

the unhappy parent of the girl, with the candid acknowledgement that her situation was one of imminent peril. 'Can nothing be done to save her?' said the weeping father; the sister had been removed in an almost unconscious state from the cabin, and was in the care of some of the ladies. The physician replied that there was but one hope to rest upon—an operation, and that skilfully and speedily performed. 'What operation?' said the father, holding her head in his hands, and waiting a reply in breathless anxiety.

'Trepanning,' quietly responded the physician, and briefly explained his meaning. A silence of some duration ensued.

'When this dreadful operation is performed, what is the chance of recovery?' gasped the father, seizing the physician by the arm.

'That must depend upon circumstances,' was his reply.

'Save her life. Ellen, my child—my child. Poor girl, 'tis an awful thing to think of. If, as you say, it must be done, for Heaven's sake lose no time.'

'I have no instruments fit for the purpose. Nor would I undertake it if I had. It needs a more experienced hand than mine. I never even saw it done. From the books only I know its nature and manner of proceeding.'

The captain remarked that he had a case of instruments on board the boat; of their purposes he was ignorant. The young man who had entered with the physician, had been carefully examining the injury, and requested the captain to procure the instruments, who left the cabin for that purpose. He then addressed the physician—'Sir, should the trepan be at hand, would it not be well to attempt the operation? In her present state, she must die, unless some aid by promptly given. I will assist you.'

'Are you a physician?'

'No, I am a student of medicine only. I have seen the trepan twice used with complete success. I am aware 'tis a dangerous operation, though easily performed.'

'I shall not undertake it. I could not summon resolution. I do not profess surgery.'

'We are many miles from land, sir. I never performed this or any other operation upon the human body. Relying upon my knowledge of anatomy—the exigency of the case—the favorable position of the wound, I would not shrink in my attempt to save a valuable life. Why should you?'

The captain returned. The case was opened, and proved, upon examination, to be a large

case of amputating instruments, and, fortunately, the trepan and its necessary apparatus accompanying them. The father revived from an apparent stupor. The sight of the knives made him shudder. 'Well,' said he, in a whisper, 'what is to be done?'

The young man and the physician were conversing inaudibly together for a moment—'No, sir,' replied the physician. 'Nothing in the world would induce me to attempt it.—Having no confidence in my own power, you know, sir, it is not likely that I should succeed.'

'If you were not on board the boat, under the circumstances, and at the request of those interested, I would attempt it. Be it understood that you refuse, and if her father will trust me, I will save her if I can. Captain, you know me. I can have none but good motives.'

The father had listened. The calm and cool manner of the young student weighed much in his favor. After a look at his child, who still seemed in the sleep of death, the low, peculiar breathing sound, attendant upon such cases, being the only sign of life, and sure symptom of the nature of the hurt, he took the young man's hand and said, 'Do what you think best. Save her if you can; God help you.' He kissed her, and walked away, checking the emotion, and repeating the prayer for her safety.

A request was made for all those whose aid was not necessary, to retire from the cabin, which was, of course complied with. The physician, to his credit be it spoken, remained to assist in an act which he dared not be a principal in. The instruments having been carefully arranged, and every thing that prudence could suggest, attended to, the young lady was placed upon a table to undergo this fearful operation. There was, to her, no dread. She could feel no pain. Sensation, to her, was a lost faculty. But the loss of self-possession in the operator—a lack of knowledge and judgement in the critical moment, might make of the instrument used to save a life, a weapon of sure destruction. The physician secured her head in a position most convenient, the student removed from the injured spot the golden curls, as he took the scalpel in his hand to make the necessary incision through the integuments. 'Twas evident success would attend his efforts. His hand trembled not, his eye quailed not. In a moment a part of the scalp was dissected up—the bone was visible—the saw about to do its work. Such silence: