

Poetry.

For the Baptist and Visitor.

MY MOTHER.

BY WOODBINE.

My mother is sleeping,
That sleep knows no waking—
My watch I am keeping,
And memory's taking
Me back to those days, those good days of yore—
At her feet I am kneeling,
While she tells me the story,
With of pathos and feeling
Of Calvary's glory—
But now, oh, alas! my mother's no more!

My mother's no more—
Her tomb her grave her;
Her troubles are o'er—
In the grave we have laid her—
She sings with bright angels in heaven above
But her memory I'll cherish—
Her counsel so sweet,
I hope they'll never perish
Till in heaven we meet,
To be joined in the bonds of communion and love.

Sleep on, dearest mother,
In thy lowly bed;
May thy spirit still hover
Around thy child's head
And watch him, and guide him, as in days of yore.
Be a friend to the poor,
Thy teachings so pure—
Be kind to his brother—
And meet thee in heaven, to part never more.

Literature.

From the Independent.

THE PEARL OF ORR'S ISLAND.

A STORY OF THE COAST OF MAINE.

BY MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

CHAPTER V.

It did live. "The little life, so frail, so unprofitable in every mere material view, so precious in the eyes of love, expanded and flowered at last into fair childhood. Not without much watching and weariness. Many a night the old fisherman walked the floor with the little thing in his arms—talking to it that jargon of tender nonsense which fairies bring as love-gifts to all who tend a cradle. Many a day the good little old grand-mother called the aid of gossip about her, trying various experiments of catnip and sweet fern and bayberry, and other teas of rustic reputation for baby ailments.

At the end of three years, the two graves in the lonely grave-yard were sodded and cemented down by smooth velvet turf, and playing round the door of the brown house was a slender child, with ways and manners so still and singular as often to remind the neighbors that she was not like other children—a bud of hope and joy—but the outcome of great sorrow—a pearl washed ashore by a mighty, uprooting tempest. They that looked at her remembered that her father's eye had never beheld her, and her baptismal cup had rested on her mother's coffin.

She was small of stature, beyond the want of children of her age, and molded with a fine waxen delicacy that won admiration from all eyes. Her hair was curly and golden, but her eyes were dark like her mother's and the lids drooped over them in that manner which gave a peculiar expression of dreamy wistfulness.

Every one of us must remember eyes that have a strange, peculiar expression of pathos and desire, as if the spirit that looked out of them were pressed with vague remembrances of a past, or but dimly comprehended the mystery of its present life. Even when the baby lay in its cradle, and its dark, inquiring eyes would follow now one object and now another, the gossips would say the child was longing for something; and Miss Roxey would still further venture to predict that the child always would long and never would know exactly what she was after.

That dignitary sits at this minute enthroned in the kitchen corner, looking majestically over the press-board on her knee, where she is pressing the next year's Sunday vest of Zephaniah Pennel. As she makes her heavy tailor's goose squeak on the work, her eyes follow the little delicate fairy from which trips about the kitchen, busily and silently arranging a little grove of gold and silver shells and sea-weed. The child sings to herself as she works in a low chant, like the prattle of a brook, but ever and anon she rests her little arms on a chair and looks through the open kitchen door far, far off where the horizon line of the blue sea dissolves in the blue sky.

"See that child now, Roxey," said Miss Rucy, who sat slitting beside her; "do look at her eyes. She's as handsome as a picture, but 'ta'n't an ordinary look she has neither; she seems a contented little thing, but what makes her eyes always look so kind o' wistful?"

"Want her mother always a-longing and a-looking to sea, and watchin' o' the ships, afore she was born?" said Miss Roxey; "and didn't her heart break afore she was born? Babies like that is marked always. They don't know what ails 'em, nor nobody."

"Is't her mother she's after?" said Miss Rucy. "The Lord only knows," said Miss Roxey; "but them kind o' children always seem homesick to go back where they come from. They're mostly grave and old-fashioned like this un'. If they gets past seven years, why they live; but it's always in 'em so long; they don't seem to be really unhappy neither, but if anything's ever the matter with 'em, it seems a great deal easier for 'em to die than to live. Some says it's the mothers' longing' after 'em makes 'em feel so, and some says it's them longing' after mother; but dear knows, Roxey, what any thing is or what makes anything. Children's mysterious, that's my said."

