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BUDDHA.*

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SIX hundred years before Christ the religion of Brahmanism had matured into an absolute domination over India. The simple patriarchal worship of the early Vedic hymns, already corrupted within the Vedic period, had become a sacerdotal system, constructed and managed by a sacerdotal caste. Founded in the most solemn convictions of the people, it had extended its ramifications of despotism over the whole country, and from the highest to the lowest grades of society. It held every individual, from birth to the grave, in bonds which he could not escape for a moment: and which were the more awfully oppressive, since they were rivetted in the soul. It was then that an intellectual champion appeared, who undertook to rescue India from the bondage of her creed, and from the natural ills which her creed had aggravated.

Couddhadana was king in Kapilavastu, capital of the country of the same name, in central India, at the foot of the mountains of Nepal. He was of the family of Sakya, a branch of the powerful tribe of Gotama, and of the Kshatrya, or warrior

caste. His queen, Maya Devi, was daughter of a neighboring monarch, and equally distinguished by her beauty, intelligence, and piety. Such were the father and mother of the liberator. Resistance to Brahmanical oppression did not spring from the ranks of the oppressed, but from the tender and generous heart of one who came down from the loftiest rank of society to deliver them.

Siddhartha, the first son of Couddhadana and Maya Devi, and heir apparent of the throne, was born towards the end of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century before Christ. From childhood he evinced a meditative disposition. The plays of other children had no attraction for him, while he excelled in every branch of learning, as presented to his years. Prolonged solitary meditations were not deemed suitable to the education of a king, and various methods were devised to interest him in the business and amusements proper to his rank, and the office to which his birth assigned him. Mildly, but firmly, he persisted in his way. The sight of poverty, sickness, old age and death, filled him with sadness for the sufferings of mankind. Was there any way of salvation to be found? Brahmanism, as

* *Bouddha et sa Religion*, par J. Barthelemy Saint Hilaire. Paris, 1866.

friend. I came to China as a missionary, and hope to spend my life in this work. I have spent seven years studying the language, habits, history, and people of China, and I must say I do not regard them as models. The more I know of them, the less I think of them. Their virtues are manifest, while their vices are concealed. They promise much, and perform little. They seem strong, but prove to be weak. Their art is servile imitation. Their learning is dead dry bones. Their social system is a foul mass of corruption. Their civilization is a mockery unworthy of the name. Their government is weak and contemptible. And what is more than all, they are heathen to the core. Morally, they are scarcely above the lowest. Their system of religion is nearer Atheism than that of any other nation under heaven. Many things may, no doubt, be said in favor of China; and none can be readier than the writer to accord her every just praise. But let it be remembered that China shines only in comparison with other *heathen* lands. He who undertakes to eulogize her, as in comparison with the Christian civilization of the West, to say the least, might

spend his time to much better purpose. While I say this much, I hold that the Chinese are worthy of a higher place, and I trust are heirs of a better destiny, than merely to be laborers and servants to the aristocracy of America. I do not believe their extensive introduction into America would be a blessing, either to them or to us. Let them go if they wish, but let them make their own way, and find their own place, and let America give them their rights, and treat them as citizens, not as slaves. What China needs is the gospel. She needs it to strengthen her, to quicken her, and wake her from the sleep of ages. She needs it to purify her, to elevate her, and to save her. The days of China's exclusiveness are numbered. Western influence, western inventions, western learning, and western religion, are bound to advance and fill the land. This is the setting of the irresistible tide of events, which is but another name for the overruling providence of God. Let Christian America, then, not selfishly look to China for patient laborers to do her menial work, but generously *send to her* the gospel, and thus fulfil to her neighbor the royal law.

A STORY OF TWO POOR FISHERMEN.

BY MRS. JULIA M'NAIR WRIGHT.

"I pray you hear my song of a boat,
 For it is but short:—
 My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
 In river or port.
 Long I looked for the lad she bore,
 On the open, desolate shore;
 And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
 For he came not back to me."

Beyond the blue, sun-kissed waters of Northumberland Straits lies a low, green island, lovingly lapped by the cool waters of the North, set apart from all the world, and, until within the last century, by all the world forgotten. The little island has had no active part in history; no saint has here seen visions, as on Patmos; no poet has sung it into fame,

like the isles of Greece; it has not, like Corsica, flung a thunderbolt among the nations. It has had its tragedies and its comedies, its heroes, and its heartbreaks; but they have been those of humble life, and have gone down under the spray-salt sods of the little country churchyards, buried in the hearts that suffered them.

