

separates life from death I cannot say—such may possibly have been the case with many—but my own experience of the sensations of drowning, extending even to the verge of absolute unconsciousness, is far different. The agony of this second immersion was almost insupportable. As in the first instance, I sank slowly, then after a momentary pause was dragged violently upwards, the resisting body of water clinging to me as if loth to lose its prey. Once more my face reached the surface; I gave a deep gasp for breath. But nature had been too heavily tried. A loud booming in my ears—flashes of light before my eyes—and I knew no more. . . .

When consciousness returned, I was in my own cabin, the assistant-surgeon bending over the bed. Although too feeble for conversation, I could understand from him that my rescue had been effected by the men who had descended the rope; they had seized my hands just as insensibility was unlocking their grasp. He also informed me that, contrary to all expectation, the shock experienced by the surgeon was likely to prove beneficial—that, all fever having left him, he was now sleeping calmly and peaceably. With strict injunctions to follow so good an example, I was left to my repose.

In these southern latitudes no soft intervening twilight exists; the change from obscure night to glaring broiling day is almost instantaneous. No sooner did day break on the following morning, and the sun appear, than all eyes were anxiously engaged sweeping the horizon in hopes of encountering the lost slaver. Fifty voices quickly exclaimed, "There she is!" and there indeed, not two miles off, was the luckless vessel, which even the tornado had failed to save. The sea was calm; not a ripple disturbed its glassy smoothness as it gently heaved in the long low swell which prevailed. It was evident to the crew of the slave-ship that no chance of escape remained; although armed, they were no match for the English cruiser. Soon a Brazilian ensign fluttered up to her masthead, waved there for a moment, and then slowly and reluctantly descended, in token of surrender.

Our boats, well manned and armed, now pulled towards the prize, passing through some dozens of empty wine and ale bottles recently thrown overboard, demonstrating that the slave-crew had begun to drown their sorrows in the good liquor the cabin stores afforded, determined it should not be wasted down the throats of their captors. Lazily floating also close to the vessel were several large sharks, showing too clearly the nature

of her cargo. Attracted by the scent, these monsters of the deep follow in the wake of slave-ships, accompanying them across the Atlantic, and becoming the floating graves of many a victim to the horrors of the Middle Passage.

On boarding and taking possession, the prize proved to be the *Aventureiro*, a fine yacht-like schooner, carrying one long swivel gun amidships. Small need was there to inquire of her sullen commander whether the cargo was lawful or "contraband," and our sailors at once proceeded to open the closely-covered hatchways. On removing them a dense steaming mist of foul sickening air ascended from the slave-deck below; and three hundred unhappy beings of both sexes were discovered lying down, their feet manacled to long iron bars placed "fore and aft" throughout the ship. From this piteous writhing mass of humanity arose strange voices and shouts of joy, as the irons were unloosed and the fact of their deliverance dawned upon their minds. Half the number were brought on deck to breathe the purer atmosphere, and the rest, unfettered, roamed about at will below.

The crew of the slaver, twenty-four in all, were transferred to the *Pantaloön*, and a lieutenant and party of men detailed to convey the prize to Sierra Leone. Before parting company, however, an exciting scene of plunder was enacted; officers and sailors keenly searching after comestibles which—although articles of daily consumption on shore—were luxuries to men shut up for months in an African cruiser.

Tins of preserved meats, sardines, potted salmon and lobster, boxes of crystallized sugar, raisins, potatoes, butter, wine, and bottled pale ale rewarded the laughing plunderers; and were passed into the ship under the very eye of the slave-captain, who, as he leaned over the side, muttered the not inappropriate word, "Ladrones!" Soon, however, his face cleared up, and ejaculating "Fortuna de la guerra!" he smoked his paper cheroot with calmness, consoled doubtless by the recollection of former successful trips; for slave-traders confess that if only one vessel out of four escapes, they are amply repaid.

And now, all arrangements being complete, the prize-crew gave a hearty farewell cheer as the *Aventureiro*, with England's flag of liberty waving at the peak, bore away to the westward, a cheer returned as heartily by their comrades in the *Pantaloön*, as that vessel's head was once more turned towards her cruising ground.

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