

in a single night. Not a vestige remained, save this golden message wafted up from the solemn sea: "*I hope for better things!*" There is but one ignoble consummation for all things temporal, but there is a world beyond to which all may look for better things.

Such sea-beaten waifs the patrol occasionally discovers; or, perchance, before he has completed his rounds, the sullen boom of a gun comes heavily from windward, or else the pack lifts and he discerns the outline of a dark hull grinding on the outer bar, with flapping sails and rigging loosely streaming in the wind, and swept with foam from stem to stern. Then quickly the alarm flies to Head-quarters. The signal-flag goes up before the courier has fairly dismounted from his horse. "*A wreck! a wreck!*" resounds on every hand. From every house the tenants issue forth like firemen at the bell stroke. There is a rush for the boat-house and stables, where horses ready harnessed are always in waiting, and in a twinkling the life-boat is mounted on its wheels, the wrecking apparatus is tossed into it, and a motley cavalcade goes galloping along the winding beach in the direction of the wreck. All is excitement, and every eager horseman presses forward to his duty, the lumbering cart following in the rear, with its three ponies strangely harnessed, one in the shafts, and two ahead as leaders, on round many a point and crescent shore, and thence across the Island toward the other beach. But ere they have accomplished half the distance they desery the figure of a stranger toiling wearily toward them. Hurrah! there can be no mistake, it is one of the ship-wrecked crew; one at least is safe! The foremost gather around him with congratulations and eager questions. It is the captain of the vessel, a brig. His men, he says, are most of them safely landed in the yawl, and the vessel is thumping on the beach, but not yet broken up. He will guide them to the scene of the disaster. Now, gathering fresh courage and stimulated to continued exertions, the cavalcade presses forward; but presently a thickening cloud of fog envelops them so that they can scarcely see their horses' heads before them. The guide becomes bewildered, and all are in danger of losing each other in the fog. On this emergency the only means of giving the stranded seamen immediate relief is to form a line of patrol across the narrow strip of land, and thus move forward abreast, keeping each other within sight or hail. Thus they proceed toward the extremity. But presently the fog lifts a little, and the dim outline of the vessel is barely defined just outside the surf, with her bows driven high up into the sand and her stern pounding heavily with each successive surge. Some of her sails are set, and with each lurch of the vessel flap with a loud report. It seems that the captain finding no escape, has wisely driven his vessel ashore before the wind. The yawl is discovered near at hand, with the worn and weary seamen soundly sleeping under the thwart; nor do they express surprise when awakened to see strange faces around them, knowing full well that the captain had gone for aid. Sailors are so much the victims of circumstances that they learn to accept the vicissitudes of life with a show of stolid indifference in whatever shape they come.

While all are waiting for the arrival of the cart and deliberating what course to pursue, they are startled by a voice from the deep, and lo! the form of the steward appears on the fore-castle, and a stentorian voice hails: "*Ahoy there! breakfast is ready! All you chaps what wants breakfast better git aboard in a hurry if you want it hot!*"

Had manna fallen from the clouds the event could scarcely have been more startling, for the crew believed he had been washed overboard and drowned. But the voice and figure were unmistakable. It was the voice of a genuine Cape Cod Yankee, who was lord of the galley, and the figure held in his hand a steaming coffee-pot from which the muddy fluid slopped fitfully with every thump of the vessel. Such a welcome and *bona fide* summons needed no repeating, and when all had satisfied their senses, they clambered up the forechains with unworldly agility and applied themselves to their task as best they could. Nor were they invited to partake of mean fare. There was pork

and potatoes, and pudding afterward, with a ration of gin and oranges for dessert. How the steward contrived to make stove and sauce-pan do duty will ever remain a mystery, for the vessel thumped so that it was difficult to eat, even with the primitive table service of fingers.

From this day forward for a month there is constant work for man and horse. To strip the wreck of spars and sails and every thing of value that can be saved, to land and store the cargo, and haul it down to Head-quarters for reshipment, will cost many an hour of toil and many a tedious trip to and fro through the tiresome sand. All this time some one must remain in camp near the wreck, to guard the goods from depredators or render prompt service in the event of a sudden gale; but, comfortably sheltered by a mainsail thrown over the brig's caboose, and protected from the damp fogs and searching blasts by an overshadowing bluff, their temporary hermitage is not only endured with equanimity, but invested with a spice of romance. The lighter spars of the dismantled vessel furnish tent-poles, a solid mahogany log supplies a sofa, and a barrel set on end serves nicely for a chimney; and at night no moss or down can furnish a more comfortable bed than the softly yielding sand which the pressure of the body moulds to tired and aching bones. And when the day's labor is ended, the lantern swings cheerily overhead, while song and jest go freely round, and startling tale seasoned by oft-replenished pipe. Sometimes the solitude is broken by a visit from the patrol, or perhaps "*Old Sam,*" a worn-out patriarch discarded from the stables, comes down for an evening stroll, and moping near at hand furnishes the butt for many a jibe and jest.

But it is time to look for the return of the cutter, if, peradventure, she has been fortunate enough to weather the gale. Once more the signal flag mounting to the mast-head announces the happy intelligence that she is already in the offing, and in an hour or two she again comes gallantly to anchor abreast of Head-quarters. The Captain states that a few hours' run carried him clear of the circuit of the storm, and that there was only a stiff breeze of wind where he was. He has additional service to perform now, for the shipwrecked crew are to be transported to the main land with their luggage, besides, he has orders to carry back a score of the wild ponies which are to be caught, and sold in Halifax on Government account.

And now follows one of those wildly exciting episodes which annually or twice a year occur to break the monotony of Sable Island life, and whose counterpart may be found on the Texan prairies in the wild chase after mustangs. The fleetest and best-trained horses are selected from the stables, or loosed from the tethers where they have been grazing. There is a careful girthing of saddles and adjusting of bridles. Some dexterous riders leap to the bare back with only a halter to guide, and when all are ready and properly equipped according to fancy, they canter off in motley cavalcade—red shirts and blue, rough pea jackets and stained tarpaulins, hats and caps of fantastic shape, and flaunting bandanas wound round the head, all mingled in a curious mélange, bobbing as they go, like corks upon the waves. Galloping on toward the lower extremity of the Island where the ponies most do congregate, and where they are generally secure from intrusion, videttes begin to mount the hill-tops which overlook their feeding grounds, and taking observation, discover dusky groups moving in the distance. The entire number of ponies does not now exceed two hundred, but they do not herd all together. They are divided into half a dozen gangs (each known to the Island people by a distinguishing name), have separate pastures, and are each presided over by an old grizzled stallion, sagacious as Solomon and conspicuous for his patriarchal length of mane, which falls in tangled masses over head and shoulders. These old custodians are ever on the alert, and even now can be seen standing a little apart from their charges, with head erect, sniffing the tainted atmosphere and tossing their shaggy locks from their eyes.

Warily the hunters now move forward in ample circuit, always keeping the hills between themselves and their prey, and at length appear in long, unbroken line behind them, stretching from shore