Dench decided to take the shipwrecked men home, and so "make a good job of it." So they turned their prow to Shelburne, which they reached after a hard tussle. The firm who owned the *Life-Boat* gave Captain Dench a suit of sails with which to come to Gloucester, and later the British government presented him with a splendid marine glass which his son uses on board his sloop to this day.

The spirit that passes no one by in distress, and is undismayed by impossibilities, is one not too common, even among mariners.

We instinctively look upon the hero as one who in moments of emergency or danger has manifested the maximum of iron-hearted activity. The readiness to endure suffering, the contempt for luxury, the willingness to court risk or death—this is courage indeed, but rather of the bull-dog variety, and none the less tenacious. Soldiers say that the sure test of courage is to rest on one's arms, motionless, silent, unanswering, while the enemy is spattering you with shot and shell.

Heroism rises to its greatest height when from a noble motive one endures the danger from which one might easily escape. "In other words," quoting Thomas Hughes, "may we not say that, in the face of danger, self-restraint is, after all, the highest form of self-assertion?" England can never forget her *Birkenhead*, and she recalls with equal Saxon pride her *Victoria*.

Napier would have been a good judge of the following incident.

This began with an accident. It is no joke to be caught off Cape Sable in a December hurricane. It was what happened to the *Fredonia* in 1896.

The *Fredonia* was a historic vessel. She was built by Burgess for Commodore Forbes, and made a cruise across the Atlantic. She was then sold to Gloucester, and became a fisherman, the handsomest, proudest, and fastest of the fleet. She was noted for her race with the crack Boston pilot-boat *Hesper*,

in which she was easily victorious. She was the best-known fishing-vessel on the Atlantic coast. But in 1896 the *Fredonia* was seven years old, and she had never been spared.

On that fatal morning a hurricane came up from the northeast. Captain Morgan had a crew of twenty-three men on board, and at half-past four in the morning it was blowing so wildly that he hove the vessel to under a doubled-reefed foresail. Without warning, a curling monster, cross-trees high,—so tall and toppling that one could see right under it, much as, in the case of the Cave of the Winds, one can look under the avalanche of Niagara,—boarded the *Fredonia*, and swept her clean. No one but a fisherman knows what this means. Take the difference between one hundred and nine tons, the burden of the *Fredonia*, and three thousand, the average of our ocean steamers. A wave that might not even stagger the *City of Paris* might be, if it assaulted just right, the death-blow of a fisherman. The *Fredonia* was easily “hove down,” and she was swept as clean as if a plane had been run over her. The dories were demolished, masts gone, chain-lockers gone, sails gone; the new road was snapped off clean, and gone; cat-head and windlass torn right out, fore-rigging not to be seen at all, fore-boom and fore-gaff in splinters, backstay all tangled up with the jib-stay; checker-boards, trawl-tubs, gurry-pens, topping-lift, God knows where; bulwarks all gone, hatches gone, rudder and wheel-box gone, and even the ring-bolts on the deck were cut off as by a chisel. Only the pumps were left. One man had gone overboard, and another was literally blown to pieces. This was Olaf Olson. He lived about six hours.

All this happened in less than a minute, between four and five in the morning, when vitality is at its lowest ebb. Fortunately, only three men were on deck when the catastrophe happened; otherwise the fatality would have been multiplied. As it was, the plight of the crew was desperate; for it was soon discovered that the schooner’s “grub-beam” had started, and that she was leaking badly.

All hands immediately manned the pumps to keep her above water. This they were scarcely able to do. The deck was almost flush with the sea. Every wave boarded the wreck, and the men were exhausted and disheartened. If the sea had not moderated by nine o’clock at night, and made the task easier, the crew would have given up the struggle; for the *Fredonia* was fast sinking, and the men were losing courage and becoming numbed.

At half-past four next morning, just twenty-four hours after the disaster, the steamer *Colorado* hove in sight, and, noticing the frantic signals of distress, bore down on the sinking vessel. With great danger, a life-boat was lowered; for the seas were very high, and rescue was a feat of great difficulty.

Indeed, President McKinley awarded Captain Whitten of the *Colorado* a gold watch and chain “for heroic service in effecting the rescue of the crew of the schooner *Fredonia*, on December 18, 1896.” The names of the mate and the sailors who did the deed are probably forgotten, if ever known at all.

At last only five were left aboard the *Fredonia*. She was sinking rapidly, and the seas were washing her with increasing malignity.

“We can’t leave him behind,” said Captain Morgan, pointing to their crushed and silent mate, whose body was lashed to prevent it washing overboard. For to leave a shipmate to go down with a vessel is a discourtesy to the dead that sailors will not allow.

