

where Sir Cloudesly Shovel and his fleet were destroyed in the days of Queen Anne, sang their song of death before, and the Dead Man's Ledge replied in hoarser notes behind us. 'To go ahead, seemed to be death, and to go about was sure destruction. The first thing that caught the eye of the Captain was the furled mainsail, which he had ordered to be carried throughout the evening—that hauling up of which, contrary to the last order he had given on leaving the deck, had caused the ship to fall off to leeward two points, and had thus led her into a position on a "lee shore," upon which a strong gale was blowing her, in which the chance of safety appeared to the stoutest nerves almost hopeless. That sole chance consisted in standing on, to carry us through the breakers of Scilly, or by a close graze along their outer edge. Was this destiny to be the end of the gallant old ship, consecrated by many a prayer and blessing from the heart of a nation?

"Why is the mainsail up, when I ordered it set?" cried the Captain, in a tremendous voice.

"Finding that she pitched her bows under, I took it in, under your general order, sir, that the officer of the deck should carry sail according to his discretion," replied the Lieutenant in command.

"Heave the log," was the prompt command to the Master's Mate.

The log was thrown.

"How fast does she go?"

"Five knots and a half, sir."

"Board the main tack, sir."

"She will not bear it, sir," said the officer of the deck.

"Board the main tack!" thundered the Captain; "keep her full and bye, quarter-master!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

The tack was boarded.

"Haul aft the main sheet!"

shouted the Captain; and aft it went, like the spreading of a sea-bird's wing, giving the huge sale to the gale.

"Give her the lee helm when she goes into the sea!" cried the Captain.

"Aye, aye, sir! she has it," growled out the old sea-dog at the binnacle.

"Right your helm; keep her full and bye!"

"Aye, aye, sir, full and bye she is," was the prompt answer from the helm.

"How fast does she go?"

"Nine knots and a half, sir."

"How bears the light?"

"Nearly a beam, sir."

"Keep her away half a point."

"How fast does she go?"

"Nine knots, sir."

"Steady so!" returned the Captain.

"Steady!" answered the helmsman, and all was silent as the grave upon the crowded deck, except the howling of the storm, for a space of time that seemed to the imagination almost an age.

It was a trying hour to us; unless we could carry sail so as to go at the rate of nine knots an hour, we must of necessity dash upon Scilly; and who ever touched upon those rocks and lived during a storm?

The sea ran very high, the rain fell in sheets, the sky was one black curtain, illuminated only by the faint light which was to mark our deliverance, or stand a monument of our destruction. The wind had got shove whistling—it came in puffs that flattened the waves, and made our old frigate settle to her bearings, while everything on board seemed to be cracking into pieces. At this moment the carpenter reported that the left bolt of the fore shroud had drawn.

"Get on the luffs and set them all on the weather shrouds. Keep