rising, bowed with dignity to her judges and, smiling, said:

"I thank you, gentlemen, for thinking me worthy of sharing the fate of the great men whom you have assassinated. I shall endeavour to imitate their firmness on the scaffold."

With the buoyant step of a child, and with a rapidity which almost betokened joy, she passed beneath the narrow portal, and descended to her cell, from which she was to be led, with the morning light, to death. The prisoners had assembled to greet her on her return, and anxiously gathered round her. She looked upon them with a smile of perfect tranquillity, and, drawing her hand across her neck, made a sign expressive of her doom.

The morning of the 8th of November, 1793, dawned gloomily upon Paris. It was one of the darkest days of that reign of terror which, for so long a period, enveloped France in its sombre shades. The ponderous gates of the courtyard of the Conciergerie opened that morning to a long procession of carts loaded with victims for the guillotine. Madame Roland had contemplated her fate too long, and had disciplined her spirit too severely, to fail of fortitude in this last hour of trial. She came from her cell scrupulously attired. A serene smile was upon her cheeks, and the glow of joyous animation lighted up her features as she waved an adieu to the weeping prisoners who gathered round her. The last cart was assigned to Madame Roland. She entered it with a step as light and elastic as if it were a carriage for a morning's drive. By her side stood an infirm old man, M. La Marche. He was pale and trembling, and his fainting heart, in view of the approaching terror, almost ceased to beat. She sustained him by her arm

and addressed to him words of consolation and encouragement, in cheerful accents and with a benignant smile. She stood firmly in the cart, looking with a serene eye upon the crowds which lined the streets, and listening to the clamour which filled the air. A crowd surrounded the cart shouting:

"To the guillotine! to the guillotine!"

She looked kindly upon them, and bending over the railing of the cart, said to them in tones as placid as if she were addressing her own child:

"My friends, I *am* going to the guillotine. In a few moments I shall be there. They who send me thither will ere long follow me. I go innocent. They will come stained with blood. You who now applaud our execution will then applaud theirs with equal zeal."

The long procession arrived at the guillotine, and the bloody work began. The victims were dragged from the carts, and the axe rose and fell with unceasing rapidity. Head after head fell into the basket. The executioners approached the cart where Madame Roland stood by the side of her fainting companion. With an animated countenance and a cheerful smile, she was endeavouring to infuse fortitude into his soul. The executioner grasped her by the arm.

"Stay," said she, slightly resisting his grasp; "I have one favour to ask, and that is not for myself. I beseech you grant it me." Then turning to the old man she said: "Do you precede me to the scaffold. To see my blood flow would make you suffer the bitterness of death twice over. I must spare you the pain of witnessing my execution."

The stern officer gave a surly refusal, replying: "My orders are to take you first."

With that winning smile and that fascinating grace which were almost resistless, she rejoined: "You cannot, surely, refuse a woman her last request."

The hard-hearted executor of the law was brought within the influence of her enchantment. He paused, looked at her for a moment in bewilderment, and yielded. The poor old man, more dead than alive, was conducted upon the scaffold and placed beneath the fatal axe. Madame Roland, without the slightest change of colour, or the apparent tremor of a nerve, saw the ponderous instrument, with its glittering edge, glide upon its deadly mission, and the decapitated trunk of her friend was thrown aside to give place for her. With a placid countenance and a buoyant step she ascended the steps. She stood for a moment upon the platform, looked calmly around upon the vast concourse, and then bowing before a clay statue of Liberty near by exclaimed: "O Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name." She surrendered herself to the executioner, and was bound to the plank. The plank fell to its horizontal position, bringing her head under the fatal axe. The glittering steel glided through the groove, and the head of Madame Roland was severed from her body.

The grief of M. Roland, when apprised of the event, was unbounded. For a time he entirely lost his senses. Life to him was no longer endurable. Privately he left by night, the kind friends who had concealed him for six months, and wandered to such a distance from his asylum as to secure his protectors from any danger on his account. Through the long hours of the winter's night he continued his dreary walk, till the first gray of the morning appeared. Drawing a long stiletto from the inside of his walking-stick, he placed the head of it

against the trunk of a tree, and threw himself upon the sharp weapon. The point pierced his heart and he fell lifeless upon the frozen ground. Some peasants pass¬ing by discovered his body. A piece of paper was pinned to the breast of his coat, upon which there were written these words:

> Whoever thou art that findest these remains, respect them as those of a virtuous man. After hearing of my wife's death, I would not stay another day in a world so stained with crime.

