

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

RESCUE OF THE SHIP'S CREW—ALL ABOARD  
THE FLYING CLOUD—THE STORM CONTINUES  
—THE FLYING CLOUD LYING AT HER ANCHORS  
AND RIDING OUT THE GALE.



HE ship struck on her bilge, fell over on her beam-ends, and the sea dashed over her in a mass of foam. In this position she rolled heavily from side to side, and, with one surge heavier than the rest, two masts went by the board.

“We must save her crew, my men!” exclaimed Captain Bowers. “Who volunteers to man a boat?”

All the men eagerly rushed forward, and the captain said:

“You, Ruggles,—Linden, Deal, and two others. Lower away the starboard boat!”

More quickly than it is told, the men lowered the boat and unhooked the falls. The captain

ordered a coil of rope to be thrown into her, and then leaped aboard with his speaking trumpet in his hand. The oars fell into the rowlocks, and the boat went plunging through the heavy sea.

The captain steered for the little spot of sand, on the outside of which the breakers were dashing in long lines, like gigantic cavalry charging from the sea. Fortunate, indeed, was it for the crew of the ship, that she had drifted on the Reef at a point just to windward of that sand island. Using the telescope, I saw the captain land on the leeward side of it, run to the windward side, then stop and put the trumpet to his lips. At the distance at which we lay in the schooner, I could not distinguish what he said, but a movement instantly took place among the forms that clung about the ship's deck. In a few minutes, I could perceive a couple of men making a line fast to the ship's stern, and then, after a pause, a sailor, holding the line, dropped into the water. There I lost sight of him in the engulfing waves, and intently watched the boat's crew on the beach. Suddenly they rushed forward, and I saw them drag a dark object from the edge of the breakers. They supported it. It stood erect and walked. The sailor was saved!

"Hurrah!" exclaimed I to George, who stood

beside me, and to whom I described every movement that I saw. "One saved; hurrah!"

"What are they doing now?" said George to me, "can you make out? They're at the boat."

"No," I replied, looking through the telescope. "I can see them as plainly as I can see you, but I can't make out. They seem to be bending the line from the ship to the middle of the boat. Yes, that's it; now they are rolling the boat over and over, and the line is getting taut. I see what it is now! They are rigging up something on the ship. It's a sling of heavy stuff, with a line made fast to it. Now the captain is saying something through his trumpet. Now I can see a sailor getting into the sling. There he comes, don't you see? —sliding down, working his way hand over hand, while the slack line pays out behind him. There he is, just at the edge of the breakers, and the line swags so much that they'll carry him away. No they won't! Our men have given the boat another turn over on the beach. He has cleared the breakers! Hurrah! One more saved!"

Here George and I engaged in capering about deck, shaking hands with each other and shouting to Hannibal.

"Look again, Fred," said George to me, "or let me have the glass."

"I've got it on them again," said I. "The captain is bending his line to the sling. Now he is speaking the ship again. There goes the sling back to the ship. There's another man getting into it. Our men on shore are pulling him down as fast as they can go. They've got him safe ashore. I see him getting out. There goes the sling back again. Now there's another man getting into it. Here he comes, hurrah! that's quick work. There goes the sling back again. They'll all be saved, George, won't they? Won't they be saved, Hannibal?" halloed I to the cook, who was standing near and participating in our excitement.

"Lor' bress um, and watch over um, Massa Fred! I believe you'se right," said Hannibal. "But I wish dey was all ashore, for ebery one make dis chile feel as if dat would be de lass."

But down came another and another and another; and we watched them through their perilous journey, and, at every escape, capered and lugged each other around, bestowed some hearty slaps upon Hannibal's broad shoulders, and then quieted down and renewed our observation of what was happening on shore.

At last, there was a pause, and the scattered pigmies on the beach collected in a group; and I could distinguish the men engaged in unbending the line on the boat and righting her again. Then some of them seized her by the gunwale, and ran her down to the leeward side of the beach, and a number crowded in and shoved off, leaving the rest on the island.

In five minutes, the captain was along-side, and a portion of the ship's crew jumped upon our deck.

"Shove her off," said the captain; "there's not a moment to be lost, the water's commencing to rise on the beach."

The boat shot away again, and George and I addressed ourselves to the wants of the shipwrecked men. They had saved nothing: it was hardly worth while to ask the question, for we had seen all. Wet, exhausted, and miserable they were. We sent them below, and Hannibal instantly supplied them with hot coffee, which he had prepared in anticipation of its being needed. The three men on board opened their kits, and made the new-comers welcome to every thing in their possession. The Norwegian's clothes, now, for the first time, came into play; for not one of the men had ever been willing to wear the clothes of the poor fellow.

By the time that the captain returned with the second and last boat-load, including the captain and mates of the ship, who had preferred to remain on the beach, the first set of men were tolerably comfortable. Captain Bowers took the captain and first officer into the cabin, to fit them out with his wardrobe, while the crew of the boat provided the last-comers from their kits.