For a little band of Americans, who came yearly from Cape Ann to fish along this coast, one of these tragedies began on a September evening, when all the north-western shore was transfigured by the glory of the setting sun. The great red clay cliffs stood up in the crim-

son light like walls of ruby—the bare, storm-scathed pines that fringed the bold foreheads of these cliffs, were for the time lit up into bright shadows of that bush that burned unconsumed—all the broad sand beach below the headlands gleamed like the priceless dust of jewels, the lines of treacherous rocks that ran out here and there had little pools, left by the retreat of the morning tide, and these pools were red like blood; so was the sea red in a broad track between the land and the crimson clouds, and on either hand the red softened to purple, and faded into a dull blue, far out of reach of the evening splendors.

Along the smooth beach came a strongly built, quick-stepping young woman of twenty-five; healthful, dark, courageous, she looked a true daughter of sun and sea. Her abundant black hair was caught as in a loose knot, with quite as much careless grace as the locks of her sisters in the cities; a gay-hued handkerchief was loosely knotted about her full throat; her sleeves rolled up, showed arms round and strong; she was bare-headed, because she was warm; shoeless and stockingless, that she might walk easily over the sand; she had pinned her best green gown high up over her short, striped petticoat, and on she came along the shining sands below the burning cliffs, a model of vigor and cheerfulness. Over the glowing sea she cast long, happy glances, and with her thoughts straying further and further out on the waters, her steps became slower, and as she reached a deep curve in the shore, where the sand line was broad and smooth, she searched for a muscle-shell, to try the fisher maidens' favorite charm.

As we may divine, this stalwart damsel's lover was far out with a fishing schooner, and now she was going to challenge the fates for a promise of his safe return. The maid was wise in her generation—she eyed the tide now rising to see how nearly it was *in*—she considered of the time of the moon, and of the height of the water yesterday—she would risk no unfavorable oracle, and a sleepless night. Then she knelt on the

beach, and wrote with the shell her lover's name in the sand—only "Tom Turner"—but the romance of her life was in the letters of the common name, and throwing away the purple and silver shell wherewith she had clearly shaped these letters, she went back into a hollow of the cliff, and sat to watch what would come. She clasped her shapely brown hands behind her head, as it rested against the red clay; the drifted sand, scattered with dead weeds, empty lobster-shells, and purple muscles, being no unfamiliar seat to the fisher maid; the light changed her smooth, sun-darkened skin into a rare warm bronze.

Up came the tide, the white foam beads evensly curling near the flourishing capital T's, then creeping away ashamed. The girl shut her eyes to count a thousand—that done, she would see if the name were gone, or if the tide were slipping back, and leaving it unharmed, an omen of Tom's safe return. Meanwhile a younger woman came slowly along the sand from an opposite direction. She had an anxious, almost fretful expression; but as she turned the corner of the rocks that formed the dark girl's grotto of divination, her face brightened, as she cried out:

"Why, Bessie!"

Bessie opened her eyes.

"Sit down—I'm seeing if Tom's coming back safe. Will you write Joe's name?"

"No, let it be," said the woman, sitting down wearily; "I don't believe they'll ever come home safe. I just feel as if the *Susan* was doomed for bad luck this trip."

"Bless you, girl! that's only 'cause you're poorly, and in low spirits. You'll laugh at yourself by the time Joe and your mother get in safe. Folks are always having whims like that, but they never make out anything. Did you get lonesome because I was away this afternoon?"

"Yes—no—the parson's lady called for more than an hour."

"O! I believe the tide is turned, and Tom's all right!" cried Bessie, jumping up to look at the damp water-mark just

below her inscription on the sand. "Turned, as sure as you live, just at the edge of the letters!"

"If it shows anything, it shows he'll just miss being lost. Did you choose the spot with your eyes shut?" asked the young woman, rousing to a little interest.

"Yes; I whirled three times, shut my eyes, and then wrote straight out from where I began."

"Well, if you'd written Joe's name you would have put it first, you know you would, and it would have been rubbed out."

At this imputation Bessie laughed, and to turn the dismal current of her companion's thoughts, asked, "What did the parson's wife say for all that time?"

