

luggage." Lowering his voice, he added, "I think you are game, so I will tell you the truth: it is a chance whether we ever reach the shore. With ten men in her, our boat will be very low in the water, and, if the gale comes on before we get to land, God help us."

Turning away, he gave his orders for the boat to be got ready in as cheery a voice as if he had just been foretelling most favorable fortune.

"Now Smith, you have the sharpest eyes in the ship: jump up aloft, before we start, and see if you can make out land or a sail," he said.

The active young fellow was quickly at the mast-head with a glass slung at his back. After sweeping the horizon, he remained gazing intently at one spot.

"Well Smith, what is it? Do you see anything?" hailed the skipper, impatiently.

"Yes, there is something, Sir, though I can't quite make it out," was the answer. Then, after a pause, "It's a sail, a small boat, like a whale boat, heading this way."

"Look out then, and let me know if she changes her course. Sam, hoist the ensign at the mast-head, union down. Mr. Trevor, load some of the guns so as to make a loud report. Jones, set the topsails: it may catch their eye, and we can spare the sticks now, if they do go."

It was an interval of anxious suspense. The strange craft, now made out without doubt to be a large whale-boat, was heading for a distant reef some miles astern of us, so they evidently had not seen us, and at any instant they might tack to leave us.

"Jones, take four men in the boat, and pull down to that reef," said the skipper, "they may be *beche-de-mer* fishing."

But before our boat started, the stranger either heard or saw our signals, for she suddenly altered her course, and sailing like a witch rapidly approached us. As she drew near

we could see a white man sitting at the tiller, while his crew were dusky skinned, lightly clad Hanakas.

She came up alongside in a style which showed she had good sailors on board, and in an instant a little sun-burned man, with a profusion of red hair about his face, was standing on our deck.

"You seem in a pretty fix, friend," he said to the Captain after a rapid look around.

"Have you a party near at hand, who could help us to get her off?" asked Barker, regaining some hope.

"Oh, we are on Blank Island, *beche-de-mer* fishing. Black and Campbell's party: I am Campbell. It's quite a chance we saw you, for we should not have come to the reef as there will be no fishing to-day, but I thought I would sail across to pick up a kedge I dropt last night."

"Don't you think there is any chance then?" asked the skipper. "You must be a strong party; if you would give assistance we might try."

"I should be glad enough to earn the salvage, Captain, but it is no go," replied Campbell. "Look at those rollers, and those clouds; I have been too long in these waters not to know the signs that a gale is at hand. Before sunset your craft will be a heap of firewood. We have no time to lose, Captain, get your papers and traps, and tell your men they may bring their light kits."

We were quickly ready to leave the doomed vessel.

"I can take six of you, Captain," said Campbell, "and put one of my darkies in your boat to pilot you, in case we part company. We will tow you while we can."

We had to beat out through winding passages in the reef, and it surprised me to see with what skill the dusky crew managed their little craft. She was a fine large boat, built like a whaleboat, though of unusual strength, which was increased by several strong water-tight partitions crossing her.