



## IN A CYCLONE.

IN the month of July, 1853 (says Captain Parker Snow), I was on board a small vessel that was owned and commanded by myself. We were about two hundred miles off the east coast of Australia, and bound northward among the Polynesian Islands. But for two weeks we had encountered such tempestuous weather, and had received so much damage, that the little craft was now but a mere wreck upon the water. Her decks had been swept by heavy seas, washing everything overboard. Not only had the boat been carried away, but all the bulwarks, so that we were without protection of any kind, until, at great risk, ridge-ropes were run along in the best manner we could. Adding to our trouble, we had sprung a leak; and despite all efforts in pumping, the water gained so much, that it began to appear above our cabin floor every roll the vessel gave. It was the Antarctic winter; and besides having my *all* embarked in the venture I was making, my wife also was with me. She was, however, a good sailor, and bore up bravely. My small crew had likewise behaved manfully, until on this especial day, or rather evening, symptoms of discontent began to appear. As for myself, I had been nearly the whole time on deck, and was now covered with sores from the chafing of wet garments, though I had changed my attire several times. Good water-proofs were of no avail when it was almost literally standing in the ocean most of the time.

No wonder that I was both physically and mentally prostrated, as on this particular evening, before sunset, I

looked around, almost against hope, for any signs of a change. True, a change had occurred, as many might have thought greatly for the better: but to my eye it was deceitful. The wind had too suddenly fallen to a calm, and as I reclined against the companion-hatch aft, the green, sickly-looking sky boded us no good. Consequently, I still kept the vessel under small storm canvas, indeed only enough set to try and ease the fearful rolling that was occasioned by the mountainous seas tumbling about us. Truly, it was a terrible, though otherwise a grand sight. We were only sixteen tons register and thirty-four feet long, no longer than a war pinnace; yet, for the duty I was on, suitable enough, could we have reached the islands. And now before me, amid these giant waves, lay the little craft, floundering about like a human being suddenly struck with some terrible blow and deprived of reason. There, too, lay the destruction of all my hopes, and the loss of all I possessed in the world, should my fears prove true as to the coming night. I had made some storm calculations, and though keeping the result to myself, felt convinced we had drifted into the treacherous calm centre of a cyclone. Three months afterwards, when I got to Sydney and compared observations with official registers, my calculations were found correct.

Added to other prognostications was the ominous sign of sea-birds narrowing their circles of flight around us. These at length came so near that one was caught by my wife's hand as she sat on the deck with a rope around her, and life-buoy attached, in case the ship broke up. This bird had, to our surprise, a small piece of yellow ribbon tied round its neck; but on examination,

I could find no writing or indication of its being sent off, as is occasionally done, by others perhaps as badly situated as ourselves. We concluded, therefore, that as it appeared different from ordinary sea-birds, it had been blown from the land. Accordingly, I marked the ribbon with our name, stating we were not expecting to survive another night; gave the bird a good feed, which it partook of after the first few moments; and when, a little later, a breeze sprung up which blew on to the shore, we released it, and watched its flight to the westward. Two hours afterwards, the hurricane again burst upon us, and, as I had calculated, from the exactly opposite quarter whence it had previously come. Hope now all but left us. Leaving one man on deck, fastened to the pump, and relieved every hour by all of us, even my wife also, in turn, and lashing the helm alee, we kept below, awaiting our fate. Suitable prayers were read; and then each man sought to lie on the cabin floor as best he could, water, as I have said, being all about even there.

My wife had gone to her berth and lain down, still with the life-buoy loosely attached to her. I was seated on a chest by her side, and in open view of the men. We had all shaken hands, and now expected each moment to be our last, as seas rolled over us, and the leak gained, though the pump was bravely kept going. Now, I must state that my wife had a very fine canary hanging over the head of her sleeping-berth. The bird had come with us a few years before from America, and had already made two or three voyages in our company; and all of us considered the little creature as the ship's pet. Indeed, previously at Melbourne, when we had camped in "Canvastown," scores of persons used to come out on Sundays to have a look at the sweet songster that reminded them of the far-off home; and I was offered on several occasions up to ten pounds for it. Its loud and enliven-

ing notes could be heard all over the camping-ground. So, as it charmed us and many of our own race, in like manner did it afterwards delight and surprise numbers of the wild Australian aborigines when we were thrown for weeks among them, as also, still later, the uncivilised natives of Tierra del Fuego. On the present occasion, this bird was, as I have said, hanging over my wife's head, and, doubtless from long use to a ship's motion, was fast asleep, as, with my wife's hand in mine, I drowsily watched her lying in a sort of dreamy stupor.

