

The subject is of course far enough from being exhausted. But the popular character of this magazine appoints a just limit to such discussions in its pages. We have not yet ever named the chief practical suggestion to introduce which our strictures were originally

conceived. We began this paper with no barren critical purpose. At a future time we may feel invited by the public interest in the subject to resume its discussion. We shall then pursue it to an issue that will not, we hope, remain without its fruit.

TWICE ALONE.—A TALE OF THE LABRADOR.

THE Stormy Petrel, or Mother Carey's Chicken, is the bird of omen in the Northern seas;—the storm-bird, upon whose breath depends a good or bad voyage to the mariner. Down on the Labrador the sailors believe that the presence of this bird portends a storm. They take it as a warning. Woe be unto him who fails to heed it; a thousand times woe unto him, if he destroys the bird while in the performance of its mission.

Down on the Labrador—down where the icebergs crash and grind and pound themselves to pieces on a shore bleak and desolate—down where the north-east wind flings destruction upon the waves—down where death is ever raving for his victims and is never satisfied—down on the Labrador—there's where I went to seek my fortune in a fishing-smack, the *Squid*; there's where I went, despite friends and family; there's where I—John Hardy—did the deed that brought an evil day on me, as if it were a judgment.

We were returning from the Labrador after fishing there all the summer—nine of us altogether—nine able-bodied men, if I could be called one; for, although doing a man's work, I was, in fact, little more than a boy in years.

Blue Pond was the harbor we were making for, and we were about a mile to windward of a long and lofty island, with dark and forbidding cliffs. We had to pass to the southward of this island, and by keeping close hauled on the wind, we had hoped to weather its south-east cape without tacking off from the land. This accomplished, there were but nine miles more for us to sail. To be sure, we would have some seaman's work to do in making these nine miles; but then the captain had been through the passages so

often that he could almost sail the *Squid* there in the night-time.

This was our course. After passing Gull Island (leeward of us), a clear run of three miles brings us to Charge Rock; then four miles more, dead before the wind, and we are in Blue Pond Tickle. Hauling then sharp on the wind, we keep an island close aboard on the weather, or starboard hand, in order to avoid a shoal; and so along we go, now swinging off, or rounding to, as the dangers of the channel compel us to change our course. And then we are through the Tickle, with a little sheet of smooth water lying before us. The *Squid* comes to the wind, down her anchor goes, and we are at home—home after four months of weary work and hard exposure on the dreary Labrador—home, too, with a record of good fortune that makes our coming still more welcome.

We saw all this before us in prospective, and were making merry over it through the day. We counted the hours that would pass yet before we reached our anchorage; and we laughed over the cries that would be raised in the little town: "The *Squid* is coming," shouts one; "The *Squid* is in the Tickle," roars out another; "The *Squid's* in port!" "All's well on board the *Squid*!" "The *Squid* has had a splendid 'catch.'" The prospect was a pleasant one, and well might we laugh.

Then we wish that Gull Island, which we are struggling to weather, might be sunk in the sea, and buried from sailor's sight and track of ship forever; for it is dreadfully in our way, directly in the course to where our mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts are waiting for us.

There were some good fellows on the *Squid*, or I thought so then. There was Old Bunks,

my special admiration, who had harpooned his whales off Nantucket, and spread his herring-nets on the Dutch coast, and whose yarns would run easy through a night-watch. And Tufts—"Capt'n" we called him below deck—who had been in a mutiny (though only Bunks and I knew it), and the Book Rat, as we got to calling him. Book Rat was the scholar of the crew, and was forever writing in a notebook, which no man could get a look at for love nor money, though most of them wouldn't have gained much in looking, not being scholars. I, being the youngest aboard, was the butt of the crew. They were always laughing at my landsman ways, and suspecting, or pretending to suspect me of being at the bottom of every mishap occurring on board. Bunks alone stood my friend. Ignorant and rough though he was, he had some sense of fairness.

One of our chief sports was firing at seals; and it so happened that, good marksman as I knew myself to be, the creatures played me false at every shot, especially if Bunks bet his pint on me, and Book Rat looked on, log in hand. One day, feeling in capital spirits, and seeing an unusually fine seal, I recklessly challenged attention—sent a shot after him—and missed. Such a shout as went up from the deck! Even Bunks ha!-ha'd! and mockingly presented me with his fowling-piece.

