

its light the form of the doctor was visible, floating rapidly astern. Not a moment was to be lost, and divesting myself of coat and waistcoat, I was quickly in the water at his side. Being a good swimmer, there was little difficulty in supporting him; the shock of the plunge had apparently restored his senses, for he recognized me, and feebly syllabled my name. A few strokes brought us to the life-buoy, and resting my feet on the lower part under water, one arm clinging to the upper rod, and the other round the waist of my friend, I awaited with impatience the approach of succour from the ship. The situation was by no means agreeable; the half-drowned man soon lost the little consciousness that remained, and hung a dead weight on my arm. The recent tornado had occasioned a heavy sea; and, though the life-buoy bore our weight well, yet frequently the waves, dashing over our faces, half-choked me. I was also myself much weakened, having only lately recovered from an attack of yellow fever; and as the light at the *Pantaloons'* masthead dimmed and faded to my eye as we drifted more and more from the ship, so also fainter and more faint waned my hopes of deliverance. The portfire was quickly burning out, already its brilliancy had much lessened, and the fine volume of light it had at first given was dwindling into a fitful gushing of sparks, as in a badly-prepared schoolboy's squib. I knew well that, if the light should indeed go out entirely, the boat sent to our aid would row in vain quest of such a speck as the life-buoy; when morning broke it might be discovered, but long before that time my exhausted arms would have loosened their hold, and our bodies found the sailor's grave. With despair in my heart I gazed upwards at the portfire, which now suddenly shot forth an expiring gleam—tinging with a blue unearthly glare the closed eyes and senseless form of my companion: and then all was darkness. But, even at that moment, I heard the welcome sound of the measured beat of oars. Gathering all my strength, I hailed; the hail was answered cheerily by many strong voices, and guided by my shout the boat discovered our position. Soon friendly hands grasped us, and in another minute I was safely seated in the boat, with the doctor, still unconscious, by my side.

The boat's crew gave way cheerily for the brig, towing the life-buoy astern. Overhead the sky was clearing, the stars again shone out; and as the black form of our floating home once more became visible—her hull looming large in the obscurity of night—I revelled in anticipation of the comforts and

of the rest in my own little cabin, which a few moments more would bring. But not easily were these enjoyments to be gained—not yet were the dangers of this eventful night passed.

As we neared the ship it became perceptible that she was rolling heavily in the trough of the sea, and that the act of getting on board and hoisting up the boat would be a perilous one. Nothing, however, could be gained by delay, so seizing what appeared to be a favourable moment, during a temporary lull in the ship's motion, we pulled up alongside. Just as the boat came abreast of the gangway, we rose on the crest of an immense wave: a crowd of men were on deck ready to assist us, and into their outstretched arms we literally threw the insensible form of the doctor. Two of our men also leaped on the deck and were safe, but the danger to us who still remained was imminent. Our boat sank with the receding wave, the ship at the same time rolling heavily over to starboard, away from us. With the return roll would come the danger. In vain with desperate efforts we tried with oars to force the boat away from her dangerous proximity. Closer and closer yet the power of attraction pressed her to the ship's side. The return roll came. I looked up, saw the heavy dark mass descending remorseless upon our heads; then a crash, a cry of agony—a few struggling, breathless moments in the dark depths; and I was floating, half-stunned, but unhurt, on the surface, amidst oars and fragments of the wrecked boat. One poor fellow, whose death-shriek we had heard, had sunk to rise no more, but the others were swimming beside me uninjured.

And now the safest way of regaining the ship had to be considered. The "falls," or ropes by which the lost boat had been lowered, were hanging from the projecting davits, their ends trailing in the water some six or eight feet from the side; and to climb up by their assistance was an easy mode of escape for trained sailors.

Swimming therefore to these ropes, I directed my men to go up first, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing them all safely on board, the ship at this time being tolerably steady. Then grasping the falls I began my own ascent hand over hand. Scarcely had my feet left the water, however, when the rolling motion once more commenced. As the ship inclined gradually over, my feet again touched the surface; still I descended until the waters closed over my head, and then lower and lower yet—clinging the while to the rope as my only chance of ultimate safety—until at length I felt the downward motion