"O, the old talk about piety, as if I hadn't enough to think of now without vexing myself with things I can't see—I says so to her. Says she, 'it would give you an easy mind.' It would be hard havin' an easy mind, I told her, with Joe here and there on the sea, as I fear and hate with all my heart!"

"Don't hate the sea!" laughed the buoyant Bessie; "why it made Joe's living and mine from the time we was little ones, when our father died in his bed with fever, 'stead of in the sea as a sailor should."

"Yes," but our mother had the comfort of his last word and look," said the pensive sister-in-law.

"And she caught the fever and died," said the practical Bessie.

"Poor Joe!" sighed Joe's little wife.

"And poor Bessie!" said Joe's merry sister; "we was in the same boat; dear knows, we had a hard pull of it. We run about bare-legged among the fishes, buying trays of fish and carrying them to town on our heads to sell. Then Joe went out fishing, and I sold the fish; and winters we kept one of the wrecker's houses in the gully, and a power of drowned men we handled one way or another, and many of them we saved, and some we couldn't, and that was how I came across Tom, when the poor fellow looked as dead as a door nail. There now, he came to, and we are to be married! And Joe, captain of a schooner,

and you for his wife. Shame on your sober face, Mollie, we'll be as gay as crickets when the *Susan* gets in, and the baby has come."

"Yes, the parson's wife, says she, 'Don't you want to be a Christian mother to your little one when it gets here?'"

"I told her I laid out to be a good mother, like my own before me, and *she* wasn't pious; we all do well enough in our way, I'm sure."

"Well, I think Tom Turner is as good a fellow as you'll find, and it wouldn't do for me to get pious on his hands, for he says he hates cant, and don't believe a word of it!" said Bessie.

"When I told her how I hated the sea, says she to me: 'Wouldn't you like Him for your Father that holds the sea in the hollow of his hands, and hears all that cry to him on wave or shore?'"

"Why, what did you say to that, girl?"

"I told her the truth, that I felt afraid of Him, and heaven looked kind of fearsome so high up and far off, but I'd talk to Joe, and if he tried religion, I would with him, but not else."

Poor Mollie drooped her head against Bessie's strong shoulder, looking more than ever shy and gentle and anxious, in contrast to that dashing maiden.

"Don't trouble your head," said Bessie, "if the Lord is good and kind—and of course he is—he'll give us good luck while we do our best; and as to getting to heaven at the end, it always seemed to me as all decent people went there."

The two rose and walked slowly along the way Joe's wife had come. They had not gone far when an ungainly, cross-eyed, bow-legged man shambled by them in haste. Mollie drew close to her sister.

"How I fear that awful man!" she whispered nervously.

Bessie laughed in sheer merriment.

"Fear that poor crooked old soul! Why girl, where's the harm in him? He wont touch you!"

"Not fear for myself, but for Joe: to think of Joe's life being in his hands."

"It isn't in his hands; how can it be? Joe's life is in his schooner, a good sound boat; and he knows how to manage her, and so does Tom. Life in *his* hands!"

"Yes it is. He keeps the light-house, and he is stupid, and slow, and queer; and just think of the rocks along this coast, and all the ships and the men trusting to a light-house kept by that crooked creeping thing, that never kept a light-house before. O, Bessie, Bessie!"

"I declare you're crying! What a silly child; you are not one bit like yourself. Come on home, and let me put you to bed; you've walked too far."

Bessie put her strong arm about her sister-in-law, and accommodated her swift long steps to Mollie's more quiet pace. The fierce red had died out on land and sea. Little black-headed sheldrakes perched on ledges of the cliffs, and peered down at the sisters. The gulls whirled in wide circles near shore, and the broad-winged gannets swept out, out afar toward a mass of black cloud into which the sun had dropped suddenly, and which now grimly shut up all the glory of the west.

"The *Susan* should have got in yesterday," said Mollie.

"Wind the wrong way," said Bessie, cheerfully.

"Only think, Joe and my mother and your Tom—all we care for—on board one little ship," continued Mollie.

"Well its a little ship that has always come in safe, and well-loaded, and you know this summer has been about the best fishing that ever we have had, and prices high at home: we'll go back to Cape Ann quite rich, girl, and some day we'll all club together, you and Tom and Joe and I, and we'll buy that little white house on the Cape, where we can see all the ships go by, and we'll live like princes, won't we?"

"O, did I tell you," said Mollie, rousing cheerfully, "the parson's wife brought me such a sweet little dress, and a blue cloak with a hood to it, and made me take the present; they are so pretty."