"Mara, dear," said Miss Rucy, interrupting the child's steady look-out, "what you thinking of?"

"Me want somethin'," said the little one. "That's what she's always saying," said Miss Rucy.

"Me want somebody to pay wi'," continued the little one.

"Want somebody to play wi'," said old Miss Pennel, as she came in from the back; "but her mama yet daisy with the back of her hand, and she don't never want nobody."

Kittridge," said Miss Roxey, "and let her play with their little girl; she'll chirk her up, I'll warrant. She's a regular little witch, Sally, but she'll chirk her up.—It's a't good for children to be so still and old-fashioned; children ought to be children. Sally takes to Maria just cause she's so different."

"Well, now, you may," said Dame Pennel; "to be sure, he can't bear her out of his sight a minute after he comes in, but, after all, old folks can't be company for children."

Accordingly, that afternoon, the little Mara was arrayed in a little blue flounced dress, which stood out like a balloon, made by Miss Roxey in first-rate style, from a French fashion-plate; her golden hair was twisted in manifold curls by Dame Pennel, who, restricted in her ideas of ornamentation, spared, nevertheless, neither time nor money to enhance the charms of this single ornament to her dwelling. Mara was her picture-gallery, who gave her in the twenty-four hours as many Murillos or Greuzes as a lover of art could desire; and as she tied over the child's golden curls a little flat hat, and saw her go dancing off along the sea-sands, holding to Miss Roxey's bony finger, she felt she had in her what galleries of pictures could not buy.

It was a good mile to the one story gambrel-roofed cottage where lived Captain Kittridge—the long, lean, brown man, with his good wife of the great leghorn bonnet, round black bead eyes, and psalm-book, whom we told you of at the funeral.

The Captain, too, had followed the sea in his early life, but being not, as he expressed it, "very rugged," in time changed his ship for a tight little cottage on the sea shore, and devoted himself to boat-building, which he found sufficiently lucrative to furnish his brown cottage with all that his wife's heart desired, besides extra money for nick-nacks when she chose to go up to Brunswick or over to Portland to shop.

The Captain himself was a welcome guest at all the firesides round, being a chatty body, and disposed to make the most of his foreign experiences, in which he took the usual advantages of a traveler. In fact, it was said, whether slanderously or not, that the Captain's yarns were spun to order; and as when pressed to relate his foreign adventures, he always responded with, "What would you like to hear?" it was thought that he fabricated his articles to suit his market. In short, there was no species of experience, fishy, finny, or aquatic—no legend of strange and unaccountable incident of fire or flood—no romance of foreign scenery and productions, to which his tongue was not competent, when he had once seated himself in a double bow-knot at a neighbor's evening fireside.

His good wife, a sharp-eyed, literal body, and a vigorous church-member, felt some concern of conscience on the score of these narrations; for, being their constant auditor, she, better than any one else, could perceive the variations and discrepancies of text which showed their mythical character, and oftentimes her black eyes would snap and her knitting-needles rattle with an admonitory vigor as he went on, and sometimes she would unmercifully come in at the end of a narrative with—

"Well, now, the Cap'n's told me at stories till he begins to believe 'em himself. I think." But works of fiction, as we all know, if only well gotten up, have always their advantages in the hearts of listeners over plain, homely truth, and so Captain Kittridge's yarns were marketable fire-side commodities still, despite the skepticism which attended them.

The afternoon sunbeams at this moment are painting the gambrel-roof with a golden brown. It is September again, as it was three years ago when our story commenced, and the sea and sky were purple and amethystine with its Italian haziness of atmosphere.

