

unaccustomed to act on his own responsibility, and he dreaded the rashness of a midshipman. He coughed, looked hard at a special rowlock, rubbed it with his great horny fist, and muttered something about,—

"Spouse it's a hambuscade. What can we do agin forty or fifty Portuguese? and as for blacks, they can fire muskets as well as white men."

"Chal!" said Powis, speaking between his half-clenched teeth. "Do you think my brains are all leather, like yours? Don't I see that the rascals are gone ashore to bring slaves from the barracoon? There can be no one on board but a nigger and a sick man or two. I tell you, man, I'll go alone, and swim to it, if you are all cowards."

This fired the damp powder of the old seadog's spirit. There is a drop of Cain's cruel blood at the bottom of most men's hearts.

"A vast with your cowards!" he cried, pulling out his cutlass, and running his big thumb along the edge in a most business-like way. It was a bad omen for the slaver's men.

Powis's eyes glistened as he seized old Gasket's hand, and took off his own cap, and waved it. Then he and the men took out their pistols and looked to the locks, or tightened their belts, and slung round their cutlasses snugger for their hands.

The boy-captain's speech was spoken in a low but firm voice. "Men," he said, "we may be doing a safe thing, or we may be going to our death, for, even if we do get the slaver safe, our captain and comrades may not return in time to help us if the dogs dare to try and get her back. If we die, let us die like Englishmen, true to our God and our Queen; we must hold together back to back, and no finchers. If we fail, they will at least say in England that we deserved to have succeeded. God be with us, and guide us to victory, for our cause is a good cause. Now then, men, give way with a will, and board her!"

"Pull straight for her, Spitfires!" cried Gasket, and out the boat flew from between the branches as if it was driven by steam.

The water was scarcely splashed by the oars. It seemed only an instant after that the boat lay alongside the phantom ship, and, headed by Powis, the boarders dashed like wild cats at the main chains, and sprang on deck with an English hurrah that was full of cheerful courage.

Three or four frightened negroes and an old P. guess sprang to arms, but they were cut down or beaten down in a moment. One Spitfire was shot in the arm, but with the exception of that casualty, and a knife-cut on Powis's sword-wrist, the daring assailants suffered no hurt. The phantom ship was their own.

"Well done!" cried Powis, wrapping a handkerchief round his wrist. "The dog tried hard to get at my throat, but I gave him No. 3, Gasket, and that'll last him for some time. See to him; he mustn't bleed to death. The ship's our own. Now get up the anchor, for we must move her off."

He fired his pistol, and the Spitfire answered with a gun, as agreed on.

"We haven't too much time," he said, "for directly the blackguards hear the row they'll be after us. Now, with a will, lads, and I'll take a capstan bar myself, for I've got my left hand all right still."

And they did work with a will. They found some slaves in the hold, and made them, too, help. In an incredibly short time the vessel's head was turned, and she and the Spitfire were working down the lagoon, towards the old mooring-place.

And now, in the full excitement, the boy's nature began to crop up again. Once more on board the Spitfire, and down in the cabin, he danced hornpipes and hugged Jekyll. Nor was Jekyll one whit less delighted.

"Only think, Jekyll, how pleased the governor and master will be to hear how we took the slaver."

"The dodgy old fellow," shouted Jekyll. "Allow me, gentlemen, to propose the health of Captain Powis of the Phantom Ship; that's about the style."

But the boy's talk was broken by the entrance

of Gasket. He looked flurried, and rather pale with excitement.

"Mr. Powis," he said, "it's all up; here's the dirty blackguards of Portuguese on us as thick as thunder—boats full on 'em, sir, rampaging away like so many sore bears. You can see them poking their noses out of the bight there, as thick as bees at a swarming."

Powis was awake in a moment, and ready for the emergency. If there was not a Nelson, there was at least the making of a Colliagwood in that "Pickle" of the vessel.

"We'll warn the dogs, Gasket," he said, leaping up, and calmly loading a revolver that lay on the table before him. "What we've contrived to get we'll contrive to keep. It can't be long before Captain Willoughby and our messmates return. Be quick, man, then, and give them a shell before the canoes spread out into the bay; we shall have them more in a lump now."

There was no time to lose. When Powis got on deck, five or six canoes, crammed with shouting negroes, mulattoes, and piratical-looking Portuguese sailors in Panama hats, were rowing fiercely out of the tree-shadowed mouth of the lagoon, and pulling straight for the Spitfire.

"Give it them hot, don't throw away a shot!" cried Powis to the men at the guns.

"Well thrown, but a little over them."

The next moment the second gun thundered out.

"Famous, by Jove!" cried the boy-captain.

This time the shot ploughed into the second canoe, and shattered it into fragments. The leading canoes halted to assist the wounded and pick up the survivors.

The Spitfires gave a shout of triumph. The next moment the storm burst full upon them. The slavers rallied and bore down upon them in full force. From the first canoe a dozen rough, black-muzzled fellows dashed at the Spitfire's side and attempted to board her. Powis met them with pike and cutlass, and drove them back over the ship's gunwale after ten minutes hand-to-hand fighting. Twice Gasket's cutlass saved the boy-captain's life. Three of the oldest hands, urged on by Jekyll, kept at work all the time with a central gun, to keep off the other miscreants.