At that instant a stormy petrel flew across our stern. Calling to the sailors to "Look! look sharp!" I aimed and fired. I saw the storm-bird fall; saw the blood-stains on his wings; and, before the waves had swept it from our sight, I saw it give a gasp for breath. At that very instant the wind struck us with a fearful force. The sails were split, the sheets were parted, and the topmasts broken short off at the caps—broken as if they had been reeds.

We were crowding on all sail to make our port. Our vessel was the common fishing-smack, and of such great numbers are seen down on the Labrador every year. It was, however, not so usual a craft in that sea as many others, being sharp at both ends, of the form known among seamen as a "pinkie." It was a small craft, and carried no other canvas than fore and mainsails, fore and main

gaff topsails; fore staysail and jib. Both gaff topsails and the jib were carried away in the squall following the shooting of the bird.

The sea and sky, and all our prospects, were in an instant changed. Every man on board was terror-struck. For a moment they were paralyzed. Not that they had never met such an accident before, for they were hardy sailors all, and had made rough weather many a day. When they saw the stormy petrel fall heavily upon the sea they read their fate—destruction to them all, despite every effort they might make. What use to clear away the wreck, and save the spars and mend the sails, when their doom was pronounced already?

This utter hopelessness was general, from the captain to the cook. A sudden thought, however, seemed to strike them, or at least some of them. The outraged deity of the storm had given us a fearful warning; they would offer up a sacrifice in propitiation, and thus ward off the dire mischief that was threatened.

Then I heard reproachful voices—voices full of anger and despair and hate. "Overboard with him!" "Heave him in the sea!" "Kill him before the bird dies!" and other such threatening speeches. Then, amid shouts of "Kill him, kill him!" I felt strong hands upon me.

I was already appalled by what had happened, even before this sudden outburst of violence. The horrified faces of the sailors, as they gazed upon the wreck, convinced me that I had been guilty of a crime; but its magnitude was realized only when I saw the dismay and fury that had followed it, and, for the instant, I felt as if the death my shipmates proposed for me was deserved. Old Bunks, who stood among them, did not raise his hand or voice to stay their resolution; but I thought I heard him cry, "Into the sea with him!"

Then my heart failed me utterly, and I had almost sprung over the rail of my own accord, when the captain stilled the tumult. "The bird is dead," said he. "It does not matter now. Let the wretch live, if he can." Then I saw him look up at the sky with a fervent "God help us!"

He said not a word to me, nor did any

body. At the captain's command the men had given up their evil purpose; but they all avoided me as if I were afflicted with some foul disease. Then they cleared away the broken spars; but they would not let me help them do it. Whenever I approached them at their work I was driven off, or the person next me moved away, as if to avoid my touch.

Soon the squall was followed by a gale; the bitterness of the men returned when the storm threatened to head us off; they grew furious, and again they threatened me. Before, they had proposed to offer me as a sacrifice; now, there was evidently in their hearts a feeling of revenge.

The captain went below—probably to look at his chart. No longer restrained by his presence, they rushed upon and bound me in a moment. A little boat lying on the deck was launched; into it they put a keg of water and a bag of hard ship's biscuit; then bore me to the side, cut my bonds, lowered me into the boat, and I was adrift on the raging sea.

Something hit my shoulder. It was a flask of liquor thrown to me from the receding *Squid*. I looked up, and saw Bunks turn away. It was his most precious possession.

Once only I had begged for life, and they had bid me thank my stars they did not throw me into the sea at once. And, indeed, I was glad for even the slender chance that the boat promised me; although I have no idea that the crew regarded it as anything more than the least repulsive way of putting me to death.

Thus launched upon the sea in a frail open boat, I drifted rapidly to leeward, while the pinkie shot ahead in the gathering darkness, and I saw her no more.

Was she safe? Was my crime sufficiently atoned for? Paralyzed and bewildered, I gave no thought whatever to my own danger, and, perhaps not unnaturally, thought only of the crew.

