



THE  
LIGHTHOUSE  
KEEPER'S  
DAUGHTER.

RELIGIOUS TRACT  
SOCIETY:  
56, PATERNOSTER ROW;  
164, PICCADILLY.

New Short Stories.—11.

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THE  
Lighthouse-Keeper's Daughter.  
A TRUE STORY



A LIGHTHOUSE is a high tower, or building, the upper part of which is called "the lantern," where lamps are lit at night. The light of these lamps shines all night, to

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guide ships on their way, and to show where danger lies. The lighthouse seems to say, "Take care, sailors, for rocks and sands are here. Keep a good look out, and mind how you sail, or you will be lost."

Two or three persons live in the lighthouse to attend to the lamps. We will now look into one of these buildings on the coast of Cornwall.

Little Mary was in the lighthouse alone. The night was coming on, and a storm was rising on the sea. She heard the waves dash against the rocks, and the wind moan round the tower.

Mary's father had trimmed the lamps, and they were ready for lighting when the evening came on. But as he wanted to buy some food, he crossed the "causey," which leads to the land. This causey was a pathway over the rocks and sands, which could only be passed for two or three hours in the day; at other times the waters rose and covered it. The father intended to hasten home before it was dark, and before the tide flowed over this path to the shore.

But where was Mary's mother? She had been dead for two or three years. She was a pious woman, and often sat in the

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lonely lighthouse with her little girl, teaching her to read from a large old Bible. Then she used to tell her of Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, and how he came into the world, and died on the cross to save sinners, and how he invites the young to come to him, that they may be happy.

Well, as we have said, the father of Mary had gone on shore. He had told Mary not to be afraid, for that he would soon return. But there were some rough-looking men behind a rock, who were watching Mary's father, and seemed glad as they saw him go to the land. Who were they?

These men were *wreckers*. They waited about the coast, and if a vessel was driven by a storm on the rocks, they rushed down—not to help the poor sailors—but to rob and illtreat them, and to plunder the ship.

The wicked men knew that there was only a little girl left in the lighthouse; and they had a plan to keep her father on the shore all the night. Some ships, filled with rich goods, were expected to pass before the morning; and they thought that, should the lamps in the lighthouse not be lit, these vessels would run upon the rocks

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and be wrecked, and then the goods would be their spoil.

How cruel and wicked these men must have been to seek the ruin and death of the poor sailors! But we see how true it is what the Bible says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"\*

Mary's father had filled his basket with bread and other things, and had prepared to return; for it would soon be time to light the lamps. As he drew nigh to the road leading to the causey, the wreckers rushed from their hiding-place, and threw him on the ground. They quickly bound his hands and feet with ropes, and carried him into a shed, there to lie till the morning. It was in vain that he cried to them to be set free; they only mocked his distress. They then left him to the charge of two men, while they ran back to the shore.

"Oh, my sweet little Mary! what will you do?" cried the father, as he lay in the shed; "there will be no one to light the lamps: many ships may be wrecked, and hundreds of sailors may be lost."

Mary looked from a narrow window in

\* Jeremiah xvii. 9.

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the lighthouse towards the shore, thinking it was time for her father to come back. The clock in the little room had just struck six; and she knew that the waters would soon rise up to the causey.

An hour passed; the clock struck seven, and Mary still looked towards the beach; but no father was to be seen. By the time it was eight, the tide was nearly over the pathway; only bits of rock here and there were above the waters, and they too were soon covered over. "Oh, father, make haste," cried Mary aloud, as though her father could hear her: "have you forgotten your little girl?" But the only answer was the noise of the waters as they rose higher and higher, and the roar of the wind as it gave notice of the coming storm.

Now Mary sat down and wept. Surely there would be no lights that night, and many a vessel would be cast ashore.

While Mary wept, she thought of what her dear mother used to say, that we should look to Jesus in every time of need. And in a corner of the room she knelt and prayed for help: "O Lord, show me what to do, and bless my dear father, and bring him home safe."

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The water was now some feet above the causey. The sun had set for more than an hour. As the moon rose in the sky, black storm-clouds soon covered her from sight, and then not a star was seen. The wreckers walked along the shore, looking for some ship to strike on the coast. These men hoped that the sailors, not seeing the lights, would think that they were not near the coast, and would be dashed on the rocks.

Just at this moment the thought came into Mary's mind that she would try to light the lamps. But what could a little girl do? The lamps were far above her reach. She, however, got a few matches, and made a light. The next thing was to carry a set of steps to the spot, and attempt to reach the lamps. But after much labour, she found they were still above her head. A small table was next brought from below, and Mary put the steps upon it, and mounted to the top with hope and joy, for now she was almost sure that she could light the lamps. But no; though she stood on tiptoe, they were even yet a little higher than she could reach. "If I had a stick," she said, "I would tie a match to it, and then I could set light



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to the wicks." Yet no stick, nor anything of the kind, was to be found.

The storm now became quite fearful. The sailors looked along the coast for the lights. Where could they be? Had they brought their ships in a wrong direction? They were at a loss to tell, and knew not which way to steer.

All this time Mary's father was praying in the shed, that God would take care of his child in the dark and lonely lighthouse.

Poor Mary was about to sit down again, and weep, when she thought of the large old Bible in the room below. But how could she tread on that book? It was God's holy word, which her mother loved so much to read. "Yet it is to save life," said she; "and if mother were here, would she not allow me to take it?" Mary did not scorn her mother's Bible: its very covers were precious in her sight.

In a minute the large book was brought and placed under the steps, and up she got again. Yes; she was just high enough: then she touched one wick, and another, and another, till the rays of the lamps shone brightly far over the dark waters.

The father saw the light as he lay in the

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shed, and thanked God who had sent help—though he knew not how—in the hour of danger. The sailors beheld the light, and steered their ships away from the rocks, and were safe. And the wreckers too saw the light, and were full of rage that their cruel plot had wholly failed.

All that stormy night the lamps cast their rays over the foaming sea; and when the morning came, the wreckers let the father loose from the shed. The water was again down from the causey, and he was soon in the lighthouse, there to learn from his little girl the way in which God had helped her in the hour of her trial. Brave little Mary! may we not hope that the blessed Bible was “a light unto her feet and a lamp unto her path” all through her life, and that it guided her to heaven, there to meet her dear mother to part no more?

Young reader: Have you the light of life? Has the Holy Spirit led you to believe in Jesus as your Saviour? If so, let your light shine—let it be seen in a holy temper and conduct. And while the wicked try to put out the true light of God's truth, do you strive to set it up in the world, that men may see it and be saved.

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