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WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN.

"PLEASE, Miss Carleton, your ship has come in!"

The speaker was a bright little fellow, perhaps eight years old, and he made the announcement with a wonderfully eager and important air, as he entered the schoolroom where his teacher and fellow-pupils were assembled, one lovely summer morning. It was not yet quite nine o'clock, and the children had been gathered in little groups chattering away like magpies, but at Charlie Gray's speech they stood for a moment in silence, then all burst forth with a torrent of exclamations.

"O Miss Carleton! Isn't that good! Now you'll get the new maps you promised us," cried one.

"Yes, and flower seeds for the garden," said another.

"And my new kite," chimed in a third.

"And string for our kites!" chorussed several.

"And I hope, Miss Carleton, you won't forget the curtain, so the sun need not make your head ache so badly," said gentle Annie Evans, one of the oldest scholars.

Miss Carleton heard this last remark even amidst the general hubbub, and her bewilderment at its cause.

"Thank you, Annie," she said, gratefully; "but let us first find out what all this is about. What makes you think my ship has come in, Charlie?" she asked, drawing the little fellow towards her.

"Cause I saw it," was the proud reply.

"You saw it! But where? and how did you know it was mine?"

"Cause your name is on it in big gold letters. I was coming along the beach, and saw her lying right off there, pointing towards the coast. 'She is a real beauty, too,' said the boy, with the nautical enthusiasm inherited from a long line of seafaring ancestors. 'She is all black and gold, and her sails are as white! Guess they're new, ain't they?' he inquired, excitedly.

"I really don't know," laughed Mrs. Carleton; "but you are sure it was my name, Charlie? Can you remember how to spell it?"

"Yes ma'am!" responded Charlie, emphatically; "just like this." And picking up a bit of chalk, he laboriously inscribed on the blackboard, "G-r-a-c-e-C-a-r-l-e-t-o-n." "There!" he exclaimed, in triumph, "ain't that your name? I knew 'twas, 'cause it's on your book that you let me carry home for you sometimes, and I remembered just as soon as I saw it on the ship."

Miss Carleton looked both puzzled and amused; but just then the little wheezy old clock fastened to the wall began to strike nine. With a slight sigh, she rang the little bell on her desk, the children subsided into their seats, and the business of the day began.

Only Annie Evans noted the restless faraway look in the face that had grown so dear to her, or the expression of pain that crossed it when at the noon intermission, as she tried to soothe a little one whose doll had come to grief, she unconsciously began her usual phrase, "When my ship," and Charlie, with wide open eyes, interrupted, "Why, Miss Carleton, it has come!"

The teacher and most of the scholars lived too far from the schoolhouse to go home at noon, consequently it was not until four o'clock that Grace Carleton found herself free. Looking the door of the schoolhouse, she turned her steps towards the beach.

Fortunately, Charlie's mother had given him an errand in an opposite direction, for she did not feel inclined just now to listen to his ceaseless talk. His announcement, made in all good faith, had roused a host of sad memories, and she longed to be alone, and think them all down.

Clear before her rose the time, not yet

three years past, when she had been the petted darling of wealthy parents. Then came the memory of those sad days, when her father's sudden death had been followed by the unexpected news that all their fortune was gone. Probably her father had foreseen the impending ruin, and his anxiety had killed him. She and her mother had, with the pittance remaining, come to this little seaport town, as Mrs. Carleton's health, always delicate, had been seriously impaired by her grief, and the family physician had ordered change of scene.

"Change of scene!" repeated Grace to herself, bitterly, as she recalled this. "When he knew full well that we must change—give up our dear home, and all that mamma had been accustomed to.—That we had scarcely money enough left to bring us here, and yet how coolly and easily he talked, and pocketed his fee as if poor papa were alive, and we had plenty of means. And Gerald, too! Never to come near us!"

That was the bitterest thought of all. Gerald was the doctor's son, and had been Grace's most devoted cavalier until her sad reverses; after which she had never seen him at all, and his father only at the above-mentioned interview.

It could hardly have been said that Grace was in love with Hugh Haughton, but he was handsome and devoted—she had enjoyed his society, and very probably might soon have been engaged to him, had her prosperity continued.