"There, that was more like sense than her preaching; but she's a good woman, and thinks she ought to do the preaching."

They came out of the shelter of the cove, and a fierce sweep of wind rushed on them from the sea, almost taking their breath.

"A storm! I knew it, I knew it; and see the white-caps away off. O, Bessie, what shall we do?"

"Nonsense, child! was there never a storm before?" said Bessie, stopping to watch the long rollers that began to break on the beach. "The bonnie white horses! I've played with them many an hour. Look, Mollie, how grand! See them coming up into the bay."

"It will kill my Joe and my mother," said Mollie, covering her face, as she fell to sobbing.

"Never a bit. The *Susan* can ride out a sea ten times as high. She knows the port, and will have the light; and with this wind at her back, and Joe or Tom at the wheel, she'll run in as light as a bird."

Still Mollie sobbed on, refusing to be comforted. Patiently aiding her steps, and striving to cheer her, Bessie led her on to their plain little home, not a quarter of a mile from the light-house, toward which the keeper could be seen making his way over the rocks.

One room below stairs and two above, was the little dwelling put up by these wanderers from Massachusetts for their summer home.

It was clean and weather-proof, and that was about all, for these people were poor, and were saving all they possibly could of their hard won gains to establish themselves comfortably on their native coast. The vision of a white cottage, with window blinds and a carpet for the best room, hung before them like a pleasant picture in this bare abode. The floors were clean scrubbed, the bed beautiful from its neatness, the curtains to the windows were newspapers, fancifully cut in festoons and open work, and the furniture was chiefly of their own manufacture. A huge old-fashioned bandbox held a rainbow assortment of patchwork; the work of Bessie for her future home; while near Mollie's "barrel chair" stood a big basket filled with carpet rags, and balls of the same, well cut and sewed.

"Have done with your dumps," said Bessie. "I'll get supper, and you'll see our folks home to breakfast."

"It will be so dark and rough," said

Mollie, looking anxiously toward the gray light-house tower, "why don't he light that lamp?"

"He will, it is early yet," said Bessie, stirring about the stove, and then while her kettle was boiling, going to bring a basketful of shavings and chips for the morning fire.

The night shadows fell swiftly. The tireless Bessie lit her lamp, and forced her despondent sister to the table.

"Eat your supper, girl; don't you see the light-house lamp is lit? That's all right."

"It don't half burn, seems to me," said Mollie.

"That is only because your ideas are so large to-night. Why, child, rather than have you worry so, I'll run over and scare that old scarecrow in his den, and look after the lamp myself. Say the word, Mollie."

"No, don't go," said Mollie. "I guess I'm tired and cross, and with the trouble of all our folks in one boat, when I always was afraid of boats and of the sea."

"And married a sailor!" cried Bess.

"So I'll go to bed early, and feel better to-morrow, only you must sleep with me, Bessie, for I feel afraid."

"All right," said Bessie, "only Joe'll be coming home before morning, and drive me up stairs."

Mollie Wentworth was indeed tired out; exhausted in mind and body, she soon was lost to all consciousness of the rising storm. Bessie, accustomed to the sea, fearless by nature, and with firm faith in her brother and lover, and in the *Susan*, slept soundly, until suddenly roused by her sister, who started up with a shrill cry, "they are drowning! they are drowning! Joe! Mother!"

In an instant these two young women were on their feet; they heard the pounding of the surf like the tramp of hosts, the beat of drums, and the wild clangor of trumpets along the shore. The wind screamed madly about their roof, the night was black as the grim caverns of the infernal stream. They rushed to the door, looked where the light-house should blaze with safety to all that coast—and the light was gone!

They had but one thought, the beacon must be re-lit—perhaps the lives of their loved ones hung on that vanished flame. Bessie caught her basket of kindlings, thrust a box of matches into her pocket, and having huddled on her clothes, she knew not how, she was soon flying along the shingle, her shavings protected by her ancient water-proof mantle, and an oil can in her hand, bumping against rocks and trees, as she took her headlong way. Poor Mollie forgot her weakness and fatigue as she stumbled, half-clad, after her stronger sister. Bessie forgot her for a time, but when she reached the low line of rocks running out into the sea, among which the waves were clashing and boiling, she stopped to shout to her to go back. In a lull of wind and water she heard Mollie cry to her to "go on." Well, she would go on. Mollie was not likely to hurt herself past remedy, but six lives might be lost in one little schooner beating along an unlighted coast.