Returning at length to consciousness (for I was really like one asleep and dreaming), I was greatly rejoiced to discover that the boat had shipped very little water, a circumstance which seemed to me providential. To be

sure, the storm-bird was being avenged; but had not the sailors cried "God help us!" while putting me in the boat? I did not so much as think about it then, but I have since come to know that this is not unusual in the world—the help of Heaven being often asked at a time when the mind is under the dominion of a wicked superstition or wicked desire, not unfrequently misnamed "a sense of duty."

In the bottom of the boat I discovered an oar or scull, which I quickly dragged out, and running it over the stern, shoved the boat around, and brought her head to the wind and waves, which certainly saved me from being overwhelmed, for the storm soon increased in violence, and the waves ran higher. After this I worked vigorously. Of course, with a single scull I could do but little more than keep my boat from falling off into the trough of the sea, where she would be in danger of swamping; but, knowing that land was under my lee, and dreading to drift down upon it, I was eager to keep as far out as possible. Sometimes, therefore, after mounting a wave I managed to shoot the boat ahead a little. If I could keep away from the land until the storm subsided, or the air cleared, I thought there would be little difficulty in making a harbor somewhere.

While struggling on with this idea in my mind, I met with a singular adventure. I had been so successful in manœuvring my little boat that very little water came aboard; but at length she took a sudden sheer to one side, and then giving a weather roll, the water rushed in at a fearful rate. At first I expected to be swamped, but escaping that, I looked into the bottom of the boat. Something besides water had come in; by its fluttering, evidently a bird; and, as we rose up on the next wave, it floated down between my feet. Not requiring both of my hands at the scull, I picked the bird up, and was about to throw it overboard, thinking that it would be in my way, when I perceived that it was wounded. Then I saw that it was a storm-bird, and believing its presence boded evil to me, I became afraid, and did not know what to do. So the old superstition was on me once more, with all its force, and my faculties again became clouded. Not long, however,

for I soon began to see hope ahead. Thus I reasoned: "This wounded bird has come to me for shelter, and surely it would not have so come had the storm-spirit wholly given me over to evil fortune." So I plucked up courage again, and placing the bird under my jacket, where it nestled very quietly against my breast, I sculled on with the same resolution as before.

After this the sea became more quiet, although the storm did not abate in the least. This convinced me that I had drifted under the lee of land,—probably a small island. Soon the sea became still more smooth. Being now in water which enabled me to manage the boat without danger of swamping, I worked up towards this land, which I soon saw looming out through the thick atmosphere. The waves were still high enough to break heavily upon it, as I could plainly see. The land altered its trend presently; following its course, I was soon completely in its shelter. Then I saw and heard breakers on the other hand, which satisfied me that I was either passing through a strait or had drifted into some bay—the latter, as it proved, for I soon came to the end of it; yet there was still a line of breakers all along the shore, showing that the bay was not a good harbor; and to make a landing there would be both difficult and dangerous. With great joy, I discovered a sandy beach; at once headed my boat for it, and rode in on a breaker. As soon as the boat touched I sprang out and seized it, vainly hoping to drag it out of danger before the next wave came. But the boat was struck under the counter, and hurled upon me with great force before I could get away. I was knocked down, and my ankle was fearfully bruised. My bag of bread, keg of water, and the oar were likely to be lost; yet, badly hurt as I was, I managed to save them; so also at last the boat, but not until her bottom was completely stove in.

Drenched and exhausted, my first impulse was to look about me for help. I walked up the beach and over the rocks, and halloed feebly. No answer. Not a living thing was to be seen—not even a tree or flower or blade of grass—all was desolation.

Then I sat down on the rocks and cried—cried from pain and utter wretchedness.

Instantly my bird commenced crying also. I had forgotten all about the poor wounded thing. Taking it from under my jacket, I found its feathers all ruffled, and as thoroughly water-soaked as were my clothes. It seemed quite stupid, and could only keep its eyes open by making a great effort. Its wet feathers gave me a good chance to see its skin, and on the back of its head I found a wound, with a piece of lead sticking in it. This I removed. Then there were two other shots in the breast which I could not reach. One leg was helpless, but I could not discover any fracture. The wings were quite sound.

It never once occurred to me, until I saw its wounds, that this was the very same bird I had fired at from the deck of the *Squid*. The identity was clearly proved by the square piece of lead that I took from the back of its head—the very same kind that I had used, for we were entirely out of shot on board the pinkie, and had to cut slugs from a piece of sheet-lead.