The prescribed change of scene had not benefited Mrs. Carleton, and but a few weeks elapsed ere Grace found herself a penniless orphan, with no one to turn to for support or guidance.

"Don't grieve so, you poor child!" said good motherly Mrs. Gray, with whom they had been boarding. "Try to remember that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, and believe that in some way all our trials are for our good, though we can't understand how."

But the girl drew away shuddering.—"O, don't, Mrs. Gray! Don't say that it is good for me to lose my dear parents. You don't know what it is to be left all alone!"

"But I know what is perhaps worse," answered Mrs. Gray, so quietly that Grace's sobs were checked, and she glanced up, wonderingly, to say:

"Worse! what could be worse?"

"Was it not worse to see the fish-smack, with my husband and my brave lad, go down before my eyes, and the storm raging so that no one could help them? I was left, Miss Grace, with my little Charlie in my arms—he was but a baby then—and not a cent to take care of him or myself?"

"And you can say it was for your good?" asked the listener, almost reproachfully.

"I know that 'He does not willingly afflict,'" answered Mrs. Gray, reverently. "I cannot doubt that my husband and boy are better off; and has it not taught me how much goodness and kindness there is in the world? Didn't my neighbors club together to pay what was owing on this house? and didn't the owner refuse to take the money, and send me a deed of the place? And every summer, when the city folks come down here, don't the neighbors pretend they can't take boarders, and send them to me, till my house is crowded? And did one of them ever forget to send me the finest of their fish when they came in, or the earliest of vegetables, or a can of milk? Ah yes, Miss Grace! there's a deal of goodness in people, if you only find it out," concluded the good woman, as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her neat gingham apron.

One sentence in the little history cut Grace to the quick. She had always a brave honest spirit, and she showed it now.

"That is one thing that troubles me, Mrs. Gray," she said. "The neighbors recommended us to come to you. We meant to stay only two weeks, until mamma could gain strength, and then we were going to look for work. But you know how ill she grew, and could not be moved, and then the expense of the—" Grace's voice trembled sadly—"funeral; and now I have nothing left, and you will soon lose me, and—and what shall I do?" sobbed the poor girl.

"There, there, child, don't cry and take on so," cried the widow, affection-

ately stroking the bowed head. "Lie down here on the lounge and rest a bit. See how comfortable you will be when I put a pillow under your head, and throw this shawl over you; and now listen while I tell you something."

"As for your owing me, that's all nonsense. What signified a week or two more or less, and neither of you eating enough to keep a bird alive? It was so late in the season that the rooms would have been empty, so it was all the better that you had them, and you need never think of that again."

"But now, just see how things are ordered for us! Why, this morning the milk-man was telling me how the school committee have been disappointed about the teacher they had engaged. It seems she is going to be married, and has written to say that they must find another teacher, and they're in a peck of trouble, for school was to begin in another week. Now if you say the word, I will just step over and tell some of the committee that you would like the place, and then you'll be all provided for."

"A school!" exclaimed Grace, sitting up in alarm. "Why, I don't know enough to teach! I'm afraid I have forgotten all my algebra and geometry, and—"

Mrs. Gray laughed softly. "Bless the dear child's heart! She thinks we are the same as city folks. Why, Miss Grace, most of them won't know their letters, and those that do only want to learn enough arithmetic to count what little money they make; and enough geography to know whether they live here, or 'tother side of the world. They will pay you so much a month, and you can board round, or—"

"O, I couldn't possibly do that," cried Grace, shrinking from the idea of living in some of the houses she had seen in the little hamlet. "Couldn't I earn enough so that I could pay you for my board?—that is," she hesitated, "if you would wish to have me stay!"

"Of course I wish it, with all my heart!" answered Mrs. Gray, earnestly, and evidently complimented by Grace's wish to remain under her roof. "Now just lie still, and I'll step over to some of the neighbors and talk to them about it."

Grace sank back; too much worn in mind and body to offer any opposition, and thankful for the possibility that here was a chance for her to support herself.