Here was the light-house door; the latch string had been drawn in; Bessie fumbled a second, calling aloud, but the next instant she set her strong shoulder against the door, and burst the shabby fastening.

"Man! Man! Nick Hays! where are you? Your light is out!"

That was Nick Hays shuffling on the stair, and Bessie rushed against him, and threw him backwards as she hurried up.

"It won't burn," gasped Nick. "I don't understand it. I can't manage the oil."

"Come up," cried Bessie, pressing on, "for the love of Heaven, how long has it been out?"

"I don't know. I found it out when I came up. I was going for a light."

They were up in the tower, and Bessie lit some of her shavings. The lamp looked hopeless enough. Bessie piled up fuel on the brick floor, and poured some oil on them. The broad red blaze spread out a glorious beacon over that black sea.

Mollie saw this in her last painful steps before she reached the door, and came up weeping, trembling, and blessing Bessie.

"O, you poor soul!" said Bessie, still tending her fire, "go down and get into

the bed; Nick and I will keep this light up."

But how could Mollie sleep, when even now those she loved the best might be tossing up and down on the cruel waters, at the very point of death? She crouched in a corner, and presently Bessie found time to strip off the poor thing's wet dress, and wrap her in a bed-quilt.

So until morning Bessie watched, sleepless as a vestal guarding and feeding a sacred fire, meanwhile encouraging her sister, and anon in good strong Saxon execrating Nick, who, when lives were to be lost or saved, could let his light go out while he was asleep. Nick's cross-eyes glared, but he scrambled up and down, obeying Bessie's orders like a whipped cur.

Poor Bessie! She gave orders with a fainting heart, for all through the night as she gazed out into the gloom she saw no *Susan* speeding into port, with dripping sails spread wide, like a storm-beaten bird gaining its nest.

So the gray day dawned, and as Bessie, with chill fingers, steadied the light-house glass, and swept the horizon in search of her brother's craft, she caught no welcome glimpse of hull or spar.

No need to stay longer. The dull sunless day lay with equal light on land, and sky, and sea. All now to be done was to go wearily home, and wait, and weep, as is too often woman's portion in this world. So she took Mollie by the arm, and they two went back the way they had come, to find the home cold and lonely, the door blown open, and the rain beaten across the floor.

All day Bessie worked about the house, and ran along the cliffs, looking through her spy glass for the schooner's sails. We know she was one who could not *pray* for her beloved; she could only look vaguely up to the lowering sky, and wonder if Omnipotence could suffer ships and lives to go down unhelped; feeling that if God let the *Susan* and her precious freight perish, God must be her foe.

Still as the day grew and waned, these women watched and waited, and questioned all the sailors and fishers at the

harbor about the *Susan*, and what they thought of the storm.

Some small vessels made port that night, and Bessie ran down to meet the crews, standing forlornly in the fog that clung and dripped like rain:

"Have any of you seen the *Susan*?"

"Aye, aye; ain't she in? She passed us like a bird yesterday mornin'," said one captain.

"But she isn't in. O, what do you think of her?"

"Aye? not in! That's bad, girl. The *Susan's* a main fast sailer; and the brother is in her? And maybe some other body you've your mind set on? Well, keep your heart up, girl; she may get in yet."

She *may!* ah, that was but a small and bitter crumb of consolation; she dared not carry it to poor Mollie, who was already nearly distracted.

So another night, another morning—not gray, but sun-bright. Bessie rose up with a lighter heart.

"Other ships have got in safe, so may the *Susan*," she said to Mollie. "We'll look for them this day." And she set her house in order.

But, alas, before the sun was high, news of wreck crept along the coast. Some fishing vessel had been cast away, and the sad tokens of the disaster had been driven in shore during the night. All the men and women living near were hurrying by to see if they could ascertain what ship it was; for the schooners *Portland* and *Maggie* were also missing with the *Susan*.

So on they went to that very cove, where by the magic of shell and sand, Bessie had striven to spell out Tom Turner's fate. Here they lay, spoils of the sea; a bit of spar and a ragged fragment of cable; a keg; an empty barrel; a pillow; a ship's knee, and a great iron spike an inch and a half in diameter, bent like a scrap of wire; and a bar of iron that Bessie, the strong, could scarcely lift, flung up here by the mighty water, like a weed.