Having dressed the bird's wounds, I made a little pen of flat stones and put him in it. The sky cleared soon afterwards, and the sun came out, which was very grateful both to the bird and myself, for it dried our coats. Then the clear air gave me an opportunity to see where I was. There could be no doubt that I was on Gull Island, for I recognized the very cliffs near me that I had seen as we passed along in the smack.

My desire now was to look for help. If nobody lived on the island, surely I could signal some passing vessel. I did not then feel much doubt of being rescued in one way or another, being so near the port for which we were bound, and where the pinkie belonged. My bag of bread would last for several days. As soon as the sun came out, I spread the bread to dry. I think my greatest comfort was in the bird. I was so sorry before that I had shot it; I was so glad now that I had rescued it. Had it died, I believe I should have given up in despair.

But when I tried to climb a hill for a look-out, I found my confidence in the bird somewhat abated, for I could not go far, owing to

my ankle, which continued to grow worse, swelling greatly, and causing me real agony. Nor for eight days did I move from the spot where I had come ashore.

I will not recite the misery of those days. The weather was often bitter cold; sometimes it snowed and blew heavily. I should have perished, having no shelter but the rocks, had I not managed to break up my boat, and start a fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together. I scarcely slept all of that time. Walk I could not, and my pain was so great that I was just able to crawl. Meanwhile I lived upon my bread, having nothing else to eat; and my bird ate the same food. Finding a stream of water near at hand, I had no longer any use for my keg, so I made an open cage of it for the bird, and it became quite tame, as we two poor wounded creatures grew well together.

My bird recovered perfectly, and I often felt guilty in keeping the poor thing shut up in a cage. I could do nothing more for it, or it for me. Still, when I thought of letting the bird go, I could not do it; the feeling was strong upon me that, in some mysterious manner, our fates were linked together for good or ill.

On the ninth day I managed with great difficulty to climb a neighboring hill, but discovered nothing. There was not a sail in sight. I came back intending to carry my bread up there and remain on the watch; but on the following day I was quite unable to move. Then, for the first time since my bird had recovered I thought it an evil spirit, and determined to set it free, which I did without any reluctance. But it would not leave me when I released it. It tried its wings once or twice, then settling on the rock near by fixed its uncanny look upon me for an instant and swaggered into its pen.

On the eleventh day I was much refreshed, though suffering greatly, and very weak and emaciated; yet, feeling that I must make some effort or perish, I dragged myself to the farthest end of the island, which was very lofty, and commanded an extensive view. Still, not a sail did I see; but, on my way back, while near the south-east cape, I discovered something which gave me at first hope, and then

filled me with horror. I was then in a gorge, which I followed toward the sea, expecting to find a village, or a fishing-station, or something of that kind. The first thing I discovered was a handkerchief, then a familiar-looking old gray coat; then the heel of a boot, near which was a sailor's sheath, with a knife in it; and a tarpaulin hat, which I would have declared I had worn many a time, had I not known that my tarpaulin was on board the *Squid*.

Looking about me in joyful bewilderment, I was suddenly startled and horrified to see a man or a corpse (it was difficult to say which) sitting upon the ground, with his back to a rock and his face toward me. His eyes were closed; his head had fallen forward on his breast; his right hand clutched a pencil, and his left held a volume, in which he evidently had been writing. It was the Book Rat! Emaciated though he was, I could not be mistaken; and this in his hand was his mysterious "log," open enough now to any prying eye. Gasping for breath, I called his name, but he did not answer. Going closer, I placed my hand upon his shoulder, and tried to wake him, for I wanted to think him only sleeping; though from the first something had told me he was dead. He was firm and solid as the stone he leaned against.

This man had never been kind to me on board the *Squid*, and when I saw him there dead, I must in candor own that I felt a momentary sense of triumph, miserable though I was myself, and likely as it seemed that I should follow him very soon. Yet he, who had been one of eight that were willing to sacrifice me, had gone before, to all appearance the greater sufferer.

The man had died in the act of writing. The last feebly written words beneath his fingers were very illegible, but I managed to decipher them: "Beware of harming the stormy petrel. The boy did not die, or we would not have suffered thus; beware of him. I am cold and sleepy; very cold; will write about the boy to-morrow; may curses fall—" But no to-morrow ever came to him in this world.