The brown house stands on a little knoll, about a hundred yards from the open ocean. Behind it rises a high ledge of rocks, where cedars and hemlocks made deep shadows into which the sun shot golden shafts of light, illuminating the scarlet feathers of osprey which threw themselves jauntily forth from the crevices—while down below, in deep, damp, mossy recesses, rose ferns which autumn had just begun to tinge with yellow and brown. The little knoll where the cottage stood had on its right hand a tiny bay, where the ocean water made up amid picturesque rocks—shaggy and solemn. Here trees of the primeval forest, grand and lowly, looked silently into the waters which ebbed and flowed daily into this little pool. Every variety of those beautiful evergreens which feather the coast of Maine, and dip their wings in the very spray of its ocean foam, found here a representative. There were aspiring black spruces, crowned on the very top with heavy coronets of cones; there were balsamic firs, whose young buds breathe the scent of strawberries; there were cedars, black as midnight clouds, and white pines with their swaying plumage of needle-like leaves, strewn the ground beneath with a golden, fragrant matting; and there were the gigantic, wide-winged hemlocks—hundreds of years old, and with long, swaying, gray beards of moss, looking white and ghostly under the deep shadows of their boughs. And beneath, creeping round trunk and matting over stones, were many and many of those wild, beautiful things which embellish the shadows of these northern forests. Long, feathery wreaths of what are called ground-pines, ran here and there in tufts of green, and the prince's pine raised its oriental feather, with a mimic cone on the top, as if it conceived itself to be a grown-up tree. Whole patches of patridge-berry were their evergreen matting, dotted plentifully with brilliant scarlet berries. Here and there, the rocks were covered with a curiously woven tapestry of moss, over-shot with the exquisite vine of the Linnaea borealis, which in early spring rings its two fairy bells on the end of every spray, while elsewhere the wrinkled leaves of the mayflower were themselves through and through deep beds of moss—meditating silently thoughts of the thousand little cups of pink shell which they had it in hand to make when the time of miracles should come round next spring.

Nothing, in short, could be more quaintly fresh, wild, and beautiful, than the surroundings of this little cove—where Captain Kittridge had thought fit to dedicate to his boat-building operations; where he had set up his saw-kettle between two great rocks above the highest tide-mark, and there at the present moment he had a

in her clean kitchen, very busily engaged in ripping up a silk dress which Miss Roxey had engaged to come and make into a new one; and, as she ripped, she cast now and then an eye at the face of a tall, black clock, whose solemn tick, tock, was the only sound that could be heard in the kitchen.

By her side, on a low stool, sat a vigorous, healthy girl of six years, whose employment evidently did not please her, for her well-marked black eyebrows were bent in a frown, and her large black eyes looked surlily and wrathful, and one versed in children's grievances could easily see what the matter was—she was turning a sheet! Perhaps, happy young female reader, you don't know what that is—most likely not; for in these degenerate days the strait and narrow ways of self-denial, formerly thought so wholesome for little feet, are quite grass-grown with neglect. Childhood now-a-days is unceasingly feted and caressed, the principal difficulty of the grown people seeming to be to discover what the little dears want—a thing not always clear to the little dears themselves. But in old times turning sheets was thought a most especial and wholesome discipline for young girls;—in the first place because it took off the hands of their betters a very uninteresting and monotonous labor; and in the second place because it was such a long, strait, unending turpitude, that the youthful traveler, once started thereupon, could go on indefinitely without requiring guidance and direction of their elders.

For these reasons, also, the task was held in special detestation by children, in direct proportion to their amount of life and their ingenuity and love of variety. A dull child took it tolerably well; but to a lively, energetic one, it was a perfect torture.

"I don't see the use of sewing up sheets one side, and ripping them up the other," at last said Sally—breaking the monotonous tick, tock of the clock by an observation which has probably occurred to every child in similar circumstances.

"Sally Kittridge, if you say another word about that ar sheet, I'll whip you," was the very explicit rejoinder; and there was a snap of Mrs. Kittridge's black eyes, that seemed to make it likely that she would keep her word. It was answered by another snap from the six-year-old eyes, as Sally comforted herself with thinking that when she was a woman she'd speak her mind out in pay for all this.

At this moment a burst of silvery child-laughter rang out, and there appeared in the doorway illuminated by the afternoon sunbeams, the vision of Miss Roxey's tall, black-robed fairy, hanging like a gay butterfly upon the tip of a thorn bush. Sally dropped the sheet and clapped her hands, unnoticed by her mother, who rose to pay her respects to the "cunning woman" of the neighborhood.

"Well now, Miss Roxey, I was 'mazin' afraid you weren't a-comin'." I'd just been in 'em got my silk ripped up, and didn't know how to get a step further without you."

