

"My God!" For a moment the fortitude that had sustained him during the last ten days gave way, and he sank down again, covering his face with his hands in a dry-eyed anguish.

"I wish from my soul I might have helped you, but this is all I can do," the corporal said. "Pick them up as a gift from a brother in arms." He surreptitiously dropped some coins upon the sand, and Richard, more because of the friendliness of the gift than because he thought of their value, ran his fingers through the sand and picked them up, shoving them into a torn place in the lining of his boot.

"You have been good to me—" he began slowly, and with the look of a man who is talking unconsciously; but with an impatient shrug the other had moved away. When he had walked the length of the line and stood looking over the water a minute, he came again to Richard's side, apparently with no special object in view. His voice was very low as he said:

"True soldiers respect each other, no matter what the color of their uniforms. I guessed—but I want to know for certain—did you let the little lad escape the other night rather than go by yourself and leave him?"

Richard nodded. Colborn took off his hat. Those who watched him from the sand and from the picket line thought he but bared his head to the cool sea breeze, but in truth it was to a brave man's self-sacrifice. A Scripture verse was running in his head: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he give his life for his

friend." But he did not speak it, for a boat grating on the sand behind made him turn.

"The ship's warden to receive you," he said, with a quick-drawn breath. "God help you." Then aloud: "Attention!"

The prisoners arose and lined up as the boat's crew came ashore. The warden conferred a few minutes with the corporal, went over the list of prisoners, counted them carefully, eying each one sternly as he did so; then turned again to the corporal, who, after another short conference, stepped out before the line of prisoners.

"Attention! My care of you ends here. The warden of the prison ships will henceforth have you in charge." At a signal his men fell back, and the crew from the ship's long-boat took their places; the two officers saluted, and the corporal stepped aside.

"Attention! Forward! March!" the warden shouted, pointing with his sword to the boat; and the handful of dazed and miserable captives, like so many automata, caught step and sullenly moved to the water. As Richard, who brought up the rear, passed Colborn, the latter whispered:

"Your Joscelyn shall know," and Richard's eyes spoke his thanks.

Then the boat drew away from shore, carrying its freight of helpless despair to the plague-infected hulk rocking in the tide, the plaything of the winds, the sport of every leaping wave that cast its crystal fringes to the sun.

*(To be continued.)*