I took the book from his stony hand, and turning back the leaves, read what he had written. It was a full account of what befell

the crew of the *Squid* after I had been cast adrift. It was an awful record. Ending with an unfinished curse, it began with a deliberate lie, written on a loose sheet, to which eight names were signed ;—the captain's first, and that of the author of the record last. It ran thus :—

“The boy shot a stormy petrel, and then fell overboard. We threw the punt to him, but did not see if he was able to reach it. We could not help him, for when the bird died we were struck by a squall which carried away the topmasts, and we had to look out sharp for our own safety, as the weather came on thick, with a heavy gale, which is blowing now.”

This had evidently been written immediately after I was set adrift. They clearly thought themselves safe, and felt sure of reaching home, where they might be questioned about me. The next entry was in a different vein, and was headed with :

“On Gull Island, where we were wrecked yesterday, October 3d.”

So the *Squid* had gone ashore before I had been long away from her, and by setting me adrift the crew had really saved my life—at least, so far. I thought of the stormy petrel now as a forgiving spirit, and not as an avenging one. Loving it as I had done in my misery and loneliness, I loved it more than ever now.

The record, after giving some details about the different men, went on to say :—

“After the gale set in we kept on close-hauled, trying to weather the cape, the pinkie laboring heavily, and carrying on an unusual press of sail, considering the strength of the wind ; but we could not reduce our canvas. The sea rose very rapidly ; wave after wave dashed madly over us, and we were helplessly driven to leeward. The wind hauled, too, and headed us.

“With despair we saw it was impossible for us to weather the cape, which loomed like a great black wall with a fringe of white along its base. But the captain, ever on the alert, cool in proportion as dangers thickened, would not lose hope. Not until after his efforts were baffled again and again did he yield to fate. We were completely embayed,

with no possible chance of beating out. There was nothing left but to find a soft place among the rocks to lay the pinkie's bones.

“But there was no such place. The coast was as erect as a house-wall, and very high. There was no break in it anywhere, only an occasional cleft. Into some of these the sea entered ; others were not so deep, and were above the reach of the waves. One lay almost directly ahead of us, and the *Squid* being steered for it, we were borne in on the crest of a great wave, which hurled us with terrific force against the rocks, striking first with our starboard bow. The pinkie did not stick fast here, however, but sheered to port, and shot ahead about half her length on the next following sea, when she struck again, driven in like a wedge, and between two upright walls, the space between which widened but little above for some three or four fathoms, though converging to a point about a ship's length ahead of us.

“I have since looked down the chasm. In the first terrific shock both masts went by the board, but they fell leaning against the wall of the cliff. When we sheered to port I saw the main-mast go over the stern, striking in its fall and knocking overboard the captain, who had stuck to the helm. Then I remember being carried from my feet and pounded on the deck ; that a great weight of water was on me, and that I was swept along by it until violently dashed against the forward bits.

“Not being seriously injured, I was quickly on my feet again, and, looking up, saw that the fore cross-tree had caught against a jutting rock. The rigging was still dangling from the mast-head. Climbing up by it, I secured a footing on the ledge. My ship-mates followed, and carefully working our way upwards, step by step, we reached a place of safety ; but not a moment too soon. The succeeding waves swept away the broken spar that had saved us from present death.”

Here closed the entry in the journal, relative to the wreck ; and I need hardly say that I read it with intense eagerness. The story of the captain's fate smote me heavily, for he alone had no hand in setting me adrift. Convinced that I had been greatly

wronged by them (so far at least as their purpose was concerned), I felt that I could wish the other seven in his place. But, then, where were they? I looked down upon the one stone-dead beside me, and wondered if the end of the other six had been like his.

