

by sheer main force along the gunwale; then hand over fist hauled in the jib, and at great peril, owing to the tumbling seaway, got the trysail set. Under it alone, the boat tore madly through the swirling waters.

A warning cry from Kirke startled me, but one glance ahead was enough, and flinging myself down I gripped the thwart, thinking our end was coming. With a cunning shove of the rudder the boat breasted the immense mass of roaring, frothing water, but the crest of it, breaking before the small craft swung over, swept in upon the bows. Snatching the baler from under the thwart, I began frantically throwing the water out of her. By now I was grown apprehensive, too, of the Scaurs, and strained my eyes over the inky seas; but the velocity of the squall blinded me.

"Where away are we?" I shouted.

"Sou'-sou'-west. Inside o' the Scaurs," the boatman bellowed back. "Weather the seas on no other tack. God help us."

But the next minute or two the squall had passed, screaming down-wind, and taking the pitch darkness with it. A strange misty greyness spread through the air.

"Stand by for the change," Kirke cried. "Slack 'way sheets for'ad."

I did so, and sat quick and ready, the halyards in either hand. To my amazement a tall ship forged out of the night to windward, and stood down off our weather bow. Past us she drove up the bay, her tattered main topsail, square foresail and half-brailed jibs full-bellied in the wind. Tossing and scattering the seas with her bluff, high-pitched stern, she almost instantly was lost in the further smother of night and the spindrift.

"What the deuce is that?" I roared, turning to Kirke. He was staring before him like a man demented. When he swayed into the light from the binnacle, I saw fear stamped on his face. Scrambling aft, I seized the rudder in time to evade the next roller which was about to sink us.

Violently I shook him. "What's wrong?" I roared.

"We're lost, we're lost," was his husky cry. "Oh God, we're lost."

"What?" I flashed out in a panic, looking to see if the boat had sprung a leak.

"The ship—the Spanish ship, the Tides beguiled lang syne." And Mistress McFaddyen's augury surged into my recollection.

I jabbed Kirke in the side, but he only cowered the more—his face hidden between his hands. Putting up the helm, I hauled on the lee sheet of the story trysail. The boat paid off handsomely before the wind, and none too soon for our safety.

The waters about us were now heaving in confused runs. Little swirls broke against gunwale and bow. Heavy tufts of spray leapt up, to fall with a dull thud into the bilge water. I could make out a great stretch of yeasty seas, shooting up into the air like tongues, to fall back crashing. Clearly we were now in the meeting of the nine currents that run past the *Mull of Galloway into the gut between Luce Bay and Burrow Head. The small craft could not live in it for a minute.

"Stir about, Kirke, stir about," I cried in his ear; "be a man." But the next instant I had leapt to my feet.

Down on the gusty blasts came the clamor of wild voices—the voices of drowning women.

Swaying to the jumping of the boat, I scanned the waters just as if I expected to see some sinking vessel. Again the agonized voices rang out—sharper and more imperative. What could it be but the strange Calling of the Nine Tides as they swirled against each other.

Kirke sprang up. "Do ye no' hear them calling on us?" he shrieked, madness gleaming in his eyes. "Do ye no' hear the Cries?"

With an impetuous thrust he reft the rudder from my hold, and shoving it down brought the boat round, the trysail cracking like small cannon. But the boat lurched to leeward as the swell fell abruptly from under, and he fell forward on his side. I sprang on him, and in a trice had him bound fast hand and foot with his mackerel lines; then left him