

## THE ADVENTURER

The weary head sank. The weary eyes closed. Westbrook gazed down at the handsome face long and earnestly. A smile still lurked in the corners of the well-shaped mouth; the breathing was as soft and regular as a child's; a veil of contentment covered the careworn features now softened in sleep.

The old man tiptoed silently from the room and held a whispered colloquy with Goltz and Wicks outside.

A few minutes later the *Fortuna*, under storm trysail and treble-reefed fore-topsails, was tearing her way through the dark and flooded llaño. Her great wheels shot up a blinding spray; her great hull rocked and bounded on the groaning springs; her masts bent as though the tortured wood could not long hold back the weight of the gale. Wicks, his thick legs wide apart, his hands clinched on the rail, his speaking trumpet tight in the vice of his arm, dominated the uproar from the lofty bridge, and with masterful eye and rousing voice sped the ship on her perilous course.

Gloom in front. Gloom behind. Dreary, watery stretches of sodden earth. Dripping ropes and thundering sails. A world of wet and wind and emptiness, through which the *Fortuna* lumbered in headlong flight, jolting, bumping, lurching, discordantly creaking from every rivet of her fabric.

Homeward bound!