Nothing yet to determine whether the lost boat was *Portland*, *Susan*, or *Maggie*, and whose heart must break. But

rising and falling on the long swells came in a larger fragment, for which all waited breathless—nearer, nearer, the men drag it in—a portion of the deck-house. What is this over the door? "*Certified to accommodate five seamen.*"

Then it is the *Susan*; the *Portland's* cuddy was marked eight, the *Maggie's* only four. To make assurance doubly sure, here is T. B. cut in the wood. Bessie knows when and by whom. That sunny June morning when they fixed the marriage for October, Tom set here his initial and hers, and made under them this rude heart and arrow.

"O, Tom, Tom! are you dead, and people say that a good God rules over all! A kind God, a father? No, only a tyrant who crushes peoples' loves, and blackens their lives, and mocks their woe." It is thus that distracted Bessie's smitten and rebellious heart pours out its grief and rage.

As for Mollie, she has mercifully passed into oblivion, lying on the sand with her head in an old fish wife's lap. They cannot leave the beach; the sea may half-repentant give up the dead bodies of its prey. All day they watched and moaned; and with the evening tide, lo! a body floated shoreward. Bessie rushes knee-deep into the water with outstretched arms; Mollie lifts her heavy head, and gazes at the in-coming corpse in a mute despair. Well, it is in at last. Not Captain Joe of the stalwart arm: not high-hearted Tom Turner: not the old mother, coming to care for her daughter, and receive in her hands her first grandchild. None of these; with slender limbs cold, and light hair dripping, and coarse garments, half torn away by the waves, it is orphan Ned, the "boy" of the *Susan*, a sort of pet with Tom and Joe. This dead lad, laid on the yellow sand, his face upturned to the sky, has a heavenly peace on every feature, that makes him beautiful as an angel. Not a trace of battle; not a contortion of despair; no moan could have passed those lips. Heaven in storm and darkness had stooped nearer and nearer, and there had come a small loss that God had made eternal gain. O, to know the last words

and visions of this child, who had died a hero, smiling on death!

That is all. They watch and haunt the beach for days, but no more fragments of the *Susan*, no more bodies of the dead.

The *Portland* gets in mastless, broken, her cargo gone, barely afloat; but is not that enough? her eight seamen live.

The *Maggie* went to pieces on a reef, but her four men got safe to land.

"We are the only ones to lose. We are the ones God forgot to take care of; if He held those raging waters in his hand, why did he not by a merciful breath save the *Susan*?" Thus raves Bessie to the pitying minister and his wife.

Mollie does not rave. They almost wish she did. Alas, poor Mollie's mind has gone astray. All day long she sits in a melancholy muse, or wanders up and down the beach, moaning her wordless pain to wind and wave.

The fishing people are kind. Neighbors bring Bessie work and wages. The parson's wife comes to them like a sister; but charms she never so wisely, these two women are deaf adders, that will not hear a gospel of peace. When she can no longer hope to minister to their souls, the parson's wife ministers to their daily needs; they can love her, and in a measure understand her, but they will have nothing to do with God.

So six weeks pass by since the wreck of the *Susan*, and Bessie is waiting, feeling sure of Mollie's approaching death. But the anticipated danger is no danger. There is no mother to comfort; no father to rejoice in a new born son, but Mollie's living child lies in Bessie's arms, and Mollie's mental darkness clears away, and while realizing all her loss, Mollie is sane once more.

Loving her child, Mollie was not made happy by it; her sorrows had made her face old and wan, and her hair gray; she looked twenty years older; hapless young widow!

Of course Bessie expected to return to Cape Ann, to old friends, when Mollie was well, but to this Mollie would not consent. She fixed her mind strangely

on staying on that chilly coast, and keeping the light-house.

"We lost our people because Nick Hays neglected the light: you and I will tend it, Bessie, and it will never go out."

So in spite of all Bessie could say, Mollie would stay and keep the light-house on the coast where her husband perished. It was easy enough to get the position. Nick, of course, must lose his place, execrated for his neglect. Public sympathy was with the bereaved sisters; their conduct on the night of the storm was known; the minister helped on the plan, when he saw their hearts were set on it. Bessie knew their own hands must support them; there would be great expense in going back to Cape Ann, and they had no relatives there; perhaps to stay and keep this light-house, and wash and sew for people near, was the best they could do. It was thus that they remained on the shore. Nick Hays fled from popular indignation; the few household goods of the sisters were moved into the lower story of the light-house, and here the cold long northern winter closed about them, shutting them out from the world; shutting them in to their loss and pain.