Mrs. Gray returned radiant. She had seen the leading members of the school committee, who had been much pleased by her suggestion, and promised to call that evening with their official brethren and "examine" Miss Carleton for the situation.

"Examine me?" inquired Grace.—"What does that mean?"

"Now don't you be a bit worried," answered Mrs. Gray, soothingly. "It means asking questions, to find out if you know enough; but bless you heart, they don't know half as much themselves; and if you told them the moon was made of green cheese they'd all believe it. Don't you trouble about that, but just take my word for it that you'll do first rate, and who knows! This school may last till your ship comes in!"

Grace had never heard this expression and perceiving her bewildered look, Mrs. Gray added, "That's what we always say here when we mean that better luck may come sometime;—perhaps it's a kind of a seafaring saying."

Mrs. Gray's prophecy was fulfilled.—Grace charmed the entire committee by her sweet simple manners, and what they deemed her profound learning. A week later saw her formally installed as mistress of the village schoolroom, where she had ever since reigned, enthroned in the hearts of her little subjects.

Gradually light and happiness, or at least cheerfulness, had stolen back to her. Mrs. Gray's motherly care had smoothed many little troubles from her path, while her plain practical good sense and true simple faith had taught the young girl many a useful lesson.

She had rather adopted the phrase, which had at first hearing sounded so oddly to her, and often used it, as it was evident from the beginning of our story her scholars had noticed.

"When my ship comes in we will have new maps," she said one day, while endeavoring to explain the

changes that had taken place since those somewhat ancient charts were printed. "When my ship comes in we will have a new ball of string," as she patiently disentangled the old and much knotted twine attached to a scholar's kite; and "Miss Carleton's ship" was firmly believed in by many a childish heart.

But while we have been thus reading some of Grace's thoughts, she has advanced far enough along the beach to come within sight of the vessel that had so aroused Charlie's admiration in the morning. There she lay at anchor, as graceful as a swan, and glistening in the afternoon sun was her golden name—"Grace Carleton."

"It is strange!" said Grace to herself. "To be sure my name is not very uncommon, but it seems strange to me to see it there. However, I do not see that it affects me one way or another, except that it has raised hopes in my little scholars that I cannot fulfill." And she pursued her homeward walk, pondering upon the possibility of making the children comprehend that the vessel had not brought their expected prizes, and wondering if her little savings would enable her to purchase the articles she had thoughtlessly promised.

"I must break myself of the foolish habit of saying that so frequently," she thought, as she opened the gate of Mrs. Gray's garden. That good woman sat on the piazza, conversing with a young man, a stranger, of perhaps twenty-five or thirty years.

"Ah, here comes Miss Carleton now!" she heard Mrs. Gray exclaim; and she advanced with the uncomfortable feeling that she had been the subject of their conversation.

"Well now, dear child, I'm real glad you're home. Seems to me you look tired. This is Captain Hendricks, who is going to stay here a day or two, while his vessel is getting fixed up. I told him we would try to make him comfortable and contented, so you just sit down and talk a bit while I get tea ready. I was just saying how odd it was that his vessel has the same name that you have." And the worthy woman bustled into the house, leaving Capt. Hendricks bowing, and Grace somewhat embarrassed by this strange introduction.

She soon recovered her self-possession, however, and said with a smile, "Since Mrs. Gray has promised that I will assist in making you comfortable, allow me to suggest that you will be more so if you are seated," ensconcing herself as she spoke in the chair which Mrs. Gray had just vacated.

The gentleman again bowed, and resumed his seat, and with a few easy remarks on the kindness of their hostess, led the conversation skillfully to topics in which his fair companion might probably be interested.

Grace wondered, even while she took her part. She had not met an equal in education and manners since the death of her parents, and it was an intellectual treat to talk to this stranger, who had evidently seen and read much.

She longed to ask why his vessel bore her name, but simple as the question seemed, she felt an unaccountable hesitation in asking it.

Others did not share in this feeling, however, for scarcely were they seated at the tea-table when little Charlie inquired:

"Captain Hendricks, what made you name your ship for Miss Carleton?"