"Well, I was finishin' up Cap'n Pennel's best pantaloons," said Miss Roxey; "and I've got 'em along so, Rucy can go on with 'em; and I told Miss Pennel I must come 'o you, if 'twas only for a day; and I fetched the little girl down, 'cause the little thing's so kind o' lonesome like. I thought Sally could play with her, and chirk her up a little."

"Well, Sally," said Mrs. Kittridge, "stick in your needle, fold up your sheet, put your thumb in your work-pocket, and then you may take the little Mara down to the cove to play; but be sure you don't let her go near the tar nor wet her shoes. D'y'e near?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Sally, who had sprung up in light and radiance like a translated creature at this unexpected turn of fortune, and performed the welcome order with a celerity which showed how agreeable they were, and then stooping and catching the little one in her arms, disappeared through the door, with the golden curls fluttering over her own crows-black head.

The fact was that Sally at that moment was as happy as human creature could be—with a keenness of happiness that children who have never been made to turn sheets of a bright afternoon can never realize.

The sun was yet an hour high, as she saw by a flash of her shrewd time-keeping eye; and she could bear her little prize down to the cove, and collect unknown quantities of gold and silver shells and starfish and salad-dish shells and white pebbles for her, besides quantities of well-cured shavings, brown and white, from the pile which constantly was falling under her father's joinder's bench, and with which she could make long extemporaneous tresses, so that they might play at being mermaids, like those that she had heard her father tell about in some of his sea-stories.

"Now rally, Sally, what you got there?" said Captain Kittridge, as he stood in his shirt-sleeves peering over his joinder's bench, to watch the little one whom Sally had dumped down into a nest of clean white shavings.

"Wal', wal', I should think you'd a-stolen the big doll I see in a shop-window the last time I was to Portland—so this is Penel's little girl—poor child."

"Yes, father, and we want some nice shavings."

"Stay a bit, I'll make ye a few a-purpose," said the old man, reaching his long, bony arm, with the greatest ease, to the further part of his bench, and bringing up a board, from which he proceeded to roll off shavings in fine satin rings, which perfectly delighted the heart of the children, and made them dance with glee—and truth to say, reader, there are coarser and homelier things in the world than a well-turned shaving.

"There, go now," he said, when both of them stood with both hands full: "go now and play—and mind you don't let the baby wet her feet, Sally—them shoes o' hers must have cost her five-and-sixpence at the very least."

That sunny hour before sundown seemed as long to Sally as the whole seam of the sheet—for childhood's joys are all pure gold—and as she ran up and down the white sands, shouting at every shell she found, or darted up into the overhanging forest for checker-berries and ground-pine, all the sorrows of the morning came no more into her remembrance.

The little Mara had one of those sensitive, excitable natures, on which every external influence acts with immediate power. Stimulated by the society of her energetic, buoyant little mother, she was now

gambled about the shore like a blue and gold-winged fly—while her bursts of laughter made the squirrels and blue jays look out inquisitively from their fastnesses in the old evergreens. Gradually the sunbeams faded from the pines, and the waves of the tide in the little cove came in, solemnly tinted with purple, flaked with orange and crimson, borne in from a great rippling sea of fire, into which the sun had just sunk.

"Mercy on us—them children!" said Miss Roxey.

"He's bringin' 'em along," said Mrs. Kittridge, as she looked out of the window and saw the tall, lank form of the Captain, with one child seated on either shoulder, and holding on by his head.

The two children were both in the highest state of excitement, but never was there a more marked contrast of nature. The one seemed a perfect type of well-developed childish health and animal vigor, good solid flesh and bones, with glowing skin, brilliant eyes, shining teeth, well-knit, supple limbs—vigorously and healthily beautiful; while the other appeared one of those aerial mixtures of cloud and fire, whose radiance seems scarcely earthly. A physiologist, looking at the child, would shake his head, seeing one of those perilsous organizations, all nerve and brain, "which come to life under the clear, stimulating skies of America, and, burning with the intensity of lighted phosphorus, waste themselves too early."

The little Mara seemed like a fairy sprite, possessed with a wild spirit of glee. She laughed and clapped her hands incessantly, and when set down on the kitchen floor spun round like a little elf; and that night it was late and long before her wide, watery eyes could be veiled in sleep.

