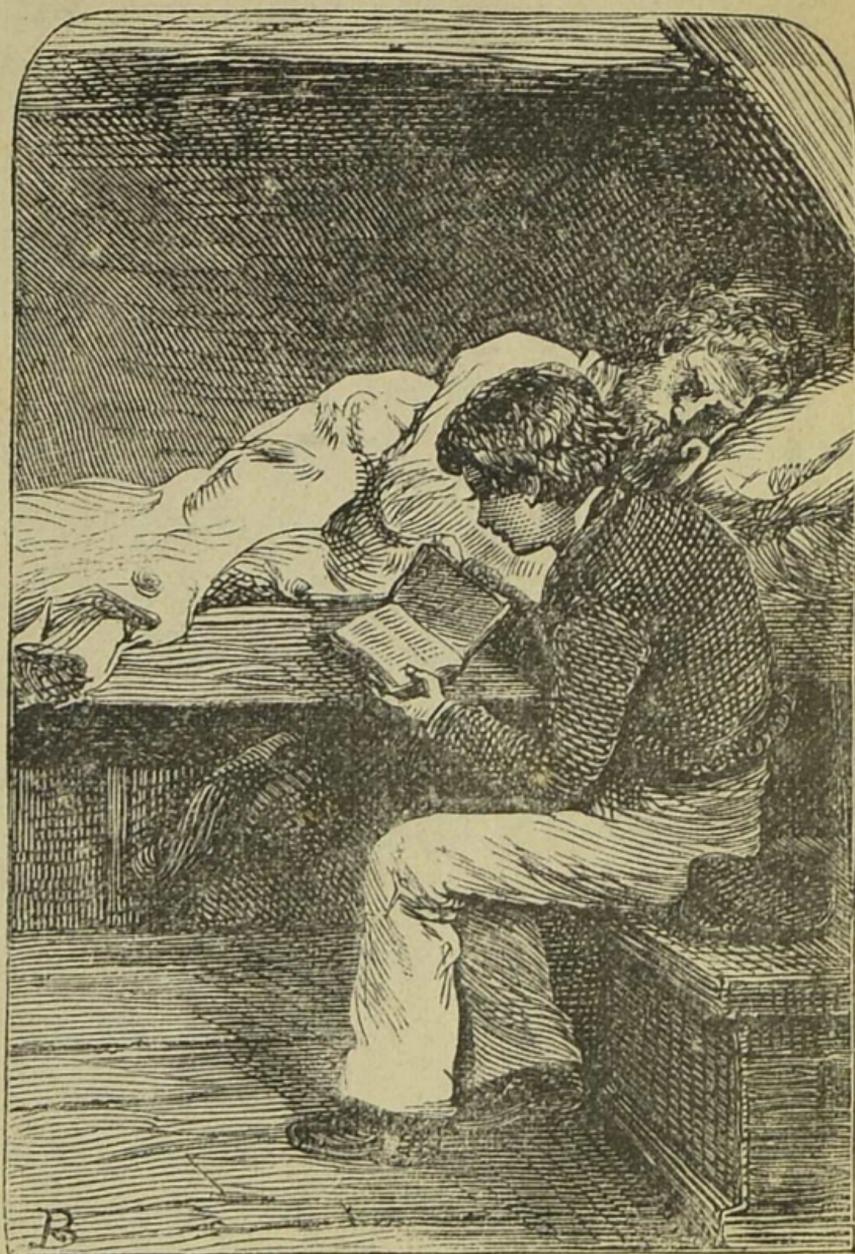


BOB THE CABIN BOY AND HIS CAPTAIN



Dublin: 10 D'Olier-st. London: 9 Paternoster-row

Price 3d. per dozen

BOB THE CABIN BOY
AND HIS CAPTAIN

37131 053 617 452

BOB, THE CABIN-BOY.

A FEW months since, a vessel sailed from England, with a captain, whose habitual blasphemy, drunkenness, and tyranny, so disgusted the crew, that some of the most fatal consequences might have taken place, but for the sudden and alarming illness of their cruel and depraved commander. The mate took charge of the ship, and the captain, greatly afflicted in his cabin, was left, by the unanimous voice of a hardened crew, to perish. He had continued nearly a week in this neglected state, no one

venturing to visit him, when the heart of a poor boy on board was touched with his sufferings, and he determined to enter the cabin and speak to him. He descended the companion-ladder, and opening the state-room door, called out, "Captain, how are you?" A surly voice replied, "What's that to you?—be off." Next morning, however, he went down again—"Captain, hope you are better." "Oh, Bob, I'm very bad—been very ill all night." "Captain, please to let me wash your hands and face; it will refresh you very much." The captain nodded assent. Having performed this kind office, the boy said, "Please, Master, let me shave you." He was permitted to do this also; and having adjusted the bed-clothes, he grew bolder, and proposed some tea. The captain knew

he had no mercy to expect from his crew, and had determined not to solicit any ; “ I’ll perish,” said his obstinate, perverse soul, “ rather than ask one favour of them.” But the kindness of this poor boy found its way to his heart ; and, in spite of all his daring, independent spirit, his bowels melted, and his iron face displayed the starting tear.