This thought filled me with so much dread that I could read no more. I looked about me, feeling as if dead men were lying all around. I called loudly, and the echoes of my voice seemed like the answering cries of living men. My impulse was to seek for them, dead or alive, and I hastened down the gorge as fast as my wounded leg would let me; but I had not gone far before my first impression was fully realized. In a sort of cave I found six ghastly bodies huddled together, as if they would keep each other warm. They were but little more than clothed skeletons. Their sunken eyes and cheeks, and projecting bones, told of fearful want and suffering. One had a handkerchief crammed in his mouth; another had fastened his teeth upon his sleeve; and a third had died with a knife clutched in his right hand, as if he would carve a meal from the body nearest him, which he was glaring at, and seemed to be reaching for. It was Bunks, the gentlest-hearted of them all. At this awful spectacle I buried my face in my hands, and, for the first time since landing on the island, felt that I should never get away from it alive. Every hope of rescue left me. Not until I again sought my good angel, the petrel, did confidence revive, and then only a very, very little. The bird would no longer eat my bread. The day before, I had found a few small mussels, but these were insufficient for its wants; and this day none could be found. It seemed less dependent on me than before, and for the first time appeared as if it would be glad to escape.

My stock of bread was running low. I was very miserable. Making a little fire of the well-treasured fragments of my boat, I ate a few crumbs and tried to sleep, but I could not; my thoughts were constantly in that dreadful gorge upon the hill. The cries of my dead comrades seemed to reach me in the mournful voices of the waves.

In my distress I remembered the journal

that I had read with such harrowing emotions, and taking it from my pocket, I began where I had left off, and finished it, reading by the light of my feeble fire. It was a sickening tale of suffering and remorse, too horrible to be repeated here in all its sad details, and therefore I only give the substance of it.

On the first day after the wreck the crew felt no alarm about their future safety. They were looking confidently for the small fleet of smacks which had sailed with us in the spring from Blue Pond, and which they knew could not be very far astern of our pinkie. They knew also that, in pursuing their usual course, they must pass near Gull Island. To men inured as they were to exposure, it was no great hardship to wander about the rocks and keep watch there, even although the wind continued to blow hard. They could obtain nothing from the wreck to eat, however; the falling of the foremast, by which they had effected their escape, having prevented them from holding any further communication with the pinkie; but they found some fresh water, which relieved their first pangs of suffering. The second entry ran:—

“The night was dark, and full as stormy as the day had been; and the tide rose very high, for the moon is new, and the spring-tides are running with full force. The tide may have lifted the pinkie and taken her from the cleft, or perhaps she is pounded to pieces; certain it is, that now at dawn no traces of her are to be seen.”

Neither had anything lodged upon the ledges of the cliffs save a single barrel, which might contain bread; but they could not reach it. They were very cold, yet still they slept, having found a cave, the mouth of which they partially closed with stones—the same cave where I found their bodies.

On the following day they began to suffer seriously for want of food. It is terrible to think of the poor wretches perishing in full view of the spire of their native village, almost in sight of their own houses—homes teeming with plenty, and where loving ones were waiting and watching for them day after day, little suspecting how near they were, and yet how hopelessly far off.

The next day their sufferings became more

intense. They knew before that there were no inhabitants on the island, so they made no search, and therefore did not come upon me. Their hope was wholly centred in the Blue Pond fleet arriving from the Labrador. They looked out from the summit of the island toward Blue Pond, and spoke of their wives and those they loved; and they gave messages to each other, to be delivered Heaven would show how and when. Another night of suffering, and then utter despair settled upon them; death stared them pitilessly in the face; but still they crawled up to watch and look out toward their homes once more. It was so hard to die in sight of the familiar church spire.

Then they fell to quarrelling among themselves, and finally, in their frenzy, turned against Book Rat, who exasperated them by coolly keeping his log, and whom now they charged with causing all their woes.

"This may be true," the journal says, "though I think not; but, fearing their anger, I have withdrawn myself from them, and now *will tell the truth* here in my log. The statement signed by the captain and the crew, affirming that the boy fell overboard after shooting the petrel, is false; our intention was to send him to his death. While the captain was below for a few minutes, I incited the crew, and led them to the boy's destruction. For this they blame me now, thinking that the act was an unjust one, because the bird might not be dead. Still, I think it was, and believe that the sacrifice of the boy's life would have insured our safety. We should have hove him overboard at first, as I wanted them to do, and made sure of it. And so the fools would kill me because they have repented, and perhaps they would save their lives by picking my bones afterwards. But I laugh at them. They know not where I am."

The next entry filled me with horror.

