

was evidently broken. The captain's voice from the poop roused him from a momentary reverie, and he shouted, "Aye, aye, sir," in orthodox reply, as he made the best of his way to his chief, who awaited him by the mizen rigging looking worn and old after his terrible vigil.

"Worst of it's over, I think, Bingham," said the skipper wearily, "but it's made a pretty mess of us—and here, too!"

"That's not the worst, sir," growled the mate; "Mort's all broke up in the saloon, I shouldn't wonder if he was dead by now, and there's three others missin'!"

"Merciful Father!" gasped the skipper. "Have you searched everywhere? They might be skulking."

"No, not this time, sir. They've done all the skrimshankin' they'll ever do, I'm afraid. I should have heard before now if there was any hope, sir. But perhaps it would be as well to have a peep at Mort. He may not be so bad as I think, an' anyhow, it's just as well to make sure. An' I can look after her now all right—only wants the wreck clearing away for the present."

The skipper assented with a word or two, and after a glance at the compass and a comprehensive look around at the clearing