“But she ’s likely to go down at any moment,” suggested one of the crew. “You ’d better get out of her while you can. Any one of these seas might bear her under.”

But Morgan shook his head. In the black before the dawn, outlined before a background of white spume, he could see the life-boat laboring back to save the remnant of the crew.

“I ain’t going to leave until we give him a decent burial,” said the captain, firmly.

“We ’re with you, skipper!” the men cried as with one voice.

Then began a scene that is not so rare at sea as one might suppose. By this time the *Fredonia* was hardly able to keep her water-logged nose up.

“Keep off until we holler!” cried the skipper, motioning the wondering life-boat off.

Tenderly the men unleashed Olaf Olson, and tied him in a blanket. Then, in order that everything might be done shipshape, they lashed some wreckage together and made a raft. Upon this they bound their dead. And all the while they silently prepared their mate for burial the tremendous seas rose upon them, and whipped them with icy spray, and chased them with curling tentacles. And all the time the gallant vessel, throbbing with punishment, and groaning in her last efforts to keep alive, threatened to sink from under them.

Then, when the corpse was prepared, Captain Morgan said:



"HE NEARED THE LEDGE."

"We've got to have a prayer, boys. It won't do to send him over without one." Then his voice broke. "I can't," he stammered. "Let some one else."

Then up spoke Bob Diggins. "I'll try my best, skipper!"

So, while the rest held the raft at the stern, Bob uncovered his head, the others doing likewise, and made such a prayer as he could. "It wa'n't much of a prayer," the fisherman would say, if you asked him; "it

wa'n't worth mentioning." But we may think that the requiem of the gale and the tumultuous dirge of the waves were not sufficient to drown that prayer before it reached the throne of the Almighty. Then, with faces wet with salt of the sea and with their tears, the crew shoved Olson over the stern into a toppling wave. Every moment had been a risk to their own lives; but they did their duty by their mate, and they buried him with that religious instinct and

respect for the Christian hope which survives in wilder hearts than those of Gloucester fishermen.

By this time the *Fredonia* was at her last gasp. "Hurry the life-boat up! Jump! Haul him in! Next!" Captain Morgan was of course the last to leap for safety. He had scarcely been hauled into the life-boat by willing hands when the *Fredonia*, in final agony, tossed her head proudly on high, hung in the air for a thrilling instant, and then plunged forward into the ocean, adding one more tally against the deep which will be paid at the last day.

Thus the noblest vessel of the fleet met her end, witnessing in her last throes a loyal courage which deserves to be classed high among our modern instances of heroism.

IF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE would offer the use of a complete number, I might do scant justice to the heroic manliness of our American sailor. A few pages can only sketch the outlines of his sturdy, storm-tossed figure. I have selected the Gloucester fisherman as a type; for he takes the largest chances, encounters the heaviest seas, ventures the densest fogs, and endures the greatest cold—all in the smallest vessels. Besides, he is one whom I have intimately known for nearly fifteen years, and I can testify whereof I speak.

I might have given instances of greater bravery than I have. Exclusion has been more difficult than selection; for Gloucester is distinguished by these unknown nobles. The chances are that the most insignificant man cutting fish on the wharf, all slimy in his gurried oilskins, has been the principal in a feat of dramatic prowess. It is next to the impossible to get him or anybody else to talk about it. If our men did brag of their exploits, there would not be enough medals to go around.

