



adelma von vay



Caroline Corner

A SKETCH

Author of "Twixt Will and Fate," "The Slinkenemirk Family," ...
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Prispevki k odkrivanju zgodovine ezoteričnih tradicij - v izvorniku

A fearful storm was raging along north-eastern coast. Many hard and anxious were there that night in the fishing-town of Whitescar; for, alas! they knew not upon how many widows and orphans the morrow's light should dawn.

At sunset some fifty or more boats had sailed from out the harbour, for it was a calm and unruffled sea, tint spread like a mirror of legends old far out to the distant horizon; and a pretty sight it was to see the fishermen's wives and daughters, with their happy faces and beaming eyes, waving a last good-bye to their brave and devoted heroes. A holy calm *then* prevailed, and though the aged and most experienced had sagely shaken their grey-fringed heads and murmured about "Either a cawn come a storm," nothing daunted, the younger and more daring had insisted upon putting to sea, and laughed with a loud "Yeo, ho!" for their hearts were full of hope.

But, alas! A storm had arisen. A storm, such as had not been known for years, so sudden and terrible it was. A gust and a whirl, and a long, long moan — that was the warning it gave, and they knew but too well what that warning meant. So the women left their warm beds to gaze on the turbulent sea that arose in its fury so awful, so grand, to grasp at the lives abroad that night, and make them a grave in its depths. A light, and another, and still another, until the whole of the quaint little town appeared as a beacon set upon the rocks overhanging the treacherous ocean. And faces, now pallid and eager, were pressed close to the window-panes, peering with awe-stricken eyes into the darkness without. And childish forms crept from their neat little cots and knelt in lisping prayer — a prayer wrung from their innocent hearts, pitifully wrung with fear: "Father, guard those at sea to-night."

The bell on the buoy had been tolling with a sad and ominous sound; but that was now hushed, and a wild tumult was heard — a howling of wind and roaring of waves, that shrieked in their ears and told a tale of the lonely to-morrow, when those whom they loved should lie stark and cold in the midst of those false, briny waters.

Thus the tempest continued to rage, and Fish Molly could endure no longer to watch, and wait, and pray. She was the pride of the whole fishing-town, and a real bonny lass was she too. Her sweetheart,

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one Harry Naecaire, was braving vast dangers for her. She must steal from her home and down to the quay, feeling her way as she went, and pausing to hold at each gust: for even she, who was more fearless and foot-sure than all, felt the perils which encompassed her path in the terrors of that fierce, unrelenting night. None other than she dare have ventured; but a star — one solitary star in the heavens — drew her onward, onward in safety, for that was her guiding star, and led to her best beloved.

Bravely she reached the goal, and, squatting down on the cold, damp stone, gazed with fixed and tearless eyes into the darkness beyond.

An hour passed, and still she sat, and watched, and prayed a silent, wordless prayer, enshrined in the heart of a simple fisher-maid. Then the wind went down, and the waves grew calm: but alas! not a boat could be seen! A numbness crept over the young fisher-girl, and her head dropped low on her breast. And she dreamed a dream of the morrow: that her lover came back to her safe: but he was an angel now, and she was his spirit-bride, and they dwelt in a cot in the heavenly land, by the side of a glorious sea, that in its whispered murmurings taught an Almighty Father's care.

With a cry of joy she awakened, and there from its watery, new-made grave the much-loved form did rise, and, smiling, beckon her on.

She sprang to meet the embrace with a strange, glad light in her eyes, and with arms outstretched, she encountered a kindly fate: 'twas the wraith of her lover returning to earth for his fond and faithful bride.

Her dream had been true; his love faithful as her own, and in heaven God willed it they should be united.

The morning dawned — a fair, autumn morn, and two bodies were found on the shore: the one was poor Harry, the brave fisher-lad; the other, Fish Molly, their pride.