

nor-wester or a norther before long, so make all snug and never mind their grumbling."

Soon after sunset, when the watch was set, Gilbert and the first mate were standing together near the binnacle when the canvass shook violently and then drew in flat against the masts.

"Here it comes," said Mr. Trail, "the skipper is a good weather prophet." Drawing his finger between his lips to moisten it, the mate held it aloft. "Ah!" he said, "I thought so, here it is straight from the north: thank heaven we are all snug."

While the mate was speaking Gilbert was lost in admiration of the magnificent spectacle presented to view in the south-east, where the moon, now an hour and more high, was just emerging from a huge saddle-shaped cloud of dark purple from whose threatening crest vivid flashes of lightning were continually emitted. The flashes from the northern extremity of this cloud-ridge were especially brilliant, and the immense cumulus, illuminated at once by the lightning and the golden moon-shield with its diamond-like attendant, the planet Jupiter, might almost have been taken for some lofty mountain bulwark rather than a bank of vapor.

"It will not come from that quarter," said Mr. Trail, casting a glance towards the port bow, "but from behind us there where you see those ragged fringes coming on before the gale. We will pull on the braces a little and let her run before it. It will be a fair wind at all events, and will take us to the Gut in no time if everything holds."

"To the Gut?" inquired Gilbert, not at once recognizing the familiar word, so common among sailors.

"To the Strait of Gibraltar," said Mr. Trail, turning away to attend to the braces.

Within an hour the storm came down on the Nizam with great fury, and ere long the gallant vessel was driven like a feather before it under close-reefed topsails, mizen

and staysails. All night she drove onward, the storm ever growing in strength, the huge waves, as they raced astern, being literally skimmed of their crests by the furious wind. About midnight Arderne, clad in a suit of Mr. Trail's oilskins, and with a sou'-wester tied under his chin, once more ventured on deck. Here, partially sheltered by the deck-house or cabin, and holding on to a stout brass handrail, he tried to form an adequate notion of what was transpiring. At first he could make out nothing very distinctly, for his eyes were filled with tears by the wind and showers of salt spray surrounded him. Gradually, however, he became somewhat more at ease, so that he was able to take note of the scene. The wind being dead astern, the Nizam was comparatively on an even keel, and even Gilbert, landsman though he was, realized that she fairly flew through the water, which heaved and tossed, as it seemed to him, far above her on both sides as she was borne onward to the south. Small fleecy clouds raced across the sky overhead, now and then obscuring the moon for a second or two, and except for the howling of the wind through the rigging and the tossing seas there was little to inspire fear, for the night was unusually brilliant.

Gilbert Arderne had been on deck about ten minutes when he saw a man, dressed in oilskins like himself, descending the ladder from the poop. It was Tom Scantlebury. He looked somewhat surprised to see Gilbert, thinking perhaps that, if left to his own choice, he himself would prefer the shelter of a berth below on such a night. Twisting an arm around the ladder, Tom said:

"Well, Mr. Arderne, we have a fair wind, you see, but a trifle too much of it perhaps. The captain himself is on deck, and we have two hands at the wheel. It will blow itself out before morning, but we shall have made almost enough southing by that time; she is travelling like a race-horse."