"Company just sets this 'ere child crazy," said Miss Roxey; "it's just her lonely way of livin'—a pity Miss Pennel hadn't another child to keep company along with her."

"Miss Pennel oughter to be trainin' of her up to work," said Mrs. Kittridge—"Sally could overstep and hem when she want more'n three years old—nothin' straightens out children like work. Miss Pennel she just keeps that ar child to look at."

"All children a't alike, Miss Kittridge," said Miss Roxey sententiously. "This un' a't like your Sally. 'A hen and a bumble-bee can't be fetched up alike—fix it how you will!"

CHAPTER VI.

Zephaniah Pennel came back to his house in the evening, after Miss Roxey had taken the little Mara away. He looked for the flowery face and golden hair as he came toward his door, and put his hand in his vest-pocket, where he had deposited a small store of very choice shells and sea curiosities, thinking of the widening of those dark, soft eyes when he should present them.

"Where's Mara?" was the first inquiry after he crossed the threshold.

"Why, Roxey's been 'em taken her down to Cap'n Kittridge's to spend the night," said Miss Rucy. "Roxey's gone to help Miss Kittridge turn her spotted gray and black silk. We was talking this mornin' whether 'no would turn, 'cause I thought the spot was overshot, and wouldn't make up on the wrong side; but Roxey she says it's one of them ar Calcutty silks that has two sides to 'em, like the one you brought Miss Pennel—that we made up for her, you know," and Miss Rucy arose and gave a finishing snap to the Sunday pantaloons, which she had been let to "finish off"—which snap said as plainly as words could say, that there was a good job disposed of.

Zephaniah stood looking as helpless as animals of the male kind generally do when appealed to with such prolixity on feminine details—in reply to it all only asked meekly.

"Where's Mary?"

"Miss Pennel? Why she's up chamber—she'll be down 'n minute, she said; she thought she'd have time afore supper to get to the bottom of the big chest, and see if that 'ere vest-pattern a't there—and them sticks o' twist for the button-holes—'cause Roxey she says she never sees nothin' so rotten as that 'ere twist we've been a-workin' with, that Miss Pennel got over to Portland; it's a clear cheat, and Miss Pennel she give more'n half a cent a stick more for 't than what Roxey got for her up to Brunswick—so you see these 'ere Portland stores charge up, and their things wa'n't lookin' after."

Here Mrs. Pennel entering the room, "the Captain" addressed her eagerly:

"How came you to let Aunt Roxey take Mara off so far, and be gone so long?"

"Why, law me, Cap'n Pennel, the little thing seems kind o' lonesome. Childen want chum; Miss Roxey says she's altogether too sort o' still and old-fashioned, and must have child's company to chirk her up, and so she took her down to play with Sally Kittridge; there's no manner of danger or harm in it, and she'll be back to-morrow afternoon, and Mara will have a real good time."

"Wal' now, really," said the good man, "but it's 'mazin' lonesome!"

"Cap'n Pennel, you're gettin' to make an idol of that 'ere child," said Miss Rucy; "we have to watch our hearts. It mends me of the hymn,

"The fondness of a creature's love,
How strong it strikes the sense—
Thicker the warm affections move,
Nor can we call them thence."

Miss Rucy's mode of getting off poetry, in a sort of high-pitched canter with a strong thump on every accented syllable, might have provoked a smile in more sophisticated society, but Zephaniah listened to her with deep gravity and answered,

"I'm 'fraid there's truth in what you say, Aunt Rucy. When her mother was called away, I thought that was a warning I never should forget—but now I seem to be like Jonah, I'm restin' in the shadow of my mound—and my heart is glad because of it. I kind o' trembled at the prayer-meetin' when we was a-singin',

"The dearest idol I have known,
What'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee."

"Yes," said Miss Rucy, "Roxey says of the Lord should take us up short on our prayers, it would make sad work with us sometimes."

