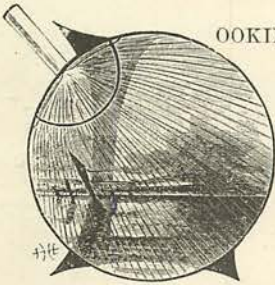


SUNDAY UNDER THE SHADOW OF HELIGOLAND.

BY THE REV. F. HASTINGS.



THE FLOATING TOWN.



LOOKING for "a needle in a bottle of hay" is doubtless a difficult task. To look for a fishing fleet in the North Sea is perhaps more difficult. The needle would probably be stationary, but the fleets move about. They are now in one place, then in another, and the North Sea is very wide.

The skipper of the *James Knott* thought he could soon find one of the great fleets, but somehow we were several days before we came on one. We had evidently passed the "Short Blue" in the night, and went on and on until we found another. We had calm and fog at times to contend with. I would rather have the former than the latter: We could hear in the dense fog, at night-time, the horrible warning whistles of two great steamers. We had only a trumpet, blown by a bellows, with which to reply. We grunted and squeaked out thereby our supplication to the leviathan to avoid running over us. When we could hear her fog-whistle begin to die away in the distance, we began to breathe more freely. Then a ship nearly ran over us. So near was she that our skipper ordered the boat to be got ready for escape. His brilliant "flare" saved us. The "flare" is a strong light, probably of magnesium. With flapping to and fro of the sails, groanings of the boom, and screechings of the peak, so the fog-night passed. Morning brings clearness. We can go forward. Where is the fleet? We hail steamers and passing fishermen: "Where is the fleet?" We get on the track of one at last; and it is the Grimshy fleet.

It is Saturday morning when we come up to the long-looked-for fishing squadron, appearing in the distance like a great floating town. Soon skipper Goodchild, of the *Sophia Wheatly*, is on board. He is glad to see us. He tells me that I was the first, in a previous trip, to lead him to try and muster courage to

address a public meeting. Soon arrangements are made for services on the morrow. Oh, that it may be a fine day! "We have been praying for it," said the skipper. "If it is too rough the men dare not leave their smacks, and if foggy they may not find them again."

Morning breaks. At five I am on deck. Yes, the prayers of the hopeful Christians on the waters are answered. Will the weather hold? It does. At seven there is a rare hearty prayer-meeting on board our vessel. At ten we go on board the larger Mission



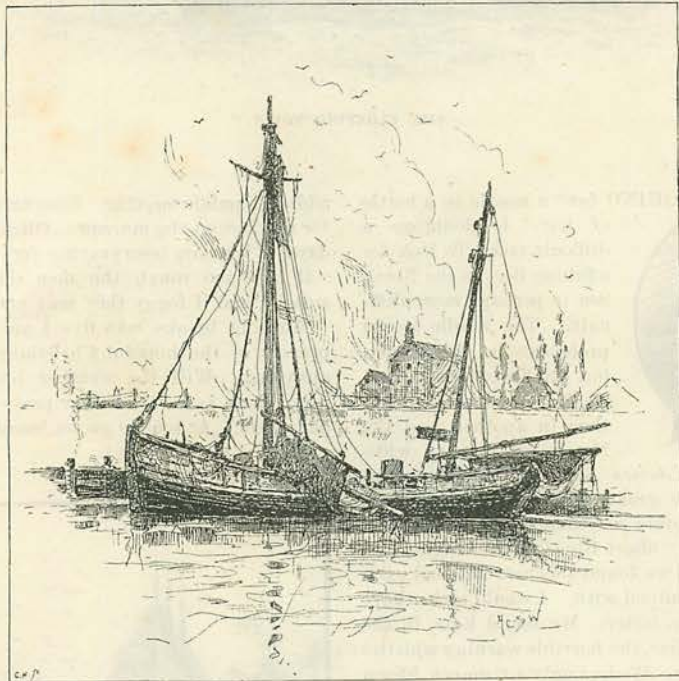
THE RITZIBÜTTELS SCHLOSS.

ship. Smack after smack, with white or dark russet sails, slowly pass. Boats push off with several in each who wish to attend worship. The ships carrying Christian skippers are easily known, as the Bethel flag will be seen floating at the mast-head. This is done to confess Christ, and also, should there be no regular service, to let other Christians know where they can find like-minded men.

Our great blue-and-white Mission-flag, sixteen feet long, is flying. So is that of the *Sophia Wheatly*. The whole fleet can see, and recognise them as readily as on shore we should the joyous jingle of the Sabbath bells.

could easily get away. Over the waves they danced in irregular measure. When our boat was wanted our skipper called for "the carriage and pair." Really, our two pullers were as strong as horses.