It was hard work, and the men were all but spent, when a discharge of musketry arose into the air from the foot of the Elephant Hill.

"God be thanked!" cried Powis, as he leant, faint and wounded, against a gun-carriage. "We are saved, boys. Give it them again? Blow the dogs out of the water! Now, all at once."

The pirates had fled, leaving one-third of their number dead in Elephant Bay. But Captain Willoughby had not arrived a moment too soon. Great was his astonishment and delight to discover that his "Pickle" of a midshipman had captured the famous phantom ship.

Powis is now, we rejoice to say, first lieutenant of H.M.S. A——, one of the finest vessels in the Channel Fleet. WALTER THORNBURY.

## MIRACULOUS VOYAGE UPON A WHALE'S BACK.

IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE.

THE following extraordinary narrative of a voyage upon the back of a whale is translated from "Le Canadien" newspaper of 24th January, 1866. Although the statements appear to be incredible, they are vouched for on good authority.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you reserve a space in your columns for the publicity of a terrible and miraculous occurrence which took place at Fox River, district of Gaspé; a truly astonishing fact, but one which can nevertheless be supported by the most incontestable evidence.

Last summer, while visiting the different posts in this district, I met at Fox River with a Mr. Narcisso Bernier, merchant of St. Thomas, Montmagny, who was there on matters connected with his business.

One fine day we decided upon making a trip upon the water with the view of enjoying our-

selves fishing for cod. A favourable wind carried us quickly to a distance of about five miles from the coast, where we threw in our lines, and set ourselves to fish. To our great satisfaction we took a large quantity; but this satisfaction and our position of tranquil security, from which we gazed upon the sea, smooth as a sheet of ice, was soon changed to one of terrible anxiety as far as we were concerned. The fish, hitherto so plentiful, seemed to have deserted us quite suddenly; and I, profiting by the occasion, sought repose from fatigue, in the bottom of the barge, leaving my friend Mr. Bernier to continue his occupation. I was soon in the arms of Morpheus; but you cannot conceive, Mr. Editor, my consternation on hearing the dolesome cry of help, helping through my ears in accents of the most fearful energy. The moment I heard this voice of terror I found myself raised upon my feet as if by some invisible hand; I looked in the barge, and on the surrounding water,—my friend had disappeared. A fresh cry aroused me from my stupor, and I beheld Mr. Bernier, boat hook in hand, on the back of an enormous fish, which I recognised to be a whale.

Seeing that the distance was too great to make myself heard, I hastened to raise the grappling in order to approach him—but the whale uttered a frightful snort, started off with terrific speed, and in a moment was out of sight. "O! Eternal Heaven," I cried, "thou who preserved Jonah, would it be more impossible to protect my friend upon the back of a similar monster!"

Coming to myself, I thought of returning, and set sail for the land. Mr. Bernier was greatly esteemed in these parts, and sorrow soon spread itself through the village and neighbouring posts. In an agony of mind, and exhausted with fatigue, I retired early to bed, in order to deliver myself the more completely to the thoughts of the sad fate of my friend.

You will be equally astonished with me, Mr. Editor, in reading the following—Early next morning I was aroused by a knocking at the door of my room. I made the person come in. What did I behold—a phantom, or a human being? No, not a phantom, well then, a man. It was Mr. Bernier, himself, who came smilingly to shake hands with me. I believed myself dreaming, yet there he was in flesh and blood. You can easily understand the feelings I experienced in beholding my, resuscitated friend, for I thought him dead at the time. He recounted to me as follows the details of his terrible adventure:

"A short time after you had fallen asleep," said he, "I saw nearing us a black object, apparently drifting with the tide. I allowed it to approach, and to my great surprise, perceived it to be a whale, which I thought to be dead. Unfortunately it was only asleep or in a state of inexplicable lethargy; it stopped of its own accord in close proximity to the barge, and I resolved to possess myself of it. 'Ha ha!' said I, 'with this big fish, if I can only succeed in tying it to the boat, I will surprise Mr. Richard; I shall tell him I caught it with my line.' I got upon its back, with a boat-hook and a piece of cord, intending to make it fast to the boat. My back was turned towards you during this operation, and when I turned my head, I perceived myself at some distance. It was at this moment I shouted for help, and I think my voice, given with all my force, must have aroused the whale from her sleep, for off she shot like an arrow. Notwithstanding my fear I had presence of mind enough to plunge the boat hook into her back in order to furnish me with a sufficient hold. The wound made her double her speed, the water became like powdered snow driven before a violent gale of wind; I could see nothing, nor knew the course we were taking, though I felt certain we were making for the north, tacking sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. I was quite in despair, and feeling my strength giving way was often on the point of slipping into the water.

"For the last time I offered my soul to God, when I perceived land towards which we were directing our course—a few minutes afterwards I recognized it to be the island of Anticosti, eighteen leagues distant from the south shore.

"The hope, that the whale would run herself ashore renewed my strength, and gave me fresh