The Life Buoy.

By Charles Garvice.

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[CHAPTER VII—CONTINUED]

The sight of a professional diver climbing down a rope ladder into the sea afforded a certain amount of entertainment to the people in the boats, but, as there was nothing more to be seen, they gradually rowed away and left the schooner and the crew alone at their anchorage. By dark the diver had roughly traced out the general direction in which the wreck lay. He reported that in three places in the soft ooze there were faint traces of something that might indicate the remains of the lost ship. The next day the schooner had cut four anchors in different positions, and she had been secured directly over the dead ship, keel to keel. It was slow work, and it was nearly nightfall before everything was in readiness for a systematic exploration of the wreck.

Capt. Breeze held several consultations with old men who remembered the wreck, and with the diver laid the exact spot where the bows of the ship might have been when she went to pieces was pretty clearly fixed. The diver would begin there and walk all over the bottom, thrusting a sharp iron rod deep into the ooze at every step. It was thought best to begin there, as it was possible that the schooner herself might be found, or perhaps a part of the iron work of the capstan.

A whole day was spent in this way, and the diver reported nothing. The iron bar sank easily into the mud and through the sand below. It could even be thrust through the rotting timbers without much trouble, and, though he had made out by this means the shape of one end of the keel and parts of two of the old ribs, he had found nothing more than fast-decaying wood and a fragment of old china plate.

The next day was steamer-day. The New London boat came over to Wilson's Holl only twice a week in summer. Capt. Breeze invariably went to the dock on these days, to see the few travelers who might arrive, and to get his weekly Tribune, on which his mental stomach had been happily stayed all these years. This time he forgot his weekly and remained on the schooner.

Love had become important. It must do more than sit idle while others worked. The diver brought up a rusty hinge from an old chest, part of a door-knob, a piece of broken iron work, and a mug, black and discolored, yet plainly a stoneware mug, with handles intact. If the diver could recover such small things as these, there was hope of more valuable discoveries. He would himself go down and help explore the wreck.

The diver's dress fitted him well. He had had no difficulty, after a few trials, in staying under the water for half an hour at a time, and soon became quite an expert in thrusting his iron rod—strange weapon to fight for love!—into the oozy bottom of the sea. Capt. Breeze, with native gumption, learned the trick of working the air-pump, that fed air to the lover below, and insisted on doing all the work himself. So it was father and son searched together, one on deck, one in the sea, vexing with one heart for the love of a woman.

The New London steamer brought some passengers, young and old, to

"YOU COWARD."

Wilson's Holl, and then departed. Old Captain Breeze, patiently at work on the air-pump, saw it depart, and wondered if it had left behind his weekly newspaper. Just as the steamer passed the buoy he hea d a boat approaching from the shore. Thinking it only some of the crew of the schooner, he paid no heed, and went on with his work at the air-pump in dogged patience. Presently there were footsteps on the deck, and some one spoke.

"Father."

He looked up without stopping his work.

"Mail! Where did you come from?"

"I have come home, father. Can't you speak to me? Can't you give me your hand?"

"I can speak fast enough, but I can't give my hand to you."

"Oh, father!"

"I can't stop this machine. There's a feller below desperatin' on it. Belay!"

Behind him stood Judge Gearing and his wife, and by the edge of the deck were two others, one with a child in her arms and closely veiled.

"I don't wonder you are surprised, Captain," said the Judge. "We heard what your son was doing."

"Yes, Sam's at work now. Guess you'll have to excuse him for a little while."

"He's at work on a noble mission. I suppose he's at home?"

"Yes, Sam's at home. Take care, Mal. Don't step on that rubber hose. It's the air-pipe for the feller below."

"Who is it, father?"

"It's Sam. He's under water, explorin' that wreck. He hasn't found much yet,—nothing 'cept a few scraps o' old iron and other such wreckage."

A solitary wave, stronger than its fellows, passed beneath the vessel; it swayed slightly, and the black buoy swung round, and a single sighing note, plaintive and particular, yet full of meaning to—to—that could hear, swept over the wa—

She turned and looked off over the sea to the cold blue horizon. A tear sparkled on her cheek, and the Judge, drawing nearer, said to her:

"My child, few women have such love bestowed upon them without hope of reward."