By times the minister came to see them, struggling through storm, snow, and fierce winds. He brought them books, he talked to them, he prayed with them; they merely *endured* his ministrations. Bessie flatly refused to entertain his views. "God," she said, "was not her friend." He had set himself against her, and abused her, when she had never done anything particularly wrong; she had deserved better treatment than she had received; she would not humble herself under the mighty hand of God!

Mollie, however, admitted that there might be comfort in religion; love to God might be a balm to her broken heart; but such feelings would seem to set her farther than ever from her husband. "Joe never said anything about these things; if he was up in heaven I would not be afraid, I would try and get there too; but I could not go there without him, and Joe is at the bottom of the sea. I can't try to be a Christian if my Joe was

not one." This was all the minister could make of Mollie.

Mollie had a fashion of going up on the tower, and staying there for hours. Finding Bessie alone in one of his visits, toward the end of winter, the minister warned her that the widow was in a morbid state, and might throw herself from the tower.

"She won't so long so the baby lives," said Bessie.

"Does she seem to take comfort in the child?"

"Comfort, sir? What comfort can there be? Can't you see for yourself that he ain't like other babes? he's simple, sir; poor dear, his mother's trouble hurt his brain."

The minister's surprise and profound sympathy so touched Bessie that she said: "Well, perhaps it will do you good to know that Mollie looks much into the Bible, and that all her cry is now because she and Joe did not study it together, and join church together."

So with this morsel of encouragement the minister went home.

The long dreary winter passed: the ice loosened from the shore, and floated away; slowly the deep snows melted from the earth; ships again were seen in the offing; life began to wake up in the harbor; the boats were being made ready for summer fishing; the shoals of herring came up along the coast; the grass grew greener every day; the ploughing and sowing had begun, and as it was May, commerce once more went on across Northumberland Straits.

On one of these early May days Mollie was upon the light-house tower, looking as usual, wistfully over the blue waste where her hopes had perished, and Bessie in the living-room was rocking the cradle, while she made a dress for a neighbor, when with the opening of the door came a hearty voice crying, "Bess! Bess!"—the voice of one that had perished in the sea; the voice of one for whose destruction she had upbraided Heaven.

It was not the part of this hearty fisher girl to faint with joy or surprise; but for certain the sewing, the cradle, and even

Mollie, whom no such glad amazement awaited, were forgotten, and Bess flew at Tom Turner, and hugged, and kissed him as a lover risen from the dead, deserved. Then delight suddenly gave place to grief—her brother, with whom she had shared hard and pleasant experiences; she leaned back on Tom's encircling arms.

"And my Joe's gone, lad? My good, true Joe—and her mother, too?"

"Aye, Bess, they're gone. 'Twas a dark night for us all. But the Lord saved me, praise his name! and I reckon he took Joe where they're better off than we."

Was this jolly, careless Tom, that was speaking so heartily of a protecting God and the final rest?

"What's come to you, Tom?" asked Bessie, awe-struck.

"I hope it's the grace of God, my girl, and if so, all we've suffered is well paid for."

"But you're not talking like yourself, Tom."

"Like a better man, because having a better Master," said Tom, with a hearty smile.

Bessie slipped away from him awe-struck. "Let me go tell poor Mollie," she said.

She ran up and clasped her sister to her bosom. "O, my poor child, that has lost Joe and will never see him more!" she said, weeping. "Ah, Mollie, it was my own dear brother that you loved, and that went under the sea; and yet you'll be glad for me that God did not take all I had, Mollie, for Tom Turner's come back alive, and is safe below stairs."

"And my Joe was drowned!" said Mollie, moaning. "And our Joe was drowned—and all the rest!"

By and by she came down stairs with Bessie. Tom had the babe in his arms, and he kissed its mother, saying, "I have heavy news for you, my girl, but says Joe to me, 'If you live through it, you'll look out for my wife;' and here I am, a brother to you ever."

"And my Joe's deep in the sea!" said Mollie, hopelessly.

"Please God, he's safe in heaven," said Tom.

