



CHAPTER 1: TO THE RESCUE

THE little town of Whitby was startled on Wednesday morning by a telegram, that in a very few minutes was agitating nearly every individual in the place. The howling waves and roaring seas had kept the town pretty well awake all through the early hours of that stormy day; but this intelligence woke it up altogether. Six miles along the South Coast, just off Robin Hood's Bay, a ship had been blown on to the rocks, and her crew of six men had been compelled to take refuge in the long-boat. To reach the shore in that sea was impossible, so they had thrown out the anchor, and, with the seas breaking over them, all benumbed with cold and ready "to perish, they waited for either deliverance or death. In this condition they were spied by some watchers on the shore, who, being unable to render help themselves, telegraphed the calamity to the men at Whitby, in the vague hope that they might be able to do something for their rescue.

This was the telegram that the men of Whitby were considering, and, to their great credit, were turning over in their hearts as well as in their heads, and hence, as we shall hereafter see, there was something satisfactory came of it. But, before we enquire what that was, we want to say that very similar telegrams to this-telegrams of a similarly heart-stirring, agitating character, and telegrams that would be productive of far more important consequences than this, if we could but get them equally credited and considered, are being handed in to us all, to the writer and readers of this paper, handed in at all hours of the day and the night, whether we live on the coast or inland. Telegrams that tell of wrecks and of perishing crews – of fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and children and friends, striking on the rocks of pride, or drink, or fashion, or mammon, or vice, or conceit, or superstition. Telegrams which tell of men and women created and intended to live in Heaven, striking and going down straight to hell; and, telegrams which tell of men and women who do not go straight down, but who float about anchored in the dangerous seas close to the breakers, to whom going down is but a question of time – unless rescued – whose being swallowed up-devoured by the greedy deeps of iniquity in which they will abide, and be damned for ever – is as certain as the power and justice of Jehovah, unless they are reached and rescued. Thank God, they can be helped; but oh, they must be



helped at once. Already they are benumbed, frozen, all but past feeling. A little longer, and they will be gone! Oh, wire – telegraph, somebody! Will no one rush in? Is there no lifeboat for these perishing souls? Is there no eye to pity, no arm to save? Heaven and earth telegraph and entreat you to help this rescue.

Now what did those Whitby men do with this telegram?

Did they leave it all unnoticed? Did they read it over and meditate on it for their own special benefit, and stroke themselves and have a prayer-meeting specially to thank God that they were not left to perish like those poor men? Did they harden their hearts with those various considerations, which are never far to reach, to justify lazy, selfish men? Oh, no! they were men with hearts of flesh, and the vision of those six half-drowned men out there, with the cold salt spray breaking over them, brought their hearts into their mouths, and the question quick as lightning, was on every lip, What can be done? Nay, What can we do? That was the proper question for the hour. Nobody felt like making a sermon on the matter of shipwrecks and dangerous rocks in general, with ever so many particulars. If he had, no one would have been found to listen to it. What was wanted was to know now TO GET THESE SIX DEAR FELLOWS OUT OF A BOILING SEA.

But how? Only a lifeboat could reach them, and there was no such thing at Robin Hood's Bay. There was one there with them at Whitby; but that was six miles away from the drowning men, and to take it by sea in that gale was impossible. What, then, is there nothing to be done? And the vision of the perishing six came up again, and somebody proposed, and it was carried right off, to send a wire back to Robin Hood's Bay: "We cannot bring our boat by sea, but we will bring her by land; we will not be beaten, and the men shall be saved." That's the sort of grit. Hurrah for the men of Whitby, and all other men of the same stuff. If you cannot go to the rescue one way, go another.

To move a ponderous boat under favourable circumstances would not be a very easy task; but here was ice and snow everywhere, and in some places six feet deep. But at it they went. Picks and shovels, and horses, and ropes, and sailors, and fishermen, and farmers, and all sorts of men lent a hand, and the Robin Hood's Bay men met the



Whitby men, and the road was cleared, and the ponderous boat was dragged up the hills and down the hills, until the bay was reached; and out there through the drifting sleet the object of their toil was seen, and now another pull, and with a ringing cheer they rushed their boat into the boiling surf, and bent themselves to the oars to reach the object of this wild enthusiastic toil.

Now, my comrades of The Salvation Army, and all other servants whose business it is to rescue shipwrecked souls, can you not learn a lesson from the children of this generation? Do you see how these men, ay, and women as well – for although the newspaper is silent as to any female help in the undertaking, we have little doubt that sympathetic and unselfish women had a hand in it – now, do you see, then, how these men and women went into this rescue business? What mad haste; what fiery zeal; what determination; what an expenditure of strength and money; what a risk of precious life! Why, the whole country side seemed to have stopped their business and concernments, and to have turned out to rescue these six men from a watery grave.

All this was very good, exactly as it should have been, and if more effort, and more money, and more strength, and more risk had been required, the men of that country side would have been equal to the requirement. They made up their mind that those six men should be saved, and they were fully prepared to pay the price.

Just so, my comrades, when we, the soldiers and servants whom God has set to the business of saving men, are prepared to pay the price, we shall see the Divine result, and never till then.

That is the way and the only way. The perishing and shipwrecked souls are before your eyes. But they can't be reached and rescued without trouble, and risk, and labour, and travail, and expense. Will you pay the price?

People die and go to hell because nobody will be at the trouble and expense to save them. Let the country side turn out. Cut a way through. Know no impossibilities. If you cannot reach the perishing souls one way, try another. Try every way, and then try them all over again. Never be beaten. You must succeed. Make your mind up to it, and it shall be done.



But what came of it all? The boat launched, the difficulties of the undertaking were still far from overcome. "After pulling for an hour the steer oar and other oars were broken, and she had to return to shore for a fresh supply. A double crew then manned the craft, and with a cheer she was again launched through terrific seas. After struggling for an hour and a half the shipwrecked crew of six men were reached, and safely landed at four o'clock. The poor fellows were thoroughly exhausted and benumbed, and it was only with great difficulty that they were brought back to consciousness. The lifeboat crew also suffered severely; one of them being unable to return home."

Even so, my comrades, pull away. The oars will break.

Those by whom you pull, your very right-hand man, perhaps the very man on whom you most depend, your steer-oar may go to the bad. But never heed; get a fresh supply, and go on again. It will be a struggle – of course it will; those seas with which these lion-hearted Whitby sailors fought were nothing like so terrific as the seas through which you have to pull to reach the dying souls of men. Cheer up! God is with you. Calvary's Royal Prince is your example, and angels look on from Heaven's overhanging shores with wonder and admiration. Now, another pull, there, let her go. Now ease her; now let her have it. There you are; take hold of that backslider – pull him in. There, help that infidel on board. Hold, now for that poor drunkard. Have you got him? Now, thank God, that wretched harlot is on board. Here give a hand to that despairing prodigal just going down. Have you got him safe? Now, another and another. Hallelujah. Full, are you? Back then to the shore, and the shouting, and the welcome; and the nursing back to life and strength and usefulness; and then for another boat load. Oh, it is hard work and exhausting work, is this rescuing of men and women from the yawning waves of temporal and eternal destruction, and the landing of them in safety at the Redeemer's feet; but it is, nevertheless, the most glorious and Divine employment that can engage the powers of any of the inhabitants of God's universe. ON THEN TO THE RESCUE!