It must be said that Miss Gwennie Davie and my daughters, who went to sing solos and play the harmonium, accomplished the task of getting in and out of the boats with great skill. They had to leap when the waves brought the boat up; then the bulwark could be clutched. Sometimes it seemed as if the rolling smack would smash our small boat. No ladders or steps were used at the sides of the vessels, but brawny and willing arms of fishermen supplied the



THE DERELICT "COPER."

Here come more boats. Soon a goodly number of men are gathered on the deck. Leaning against the bulwark, I give out a hymn. It is sung with vigour. The sound wafted o'er the waters draws more on board. Still they come. We will go down between decks. The fishermen like warmth. We have it in two senses. What a sight it was to see the hold crowded with seventy rough fishermen! And what singing! They put some energy into their praise. Hymns about Heaven and Christ stir them most. Poor fellows! living such a hard life, exposed to great dangers, and so long away from home, they like that which speaks of home and rest. With a brief interval for refreshments, services went on about six hours.

What a peculiar appearance the great Mission ship presented, with the number of boats dragged behind! Each boat was fastened by a separate rope, so that it

lack. The men were delighted to see ladies come among them. Thoughts of home and their own dear ones doubtless crowded behind those moistened eyes. Some of the men expressed to me their surprise that ladies dared to come to the wild North Sea. One said, "I am thankful that so much interest is now taken by the ladies of England in such apparently God-forsaking fishermen as ourselves."

After the regular services on board the *Sophia Wheatly*, Skipper Goodchild, Mr. Cook, the temperance lecturer, and others, came on board the *James Knott*. On the deck all lingered long, singing more hymns and having a Bible-reading. With reluctance they said, "So long; good-bye." The twilight fell. Lights—red, green, white—were moving about. Then the "Down-trawl" signal was given by a rocket from the admiral's ship, and only white lights then were seen, to show that the vessels were at rest in trawling.

We leave the fleet with less misgiving than we had felt aforetime. We know that now there is no dark-looking, wretched coper, or floating public-house, following the fleet. Thanks to the international arrangement, drams, debt, and drowning cannot now be dealt out to the poor fishermen for the profit of conscienceless men. We had been privileged to see the last "coper" brought into Ostend—an ill-shapen derelict, with sails torn and spars broken. May none ever go out again to do damage to the good work now carried on among the deep-sea toilers!

As we were close to Heligoland, we hoped to be able to hold a service there, such as has been held by the Mission, once a year, for several years past. A strong wind, however, sprang up, and we could not venture to enter. We beat round about the island, and then had to run for Cuxhaven. The heavy seas tumbling over our vessel, and the wind increasing, the captain thought it advisable to make for that place, as we could find no shelter elsewhere. It was fortunate we did so. The gale that night would have tried very severely the qualities of our little bark, even if she had weathered it. The skylight, being large and square, would have let the sea in, as it afterwards did, much to the alarm of the ladies, the very last night before she reached Yarmouth.

We had, as we passed, a grand view of the island of Heligoland, with its square lofty red rocks rising like a huge mahogany table from the midst of the blue waters. Its white lighthouse crowned the loftiest and greenest point, and its houses nestled in the southern sheltered spot. Beyond was Sandy Island, with a narrow space of water between. Through the passage between the two islands winds raged, and would have given our cable a severe straining, even if it held. We were glad our skilful and careful skipper determined to run for Cuxhaven. Soon we sight the first of the six red lightships that direct the mariner

up the treacherous channel of the Elbe. Our signal is hoisted for a pilot; after a time one comes on board, and we reach Cuxhaven and turn from out the Elbe into the pleasant little river. We could appreciate the words of the Psalmist: "Then are they glad, because they be quiet." At night, as the gale increased and swept over the town, we could only thank our God most heartily that we were not exposed to its fury on waters so difficult to navigate.

The harbour of Cuxhaven was crowded with the gaily painted smacks of the German fishermen. Their carven green-tipped rudders, their brilliant vermilion mast-heads, their deeply tanned sails, and light brown varnished hulls in the foreground; the old mill, the quaint and tumble-down buildings on either hand; the soft woods surrounding the Schloss, or chateau, and the pointed spire of the church of Ritzibüttels in the distance, formed a picture that might tempt the skill of any



THE OLD GERMAN MILL.

artist. We were soon ashore and wandering along the sea-wall, all shaded by lime- and walnut-trees. Then we go through narrow streets, with timber-crossed, gable-ended houses and shops thrown into prominence by the old-fashioned outside oil-lamps. As the twilight fell the whole place became quite romantic in our eyes.

