

involved the bracing of the yards; for the songs of the men would certainly have brought him on deck, and I might have provoked some ugly incident. But the ship was going free, would head more westerly without occasioning further change than slightly slackening the weather braces of the upper yards. This was done quietly, and the dismasted hull was brought right dead on end with our flying jib-boom. The men now caught sight of her, and began to stare and point, but they did not sing out, as they saw by the telescope in my hand that I perceived her. The breeze unhappily began to slacken somewhat, owing perhaps to the gathering heat of the sun; our pace fell off, and a full hour passed before we brought the wreck near enough to see her permanently, for up to this she had been constantly vanishing under the rise of the swell. She was now about two miles off, and I took a long and steady look at her through the telescope. It was a black hull, with painted parts. The deck was flush fore and aft, and here was a good sized house before where the main-mast should have been. This house was uninjured, though the galley was split up, and the starboard stood up in splinters like the stump of a tree struck by lightning. No boats could be seen aboard of her. Her jib-boom was gone, and so were all three masts, clean cut off at the deck, as though a handsaw had done it; but the mizzen-mast was alongside, held by the shrouds and backstays, and the port main and fore-shrouds streamed like serpents from her chains into the water. I reckoned at once that she must be loaded with timber, for she never could keep afloat at that depth with any other kind of cargo in her.

She made a most mournful and pitiful object in the sunlight, sluggishly rolling to the swell which ran in transparent volumes over her sides and foamed around the deck-house. Once when her stern rose I saw the name "Cecilia" in broad white letters.

I was gazing at her intently in the effort to witness some indication of living things on board, when, to my mingled consternation and horror, I saw an arm project through the window of the deck-house and frantically wave what seemed to be a white handkerchief. As none of the men called out I judged this signal was not perceptible to the naked eye, and in my excitement I shouted—

"There's a living man on board of her, my lads!" dropped the glass, and ran aft to call the captain.

I met him coming up the companion ladder. The first thing he said was "You're out of your course," and looked up at the sails.

"There's a wreck yonder!" I cried, pointing eagerly, "with a man on board signalling to us."

"Get me the glass," he said, sulkily, and I picked it up and handed it to him.

He looked at the wreck for some moments, and addressing the man at the wheel, exclaimed, making a movement with his hands,

"Keep her away! Where the devil are you steering to!"

"Good Heaven!" I ejaculated: "there's a man on board—there may be others!"

"Damnation!" he exclaimed, between his teeth; "what do you mean by interfering with me! Keep her away!" he roared out.

During this time we had drawn sufficiently near to the wreck to enable the sharp-sighted among the crew to remark the signal, and they were calling out that there was somebody flying a handkerchief aboard the hull.

"Captain Coxon," said I, in as firm a voice as I could command—for I was nearly in as great a rage as he, and rendered insensible to all consequences by his inhumanity—if you bear away and leave that man yonder to sink with that wreck when he can be saved with very little trouble, you will become as much a murderer as any ruffian who stabs a man asleep.

When I had said this Coxon turned black in the face with passion. His eyes protruded, his hands and fingers worked as though he were under some electrical process, and I saw for the first time in all my life a sight I had always laughed at as a bit of impossible novelist description—a mouth foaming with rage. He rushed aft just over Duckling's cabin, and stamped with all his might.

"Now," thought I, "they may try to murder me!" And, without a word, I pulled off my coat, seized a belaying pin, and stood ready, resolved that, happen what might, I would give the first man who should lay his finger on me something to remember me by while he had breath in his body.

The men, not quite understanding what was happening, but seeing that a "row" was taking place, came off the fore-castle and advanced by degrees along the main-deck. Among them I noticed the cook, muttering to one or the other who stood near.

Mr. Duckling, awakened by the violent clattering over his head, came running up the companion with a bewildered, sleepy look in his face. The captain grasped him by the arm, and pointing to me, cried out, with an oath—

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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