"I've seen them, all lying dead together. And now, what they would have done to me I will do to them,—and live."

That he wrote this where I found him, lying against the rock, I could not doubt. He had probably tried to move away, and go to the cave, but could not, and had only strength to write—

"I am very feeble, but growing stronger, and will feast as soon as I have slept."

Then he seemed to revive again, for without another date, and immediately below, he began the curse which, Heaven be praised! was never finished.

Now my bird fell sick. I took him from his cage and carried him along with me for company, when I set out early to the hill where I had found the bodies; there to take my turn of dreary watching for the Blue Pond fleet.

My ankle was still painful; but I reached the summit at last, and commanded an unobstructed view. Not a sail in sight. The wind was blowing half a gale, and my fretting companion seemed to grow more lively, and tried to get away. Once I was almost inclined to let him go, but I could not. It at least was a living creature, something warm and alive, to nestle to my heart during the long, wearisome night. It would be time enough to let it go when the worst came; when not to open its cage would be to leave it to starve, as the rest of us had starved.

Taking some comfort in this resolution, I looked towards the sunset, wondering feebly if it were for the last time, when suddenly a dark object appeared in the horizon.

Intense anxiety sharpens the vision. Soon the object took shape. It was a schooner. Presently I saw another, and afterwards many more. It was the Blue Pond fleet! They would pass near the island.

But no! they neared me very slowly, and by a course which plainly showed that they had been driven off the coast, and were making in from the eastward towards a passage much to the south of Gull Island, too far away for me to signal them.

It is surprising how quickly we think in an emergency on which our life depends. The stormy petrel might save me now! for at once I remembered that he was always in the wake of ships, and not before them, and it seemed to me that he must be there to search for food that the passing vessel had stirred up in the briny waters. There was no thought of superstition now, for might not the bird's hunger inspire him to seek the vessels? The idea was so reasonable, I felt sure he would.

Tearing a leaf from the journal I had taken from the dead man's hand, I wrote with his pencil :

"THE SQUID, OF BLUE POND, WAS CAST AWAY ON GULL ISLAND TWELVE DAYS AGO, AND ALL OF THE CREW ARE DEAD BUT ONE. FOR GOD'S SAKE COME AND SAVE HIM."

Then I snatched the oilskin lining from my hat, wrapped the paper up tightly in it, and having bound it securely around the petrel's neck, I let him go.

How glad he seemed to be to get his freedom once more, as he flapped his wings and skimmed away above the waves. I felt sure now that he would go straight to the smacks. But would the people on board discover the packet on his neck ?

Yes ; hope was supreme now. My petrel would be seen—the billet would attract attention—a boat would be lowered. They would not harm a storm-bird, but they would take the message from his neck ; he would still be my deliverer.

After what seemed an age, one of the ves-

sels hove to, and soon afterwards changed her course, directly for the island.

I signalled. They answered. I waited, and waited, and waited ; then, in a whirl, as it seemed, I found myself in the village, every one crowding around me.

The crew of the *Squid* were all back at last ; I alive, full of mingled joys, anxieties, and busy questionings as to what to go about next ; they sleeping in the little churchyard, at rest under the spire at which they had gazed so yearningly—their future no longer within their own devising.

To this day the petrel may be skimming its way alone, "far out at sea ;" and to this day, thank God, the story of that cruel setting adrift upon the ocean has never been told where the telling would bring the lost ones a reproach.

I had been twice alone ; and each time had its lesson. The first brought man's lesson of superstition ; the second brought God's lesson of charity—and faith.

SONNET.

IN riftless gloom when earth lies shivering cold,
 And tessellated summer-squares with snow
 Are bordered, while the streams impetuous flow,
 Mad with escape from durance, waxen bold,—
 When scudding winds forth sally from the wold,
 Gride with fierce wings the rainy air, and go
 Back to their sounding caves, a coward foe,
 And life peers out of darkness manifold,—
 Upleaps the ghost of pain ! — I hear the groan
 Wrung from my palsied heart as the truth fell, —
 Swift darkness, where my noon of bliss had shone, —
 And, with clinched hands, parched lips, and prayer, "Farewell"
 I breathed,—henceforth to walk in woe and moan,—
 Hope gone—heart dead—and hear their funeral knell !