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THE MAN ON THE MAST.

Continued.

an instant the physician was on his knees
a sort of litter made of coats, while a
held over his head a brand taken up from
and which, as it flickered and flashed,
and the apparently lifeless form of a w
Some of her dripping clothes had been
she had been chafed, and a drop or two
fits applied to her lips; but hitherto with
effect.

She must be removed at once to a house,"
the physician, after examining her atten-
for a few minutes. "Nothing can be
till that is accomplished," and he rose
his knees.

"We cannot leave our duty, sir," they re-
"and there is no one else here but this
man. The folks below have something
to think of, and the nearest cabin is half
off, at the least."

Well, this man and I can take her there
then us. It is the only chance for her life."
set at once about devising as convenient
of removing her as possible. The pro-
of a reward out of his own pocket brought
services of the greedy peasant, and they
in a short time or so again travelling in
any, though with a cumbersome addition
to their party. Hardly they worked that night,
plunderer and the mercenary, beating their
feet burden through the swampy fields,
over the slippery fences, in the storm; and
when their head knocking at the door
of the peasant and his family from
labourer's slumbers.

"It is needless to detail the alarm at first; the
peasant, and then the ardent compassion of
the poor cottagers. By those who know the
pitious timidity, and the boundless hospi-
tality of the lower classes of the Irish, the suc-
cess of these feelings is understood at once;
he who do not, a description sufficiently
clear for the present purpose would scarce-
satisfactory.

As the body, as it may be called, was deposited
in the body, warm from the occupation of
the day, the few turf ashes were blown
and replenished with fresh fuel and all the
bedding of the house (scarcely enough
to be collected and heated to envelope
the body of the stranger. The poor woman
with that peculiar alertness and
of management commonly met
amongst the peasantry of that secluded
district, set herself to strip the
habitations from the cold and senseless
on the bed, and to chafe and dry it
it was renewed in the course but well-
arrangements she had collected for the pur-

pose of not being extinct, these efforts, under
the auspicious superintendence of the pale-faced
man, produced, at last, their effect, and it
with real pleasure he saw the lids unclose
the eyes of an interesting looking female,
and under the middle age, and in ap-
pearance somewhat above the common class,
were the discoveries he made that night,
to her history and fate, we have not
the means of ascertaining, as he never
lower questions put to him with that ob-
servance it is to say that, whatever the dis-
may have been, they were of a nature
as long a lively interest, and secure his
ideas as long as they could be of any

value.

After dawn the morning after, a violent
storm was heard at the door of the cabin
of the pale-faced physician was still
in his patient.

"Is there?" exclaimed the shivering
man, from amongst some straw by the fire,
in the door, Lynch; we want you, man,
bring yourself."

"I am sorry, sir, but I cannot," he re-
plied, "giving admission to a terrific gust of
wind, together with two of the sailors whom
I have already introduced to our readers.
I am down to the quay, Lynch, and he
is, and take a beam oar with us. There's

a vessel gone down in Chape Bay, and there
are her mast above water, with some poor
devil of a seaman holding on."

A scream from the bed interrupted the rest
of the sentence and, in a moment the female
had started up with clasped hands, exclaiming,
"Oh, God! is he upon it?"

The men started back in astonishment, so
wild and unearthly was the voice, and so un-
expected the question. When they recovered
themselves they professed their inability to
answer it—there was not light enough to dis-
tinguish anything beyond the bare fact of
there being persons thus peculiarly situated.

There was nothing to be gained from them;
but the whole character and demeanour of the
woman was changed. She seemed to become
a new creature—her delicacy and gentleness
vanished together; she was endowed with su-
pernatural life and energy, and the return of
hope had brought with it a morbid strength,
which raised her above all the natural effects
of her recent exhaustion. As the men went
out, she energetically, and almost imperiously
requested of the physician to retire, and in
spite of his expostulations and entreaties she
insisted not more than a few minutes to elapse
ere she was clothed in her half-dried garments,
and pressing out at the door into the storm
her way to the shore. The overpowered phy-
sician made what haste he could to follow her;
but it was not so easy to overtake her. She
seemed to fly rather than run; her hair and
apparel streaming behind her, and shaping
her course towards the sea, the road to which
she seemed to discover by instinct.

On the shore, meantime, a considerable
assemblage of persons had been collected, consist-
ing (besides the coast-guard) principally of the
country people, although two or three of the
newer gentry, to whose ears tidings of the
wreck had already reached, were of the num-
ber. The morning was clear and bright; the
sun was fast ascending towards the horizon;
but the weight of the north easter was still
rushing in, might and main, marking the sur-
face of the water with white foam, and throw-
ing the breakers upon the shore with tremen-
dous fury.

