

to have been all blown up together into one dense mass of dark and threatening gloom, and, as if for miles round the wind had focussed to one spot, it burst upon the ship. The masts bent slowly down as she rose upon the wave, and the receding spray foamed among the spars. They must shorten sail; it seems madness to ascend the straining ropes, but no one hesitates: there is a moment's lull in the trough of the sea; some of the sailors are up already; our favourite, the topman, is first, busy with the reef of the maintopsail. The ship rises on the swell, and the storm roars through the shrouds again: the sheets snap like a thread; light as a cloud the canvass flies to leeward; a man is entangled in its ropes, borne away upon the wind; the mist closes over him—he is seen no more.

The tempest soon after subsided, without further mischief; when the weather cleared, we found ourselves close to the headland we had seen two days before: we had been travelling backwards and forwards, ten miles an hour, ever since. At the climax of the gale the noise had been so great, that many of those in their berths below thought we were assuredly lost. This conviction had very different effects upon different individuals; some pulled the bed-clothes over their heads, and lay in