"And I've lost it! I cannot tell him all the shame and misery I suffer. He isn't working down there for me. I know what he is looking for."

"Yes, dear, he all know; and I'm very glad I could help him."

"You helped him?"

"Yes, for his sake."

"Oh! I hope he will find nothing!"

"Why?"

"Because—oh, can't you see? He may find a piece of my father's name, or my father's name, and then I shall lose my second father."

He gravely kissed her forehead, and then they turned back to where the others stood near the side of the schooner, watching where two streams of bubbles were rising through the water. The Captain, in the depths of the vessel, was explaining to Mrs. Gearing and the woman with the child something about the worksbelow. This other woman was apparently a stranger, and stood looking on in silence. The man who had come with them was standing behind Mrs. Gearing, while the diver was working back at the air-pump.

Suddenly, with a scream, Mal Johnson sprang at this man and with a desperate push threw him in a coiled heap upon the deck.

"You coward! You—oh! You meant to kill him!"

The creature tried to scramble up, and then fell off, and his hat flew overboard, for the captain of the wrecker struck him a fearful blow on the head and it straddled him senseless on the edge of the vessel. The woman ran to his side, and Mrs. Gearing wrung her hands in terror.

"Oh! it is Royal! My son! my son! they have killed him!"

The woman placed the child on the deck, and, throwing aside her veil, knelt by the fallen man and began to chafe his hands.

"Hands off, Mademoiselle Rochet! What does this mean? Oh! my son! my son!"

"Lend a hand, men, lend a hand! Haul up the divers. Work the pump, Sam! Stop, for God's sake."

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It was wonderful how quickly the men gathered, from e ery part of the vessel. With main strength they began to haul on the two ropes that hung over the ship's side into the water. One rope slackened slightly, the other was strained taut.

"All right! He's coming up," cried one of the men.

"Pull on the other rope. Haul all—haul! there's his head s out. Quick! up with him. There! Easy now on the deck. Take off the helmet. Quick, man, quick! Lend a hand, captain."

Up from the green water came a diver, dragging with him the weight of the dead. Behind this marine monster came another, dragged up, limp and lifeless. They hauled him on the deck, and the men unscrewed the great helmet and took it off.

"Oh! my loved my love!"

It was Sam Johnson, back from the sea. His hair was wet, and his face was white.

"Take off the dress. Careful, men. That's right, mates; hold his head while she gets him out of the dress."

Judge Gearing looked in silence at the extraordinary scene before him. The young man seemed to be dead—drowned while on love's mission. Away in a corner he saw his wife weeping over Mal, who, almost prostrate, bent over stood the figure of the old Captain, his thin hair fluttering in the wind, his knotted hands clinched in rigid fists, and his face as white as in courts had he felt so heavily the weight of judicial duty. He recognized the entire case in all its bearings—his daughter, the woman who had begged to be permitted to come with them to the schooner, his stepson attempting murder.

"Stand back, all-a-side wretch! Hestood on the pipe o' purpose. Hurt my son."

"Father, you are unjust. You don't know what you are saying."

"Mebby it is, Judge. S, T, O, N, E, Stone.

"Is that all?"

The Judge's voice had a curious tremulous quaver, as if he were trying to repress some strong emotion.

"Yes. There was more once, but it's rotted off."

"Do you think it can be—Maid-stone?"

The old man stood up and wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. Not a word was said for a moment. At last Sam broke the silence.

"Father, where is that name-board?"

"It's to hum, Sam. I've kept it all these years,—thank God. I can get it when we go ashore."

"Mal," said the Judge, gravely, "how can I tell you? How can I ever thank this young man, who shall be my son? Listen."

A strange trembling was in the old man's voice. He bared his head, and his white hairs seemed a nimbus in the fading light. By some curious instinct the men all took off their hats, as if some religious service were at hand. There was a brief pause, and then he went on:

"Her ship was the Maidstone, of Liverpool. It was my wife's name, so I named it after her. My wife's dead now; she sailed in this ship years ago with her child, and the vessel was lost."