"Somehow," said Mrs. Pennel, "it seems to me just her mother over again. She don't look like her. I think her hair and complexion comes from the Borden blood; my mother had that sort o' hair and skin—but then she was like Nani, and I think it's the Lord's hand and kind

Mrs. Pennel had one of those natures—gentle, trustful, and hopeful, because not very deep; she was one of the little children of the world whose faith rests on childlike ignorance, and who know not the deeper needs of deeper natures; such see only the sunshine and forget the storm.

This conversation had been going on to the accompaniment of a clatter of plates and spoons and dishes, and the fizzling of sausages, prefacing the evening meal, to which all now sat down after a lengthened grace from Zephaniah.

"There's a tremendous gale a-brewin'," he said as they sat at table. "I noticed the clouds to-night as I was comin' home, and somehow I feel kind o' as if I wanted all our folks snug indoors."

"Why, law husband, Cap'n Kittridge's house is as good as ours if it does blow. You never can seem to remember that houses don't run around or strike on rocks in storms."

"The Cap'n puts me in mind of old Cap'n Judith Scranton," said Miss Rucy, "that built that queer house down by Middle Bay. The Cap'n he would insist on havin' 'on't just like a ship, and the closet-shelves had holes for the tumbler and dishes, and he had all his tables and chairs batted down, and so when it came a gale they say the old Cap'n used to sit in his chair and hold on to the wind blow."

"Well, I tell you," said Captain Pennel, "those that has followed the seas, hears the wind with different ears from lands-people. When you lie with only a plank between you and eternity, and hear the voice of the Lord on the waters, it don't sound as it does on shore."

And in truth, as they were speaking a fitful gust swept past the house, waiving and screaming and rattling the windows, and after it came the heavy hollow moan of the surf on the beach, like the wild angry howl of some savage animal just beginning to be lashed into fury.

"Sure enough the wind is risin'," said Miss Rucy, getting up from the table and flattening her snub nose against the window-pane. "Dear me, how dark it is!—Mercy on us, how the waves comes in!—all of a sheet of foam. I pity the ships that's comin' on coast such a night."

The storm seemed to have burst out with a sudden fury, as if myriads of howling demons had all at once been loosed in the air. Now they piped and whistled with eldritch screech round the corners of the house—now they thundered down the chimney—now they shook the door and rattled the casement—and anon mustering their forces with wild ad, seemed to career over the house and sail high up into the murky air. The dash of the rising tide came with successive crash upon crash like the discharge of heavy artillery—seeming to shake the very house, and the spray borne by the wind dashed whizzing against the window-panes.

Zephaniah, rising from supper, drew up the little stand that had the family Bible on it, and the three old time-worn people sat themselves as seriously down to evening worship as if they had been an extensive congregation. They raised the old psalm tune which our fathers called Complaint, and the cracked wavering voices of the women, with the deep rough bass of the old sea-captain, rose in the uproar of the storm with a ghostly strange wildness, like the scream of the curlew or the wailing of the wind:

"Spare us, O Lord, aloud we pray,
Nor let our sun go down at noon:
Thy rays are an eternal day,
And must Thy children die so soon?"

Miss Rucy valued herself on singing a certain weird and exalted part which in ancient days used to be called counter, and which wailed and grated in unimaginable heights of the scale, much as you may hear a shrill fine-voiced wind over a chimney-top—but altogether, the deep and earnest gravity with which the three filled up the pauses of the storm with their quaint minor key, had something singularly impressive. When the singing was over, Zephaniah read to the accompaniment of wind and sea the words of poetry made on old Hebrew shores, in the dim gray dawn of the world:

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters; the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; the Lord sitteth upon the floods, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto his people, yea, the Lord will bless his people with peace."

How natural and home-born sounded this old piece of oriental poetry in the ears of the three. The wilderness of Kadesh, with its great cedars, was doubtless Orr's Island, where even now the goodly fellowship of black-winged trees were groaning and swaying and cracking as the breath of the Lord passed over them.

And the three old people kneeling by their smoldering fireside, amid the general uproar, Zephaniah began in the words of the prayer which Moses the man of God made long ago under the shadows of Egyptian pyramids—"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

We hear sometimes in these days that the Bible is no more inspired of God than many other books of historic and poetic merit. It is a fact, however, that the Bible answers a strange and wholly exceptional purpose by thousands of firesides on all shores of the earth; and till some other book can be found to do the same thing, it will not be surprising if a belief of its Divine origin be one of the ineffaceable ideas of the popular mind.