The captain now declined apace : his weakness was daily increasing, and he became gradually convinced that he should not live many weeks at farthest. His mind was filled with increasing terror as the prospect of death and eternity drew nearer to his confused and agitated view. He was as ignorant as he was wicked. Brought up among the worst of seamen in early life, he had imbibed all their prin-

ciples, followed their practices, and despised remonstrance or reproof. A man-of-war had finished his education; and a long course of successful voyages, as master of a vessel, had contributed to harden his heart, and led him not only to say, "there is no God," but to act under that persuasion. Alarmed at the idea of death, and ignorant of the way of salvation, with a conscience now thundering conviction to his guilty soul, he cried one morning, just as Bob opened the state-room door, and affectionately inquired, "Well, Master, how is it with you this morning?"—"Ah, Bob, I'm very bad; my body is getting worse and worse; but I should not mind that so much, were it not for my soul. Oh, Bob, what shall I do? I'm a great sinner. I'm afraid I shall

go to hell—I deserve it. Alas, Bob, I’m a lost man.” “Oh, no, Master,” said the boy, “Jesus Christ can save you.” “No, Bob, no, I cannot see the least prospect of being saved. Oh, what a sinner I have been! what will become of me?” His stony heart was broken, and he poured out his complaints before the boy, who strove all he could to comfort him, but in vain.

One morning the boy just appeared, when the captain cried out, “Oh, Bob, I’ve been thinking of a Bible. I know there is not one in the cabin; go forward and see if you can find one in the men’s chests.” The boy succeeded, and the poor dying man beheld him enter with tears of joy. “Ah! Bob, that will do—that will do; you must read to me, and I shall soon know whether such a wicked man as I am can be saved, and how it is to be done. Now, Bob, sit down

on my chest, and read to me out of that blessed book." "Where shall I read, Master?" "I do not know, Bob. I never read it myself; but try and pick out some places that speak about *sinners* and *salvation*." "Well, Master, then I'll take the New Testament; you and I will understand it better; for, as my poor mother used to say, there are not so many hard words there." The boy read for two hours, while the captain, stretching his neck over the bed-place, listened with the eagerness of a man on the verge of eternity. Every word conveyed light to his mind, and his astonished soul soon beheld sin as he had never seen it before. The justice of God in his eternal ruin struck him with amazing force; and, though he heard of a Saviour, still the great difficulty of knowing how *he* could be saved, appeared a mystery unfathomable. He had been ruminating a

great part of the night on some passage Bob had read, but they only served to depress his spirits, and terrify his soul.

The next morning, when the boy entered the state-room, he exclaimed, "Oh, Bob, I shall never live to reach the land. I am dying very fast; you'll soon have to cast me overboard; but all this is nothing—my soul, my poor soul! Ah, Bob, my dear lad, what will become of my soul? Oh, I shall be lost for ever. Can't you pray?" "No, Master, I never prayed in my life, any more than the Lord's Prayer my mother taught me." "Oh, Bob, pray for me; go down on your knees and cry for mercy; do, Bob, God will bless you for it. Oh, kneel down and pray for your poor wicked captain." The boy hesitated—the master urged—the lad wept—the master groaned, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Both cried greatly. "Oh, Bob, for