One hour, two hours, three hours passed away, unrelieved by anything approaching life, except the change of one of us to the pump, the keeping of which going was our only faintest hope. How the vessel rolled and jumped and tossed about! How the seas came lashing over her! And how terrible our condition was, may be easily conceived! But a strange death-like calmness—the resignation of despair—had now come over all of us. Personally, I determined to abide by hope, and a confiding trust in the All-wise, though often mysterious One, who would do as seemeth him best; and now that I am very old, I can confidently say I was never more calm and ready for whatever might happen than then. I had endeavoured to do my duty; my conscience was clear; my brave wife was by my side; my men had listened manfully to the few words I uttered in prayer and mutual farewell; and I had now reclined my head, dozing at intervals as best I could. Suddenly, somewhat before midnight, the canary burst out into splendid song. My wife aroused, turned to me, and in a semi-unconscious state said, "Hark! hark! The angels are speaking to us! Hear them! hear them!" Then becoming more conscious, though still mentally wandering, she added, "Up! up! we shall be saved, saved, saved! The angels are telling us so."

I roused myself again. The tired-out men were yet asleep amidst all the noise of creaking timbers and the splash of water about them, for sailors will sleep sound through the greatest accustomed noises, though awakening instantly when these cease. So I stepped cautiously over their forms, and crept on deck. It was still fearful. I could not stand erect, but had to crawl along, holding by whatever my hands could find yet secure amidships, till I reached the man at the pump. Him I relieved, casting his lashings off and putting them round myself; then bidding him crawl below, making sure to secure well the stout tarpaulin which covered the small opening that admitted one at a time to the cabin. And there I stood, working hard at the pump for dear life, and thoughts rushing through my brain the remembrance of which now seem to conjure up only a something so weird and maniacal, accompanied as it were by a sort of defiance of all the wild elements of destruction, that I almost fancy myself looking at a picture instead of a past reality.

As I was then, as I now can see my-

self on that night, so let others picture me. At that pump, alone on the deck of a mere wreck, only the lowermast standing, with a reefed storm-staysail to steady her, though the sail often flapped when we fell, literally fell, into the hollow of a sea, to rise again suddenly and meet the full blast, which came like thunder-bolts upon the stout little bit of canvas displayed; the rushing and tumbling about of the tiny craft; the night, black as jet—there I stood alone! Many similar have I seen since that night, but never one that more impressed me with the consciousness of what was a death by foundering at sea.

Soon I detected symptoms of a break in the gale; and when my turn came to be relieved, I was able to go below and give assurances of hope, even as my barometer indicated. The burst of the storm had ceased; and three days afterwards we made the land, got our wrecked craft into a shelter, and were saved!

Our little canary went other voyages with us, until, after being our companion for several years, it died quietly here at home.

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## A NEW PLAGUE.



FEW years ago people were startled at the report that the Colorado Beetle, of whose devastation all had heard in America, had really found its way across the Atlantic, and had appeared at various places in Germany; and that there was every danger of the plague spreading:—"The justly dreaded addition to the plagues of thirty centuries," says the *Times*, "surpasses them all in its locomotive powers, in its versatility, in its power of adapting itself to circumstances, and in the determination with which it

compasses its ends. It can fly considerable distances, and has a wonderful instinct for directing its flight; it can take to the water and walk or paddle, if not on the open sea, which is not necessary, on rivers, pools, and docks, which is all that it wants. In this way it approaches a barge or a ship, walks up the sides, stows itself away in a crevice, a heap of dirt, or deep in the cargo, and disembarks with the passengers and crew, knowing well that wherever they go, board and lodging will be found. The Dominion authorities tell us we shall never keep it out. It has got down to Montreal, where it is impossible to