We had both anchors out, and it was as much as they could do to hold; but we gave them all the scope of cable that we had, and lay plunging up and down, and buffeted about as if we had been in the open sea.

The ship rolled so heavily, that every minute I expected to see her go to pieces. Her third mast soon snapped; and there she lay, a great dark hulk that was every now and then obscured by a dense whirling cloud of foam.

The ship's crew, fourteen men in all, were saved. They consisted of the captain, the first and second mates, and eleven men. George and I gave up our berths to the captain and the first mate, and the other mate stayed forward with the crew, as is quite usual on board of ships. As it was storming so violently, all hands, except a watch, had to stay below. It was quite crowded forward; but, in the cabin, the only difference in comfort was that George

and I shared, in common, the extra berth of the cabin, which, by spreading a couple of boat-sails in it, we managed to make quite comfortable.

The captain of the wrecked ship was in very low spirits, as may well be imagined, for he had no hopes of saving her cargo, and Captain Bowers was not able to offer him any consolation on that point. We spent the evening very drearily. The schooner lurched violently from side to side, and every now and then, in the intervals of frantic pitching, the captain of the ship would ask some question, to which Captain Bowers would respond, and then, after an attempt to keep up a conversation, silence would settle down upon the occupants of the cabin, and their energies would be confined to steady-ing themselves in their seats or berths.

If one has never spent a night aboard vessel in a storm, either in a roadstead or in the open sea, he can have little conception of what a dismal scene the interior of the vessel on such occasions presents. In the best time that can be properly termed a storm, on deck there are the creaking spars and shrilly-whistling cordage and masts playing wildly to and fro over the laboring hull that every instant experiences a heavy shock and besprinkling from stem to stern. In the cabin, things are in disorder; clothes

thrown hastily aside; broken glass; the faint light of the lamp clinking in its gimbals; disorder, discomfort, everywhere. But in severe storms, the very nature of things is reversed. Then the ship groans as if in agony; the shocks fall like those from a battering-ram; the cordage shrieks and howls as if demons filled the air; the tall masts bend like wands. There is darkness, with fitful gleams of light, whence coming or whither gone, impossible to tell. Sailors run quickly over the decks, or clamber aloft; and all that interposes between the ship and destruction, are those dark flitting forms, that binnacle-lamp faintly glowing and shedding its light on the compass and on a calm, observant face.

We experienced not all of this on that dark tempestuous night; but we were on a lee shore, plunging into the seas, with every timber cracking and straining, as the vessel surged at the cables and brought up with a jerk hard enough to disengage our grasp of the supports which we were all forced to seek in every posture. Then every thing would rattle, and then would come a horrid shock: then a roll on one side, then a shivering in every timber, the ring of metal, the crash of glass, the sough of the wind, intermingled with the shrieks and howls of the demons in the cordage. And in the cabin sat two forlorn men, whose ship lay beating, scarce



five hundred yards away, on the roaring, pitiless Reef.

There was no sleep that night for any one, either forward or aft. The watch was on the alert, and every few minutes Captain Bowers was on deck, and the poor captain of the ship followed him and strained his eyes in the gloom to try to obtain one glimpse of his ill-starred craft.

Towards morning the gale began to abate, and long before dawn every soul was on deck and anxiously waiting to discover what the first light would reveal as to the condition of the ship.

At last day dawned, and showed us the state of affairs. The storm had so raised the level of the water along the coast, that what with the increased depth and the violence of the waves, the ship had been canted around on her bilge, until she lay athwart the Reef, with her bow pointing seaward. In this position, she presented a comparatively small surface to the action of the waves, which, before, had struck her fairly on her beam. Now, they struck her bow, raised it slightly, and dropped it as they sped onward; and then she swayed heavily from side to side, until the next great billow came rolling in, raised her, and dropped her as it

rushed by her sides, and roared away over the Reef.

By twelve o'clock, the storm was decidedly abating, but the same sea still swept in from the ocean, which was a grand sight. As far as we could see, it rolled in maddened turbulence. There was a war of the waters. Groups of white-capped waves rushed frantically at each other, and then all went down together in the struggle; and in a moment their dark forms and white angry crests appeared, arose, and dashed together again desperately, in unyielding and tumultuous strife.

No wreckers hove in sight. It was impossible for them to leave their anchorages. But we did not concern ourselves about them. Even if our thoughts had not been absorbed with pity for the unfortunate situation of the rescued sailors, we would have been easy in mind in regard to the disposition of the wreck, for the captain of the ship had authorized Captain Bowers to take charge of whatever the elements might spare.

Once more night closed upon the scene, with the wind gradually lulling, but the seas still maintaining their ascendancy, and, on account of the diminution of the wind, as distinguishable in the darkness, to the ear, as they had been by day to the sight. All night long the

wind gradually lulled, until, by morning, it was almost calm. But all night long, the seas rolled on in a chorus of blending, hoarse, and menacing roar.