The daughter of Madame Roland succeeded in escap-ing the fury of the tyrants of the Revolution. She lived surrounded by kind protectors, and in subsequent years was married to M. Champeneaux, the son of one of her mother's intimate friends.

XI

GRACE DARLING

GRACE DARLING was born on the 24th of November, 1815, at a small town upon the northeastern coast of England. She was the seventh child of her parents. Her grandfather, Robert Darling, had been keeper of the coal-light on the outmost of the Farne Islands, and her father, William, succeeded him in that post. In 1826, however, when Grace was eleven years old, William Darling took his family to Longstone, another island of the same group.

These Farne Islands are about twenty-five in number at low tide, and, as a visitor has pointed out, are desolate to an uncommon degree, although they are at no great distance from the Northumberland coast. The sea rushes with great force through the channels between the islands. Longstone, upon which Grace dwelt was, says another visitor, of dark whinstone, cracked in every direction and worn with the action of winds, waves and tempests, since the world began. Over the greater part of it was not a blade of grass nor a grain of earth; it was hard and iron-like stone, crusted round all the coast as far as high water-mark with limpet and still smaller shells. We ascended wrinkled hills of black stone, and descended into worn and dismal dells of the same, into some of which, where the tide got entrance, it came pouring and roaring in raging whiteness, and churning the

loose fragments of whinstone into round pebbles, and piling them up in deep crevices, with seaweed. Over our heads screamed hundreds of hovering birds, the gull mingling its hideous laughter most wildly.

Fancy a lone lighthouse standing upon this pile of stone, dropped seemingly, in the midst of the water, five miles from the mainland. The sea tosses, and swells, and beats the rocks unceasingly. In fine weather it is blue and more kindly; in storms the waters are black and furious and fearful. It was known as a most desolate and dangerous lighthouse, and its service could be only a man and family of courage, endurance, large human feeling and strong sense of duty.

In such an abode grew the little girl, almost alone so far as school friends go. Her father taught her to read and write together with the seven of her brothers and sisters, and their schoolroom was the lantern of the lighthouse. Her instructors were in other ways the sky and the breaking surf; her comrades the sea birds and the simple shell fish and floating grasses of the salt water and all the strange and curious growths the sea brings wherever it is free.

Like her brothers and sisters, Grace was schooled after the simpler fashion. But when such days were passed she kept to her home rather than go out into the world or marry. The lighthouse sheltered a united and happy family. Grace loved the seclusion of that life and assisted her mother with the work of the household. Others of the daughters had gone to homes of their own upon the mainland.

If our surroundings help to form our characters, here in this lighthouse Grace must have grown into a strong self-control and a spirit of helpfulness toward hapless

people and those wrecks upon the Farne Islands, of which many a legend has been told.

About thirty years before she was born a fine merchantman from America had struck the ledges near the lighthouse, and it is said that to the recital of this shipwreck, of how the brave sailors fought for life and how one by one they fell or were swept into the fierce waters, the little girl would listen weeping, and then go pitifully to her bed. This tale, and the story of other sea mishaps, had a special attraction for the child, and the strength of her interest and compassion for the shipwrecked were noticed by her family as they sat round the family table of an evening, knitting, talking of the sea and watching the bright beacon above.

So it was that Grace Darling grew to womanhood. She was twenty-two years old when the disaster came that made evident what sort of a girl had come to woman's years upon the solitary island.

In the fall of the year, 1838, one fifth of September, a steamer, called the *Forfarshire,* a vessel of small size, but laden with a considerable cargo, sailed for Dundee, Scotland, from the port of Hull, England. There were forty-one passengers and twenty-two of the crew — sixty-three in all. The ship was but two years old, but her boilers were in bad order, although they had had some overhauling before she cleared her port.

