

ing the stupid negroes and the helpless passengers to the will of Providence.

However, before they had rowed a mile, with the flood-tide making eastward, one of the boats was struck by lightning, and the other caught in a whirl vorago (as the Spaniards call it), and not a soul ever came to land, and scarcely any bodies. Both these accidents were seen from Porthcawl Point by Sandy Macraw through a telescope; and much as he was mine enemy, I do him the justice to believe it; partly because he could look for no money from any lies in the matter, and still more because I have heard that some people said that they saw him see it.

But to come back to this poor ship: the wind, though blowing madly enough (as a summer gale is often hotter for a while than a winter one), had not time and sweep as yet to raise any very big rollers. The sea was sometimes beaten flat and then cast up in hillocks; but the mighty march of waters fetched by a tempest from the Atlantic was not come, and would not come in a veering storm like this. For it takes a gale of at least three tides, such as we never have in summer, to deliver the true buffet of the vast Atlantic.

Nevertheless the sea was nasty and exceeding vicious; and the wind more madly wild, perhaps, than when it has full time to blow; in short, the want of depth and power was made up by rage and spite. And for a ship not thoroughly sound and stanch in all her timbers, it had been better, perhaps, to rise and fall upon long billows, with a chance of casting high and dry, than to be twirled round and plucked at, thrown on beam-ends, and taken aback, as this hapless craft was being, in the lash of rocky waters and the drift of gale and scud.

By this time she was close ashore, and not a man (except myself) to help or even pity her. All around her was wind and rocks, and a mad sea rushing under her. The negroes, crouching in the scuppers, or clinging to the masts and rails, or rolling over one another in their want of pluck and skill, seemed to shed their blackness on the snowy spray and curdled foam, like cuttlefish in a lump of froth. Poor things! they are grieved to die as much, perhaps, as any white man; and

my heart was overcome, in spite of all I know of them.

The ship had no canvas left, except some tatters of the foretopsail, and a piece of the main-royals; but she drifted broad-side on, I daresay five or six knots an hour. She drew too much water, unluckily, to come into Pool Tavan at that time of the tide, even if the mouth had been wide enough; but crash she went on a ledge of rocks thoroughly well known to me, every shelf of which was a razor. Half a cable's length below the entrance to Pool Tavan, it had the finest steps and stairs for congers and for lobsters, whenever one could get at it in a low spring-tide; but the worst of beaks and barbs for a vessel to strike upon at half-flow, and with a violent sea, and a wind as wild as Bedlam.

With the pressure of these, she lay so much to leeward before striking (and perhaps her cargo had shifted), that the poor blackies rolled down the deck like pickling walnuts on a tray; and they had not even the chance of dying each in his own direction. I was forced to shut my eyes; till a grey squall came, and caught her up, as if she had been a humming-top, and flung her (as we drown a kitten) into the mashing waters.

Now I hope no man who knows me would ever take me for such a fool as to dream for a moment—after all I have seen of them—that a negro is “our own flesh and blood, and a brother immortal,” as the parsons begin to prate, under some dark infection. They differ from us a great deal more than an ass does from a horse; but for all that I was right down glad—as a man of loving-kindness—that such a pelt of rain came up as saved me from the discomfort—or pain, if you must have the truth—of beholding several score, no doubt, of unfortunate blacks adrowning.

If it had pleased Providence to drown any white man with them, and to let me know it, beyond a doubt I had rushed in, though without so much as a rope to help me; and as it was, I was ready to do my very best to save them if they had only shown some readiness to be hauled ashore by a man of proper colour. But being, as negroes always are, of a most contrary nature, no doubt they preferred to drift