A piece of notepaper with a border of tarred twine, nailed to a post on the wharf, told in English and German that a service would be held on the yacht at six o'clock. That hour was said to be the best, because at seven the *Abendbrod*, or evening meal, was taken. To the many fishing smacks I went round and asked the crews to come. I had thereby brief conversations on religious subjects with many of the men. I found them prepared to receive any good word that might be spoken. They were reverent, and gladly accepted the invitation. They promised, and came. Not only they, but many others likewise, shipowners,

brokers, captains of steamers, visitors, and sailors from the neighbouring man-of-war. Four or five nights successively, spite of strong winds, were services in English and in German held. At the last there must have been at least eleven or twelve hundred people within hearing, on the deck, swarming the ratlines, on steamers around, and lining the wharf ten or a dozen deep. Books were eagerly sought. If only we had had sufficient copies of the "Sacred Songs," we might have sold a great number. How they begged for them! "We would willingly pay anything for them," said some. "Would we come back again?" "You must come back next year, and bring plenty of the sweet books with you." How sorry we were to have to go away from people so ready for good things!

When the yacht reached Heligoland the second time, she was regarded as tainted and needing quarantine. On no account would the governor permit a landing. "Anything can be sent to you, but no one can come ashore," was his message. The fact is that small-pox had broken out in the Grimsby fleet, and as the yacht had been in that fleet, she was put under the ban. The governor, of course, is right in doing his best to keep disease out of the tight little island he rules; but it was awkward for the crew of the

yacht. The purposed services had, alas! to be postponed.

Through this repulse, services were held in another fleet which was sighted the next day. As they were like those in the Grimsby fleet, it is unnecessary to speak further of them. A letter brought by the fishing steamer from the "Director" of the Mission, summoned the *James Knott* in haste to Scarborough, where help was needed in various services. Mr. Mather awaited her arrival, and had the pleasure of bearing away to Queen Victoria Street from that fashionable sea-side resort nearly a hundred pounds towards the expenses of the Mission. Friends there helped very generously. We were glad there should have been such liberal help; as we believe that, if there is a useful organisation, it is that known as the M.D.S.F. (Mission to Deep-sea Fishermen). These mystic letters are seen on ship's prow, skipper's cap, men's guernseys. In "Nor'ard of the Dogger" mention is made of one little girl who is said not to have been able to understand them. She was puzzled greatly over them. She thought at length, as her father had been reformed, and had become one of the crew of a Mission ship, and had greatly changed his conduct in the home, that they meant, "Mother Doesn't Scold Father." That girl had not learned her letters in vain!

DOROTHY'S VOCATION.

BY EVELYN EVERETT GREEN, AUTHOR OF "MONICA," "OLIVER LANGTON'S WARD," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.—MR. TEMPLETON'S FAMILY.



"My dearest Dorothy," said Claudia with a little laugh, half condescending, half mocking, "girls with vocations do not care about riding in the Park."

"I did not say I wanted to ride in the Park," answered Dorothy. "I don't; I think it is very dull. But

I should like sometimes to have a ride again—a real good ride, out into the country; but I never get the chance. You always say the horses are wanted for something else. I don't quite know why you and Mabel always get it all your own way; I think my turn ought to come just now and then."

Claudia laughed again, touching Dorothy's face with the tips of her gloved fingers as if she had been a child. This kind of condescending treatment always ruffled up Dorothy's feelings more than anything. She was twenty-one—only five years younger than Claudia, and three years younger than Mabel; she had at last been introduced in society, and she saw no reason why she should be treated by her sisters as if she were a mere school-girl. She was not aggressive or exacting—she accepted the third place as a matter of course; but she could not see why matters should be arranged as if a great gulf divided her from her sisters. She had willingly remained in the schoolroom a decidedly longer

time than most girls do; but now that she really was "out," and had made her *début*, not altogether unsuccessfully, in society, she failed to understand why she was kept so studiously in the background.

"My dear child, you must be reasonable. We have only three horses, and papa cannot get on without his ride in the Park, and he likes Mabel and me with him. In the afternoon there is always something to be done, or else in the evening. You must consider the poor beasts. With all the work they get, long country rides are out of the question. You go into your district like a good little girl, and give the children their music and French lessons. One of these days you shall have a turn in the Park, I daresay; but you know papa is not fond of any changes."

Dorothy said no more; she turned away in silence, and quickly mounted the carpeted stairs. Her sisters laughingly gathered up their habits and swept away to the hall door, where the horses were waiting. Mabel observed, in passing, that she hoped Dorothy was not "going to be troublesome." These words reached the ears of the younger sister as she ran up-stairs, and brought a quick flush of mingled anger and pain to her cheek.

Mr. Templeton's large and commodious house in Belgravia was luxuriously furnished as far as the second floor. It was arranged after the fashion of most town houses. On the ground floor were entrance-hall, dining-room, and study; on the first floor was a suite of reception-rooms; on the second, four good bed-rooms