

At the same time alarm guns were fired, to give notice of their position, and avoid being run down by the rest of the fleet then scattered in every direction on the river, above and below. These were soon answered and repeated, until each vessel, in a similar manner, had come to an anchor, within a safe distance of the shore.

But louder grew the roar of the wind and waves, and the sleet drove thicker against the deck and through the rigging; while those who watched above came down into the cabins, from time to time, looking as if they had been emersed in a solution of alum, for their clothes were encrusted with crystals of ice, and whenever they rubbed they produced a sound like sheet iron—they were so stiff and crisp.

In the meantime, the night fell, and the storm rose higher and higher, and an old mariner was heard to say, that he wished they were beyond the gulf and clear of soundings; for that the winter was upon them, tooth and nail, and there would be the devil to pay before long.

Hark! Was that a gun, or the boom of a wave breaking on the rocky shore? Another, and a third! there can be no doubt now whence proceeds the sounds; one of the fleet has gone ashore and is firing for assistance. God give them aid! for he