She sailed in the early evening and for a part of her way seemed to be steaming safely. But as the vessel neared Flamborough Head the captain and crew became disturbed by many anxieties. Word passed from mouth to mouth among the passengers that the leak of the boiler was growing rapidly and the firemen could with difficulty keep up the fires. So much did this delay the

passage of the steamer that toward the evening of the following day she had only made the channel between the coast and the Farne Islands. The wind was blowing from the north. It is reported that the engines became utterly useless. There being great danger of drifting ashore, the sails were hoisted fore and aft, and the vessel got about in order to get her before the wind and keep her off the land. It rained heavily during the entire time, and the fog was so dense that it became impossible to tell the situation of the vessel. At length breakers were discovered close to leeward, and the Farne Light, which about the same period became visible, left no doubt as to the peril of all on board.

Passengers crowded the deck and as rain beat upon them and the fog shut out all but the sad scene on board, friends and strangers pressed hands for support and sought hopeful words from one another's lips. The sails hoisted for a defence became useless for the purpose, the wind was rising to tempest strength, and all control over the vessel seemed gone. The sea was master and was tossing the helpless steamer in its waves, and, as the summer wind drives thistledown in its course, was driving her toward the light. The billows beat upon the frail timbers and every lurch and swell took the vessel nearer the island where the wild waters were breaking in foam.

At length appeared in an opening of the fog a great rock, frightfully rugged, deadly to a ship weakened and in the power of the sea. Passengers and crew alike knew the spot, and they knew that unless some miracle prevailed the ship must go to pieces. There was a moment's delay, the sea seemed putting off its final victory, and then it brought the vessel with her bow foremost upon the rocks.

A panic followed. **All who** had been below rushed to the deck and sought **in the** companionship of wretchedness an escape from threatening destruction. Some of the crew, determined to save themselves, lowered the larboard quarter boat, **and left the** ship. The boiling sea now swept over the decks.

Very soon after the first shock a powerful wave struck the vessel on the quarter, and raising her off the rocks allowed her immediately **after to fall** violently upon it, the sharp edge striking her amidships. She was by this fairty broken in two pieces, and the after part, containing the cabin with many passengers was instantly carried off through a tremendous current, called the Piper Gut. The captain and his wife were among those who perished.

The forepart still remained crushed upon the rocks. Upon its deck were eight unfortunate creatures — five sailors and three of the passengers. In the cabin below lay a woman huddling two children in her arms, a girl of eleven and a boy of eight. The waves washed through the cabin tearing off the clothing of the children and half freezing them with cold. The hideous noise of the tempest drowned their melancholy cries and at last they lay quiet and dead.

At the Longstone Lighthouse the morning of the seventh of September broke mistily. The dwellers there were but three—the keeper **and** his wife and daughter. They were used to raging seas and driving winds, but this night had been one of anxiety. Grace, it is said, **had been unable to sleep, and as she dozed toward morning had started up with a wail for help echoing in her ears. She roused her father and taking his field-glass sought the wreck which she felt must be near. The remains of the shattered** vessel lying about a **mile**

off met her eye, and dim figures clinging to the broken timbers. As the waters lashed the wreck it seemed as if each wave must sweep the forms into the sea.

The hearts of all three of the lighthouse family sank. What could three do and the billows running mountains? William Darling shrank from attempting any rescue. He had been on other humane enterprises. But this seemed futile. At Grace's earnest plea the boat was launched, her father yielding to her entreaties, which his heart said were right. Grace sprang in — she knew how to handle an oar — and her father followed. She had never assisted in the boat before this wreck of the *Forfarshire,* but other members of the family had been present.

Her mother, Mrs. Darling, had assisted in making the boat ready, but as her husband and daughter pushed off, and the waves washed the rock on which she stood, she cried with tears in her eyes:

"Oh, Grace, if your father is lost, I'll blame you for this morning's work."

Says one who told the story:

"In estimating the dangers which heroic adventurers encounter, one circumstance ought not to be forgotten. Had it been at ebb tide the boat could not have passed between the islands; and Darling and his daughter knew that the tide would be flowing on their return, when their united strength would have been utterly insufficient to pull the boat back to the lighthouse island. Had they not got aid of the surviviors in rowing back again, they themselves would have been compelled to remain on the rock beside the wreck until the tide ebbed again."

The frail boat passed over the stormy waters and neared the rock.