

CHAPTER XI

THE BAT'S EXIT

COLUMBINE rolled heavily on the broken swell and the lamp that swung from a beam threw a puzzling light about the cabin. Now and then water splashed on the deck and the slack sails flapped. The fresh breeze had dropped, although the sea had not yet gone down, and Marston had set the topsail and the balloon jib. The light canvas would chafe and was not of much use, but he must reach Kingston as soon as possible. He was exhausted by physical effort and anxious watching, and when Rupert replaced the bandage on his comrade's face he leaned back slackly on the locker seat.

Wyndham lay in an upper berth, in the faint draught that came down through the open skylight. A wet cloth covered his face and the cabin smelt of drugs. He did not move and had not been altogether conscious for some time. Rupert wore Harry's white clothes and looked, in the unsteady light, like a rather haggard and jaundiced Englishman. Marston had noted his firm touch when he fixed the bandage and now he was methodically putting back some bottles in the medicine chest. When he finished he bent over the berth for a moment, as if he listened to Wyndham's breathing.

"I think he will live," he said. "Although he is very weak, we have got the fever down, and the wound