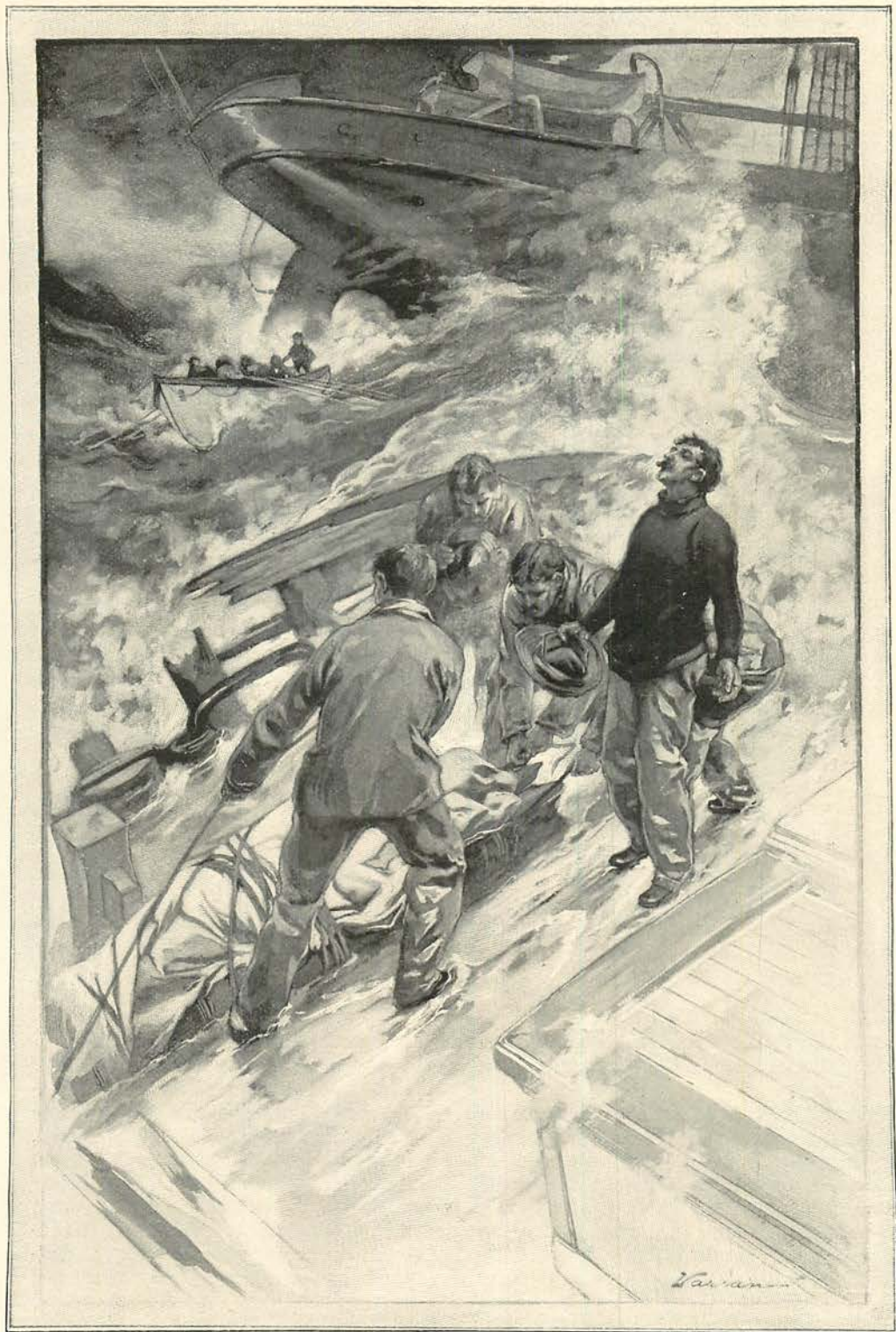
I would like to tell of the wreck of the *Finance*, and how Fred Bryant lost his life in trying to take a line to shore in order to save his mates; how George Johnston plunged in next, only to be pulled back, half perished with the cold and exhaustion; and how James McIver, an Englishman, went into the bubbling surf, and although beaten back and back again, with his boots and clothes torn off, reached the island; how, notwithstanding his being almost frozen and well-nigh lifeless with exertion, he dragged the rope out of the sea, braced his torn and bare feet against an icy rock, and held the line taut until another of the crew got to land on it; how the hero

sank to earth then, and did not answer to his shipmates' call, and they found that he was dead where he had fallen, for his endurance had reached life's limit.

I should like to tell of the magnificent and sad attempt to rescue the crew of the *Maggie E. Wells* by Chief Officer Meyer and his six volunteers of the steamer *Amsterdam*. Many pages could not compass the glory of this exploit; for there is no more thrilling story on the crest of the sea than that of this piteous expenditure of six lives in vain. These the sudden squall and the cross-sea claimed. These brave, uncomplaining men died to save others; themselves they could not save. I should like to add a detailed account of the rescue, by the *Lord Gough*, of the *Cleopatra*, that was "hove down" on January 1, 1896. This story would include another burial service in the wreck, while the rescuers were resting on their oars.

It is a pity to pass by the proud fortune of the schooner *Volunteer*, that has been "in at the death," so to speak, of her sister craft several times, and whose crew is accustomed to daring deeds. Once Captain McNeil of the same vessel was the first to jump into a dory, call for two helpers, and go to the rescue of those aboard the old "hooker" *Star of the East*. He saved every one. It sounds simple, but if properly told it is quite a story, nevertheless. Instances of rescue like this could be counted by the hundred, and are too common to excite much attention on the Cape Ann coast. There is a man called Andrew Ross. He was on the *Edith M. McGinnis* at one time. As usual, it was off Cape Sable. The *Maggie and Lily* was fast sinking. The gale was a terrific one. It was only a matter of minutes when the boat would go down. All the captain of the *Edith* could do was to lie to windward, and let a dory drift down for the doomed men to jump in, and so be hauled back. Of course the dory was smashed, and three men were left—doomed. Then Andrew Ross (who had been the first one to be rescued) and Andrew Christie—good men with good names—launched another dory in the raging surf, and took the three off. Within a few minutes the *Maggie and Lily* disappeared.