"Tom, Tom, tell me all about it," said Mollie, grasping his arm, eager for every word. Tom began:

"You see there was no light, the wind drove to the shore, and no light-house to be seen, and we went astray before we knew it. We didn't know we were in sight of land, missing the lamp, you know, when we struck fair on a reef, and the *Susan* cracked like a nut. Joe and I were trying to fasten your mother to a mast, when a wave swept us all down, the five men of us and your mother, and she and one man went over, and we saw them no more."

There was a sobbing pause for all of the little group in the light-house, hearing this story of death. Tom went on:

"Joe and the boy Ned, and the other seaman and I, held on, and we knew we couldn't hope for anything. 'All is lost!' says Joe; 'Ned, we're lost.' 'No,' says Ned, 'God has stood by me in life, and he'll save me in death. It is a short step to heaven, captain.' 'It's well for you,' says Joe, 'but I'm lost, Ned.' 'No,' says Ned, 'the Lord Jesus is as near as ever he was on shore, and he says he's able and ready to save. Catch hold of Him, captain.' 'I can't,' says Joe, 'there ain't time.' 'It didn't take long for Peter to get hold of Him when he thought he was going under,' says Ned, for we were all hanging to the mast and each other, and talking loud, so we could hear. Says Ned, 'Captain, the Lord Jesus is walking here in this storm; you cry out to him hearty, and mean it with all your heart, and he'll hold you that fast you can't be lost.' 'Why, boy, he won't hear a sinner,' screams Joe. 'Them's the very kind he does hear, having died for 'em,' says Ned; 'don't you be afeard to trust him, captain; I ain't!'

"So Joe began to pray, crying out earnest, and the *Susan* went to pieces faster and faster. I says, 'Joe, we won't see morning.' 'No,' says Joe. Ned calls out, 'Cap'n, are you afraid now?' and Joe sung out, 'No!' 'Are you going to hold fast to the Lord, Cap'n, and he to you?' sings out Ned. 'Yes!' says Joe; and a big wave lifted us up high,

and flung us and the *Susan* all abroad like straws, and I found myself in the waves holding on to a piece of the mast. I had just sense enough left to hold on, and early in the morning I was picked up by a vessel. It turned out she was the ship they send from the Provinces every year to the New Hebrides, with stores for the missionaries, and there were two missionaries aboard of her. Of course I had to make the trip, and then I sailed for New York, and so got round to Cape Ann, and found you two were living over here keeping lighthouse. So over I came on the first ship of the season."

"Well?" questioned Bessie. There was something Tom had left untold. Tom understood her.

"You see, I had been the nearest death ever I was, Bessie. And Joe was gone, too, and I had my mind on all Ned and him were saying while we held on together; and when I got aboard the ship, the missionaries and the rest—for all the crew of them were the right stripe—well, they all laid the matter out to me as how the Lord had spared my life and had a claim on the use of it; and I declare, Bessie, it looked reasonable! That's the long and short of it, Bess. I'd served Tom Turner and the devil for twenty-eight years, and it was a bad job; and now the rest of my time, long or short, goes to the Lord; and it's a fact, Bessie, I don't know how to be thankful enough to him for giving me another chance."

"And you think my Joe's safe?" said Mollie, breathlessly.

"Yes, I do," said Tom, solemnly. "It didn't take the Lord long to save the thief on the cross, and we have his word on it, that he won't cast out any that come to him. Not that I'd be willing to risk

another chance if I didn't take the one I got."

Now, when the news of Tom's return spread, the minister, among others, came, and he said to Bessie, "What do you think of your sinfulness now? Have you not been upbraiding the Lord for this man's death? Have you not called him hard when he was kind, and doubted a care and a government that was all the while being exercised for your good? Tell me, has your conduct been such that you think the Lord can have nothing against you now?"

Thus was Bessie convinced of sin, and when she married Tom Turner she was ready in this world to walk with him toward the better world to come.

Over the widowed Mollie's life fell a mantle of peace. Strength came slowly back to a mind that rested on the love and truth of God. She kept the lighthouse, and Bessie lived near by. Among Bessie's strong joyous children, Mollie's boy passed like a pale, unburied infant shade, making his plaintive moan as once his mother moaned to wind and wave.

"It will be all right by and by," said Mollie patiently to her friend, the pastor's wife. "Joe and I looked for a home and comfort along with the little one in this world, but you see God has only put off our happiness a little while, and we'll get it some day all together again."

In this simple faith Mollie was satisfied.

"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came unto Thee, even into Thy holy temple."