At the place the surf was the more broken
by the unevenness of a rocky bottom, here and
there rising above the surface of the sea, and
sinking abruptly below it. The conformation
of the rock seemed to add to the trouble of the
waters. It was placed in slightly undulating
layers, assuming in general nearly a horizon-
tal position, so that the leaves or laminae were
here and there peeled off, as it were, and
heaped over the other part in confusion. The
lime-stone rock, dark itself, and roughened with
adhesive shells and sea-weed, bristled up black
amidst the seething mass, and, at times, might
be fancied to resemble the head of some mighty
sea-monster, emerging from the waves, and
plunging beneath them again. A little farther
out, where the wave had depth to curl, the
great green wall swept up towards the shore,
carrying a little light spray toppling on its
crest, and then, by degrees, turning majesti-
cally over, till the clear top plunged its head
into the thick of the foam with a stunning
roar, and rolled in one boiling mass onward
towards the land. Father still, and just be-
yond the curl of the shoaling water, it was evi-
dent a vessel had sunk in the night, for there
were two masts by this time perfectly dis-
cernible, standing up almost perpendicularly,
immersed about as far as the tops, as they are
technically termed; that is, the broad frame-
work, which affords footing at the junction of
the mast and topmast. Of these, the foretops,
being lower than the other, were rather below
the level of the sea, but the maintops were
above it, and on these the outlines of four hu-
man figures could be seen with tolerable dis-
tinctness by a spectator on the beach, stand-
ing out against the moving stay, although so little
raised above the water, as to be partially im-
mersed by every wave as it swept past.

As soon as ever this had been ascertained
by those on land, there had been a cry for a
boat. The three sailors already mentioned
were the first to volunteer their services, and
it was with a view to completing their crew
that two of them had gone up to Lynch's cabin

while the third went northward across a neck
of land to the little pier of—, close to which
their yawl lay high and dry. The greater part
of the gazers from the top of the cliff had fol-
lowed in the direction of the projected launch;
but the officer of the coast-guard, an experien-
ced seaman, remained with his men at their
original station, occasionally raising his glass
to his eye, and taking a narrow survey of the
mast and those clinging to it; but when spok-
en to about the boat, and the chance of getting
them off, he only looked up sagaciously to
windward, without saying a word.

He had just shut up his glass, and slung it
once more in his leathern case behind him,
when the unhappy creature he had assisted to
save the night before, came running wildly up,
her hair floating behind her, her face ashy
pale, and all the intenses of fearful inquiry
in its expression. Breathless and agitated, she
could not at first say a word, but looked wildly
back and forward along the horizon, the rapid-
ity of her gaze preventing her from catching
the object she was in search of. At last she
gained utterance, and cried,

"Oh, sir, where are they? Where are they?
Show me them, for God's sake! Oh, show me
them!" and she clasped her hands before
him.

"Look over that black rock there, about a
quarter of a mile off shore, and you'll see the
mast. I doubt whether you can make out
what's on them, though. D—d hard to see
at all at this hour of the morning, with the
spray in one's face."

She shaded her eyes with her hand, and ran
her glass more slowly in the direction pointed
out, and at length screamed—

"Yes, yes, that's our stiff; there she is,
and people on the mast. Oh, who are they?
For God's sake tell me, sir, I beg thee!"

"Don't know, ma'am, indeed. Can't well
see yet who's there. Besides, I don't know
the person you speak of, that I am aware of.
Not likely he and I should be acquainted."

"Oh! look, look, sir! take the glass, or
give it me. He's tall, sunburnt, with blue
jacket. Oh, you can't mistake him!"

"Here, my lady, said the officer to his men,
"unstrap this spy-glass, and hand it to me."
They unhooked it from the back of their
spectacles, where it had been slung, and when
he had received it at their hands, he com-
menced leisurely to place it at its focus, while
the poor woman continued to watch him with
agonized impatience.

"Here, take it yourself, ma'am. You know
him better than I do. No doubt you can find
him if any one can."

She took the instrument in her trembling
hands, but her efforts to steady and direct it
were vain. The inventions of science are of
little use in the hands of passion or agony.

"Ah," said she, as she lowered it, her eyes
filled with tears, "I see nothing but clouds
and rolling waves! Take it yourself, sir, and
tell me what you can discern. Surely he might
be there as any one else—and yet did I not see
him swept away?" and she wrung her hands
in the agony of the recollection.