Grace colored. Mrs. Gray said, "Hush, Charlie! you should not ask questions." But Capt. Hendricks said, good-humoredly, "I hardly know, Charlie, whether my ship is named for Miss Carleton; but I hope she will permit me to ask a few questions in order to settle the point."

Grace bowed gravely, and Capt. Hendricks continued, rather eagerly:

"Am I right in supposing that your father was the late Granville Carleton of New York?"

Grace again bent her head in assent.—Her eyes asked the explanation that her lips could not, and Captain Hendricks replied to the look:

"My father, Charles Hendricks, was an old college friend of Mr. Carleton, and their friendship continued through life."

"I have often heard my father speak of Mr. Hendricks," interrupted Grace.

"You know, then, that my father, soon after leaving college, married and settled in England, and has never revisited this country. He, however, always

kept up a correspondence with Mr. Carleton, and were constantly together during your father's business visits to England. Since hearing of his old friend's death, my father has been unable to learn anything of you or your mother, and it was not until Mrs. Gray informed me that I knew of your double bereavement. Mr. Carleton talked so fondly of his wife and daughter, that we grew to feel well acquainted with you and when my father built the ship of which I have the command, he christened her 'Grace Carleton.'"

"So, after all, Charlie," he continued, "you are right, you see, and the vessel was named for Miss Carleton. I am most thankful," turning to Grace, "for the accident which compelled me to stop here, for I have searched vainly in New York for some tidings of you and your mother. It was my father's most especial charge to me."

Mrs. Gray's countenance was a sight to behold, and after seeing her two boarders seated on the piazza again, she went about her household tasks in a state of unalloyed delight.

"I always knew her ship would come in safe and sound," she soliloquized, "and now it has, sure enough; and I don't need spectacles to see that it will sail away with her pretty soon. Well, I shall miss her sadly, but I'm real glad, too!"

Mrs. Gray would have been still more convinced of the clearness of her vision had she known what Captain Hendricks wisely suppressed; that his father and Mr. Carleton had long ago made an agreement that when their children arrived at marriageable age they would bring about a meeting between them, which they fondly hoped might end in a mutual attachment. This plan they had prudently forborne to mention to the parties concerned; but after Mr. Carleton's death, Mr. Hendricks being unable to learn the fate of the widow and daughter of his friend, had confided the agreement to his son, and begged him to seek the missing ones.

"I don't ask anything more," the father had said. "Just see the girl and her mother, and at least let me know that they are not in destitution, as I very much fear they may be, from the accounts I hear of Mr. Carleton's business affairs."

It was a whim of the old gentleman to name the vessel which he placed at his son's disposal. "Grace Carleton." "Who knows?" he said. "It may lead to your finding her. I feel as if it would bring success to your search in some way."—And, as we have seen, it did.

But all this Capt. Hendricks did not tell Grace, till after inventing every possible pretext for delaying his departure, he finally told her another tale; and on her replying that she could not consent without knowing whether his parents would approve, he thereupon confided to her the real object of his visit to America.

"I knew how it would be, my darling child," sobbed Mrs. Gray, "and I am glad and thankful; only I can't help thinking for a minute how lonely I shall be without you. But we must not waste any time in crying," she added, presently, "for the captain will be back in two weeks, and you won't be ready."

Grace smiled, as she thought that her few preparations would need but little time. Capt. Hendricks had business in Boston, and had gone there for two weeks, when he was to return and carry Grace away; but first he must needs give a grand party on board his ship, to which all who had ever been spoken a kind word to Grace were bidden; and as she was a universal favorite, this included almost every one in the little village. A very grand affair it was, and every one was delighted, especially the school children, who, to their astonishment, found everything that their teacher had ever promised ready for them in that wonderful ship.

Mrs. Gray's heart was gladdened by many a gift from that same mysterious vessel, so that, as she gratefully declared, she had enough to make her rich all her life, if she lived to the age of Methuselah. And finally, one lovely morning there was a very quiet wedding in the village church; a procession of old and young to the wharf to see the last of the fair bride, and a still more firmly-rooted conviction in the minds of the juveniles of the reality of the fact that the old saying for once came true.