"Stop there, sir," said the old pilot. "Stop there. I was at that wreck, and I done a—a passenger a great injustice. When we found that passenger she was wrapped in a shawl, and there was marked with a name that we knew from things in the state room was the Captain's name. Mother always said it would kill—the passenger—if she was to know her father left her to die in this own ship; she'd die o' shame in thinkin' of her father."

Somehow a steady, beautiful girl, made doubly beautiful by love and happiness, her ewe shining with a new love just born, had crept closer to the two men. She stretched out her hands towards them.

"Father—both fathers—hark!"

She stood between the two old men, erect, listening, beautiful.

The night fell in peace on the sea. No sound of surf or wave was anywhere. Yet by some mysterious sympathy there was a sound, soft, musical, vanishing. They all heard it; none could any tell whether it was upon the air or only in their hearts.

Listen, father. It is—by mother—singing in heaven."

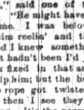
And the buoy was dumb.

THE END.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

DANIEL, THE COEUR-DE-LION OF ALL AGES.

Golden Text: "His Windows Being Opened in His Chamber Toward Jerusalem"—Daniel, VI. 10—Delivered at New York Sunday, September 3.



HE scoundrelly princes of Persia, urged on by gardens and jealousy against Daniel, have succeeded in getting a law passed that whosoever prays to God shall be put under the paws and teeth of the lions, who are lashing themselves in rage and hunger up and down the stone cage for putting their lower jaws on the ground, bellowing till the earth trembles. But the most fiercely did the devotions of Daniel, the Coeur-de-Lion of the ages. His enemies might as well have a law that the sun should not draw water, or that the north wind might be forbidden to sweep across a garden of magnolias or that God should be abolished. They could not scare him with the red-hot breath of the lions. They can not scare him with the lions. As soon as Daniel hears of this enactment he leaves his office of secretary of state, with its upholstery of crimson and gold, and comes down the white marble steps and goes to his own house. He opens his window and puts the shutters back and pulls the curtain aside so that he can look toward the sacred city of Jerusalem, and then prays.

I suppose the people in the street gathered under and before his window, and said: "Just see that man defying the law! He ought to be punished!" So the constabulary of the city rush to the police headquarters and report that Daniel is on his knees at the wide-open window. "You are my prisoner," says the officer of the law, dropping a heavy hand on the shoulder of the kneeling Daniel. As the constables open the door of the cavern to throw in their prisoner, they see the glaring eyes of the monsters. But Daniel becomes the first lion-tamer, and they lick his hands and fawn at his feet, and that night he sleeps with the shaggy mane of a wild beast for his pillow, while the king that night, sleepless in the palace, has on him the paw and teeth of a lion he cannot tame—the lion of a remorseful conscience.

What a picture it would be for some artist: Darius, in the early dusk of morning, not waiting for footmen or chamberlain, hurrying to the cage, flushed and nervous and in dishabille, and looking through the crevices of the cage to see what had become of his prime minister. "Oh, Daniel!" the king says, "Daniel is surely devoured, and the lions are sleeping after their horrid meal, the bones of the poor man scattered across the floor of the cage! With remorse I did it. Daniel, come out, Daniel!" No answer, for the prophet is yet in profound slumber. But a lion, more easily awakened, answers, and, with his head at the door through the crevice, seems angrily to demand the cause of this interruption, and then another wild beast lifts his head, and another, and all the lions in the prophet waking up, comes forth to report himself all unhurt and well.