The gruff officer put the glass leisurely up to
his eyes, and having covered the mast, gave
the result of his survey slowly, pausing be-
tween each word.

"Why, ma'am, as well as I can see, there
are four men holding on, and a boy, I think,
besides, on the other mast, but of this I can't
be altogether certain, for the sea washes over
him, and it's only now and then I catch a
glimpse of him. By George, there's one of
the men off!"

The sailors uttered an involuntary excla-
mation, the poor woman shrieked in agony,
and fell on her knees; and at the same time a
distant cry from the spectators who had moved
towards the pier announced that they too had
seen the occurrence.

"Oh, look! for the love of heaven, sir,
look, and tell me what you see!"

"Ha!" he continued, still looking through
his glass, "I caught him that moment on the
top of a wave. He is close to the other mast.
No doubt he will make for it, if he has strength,
now that he has been swept off the mainmast;
—but he will hardly have so good a berth of

it there, I expect, as the tops are below water.
He's at it, by Jove—no, gone again; and the
boy's off, too. My God, they'll not hold out
much longer, any of them!"

"Oh, don't say so!" cried the woman.
"What are the men on the mast like? Look,
sir, look, and tell me, I beseech you. What
colour is their dress?"

"They're not down yet, though," continu-
ed the officer, without heeding her, and still
looking. "There they were both together on
a wave that time—a strong fellow that to stand
against such a sea—by Jove, he has hold of
the boy; and, as I'm a living man, it was to
save him he quitted the mainmast; and there
he is now swimming back to it! Well done,
by heavens, well done!" And a loud shout
burst from his own men, and the distant multi-
tude as the individual was seen once more
standing on the mainmast with the boy he had
rescued.

"D—d that fellow, he deserves to be pro-
moted," continued the officer, his glass still
tight to his eye—"and I vow I think he is
something like what you say, ma'am. Now
that there's more light, I can see that he's a
stout young fellow, and the biggest of them
all."

"That's he, that's he, I knew it!" she
exclaimed, bursting into tears—"my generous,
noble Henry, who is there to save him? who
will go out to him? I'll go out myself with
any one!" and the distracted woman caught
the arm of the officer.

"Why, ma'am, they're gone off already to
launch one for trying the thing, but I've my
doubts if they'll get through the surf—however,
they'll try."

Just at this moment the pale-faced physician
came up. He had missed his half-delirious
patient, and having a less powerful instinct
than she, it was to be supposed had found him-
self at last on another part of the shore, and
separated from the lime-kill by a deep ravine
through which a stream issued, so that he was
obliged to retrace his steps a considerable dis-
tance in order to rejoin her.

"My dear madam," he claimed, "it is
madness of you thus to expose yourself,
you—"

"Speak not to me," she cried, in a voice
that effectually silenced him. "Only look there!
He—he is there! as this gentleman—he has
shown him to me—he is alive, and no one will
go to him. But they are taking out a boat.
Lead me, sir, lead me there!" she continued
grasping his arm as the thought struck her,
"that I may bury them, and help them, if I
can. A moment, you know, is precious now.
I'll ask to be allowed to go with them, and offer
them any sum, all I, all we possess, if they
will only bring him back safe!"

The young physician, much affected at her
distress, placed a warm coat about her should-
ers, and took her under his arm, leading her,
or rather being led by her, such was her eager-
ness, in the direction of the little pier of—

But the sagacious officer of the coast-guard
had seen, perhaps, better than the fishermen
themselves, the difficulty, amounting almost
to impossibility, of doing anything effectual un-
der the circumstances.

The boat was launched and manned by the
four intrepid men. She was of that substan-
tial and business like build best calculated to
ride out weather of this kind, being exceed-
ingly thick in the timbers and broad in the bows,
and shaped alike at both ends, as these vessels
are commonly constructed. They are used for
putting down and taking up—use oyster bar-
kets employed to take lobsters, and for carry-
ing over the sea-rack, or weed, from the ad-
jacent islands to the mainland, where it is
applied in quantities to the purpose of manur-
ing the sandy soil of the vicinity. For such
services, of course, one but a stout boat would
be suited, the weather being subjected to cer-
tain changes, the coast rugged and exposed,
and the load of sea-rack at times sufficiently
great. Helm she had none. The crew directed
her course by their oars, and her similarity of
build at both ends enabled them to back her
into small creeks and manage her with com-
parative ease. Her thwarts were little more than
square beams, on which the oarsmen found an