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A NIGHT WITH A MADMAN.

tired to his mat: "You were too much for old Wheels, that time, Scottie."

"And what," asked I boldly, "did you want with the knife?"

"Doctor," he replied seriously, "I must retire."

"Retire! What do you mean?" I inquired.

"Long hath the night of sorrow reigned," said the poor man; "the dawn shall bring me rest; and poor Wheeler will die, or the captain will kill him, roll him up in a hammock, and send him down, down among slimy, crawling things and terrible reptiles; and they're all in the plot, and all hate me—all—all!"

Just then four bells rang out sharp and clearly in the night-air; and for a short time I almost hoped someone might enter the ward-room, and relieve me from my trying situation. Some footsteps on the quarter-deck I did hear—it was but the relief of the man at the wheel; they soon ceased, and all was silent as before. A short time afterwards, the lamp in my cabin began to burn more dimly, and give other indications of an early exit. I hardly knew whether to be pleased or otherwise at this; a struggle with my maniac patient I felt sure I must have, and darkness I knew would hasten that event, and bring on the *dénouement*.

"Wheeler," I said, "do you not intend to sleep to-night?"

"Ay," said he solemnly, and starting at my voice like an old lady at a pistol-shot, "I will sleep; and—and you too shall sleep."

This was certainly not very soothing to my nerves.

"Well," I continued, "the light is going out, so you must go to the dispensary and fetch a candle."

"What!" cried he in a fierce whisper; "out into the dark steerage, to be torn limb from limb, and my body scattered about the ship by devils. No, no, no!"

The lamp began to flicker.

"See!" said I, directing his attention to it, "it is waning away fast, and you know well enough how glad they will be to catch you in the dark."

"Where does the light go to when it goes out?" he asked as if of himself.

"You'll soon know, replied I.

He started, looked at the lamp, then in my face, and then fearfully around him at the gathering gloom.

"Do not let it out," he cried. "For God's sake, Doctor, keep it in. Come with me quick, and get a candle."

I was only too glad to obey. We had not proceeded three steps from my cabin-door, when I attempted to get in advance, in order to make a rush for the companion-ladder. It was a most untimely move. No sooner did he espy my intentions, than all the madman was stirred within him.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "wretch! would you leave me to face my fate alone?"

Then seizing me by the breast, he hurled me backwards, and next moment a crashing blow felled me to the deck. He had caught up a double-flint tumbler that stood on the table, and—not thrown it at—but smashed it on my brow. Although blinded and almost choked with blood,

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