

—"Let one of them speak for all," said the captain.

—"Yes, yes," cried all; "let Alfonso de Calvo tell us all that happened to them!"

—"Well," said Alfonso, "nothing whatever happened to us!"

—"What, nothing?"

—"In very truth, nothing," said he, "I have never seen a pilot like Father Francis! He guided us through the shoals and amid the fury of the tempest, better than the best and most experienced navigator could have done. We never had a moment of anxiety notwithstanding the fury and violence of the gale."

—His hearers listened with wonder and awe as he spoke. The captain, grieved to think that his nephew had become crazed by the awful crisis through which he had passed, looked around him in sadness; the whole ship's company seemed to share his impression, and a gloomy silence was maintained. No one had the heart to speak, and all seemed to share a common grief. Don Alfonso noticed this with surprise and exclaimed:

—"What do you find to surprise you in my statement?"

—"Father Francis was not with you, my poor fellow!" said the captain, in a compassionate voice.

—"But he was, he was!" cried the rescued men, with one voice. "He himself can tell you! But where is Father Francis?"

A search was made for the good Father, but he had retired: he was giving thanks to God.

Then Alfonso addressed the ship's company once more, saying:

"How can you assert that it is not true, when you yourselves saw him come on board with us, and know he was the first to step upon the deck of the ship!"

"Simply," said the captain, "because he has not left us for a single instant; but he assured me so earnestly that you would return, and seemed to be so sure of it, that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, I had my hopes, and made up my mind to wait for you, feeling convinced that he would not insist as he did unless God had made known to him your return."

"He used to say to us," resumed Alfonso: "Courage,