

It could only have been by the exertion of muscular power as well as determined courage that the father and daughter carried the boat to the rock. And when there a danger, greater even than that which they had encountered in approaching it, arose from the difficulty of steady-ing the boat and preventing its being destroyed on those sharp ridges by the ever-restless chafing and heaving of the billows.

The father and daughter could see the eager faces turned toward them, and the sight redoubled their efforts in reaching the rock, and in the task of disembarking and drawing the boat up the rock and out of reach of the waves. It was a perilous landing-place. But when the craft was secured the father and Grace approached the half-dead group.

All were safe except the two children. Their mother was seemingly dead, also, and lay clasping the bodies in her arms. But care and attention revived her. A fireman who had lain for three hours on the rock where he had been tossed, had clung to a strong nail spiked in the rock, and though lashed and beaten by the waves, and tortured by bleeding hands, he had not let go.

The rescuers placed the survivors one by one in the boat. But the return journey was even more perilous than that which took them to the wreck, although the sailors aided at the oars. Longstone, however, was at last reached and the sufferers housed in the lighthouse.

They were in safety, but the violence of the sea forbade any attempt to reach the mainland. There were good accommodations at the light. The tower was ingeniously built, and besides a well-furnished sitting-room, in which was a capital collection of books, had

three or four comfortable bedrooms. In addition there was an abundance of wholesome, homely fare.

The poor woman who had lost her children was suffering intensely, and to her Grace gave up her bed, sleeping upon a table. A boat's crew from Northumberland which after some hours came in search of the *Forfarshire*, also had to claim the hospitality of the lighthouse, and for three days were held by the raging seas. Finally, the passage to the mainland was undertaken in safety, and the news reached the keeper's family that the boat first launched had been picked up and its nine passengers rescued. Of the sixty-three who had sailed from Hull five days before, nineteen were alive.

Within a few days search was made for the missing bodies, but almost in vain. The cargo of the steamer, which was of unusual value was wholly lost. The wreck, consisting of the engine, paddle-wheels, anchor, foremast and rigging, remained upon the rock and was visited by thousands.

Report of Grace Darling's heroic deed was soon spread throughout England. It was a simple, humane action and such actions are doing among us all the time. But the courage in facing the elemental rage of the sea, and the helpful sympathy with the unfortunate which it made evident, appealed to the popular heart, and Grace became a people's heroine. Public subscriptions were at once set on foot to express by a splendid gift the universal sense of her deserts. Many smaller tokens also came to her. Among them was a silver medal which read:

Presented by the Glasgow Humane Society to Miss Grace Horsley Darling, in admiration of her dauntless and heroic conduct in saving (along with her father) the lives of nine persons from the wreck of the *Forfarshire* steamer, 7th September, 1838

So great was popular report and admiration for the heroine that the manager of a theatre broached to her the plan of representing the rescue, in part at least, upon his stage, and offered her a considerable sum for sitting in the boat for the audience to view. Her portrait was taken and sold everywhere. She was generally flattered and caressed.

It was now that we find the true balance and strength in Grace's character. The testimonials she received with quiet pleasure. But she preferred to remain upon the solitary island under the light, and aid her mother in her simple household work.

She was glad to have saved lives at the risk of her own, she said, and would most willingly do it again if opportunity should occur. But she could not feel that she had done anything great, and certainly she did not wish for the praise that had been bestowed upon her. As for going to the theatre to receive the plaudits of a curious crowd, that was the last thing she desired.

Of Grace at this time the pleasing English writer, William Howitt, gives this account. He paid a visit to Longstone and met the heroine:

"When I went she was not visible, and I was afraid I should not see her, as her father said she very much disliked meeting strangers that she thought came to stare at her; but when the old man and I had had a little conversation he went up to her room, and soon came down with a smile, saying that she would be with us soon. So when we had been up to the top lighthouse, and had seen its machinery, and taken a good look-out at the distant shore, and Darling had pointed out the spot of the wreck, and the way they took the people off, we went **down** and found Grace sitting at her sewing, very neatly

but very simply dressed in a plain sort of striped print gown, with her watch-seal just seen at her side and her hair neatly braided—just, in fact, as such girls are dressed, only not quite so smart as they often are. She rose, very modestly, and with a pleasant smile said 'How do you do, sir?'

"Her figure is by no means striking—quite the contrary; but her face it full of sense, modesty and genuine goodness; and that is just the character she bears. Her prudence delights one. We are charmed that she should so well have supported the brilliancy of her humane deeds. It is confirmative of the notion that such actions must spring from genuine heart and mind."

She had the sweetest smile, continued Mr. Howitt, that he had ever seen in a person of her station and appearance. "You see that she is a thoroughly good creature, and that under her modest exterior lies a spirit capable of the most exalted devotion, a devotion so entire that daring is not so much a quality of her nature, as that the most perfect sympathy with suffering or endangered humanity swallows up and annihilates everything like fear or self-consideration, puts out, in fact, every sentiment but itself."

As we read above Grace was slight of frame, and not markedly robust. Barely three years after the wreck at which her pity and heroism had won her world-wide fame, she showed evidences of decline. Toward the close of 1841 she was taken from Longstone and placed under the care of a doctor in Bamborough. Not gaining in strength she begged to be moved to Wooler, a small market town on the border of Northumberland, where the scenery is of the Cheviot Hills — of sunny heights and wooded glens. But even here the clear bracing air

had little help for her illness, and after meeting her father and considering her failing strength, with his advice she returned to Bamborough. Her eldest sister nursed her with devotion, but it was evident her life was fading.

Throughout her illness she never murmured and never complained, we are told, and shortly before her death she expressed a wish to see as many of her relations as the peculiar nature of their employment would admit, and with surprising fortitude and self-command she delivered to each one of them some token of remembrance. This done she calmly awaited the approach of death; and finally, on October 20, 1842, resigned her spirit without a murmur.

Two stones have been raised to her memory, one in the Bamborough churchyard, her figure lying at length; and another in the chapel of St. Cuthbert, on one of the Farne Islands, and bearing this memorial:

TO THE MEMORY OF
GRACE HORSLEY DARLING
A NATIVE OF BAMBOROUGH AND AN INHABITANT
OF THESE ISLANDS
WHO DIED OCTOBER 20TH, 1842,
AGED 26 YEARS.

But the best memorial of a heroine is the inspiration her example offers to her own generation and those that succeed her, the love her deeds engender in other hearts, the enlarging and uplifting of our kind through her endeavour. And so it is that the heroine of Farne Islands has become a lovely memory to us, and to those who shall come after us.