

Andre does not seek to know more. He takes his father's hand. M. Letourneur's face is calm, almost smiling. He sees nothing, understands nothing, but that his son is spared. These two so closely bound up in each other, sit down aft and converse in low tones.

Meanwhile, I cannot help thinking of the impression I have received from the young girl's words. I believe in a providential rescue. I cannot tell to what degree this idea has taken root in my mind; but I would not hesitate to affirm that we are approaching the end of our miseries, and feel certain that the land or the ship is there, some miles to the leeward. Let not the reader be astonished at this. My brain is so empty, that chimeras usurp the place of realities in it.

I speak of my presentiments to the Letourneurs. Andre, like myself, is confident. The poor boy, if he knew that, to-morrow—

The father listens to me gravely, and encourages me to hope.

He willingly believes—at least, he says so—that Heaven will spare the survivors of the *Chancellor*, and he lavishes on his son the caresses which, for him, are the last.

Then, later on, when I am alone with him, M. Letourneur whispers in my ear.—

"I commend my poor child to your care. Never let him know that—"

He does not finish the sentence; big tears course down his cheeks.

I am full of hope.

I turn and gaze at the horizon throughout its perimeter. It is unbroken; but I am not disturbed. Before to-morrow a sail or land will come in sight.

Robert Curtis also watches the sea. Miss Hervey, Falsten, the boatswain himself, concentrate their lives in their gaze.

Night comes, and I am convinced that some ship will approach us in the darkness, and that she will see our signals at daybreak.

*January 27.*—I do not shut my eyes. I hear the slightest noises, the clash of the waves, the murmuring of the waters. I observe that there are no longer any sharks about the raft. This seems to me a good sign.

The moon rises at forty-six minutes after midnight, showing its half-face; but it does not shed enough light to enable me to look far out to sea. How many times, though, do I think I see, a few cables-lengths off, the so-much-longed-for sail? But morning comes. The sun rises over a desolate sea. The dread moment approaches. Then I feel all my hopes of the evening fading little by little away. There is no land. I return to reality and my memory. It is the hour when a horrible execution is to take place!

I no longer dare to look at the victim; and when his eyes, so calm and resigned, fix on me, I cast down my own.

An insurmountable horror seizes me. My head whirls giddily. It is six o'clock. I no longer believe in a providential rescue. My heart beats a hundred pulsations a minute, and a perspiration of anguish breaks out all over me.

The boatswain and Robert Curtis, leaning

against the mast, unceasingly watch the ocean. The boatswain is frightful to see. I feel that he will not anticipate the fatal moment, and that he will not postpone it. It is impossible to divine the captain's thoughts. His features are livid; he seems only to live in his look.

As for the sailors, they drag themselves across the platform, and with their burning eyes already devour their victim.

I cannot keep still, and I crawl towards the forward part of the raft.

The boatswain is still erect and looking.

"At last!" he cries.

The word makes me leap up. Douglas, Flaypole, Sandon, Burke, hasten aft. The carpenter convulsively grasps his hammer.

Miss Hervey cannot stifle a cry.

Of a sudden Andre rises to his feet.

"My father?" he cries, in a choked voice.

"The lot has fallen on me," replies M. Letourneur.

Andre seizes his father, and puts his arms around him.

"Never!" he cries with a groan. "You will first kill me! It was I who threw Hobbart's body overboard! It is I whom you must kill!"

The wretched boy!

His words redouble the rage of the executioners. Douglas, going up to him, tears him from M. Letourneur's arms, saying,—

"Not so much fuss!"

Andre falls over, and two sailors bind him so that he cannot move.

At the same time Burke and Flaypole, seizing their victim, drag him towards the forward part of the raft.

This frightful scene passes more rapidly than I can describe it. Horror holds me rooted to the spot. I long to throw myself between M. Letourneur and his executioners, and I cannot! At this moment M. Letourneur is erect. He has repulsed the sailors, who have torn off a portion of his clothing. His shoulders are bare.

"A moment," he says, in a tone of dauntless energy. "A moment! I have no idea of robbing you of your rations. But you are not going to eat the whole of me, I suppose, to-day!"

The sailors stop, look at him, and listen to him stupefied.

M. Letourneur goes on.

"There are ten of you. Will not my two arms suffice? Cut them off, and to-morrow you shall have the rest."

M. Letourneur stretches out his two bare arms.

"Yes!" cried Douglas, in a terrible voice.

And, quick as lightning, he raises aloft his hammer.

Neither Robert Curtis nor I can look on any longer. While we are alive, this massacre shall not take place. The captain throws himself in the midst of the sailors, to tear their victim from them. I plunge into the *melee*; but, before reaching the forward part of the raft, I am violently pushed back by one of the sailors, and fall into the sea!

I shut my mouth. I want to be strangled to death. Suffocation, however, is stronger than