But our text stands up at Daniel's window, open toward Jerusalem. Why this direction open? Because Daniel was his native land, and all the pomp of his Babylonish successes could not make him forget it. He came there from Jerusalem at eighteen years of age, and he never visited it, though he lived to be eighty-five years. Yet, when he wanted to arouse the deepest emotions and grandest aspirations of his heart, he had his window open toward his native Jerusalem. There are many of you to-day who understand that without any exposition. This is going to be a day of foreigners. They have come into all occupations and professions. They sit in all churches. It may be twenty years ago since you left your installation papers, and you may be thoroughly Americanized, but you can't forget the land of your birth, and your sympathies go put toward it. Your windows are open toward Jerusalem. Your father and mother are buried there. It may have been a very humble home in which you were born, but your memory often plays around it, and you hope some day to go and see it—the hill, the tree, the brook, the house, the place so sacred. The door from which you started off with parental blessing to make your own way in the world, and God only knows how sometimes you have longed to see the familiar places of your childhood, and how in awful crises of life you would like to have caught a glimpse of the old, wrinkled face that bent over you as you lay on the gentle lap tenderly or forty or fifty years ago. You may have on this side of the sea arrived in fortune, and, like Daniel, have become great, and may have come into prosperities which you never could have reached if you had stayed there, and you may have many windows in your house—bay-windows, and skylight-windows and windows of conservatory, and windows on all sides—but you have at least one window open toward Jerusalem.

When the foreign steamer comes to the wharf, you see the long line of sailors, with shuffling feet and rolling coming down the planks carrying as many letters as you might suppose to be enough for a years' correspondence, and this repeated again and again during the week. Multitudes of you are getting letters from home, and all the post-offices of the land people will go to the window and anxiously ask for them, hundreds of thousands of you expecting that window of foreign mails that open window toward Jerusalem. Messages that say: "When are you coming home to see us? We are growing old in the army. Sister is dead. Father and mother are getting very feeble. We are having a great struggle to get on the farm. Could you not send us some help or will you come to us?" All ten th love, and hope to meet—a it not in this world, then in a better. Good-bye."

Yes, yes; in all these cities, and amid the flowering western prairies, and on the slopes of the Pacific, and amid the Sierras, and on the banks of the lagoon, and on the ranches of Texas there are an uncounted multitude who, this hour, stand and sit and kneel with their windows open toward Jerusalem. Some of the people shed on the heather of the Scottish hills, some on the mere there were driven out by Irish famine. Some of them, in early life, drilled in the German army. Some of them were accustomed at Lyons or Marseilles or Paris to see on the street Victor Hugo and Gambetta. Some chased the chamois among the Alpine precipices. Some plucked the ripe clusters from the Italian vineyard. Some lifted their faces under the midnight sun of Norway. It is no dishonor to our land that they remember the place of their nativity. Miscreants would they be if, while they have some of their windows open to take in the free air of America and the sunlight of an atmosphere which no kingly despot has ever breathed, they forget sometimes to open the window toward Jerusalem.

No wonder that the son of the Swiss, when far away from home, hearing the national air of his country sung, the malady of homesickness comes on him so powerfully as to cause his death. No wonder that the apostle Daniel of my text for keeping early memories fresh. Forget not the old folks at home. Write often; and, if you have gotten into mofis and they are making practical contribution, and rejoice that America is bound to all the world by ties of sanguinity as in no other nation. Who can doubt but it is appointed for the evangelization of other lands? What a stirring, melting gospelizing theory that all the doors of other nations are open toward us, while our windows are open toward them!

But Daniel, in the dear, kept this portihole of his domestic fortress intelose I because Jerusalem was the capital of sacred influences. Solomon smoked the sacrifice. There was the Ark of the Covenant. There stood the temple. We are prepared to open our windows, open on the opposite side toward the world, that we may see and hear and appropriate its advantages. What does the world say? What does the world think? What does the world do? Worshipers of the world instead of worshipers of God. Windows open toward Babylon. Windows open toward Corinth. Windows open toward Athens. Windows open toward Sodom. Windows open toward the flats, instead of windows open toward the hills. Sad mistake! This world is a mere flat, and something I saw in the museum of Strasburg, Germany—the figure of a virgin in wood and iron. The victim in olden time was brought there, and this figure, which represents giving up to him, and, once enfolded, the figure closed with a hundred knives and lances upon him, and then left him dripping with blood. Such is the world down. So the world first embraces its idolaters, then closes upon them with many tortures, and then locks its hand and fawns