

of want, the victims may still find, amid the ruins, in the nooks and the corners, some lean bone or rejected root, which will delay famine for the moment. But on these planks, which the waves have so many times washed over, the cracks of which have already been searched, the angles of which, where the wind might have blown some of the refuse, have been scratched, what can we still hope to find?

The nights seem very, very long—longer than the days. In vain do we seek in sleep a momentary relief. Sleep, when it does close our eyes, is only a feverish dose, big with nightmares.

On this night, however, yielding to fatigue, at a moment when my hunger is also asleep, I have been able to rest several hours.

The next morning, at six o'clock, I am awakened by loud voices on the raft. I quickly jump up, and see the negro Jynxtrop, and the sailors Owen, Flaypole, Wilson, Burke, and Sandon, grouped in a belligerent attitude on the forward part of the raft. These wretches have possessed themselves of the carpenter's tools—his hatchet, hammer, and chisels; and they are threatening the captain, the boatswain, and Douglas. I hasten at once to join Curtis and his party. Falsten follows me. We have only our knives for arms, but we are none the less determined to defend ourselves.

Owen and his comrades advance toward us. The rascals are drunk. During the night they have emptied the cask of wine-brandy, and have used it up.

What do they wish to do?

Owen and the negro, less-drunk than the rest, are inciting them to murder us, and they are under the influence of a sort of alcoholic fury.

"Down with Curtis! To the sea with the captain! Owen for master! Owen for master!"

Owen is the leader, and the negro serves as his lieutenant. The hatred of these two men for their officers now manifests itself by a resort to force, which, even if it succeeds, will not save the situation. But their comrades, incapable of reasoning, are armed, while we are not; and this renders them formidable.

Robert Curtis, on seeing them advance, walks towards them, and with a steady voice cries,—

"Down with your arms!"

"Death to the captain!" shouts Owen.

The wretch excites his followers by gestures; but Curtis, passing the drunken group, goes straight up to him.

"What do you wish?" he asks.

"No more captain on the raft!" replies Owen, "all equal here!"

Stupid brute! As if we were not all equal, in the presence of misery!

"Owen," says the captain, a second time, "Down with your arms!"

"Come on, men!" cries Owen.

A struggle begins. Owen and Wilson fall upon Robert Curtis, who parries their blows with the end of a spar; while Burke and Flaypole attack Falsten and the boatswain. I come into collision with the negro Jynxtrop, who, brandishing a hammer, tries to strike me. I

endeavor to seize him with my arms, in order to render him helpless, but the rascal's muscular force is too much for me. After struggling several moments, I feel that I am about to yield, when Jynxtrop rolls upon the platform, dragging me with him. Andre Letourneur has caught him by the leg and thrown him over.

This has saved me. The negro, in falling, has let go the hammer which I seize. I am about to break his head with it, when Andre's hand arrests me in my turn.

The mutineers have all been driven back upon the forward part of the raft. Robert Curtis, after eluding Owen's blows, has just seized a hatchet, and, raising his hand, strikes.

But Owen jumps aside, and the hatchet hits Wilson full on the stomach. The wretched man falls over the side of the raft and disappears.

"Save him! save him!" cries the boatswain.

"He is dead," replies Douglas.

"Yes, that is why"—replies the boatswain, without ending his sentence.

Wilson's death ends the struggle. Flaypole and Burke, in the last stages of drunkenness, have fallen flat and motionless; and we seize Jynxtrop and tie him firmly to the foot of the mast.

As for Owen, he has been overcome by the boatswain and the carpenter. Robert Curtis comes up to him and says—

"Pray to God; for you are going to die."

"You are in a hurry, then, to eat me?" replies Owen, with inconceivable insolence.

This atrocious reply saves his life. Robert Curtis throws aside the hatchet which he has already raised over Owen, and, with a pale face, goes and sits down in the rear of the raft.

THIRST.

January 9 and 10.—To-day we are becalmed. The sun is burning hot, the breeze has quite subsided, and not a ripple breaks the long undulations of the sea, which rises almost imperceptibly. If there is not some current, the direction of which we cannot determine, the raft must be absolutely stationary.

I have said that the heat, to-day, is intolerable. Our thirst is, therefore, also intolerable. The insufficiency of water makes us suffer terribly, for the first time. I foresee that it will bring tortures more difficult to bear than those arising from hunger. Already our mouths, throats, and pharynxes are contracted by dryness, and our mucous membranes are sorely affected by the hot air carried to them by breathing.

At my entreaties, the captain has for once relaxed the usual rule. He grants a double portion of water, and we are able to quench our thirst, after a fashion, four times in the course of the day. I say "after a fashion," for the water, kept in the bottom of the cask, though covered with canvas, is in truth lukewarm.

The day has been a miserable one. The sailors, overcome by hunger, again give themselves over to despair.

The breeze has not risen with the moon, which is now nearly full. Still, as the tropical