

and that a subscription should be got up for them before they landed in the strange country to which they were bound. Little, if anything, came of the subscription. The iron was not hit whilst it was hot. And in a week or so scarcely any one gave the lonely family a thought except Chessy. The mother was a poor, shiftless creature. She was completely stunned by her misfortune, and, if it had not been for Chessy, she would have moped all day in bed, and her children would have come poorly off. But the first visit Chessy and her baby paid in the morning was to Mrs. Weston's berth, and, 'Dolphy being consigned, *pro tem.*, to the care of the little Westons in turn, Chessy busied herself in putting, and rousing up Mrs. Weston to help to put, the place and its inmates in order. She messed with the Westons also, and her management made their mess the envy of the 'tween decks. Chessy had some private stores, but she did not confine them to her own mess. Every child on board was her pensioner, and when people fell ill, the tasty little dishes which Chessy concocted for them were far more highly appreciated than the "medical comforts" dispensed by the doctor. She would go and sit with women tossing in their dark, close bunks, when their husbands and children had left them for the sake of the fresh air and bright sunshine to be enjoyed on deck. Sometimes, as a special treat, she allowed her patients to have a minute's peep at baby, brought down for the purpose by the volunteer nurse who then had him in charge. Chessy had her pick of nursemaids, and so she had of all kinds of servants. If the Westons had messed by themselves, they would have had to wait on themselves, in spite of the loud promises of help which they received off Plymouth. But when Chessy became their cateress, there was always some one anxious to get her mess's water for her, draw its rations, and carry its dishes to and from the galley.

Chessy did not confine her Sister-of-Mercy cares to her own sex. There was a poor young fellow on board who was going out to Australia in a vain hope of escape from consumption. He had a brother with him, a huge healthy ruffian, who, nevertheless, was sometimes very kind to the sick man, but, as a rule, left him pretty much to himself. Chessy was like a sister to this poor fellow. As long as he could get about, she helped him up and down the steep ladder that led to the 'tween decks, and sat with him on deck, making him as comfortable as she could, reading to him and talking to him when he liked it, and holding her tongue

when he didn't. Baby took a fancy to the poor fellow also, but manifested it so demonstratively that Master 'Dolphy, in spite of the sick man's remonstrances, was often sent away in charge of one of the volunteer nursemaids. When the sick man could no longer get on deck, Chessy and her baby still visited him. The male passengers' "sick bay" was quite in the forepart of the ship, and to get to it Chessy had to traverse the part of the 'tween decks roamed over by bison-hordes of wild bachelors; but Chessy was not afraid of them, and she had no reason to be afraid. They would cease swearing, and joking, and quarrelling when she went by, only stopping her to shake hands with the wonderful baby; and whilst she was in the sick bay, they would go on deck that she might not be disturbed whilst she was doing what she could both to alleviate the poor fellow's sufferings and to prepare him for his fast approaching end. She was in the sick bay when the sick man died, spasmodically clutching her hand in the belief that it was his mother's. His big brother was too drunk to be with him then, but the news of the death suddenly sobered him. He swore that he would never get drunk again, and that he would never forget Chessy's kindness. The former part of his vow he forgot the very night after his brother's corpse had been tilted into the sea. So long as it lay under its flag-pall upon the cover of the long-boat, everybody on board was strangely quiet; and for a minute or two after the long sail-cloth bundle with a rusty iron ring at the bottom had suddenly shot, with a splash of silvery spray, into the blue, bright, heaving wave, there was a still deeper hush on board. And then every moment people began to speak louder, and laughed again, and did everything that they had done before. But though the big brother did get drunk again that night, I do not think that, even when drunk, he forgot Chessy's kindness. One night there was a fearful row in the single men's quarters, and the big brother was the worst of them all. The women and the quieter men were shaking in their shoes, for it looked as if the big brother meant to murder the man he had got down. People were crying out "Shame," but Chessy did something better than that. She handed baby over to the charge of the nearest available nurse, and made her way through the throng of excited menfolk up to the two fighters. Then she laid her little hand upon the two huge ones with which the big brother was striving, in very cowardly fashion, to throttle his antagonist on the