It will be a long while before a translation from Homer, or a chapter in the Koran, or any of the beauties of Shakespeare will be read in a stormy night on Orr's Island with the same sense of a Divine presence as the Psalms of David, or the prayer of Moses, the man of God.

Boom! boom! "What's that?" said Zephaniah, starting as they rose up from prayer. "Hark! again, that's a gun—there's a ship in distress."

"Poor souls," said Miss Rucy, "it's an awful night!"

The Captain began to put on his coat.

"I must go out along the beach a spell, and see if I can hear any more of that ship."

"Mercy on us, the wind'll blow you over," said Aunt Rucy.

"I rather think I've stood wind before in my day," said Zephaniah, a grin

tionship to the storm, as if it were in some manner a family connection—a wild roistering cousin, who drew him out by a rough attraction of comradeship.

"Well, at any rate," said Mrs. Pennel, producing a large tin lantern perforated with many holes, in which she placed a tallow candle, "take this with you, and don't stay out long."

The kitchen door opened, and the first gust of wind took off the old man's hat and nearly blew him prostrate. He came back and shut the door. "I ought to have known better," he said, knotting his pocket-handkerchief over his head, after which he waited for a momentary lull, and went out into the storm.

Miss Rucy looked through the window-pane, and saw the light go twinkling far down into the gloom, and ever and anon came the mournful boom of distant guns.

"Certainly there is a ship in trouble somewhere," she said.

"He never can be easy when he hears these guns," said Mrs. Pennel; "but what can he do, or anybody, in such a storm—the wind blowing right on to shore?"

"I shouldn't wonder if Cap'n Kittridge should be out on the beach too," said Miss Rucy; "but laws he a't much more than one of these 'ere old grass-hoppers you see after frost comes. Well, any way, there a't much help in man if a ship comes ashore in such a gale as this, such a dark night, too."

"It's kind o' lonesome to have poor little Mara away such a night as this is," said Mrs. Pennel; "but who would a-thought it this afternoon, when Aunt Roxey took her?"

"I member my grandmother had a silver cream-pitcher that came ashore in a storm one Maro Pint," said Miss Roxey, as she sat trotting knitting-needles. Grandmother found it half full of sand under a knot of sea-weed, way up on the beach. It had a coat of arms on it—might have belonged to some grand family, that pitcher is in the Toothache family yet."

"I remember when I was a girl," said Mrs. Pennel, "seeing the hull of a ship that went ashore on Eagle Island—it run way up in a sort of gulch between two rocks, and lay there years. They split pieces off it sometimes to make fires when they wanted to make a chowder down on the beach."

"My Aunt, Lois Toothache, that lives down by Middle Bay," said Miss Rucy, "used to tell about a dreadful blow they had once in time of the equinoctial storm—and what was remarkable, she insisted that she heard a baby crying out in the storm—she heard it just as plain as could be."

"Laws a-mercy," said Mrs. Pennel, nervously, "it was nothing but the wind; it always screeches like a child crying, or maybe it was the seals; seals will cry just like babies."

"So they told her—but no; she insisted she knew the difference—it was a baby. Well, what do you think, when the storm cleared off, they found a baby's cradle washed ashore sure enough!"

"But they didn't find any baby," said Miss Pennel nervously.

"No, they searched the beach far and near, and that cradle was all they found. Aunt Lois took it in—it was a very good cradle, and she took it to use, but every time there came up a gale, that ar cradle would rock, just as if somebody was a-sittin' by it; and you could stand across the room and see there wa'n't nobody there."

"You make me all of a shiver," said Mrs. Pennel.

This of course was just what Miss Rucy intended, and she went on—

"Wal', you see they kind o' got used to it—they found there wa'n't no harm come of its rockin', and so they didn't mind; but Aunt Lois had a sister Cerinthy that was a weekly girl, and had 'the janders.' Cerinthy was one of the sort that's born with vails over their faces, and can see spirits;—and one time Cerinthy was a-visitin' Lois after her second baby was born, and there came up a blow, and Cerinthy comes out of the keepin'-room, where the cradle was a-standin', and says,