God's sake, kneel down and pray for me." Overcome by importunity and compassion, the boy fell on his knees, and with heavy sobs, cried out "O Lord, have mercy on my poor dying captain! O Lord, I am a poor, ignorant, wicked sailor-boy. Lord, I don't know what to say. Lord, the captain says I must pray for him, but I don't know how. Lord, have mercy on him. He says he shall be lost—Lord, save him! He says he shall go to hell—Lord, take him to heaven! He says he shall be with devils—oh, that he may be with angels! Don't let him perish, O Lord! Thou knowest I love him, and am sorry he is so ill. The men won't come near him, but I'll do the best I can for him as long as he lives; but I can't save him. O Lord, pity my poor captain; see how thin and how weak he is! Oh, comfort his troubled mind! Oh, help me, Lord, to pray for my master." The

captain was too much affected to speak. The simplicity, sincerity, and humility of the lad's prayer had so much impressed his mind, that he lay groaning inwardly with spiritual anguish, and wetting his couch with his tears. Bob retired on deck, for the scene had quite overcome him. In the evening he again read the Bible to the captain, whose soul appeared to receive every word with indescribable eagerness. The next morning, on entering the state-room, the boy was struck with the extraordinary change visible in his master's features. That gloomy horror which had so long added to the natural ferocity of his weather-beaten countenance was fled; and while his afflictions had softened and more fully exhibited the various parts of his countenance, the circumstance of the past night had settled the whole arrangement of his features into a holy, pleasant, calm, and re-

signed state, that would seem to say, An heir of grace can "find glory begun below."

"Oh, Bob, my dear lad," said the captain, with great humility, "I have had such a night! After you left me I fell into a sort of dose; my mind was full of the many blessed things you had been reading to me from the precious Bible. All on a sudden I thought I saw, in the corner of my bed-place, Jesus Christ, hanging bleeding on the cross. Struck with the idea, I thought I arose and crawled to the place, and casting myself at his feet in the greatest agony of soul, I cried out for a long time, like the blind man you read of, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' At length I thought he looked on me. Yes, my dear lad, he looked at your poor wicked captain; and oh, Bob, what a look it was! I shall never forget it. My blood rushed to

my heart—my pulse beat high—my soul thrilled with agitation, and waiting for him to speak, with fear not unmixed with hope, I saw him smile. Oh, my child, I saw him smile—yes, and he smiled on *me*—on *me*, Bob. Oh, my dear boy, he smiled on wretched guilty me. Ah, what did I feel at that moment! My heart was too full to speak; but I waited, and ventured to look up, when I heard him say, hanging as he did on the cross, the blood streaming from his hands, and feet, and side—oh, Bob, what sounds were these!—shall I ever hear his beloved voice again?—I heard him say, in sounds that angels cannot reach, ‘*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins, which be many, are all forgiven thee!*’ My heart burst with joy; I fell prostrate at his feet; could not utter a word but glory, glory, glory! The vision vanished; I fell back on my pillow; I opened my

eyes ; I was covered with perspiration, I said, ‘ Oh, this cannot be a dream ! ’ No, Bob, I know that Jesus bled and died for me ; I can believe the promises—the many precious promises you have read to me out of the Bible, and I feel that the blood of the cross can cleanse even *me*. I am not now afraid to die ; no, Bob, my sins are pardoned through Jesus. I want no more : I am now ready to die ; I have no wish to live. I cannot—I feel I cannot be many days longer on this side of eternity. The extreme agitation of my mind, of late, has increased the fever of my body, and I shall soon breathe my last.” The boy, who had silently shed many tears, now burst into a flood of sorrow, and involuntarily cried, “ No, my dear Master, don’t leave me.” “ Bob,” said he, calmly, “ my dear boy, comfort your mind ; I am happy—I am going to be happy for ever. I feel

for you as if you were my own child. I am sorry to leave you in such a wicked world, and with such wicked men as sailors are in general. Oh, may you ever be kept from those crimes into which I have fallen. Your kindness to me, my dear lad, has been great; God will reward you for it. To you I owe every thing as an instrument in the Lord's hands. Surely He sent you to me! God bless you, my dear boy; tell my crew to forgive me, as I forgive and pray for them." Thus the day passed in the most pleasing and profitable manner, when Bob, after reading the Bible as usual, retired to his hammock. Eager the next morning to meet again, Bob arose at day-light, and opening the state-room door, saw his master had risen from his pillow, and crawled to the corner of his bed-place, where, in his dream, he beheld the cross. There he appeared kneeling down in the at-

titude of prayer, his hands clasped and raised, and his body leaning against the ship-side. The boy paused, and waited a few moments, fearful of disturbing his master. At length he called, in a sort of whisper, "Master." No answer, "Master." No reply. He ventured to creep forward a little, and then said, "Master." All was silent! Again he cried, "Captain." Silence reigned! He stretched out his hand and touched his leg; it was cold, and stiff, and clammy. He called again, "Captain." He raised his hand to his shoulder; he tenderly shook it. The position of the body was altered: it declined gently until it rested on the bed; but the spirit had fled some hours before, we hope, to be with Christ, which is far better.