I should like to dwell on the heroic coolness of Captain Rowe of the schooner *Alice*, who, when wrecked on the northern side of Lingan Head, went down from a position of temporary security in the rigging into the seething seas that swept the deck, got a cod-line and a monkey-wrench at the risk of his life, tied them together, and threw the



"THEY BURIED HIM."



"DEAD WHERE HE HAD FALLEN."

iron to the top of the high headland, thus making the necessary connection, and saving the entire crew.

In April, 1896, the *J. W. Campbell* was "hove down" in a squall, and Abraham McCormey was drowned. Some do not forget him in Gloucester to this day; for he saved the whole crew of the *Hattie D. Linnell*, when she was driven ashore on Christmas day, the previous year. It was rather a fine holiday present to make. She was blown on the foot of a high cliff at St. Pierre, and then took fire. The fate of all was fixed, when Abraham tied a rope around his waist, and jumped into the breakers.

I should be sorry to pass by Captain Waterman Quinn, and his encounter with

an iceberg off Labrador; or to omit recording how, when all the crew from terror took to the boats, only one remaining, too paralyzed by fright to move, the skipper alone voluntarily stayed by, and, single-handed, saved the vessel from destruction.

And there was Isaiah Hatch of the *Estelle Nunan*, who, at the risk of his own life, went aloft on the foremast in a frightfully pitching sea, and cut away wreckage that threatened the immediate destruction of the vessel and crew. There were James Furlong and James McLeod of the schooner *Canopus*, who ventured out in a small dory, and did the impossible, saving the whole crew of the *Sea Foam* of Lubec, Maine, in the midst of an overwhelming sea. This was an instance

of the greatest bravery. For a like deed President Cleveland forwarded testimonials to the captain and crew of the schooner *Harry Lewis* for their gallantry in rescuing the crew of the schooner *Restless* in January, 1888.

One feels as if one owed an apology to the unmentioned heroes, the bare record of whose names would fill the limits of this paper; for it is hard to choose between friends. The unwritten deeds of these modest and courageous fishermen have not been slighted out of these pages, but crowded out by sheer excess of the glory of the Gloucester fleets.

WE turn from the white hurricane back to the peaceful port. The sun has set. The yellow of the summer has changed to purple and to gray. The bay is motionless. The city's reflection is brown and oily. Into the mouth of the harbor a vessel creeps. Five dories are out ahead, patiently towing the trawler in. She refuses the emphatic invitation of the tug that philosophically returns, bearing the tidings that the flag of the incoming boat is at half-mast. Whose home does this news smite?

Now there springs into gradual being the wonderful spectrum of the land and of the sea, which can be seen only on the prism of the harbor. Like the solar spectrum, it has its type colors, that flash toward the eye in concentric lines upon the black waters. There, across the "Cut," shines the radiant light of the electric arc. Here flashes the intermittent crimson, a sure indication that the white lighthouse on the point is steadily and loyally blinking at its friends. The slowly moving line of green tells that the approaching fisherman casts her starboard gaze questioningly at me. Little pencils of blue, of

cherry, and of corn, falling from homes and streets and decks and riggings upon land and sea, tell stories of life and struggle, of danger and death, of misery and happiness, as surely as the Fraunhofer lines indicate the kind of vapors on the surface of the sun.

Prominently from the "Neck" there shines into the mouth of the harbor one little yellow light. Every night that line cuts the water until it is lost toward Half-way Rock. It is as steady as the spectrum of salt, and perhaps not so different, after all. It is the light of greeting and of welcome which the patient wife puts before her window for her husband on the sea. The hour when he will come she may not know, or if he will come at all. Is he living? Is he dead? He is now two weeks overdue; but as long as there is oil to burn, and longer than there is hope in the desolate heart, that signal will be there. It is the spectrum of sorrow, of loneliness, of patience, of despair and fortitude—of all that silent heroism of which men take so little account, and with which the lives of women are so sad and so great.

Is that half-mast flag for her?

She draws the curtain and looks out, with her work-worn hands against her temples to shield her eyes. She shivers, but not with cold. The children cling to her skirts, and wonder what it is that ails her. She does not speak. A hundred women like her watch on Gloucester shores, waiting for answers to awful questions. Which of the fleet? Which of the crew? Widowhood and orphanage come in with the half-mast flag. Into whose door will they enter? The vessel glides up spectrally and slowly into the inner harbor. She moves as if she were loath to make the wharf and tell her tale of splendor and of woe.

