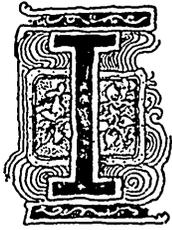


A STORM AT SEA.



DO remember me, and I'm sure most of the boys of the '70s in Ottawa remember, with what peculiar enthusiasm our learned Professor of Natural Science, Father B——, used to hold forth on some particular studies. For instance, who can ever forget the care and painstaking with which the lectures on Physical Geography were given and those charts, so perfectly designed to illustrate some of the more interesting phases of nature's economy! For my part, being somewhat given, in those days, to weaving out fancies about some of my chums and even sometimes about some of my professors, I got it into my head once, while listening to the theory of revolving storms, cyclones, tornadoes, waterspouts, etc., that our learned professor must have had a personal encounter with some of these horrors; so peculiar was the gleam in his eyes while he was telling of the awful power of a cyclone at sea. I won't say how long it took me to make sure my fancy was well founded, nor under what peculiar circumstances we actually beguiled the silent man into telling us all about it—i.e. all about his coming over from *la Belle France* to these bleak shores, but he did, and how beautifully jolly I thought it was, and how I wished I had been on board the fated *Pereire*, that I might have a blood-curdling story to tell to my grand-children (prospective), knowing how everlastingly interesting are shipwreck stories to the youngsters, and as I feel gifted (!) with a peculiarly strong love of heroic fiction I would, of course, have piled on the agony a few hundred degrees beyond the veracious and concise and exact account given us. I shall not however try to enhance his thrilling story or description, rather out of respect for the narrator; indeed, I regret that this same motive compels me to suppress some points which I know would not have been told had he known one of us would ever turn traitor and put his words in the ears of the public.

It was in 1869, that our professor bade good-bye to his home and

country, to his kith and kin, not in search of adventure *a la* Crusoe but like all those noble victims of self-sacrifice, at the word of his superiors, he set out to labor and to suffer and to die in a strange land. Well for the missionary hero that, more truly than ancient philosophers could have understood, he is at home everywhere! In no land a stranger! Well for him that his faith is fixed on high and that those uprootings of heart tendrils that bind him to the land of his birth, to the home of his father, to the soul of his mother, in their very pain give him strength, and he goes forth with good cheer. I did not understand all this heroism while I was listening to the good father's simple allusion to the pain the good-bye to France cost him.—I could only wonder. I still wonder, but more comprehendingly; life is a great teacher. It was on a Saturday early in the January of '69, that the *Pereire* raised anchor at Brest and put forth to sea, with a good though rather a strong wind. The sailing day was Saturday, the day of Our Lady of the Sea, and our friend found a peculiar meaning in the mariner's hymn of *Ave Maris Stella* as he repeated the words to himself; the passengers were numerous, among whom were two Jesuit Fathers and two French Canadian priests. Sea sickness, for the first few days, claimed the good Father for its own but there was worse in store. On the 4th or 5th day out a tempest that had been giving most ominous premonitions burst upon them—well, who has ever yet been able to write a tempest! trying to tell one is equally useless, such a tempest as that must have been! even yet, I remember the fast succession of glow and pallor on our professor's usually well controlled face as he tried to give us an idea of the howling furies that seemed to have set themselves on the ruin of the good ship, the mad plunges of the poor creaking thing, its wild climbing of the mountain waves only to fall again into what seemed unfathomable darkness. It was a veritable cyclone at sea. With what a look of hopeless pity were we told of a ghastly accident that took place before our narrator's eyes! A poor sailor had lost his hold and fallen from the rigging and