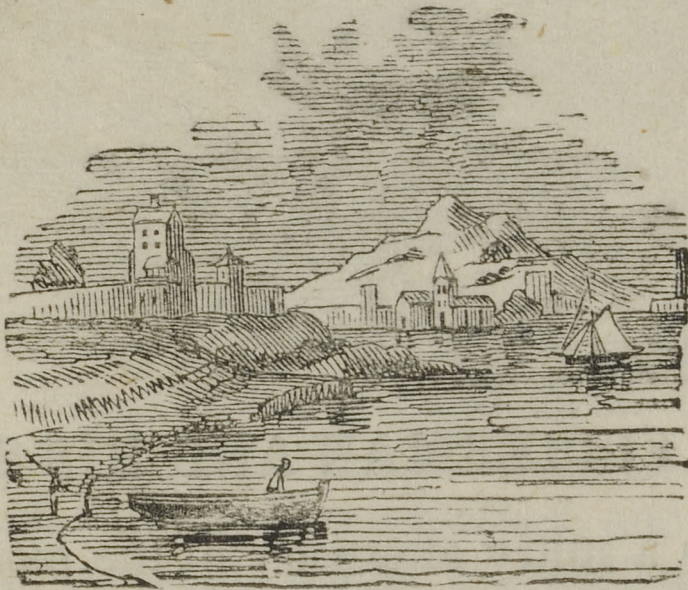


DEAN'S
Illustrated Farthing Books.

**THE FISHERMAN
AND HIS SON.**



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THE FISHERMAN AND HIS SON.

IT was a sultry afternoon in the month of August, that Peter Hampton, a poor but worthy fisherman, and his little son, Davie, a lad of some nine summers, wearily plodded their way across a sandy waste. Davie's cheeks were flushed with heat;

the big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow ; and his soft flaxen curls were much displaced. The tract of country over which they passed was not entirely barren ; here and there might be seen a little herbage, or a few scraggy bushes ; but even these were parched by the heat, for it was long since these crisped leaves and blades of grass had tasted a refreshing shower.

Little Davie had accompanied his father on a fishing excursion, having left their humble cottage early on the morning of the previous day, full of hope. But for some reason or other, Peter, though a fisherman by trade, was not sufficiently on his guard in time for the tide, and so the little boat was carried out upon the then unfriendly waters. The great waves dashed it about like a feather, and seemed every moment ready to swallow it up. But the poor man's prayer was heard ; and " He who holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand," and ruleth the fierce winds, suffered them not to overwhelm them. But after tossing to and fro, during

that long night, on the restless bosom of troubled ocean, the little boat drifted to shore, many miles from their own native beach.



What could they do? what could poor Davie do? for they were far from any habitation, and their supply of provisions was indeed discouragingly small. Such questions as these were continually rising in Davie's mind. To which the father replied, "My son, God, who rescued us from a watery grave, will protect us still."

"But come! we must not waste our time in lamenting our fate, but try and make the best of it; this is no resting-place—far from our home."

And thus they started to wind their way, over sandy waste and rugged mountains, to their humble dwelling, as dear to them as a palace, nothing daunted by intervening distance. Little Davie, after the terrors of the night at sea, greatly rejoiced to set his feet on solid earth again, and was very willing to set out homeward on foot. For a time he ran along joyously, and even endeavoured to urge his father to a more rapid movement. But by-and-by their course lay through a more desolate region; the sun rose higher, and the heat waxed more and more intense, and scarce a breeze disturbed the sultry air. No water could be found to cool their parched lips; no inviting shade-trees greeted their eyes, or extended their friendly arms to shelter them from the oppressive heat. On, on they must go. Little Davie's energies were severely taxed. He grew faint, and his courage beginning to fail, and hope to die out, he exclaimed:

“Pa, shall we *never* pass this dreary waste?”

“Yes, my son,” said Peter, “I trust

we shall. God will give us the necessary strength."

"Why, then, don't God make a spring here for us to drink out of, like he did for the Jews, when they were in the wilderness?"

"That was a miracle, my son; God's ways are not as our ways; but he knows what is best."

"But, Pa, I feel so weak; my head aches so; I never felt such pain—do let us rest."

"Not here, my child; if we sit down here, the heat would make your head ache worse, and then may be we couldn't get on at all."

"Oh! if I just had a little drink—a teaspoonful—I could do. My tongue seems so big, I can hardly talk."

"Keep courage, my boy, a little longer. Look yonder; can you see anything?" pointing considerably ahead.

"I think I see some trees, but my eyes are so sore I can hardly see."

"You are right, Davie, as to the trees; and if I mistake not, we shall find water there. Come, cheer up, my brave boy."

For a distance they trudged along in silence, Davie carefully keeping his eye in the direction of the trees, where he hoped to quench his burning thirst; but he again became disheartened, because the distance did not seem to grow much less, and cried out most piteously :

“ Oh ! Father, do let me lie down, or sit down, or something ; I feel as if I would fall down ; I can't go any further,”

“ We must not stop here,” said the father, endeavouring to encourage poor Davie. “ A little more effort. This is not the resting-place yet. See, we soon shall reach yonder wide spreading trees ; put your hand in mine ; I can help you along. Think of poor Mother and Hettie ; how they'll long for us, and how they'll embrace us when we get home again.”

At last, they reached the refreshing shade. Poor Davy was so exhausted, that he fell down just as they reached it, but was revived by water which his father carried in his hat to him. There they spent the night. Then, after breakfasting on such palatable vegetables as could be

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found, they pursued their journey with renewed energy. Their way was no longer barren, though it was sometimes rough, and even thorny. Yet they took no longer account of the occasional pricking of thorns. They no longer suffered from heat and thirst, and the prospect of reaching home in safety cheered them, as each step brought that loved spot nearer. And just as the evening shadows were slowly climbing the mountain, they reached the cottage door, and the fond embraces which they received, showed how much they were beloved. That night, from the little family altar, a sincere thanksgiving was offered up to God for his manifold favours to the children of men.

