

full of fresh water. She had sunk to the level of her main deck, and we set to work and cut away the bulwarks in places, so as to let the sea have a free run as she rolled heavily in the long swell.

"I need not tell you what we went through. The only thing that kept us up at all was, that we were in the track of ships and the weather was fine. But what nearly drove us crazy was the sight of ships that showed up only to keep straight on their course and by and by get hull down and out of sight. I'll never forget as long as I live the first one we sighted on the morning of the second day. When the man who saw her sung out, you'd have thought we were as good as on board her. We laughed and talked as we watched her standing toward us. We made no signals, for we'd nothing to fly a rag on, and we couldn't start a flare if we'd had dry stuff, for there wasn't a match in the lot of us. And anyway it didn't seem to matter, for she came straight on, and it didn't seem that it could be any time till she picked us up. Well, sir, we stood there talking and laughing like a lot of school boys, and the Norwegian captain was just saying 'Well, Captain, this is your luck every time,' when we saw her alter her course and begin to pay off on it. Lord! sir, you never heard anything like the way those men went on; they screamed and shouted till they couldn't make a sound, they tore off their shirts and waved them until their arms were so sore they couldn't lift them above their shoulders, and for hours after she was out of sight I don't think anyone said a word.

"Most of the men sat about the deck staring at anything or nothing, and some of them leaned over the rail looking into the water at their feet; it was awful!

"Day after day dragged on; we saw two more ships, but do you know, that first one worked on us so, that we watched them with hardly a word as they slowly showed up, and then went down, down out of sight—too far away even for hope.

"At last our water gave out, and we knew that help must come at once, or—well you know what has happened to castaways like us. Nobody had said a word, and each man hated to look at the others for fear he might look what he wouldn't say.

"I sat all that night wide-awake, with Jock here asleep beside me, his head on my lap, and tried not to think, for fear of the awful thought that would come in spite of me.

"The next day was simply awful. The sun was blistering, and yet when it came evening we saw it go down with terror, for we knew that night, in the darkness, some one would propose what he dared not speak of by day.

"Lower and lower it sank down, and as the edge just touched the water we all stood watching it, know-

ing that what we all feared would be done before we saw it again.

"Some one of us was looking at it for the last time.

"Down it went faster and faster, till at last there was just a jagged see-saw of water against the glow. We turned slowly with a kind of gasp, and as we looked round the horizon, as if in search of something to rest our eyes on, three or four of us tried to shout out together 'Sail ho!' The shout was a failure, there wasn't more than a decent whisper between us, but we pointed straight to the eastward where we could clearly see a full-rigged ship bearing directly down on us.

"It was curious to see how many of the men refused to believe in our luck, even when she came on nearer and nearer, running easily under the freshening evening breeze. We were so near death that it seemed impossible that life could come back to us so quietly.

"We crowded together in silence by the rail, and we waved back our silent answer to the cheers that were sent to us by the boat's crew that came alongside two long hours later.

"They boarded us and handed us down one by one like a lot of children, and before midnight we were all safe aboard the 'Montezuma,' Captain Walter Davies, bound for Liverpool with hides.

"We pretty well crowded them out for room, but nothing was too good for us, and I had the Captain's own bunk, which I kept for three days without stirring.

"On the Sunday evening following our rescue, Captain Davies came up to where Neilson and I were sitting with Jock, and after a word or two said to me, 'Do you know, Captain, how you were picked up?'

"I thought at first he was chaffing, and said, 'Of course I do.'

"'No,' he said, 'you don't; but if you'll listen a minute I'll tell you. Last Tuesday evening, just before supper, I had no more idea of picking up you and your men than of touching bottom. I was walking up and down here, as I always do at that hour, when the steward came to call me to supper. I looked about; everything was fine, the sun just touching the water, and so I walked slowly over toward the companion-way. All of a sudden a bird flew across the deck on a level with my head between me and the companion, and then made a quick turn, and passed again so close that it almost struck me with its wings. It flew straight away from the ship in the direction of the sun.

"It was curious, but I didn't think anything particular about it, and turned towards the companion again, when there was a swish of wings in front of me, and I threw up my hands to guard my face as the