

On ordinary occasions these said crows were wont to seat themselves on the window-shutters, and keep a sharp look-out for booty, carrying off anything that they could pounce upon unobserved, from a silver tea-spoon to a bit of bread. Now, however, they had relinquished all thoughts connected with petty larceny, and were evidently in earnest combat, from the tops of houses and cocoa-nut trees, despatching occasionally some special messengers, amidst a good deal of cawing warning, to see how matters looked on the sea-side.

Suddenly, however, the intense stillness of the atmosphere is broken in upon by the booming report of cannon—one—two—three! See, the crows know the signal as well as the oldest resident at Madras. They raise a great clamour about it, however—grieving and complaining, possibly, at being obliged to relinquish their nests and young ones. In five minutes not a crow is to be seen. They have more confidence in the master attendant's barometer than in their own emissaries, at least if one may judge by the attention paid to the alarm signal—the three guns just fired from the custom-house. Hurrying down to the beach, we find the signal flying at the master attendant's office—"Vessels must slip and put to sea." And a pretty strait the shipping in the harbour appears to be in. Sails are spreading in every direction; the sailors tumble and stumble in their intense anxiety to be off to sea. All the shore boats hurry off for the land, with human beings and cargo promiscuously tumbled into them. The last yo-heave echoes from the vessels' decks, and the slowest and worst managed ship in the harbour is under sail, flying away like a frightened bird from the snare of the fowler. As yet the surf does not give much indication of the terrific struggle that is going on amongst the elements, miles away at sea; but it looks terribly dark and ominous to windward. The ocean in that direction appears almost as black as ink, and, like white spots upon the palpably murky horizon, are countless seagulls, rejoicing at the prospect of a pleasant swing upon the mighty billows

of the ocean. But whilst the ships have been all bustle and confusion, the people on shore have been not one whit behind in making preparations against the advent of the pending hurricane. All the shops and offices are being speedily deserted; merchants that live at Grindy or Spurtank are driving furiously in that direction; all the thoroughfares are crowded with passengers, mounted and on foot, in palanquins, tonjons, carriages, buggies (cabs), hackarees, bullock carts, and even upon elephants—all hurrying in one direction. The warehousemen have shut every window and door in every warehousemen; bringing out stout cross-bars that have long been lying useless, but which will now hardly be strong enough to resist the first furious outburst of the hurricane. Careless housekeepers, who have suffered bolts to rust, or bars to be wanting, are now at their wits' end how to provide against the emergency. Large bales of goods are piled up against doors and windows; barrels, trunks, anything available, are used to barricade them; for, whilst the hurricane lasts, it will blow with equal fury from all quarters of the compass at stated intervals. The last window of the last inclosed warehouse has been well secured, and the last warehouseman drives through the Elephant Gate (whose massive doors are left open and unwatched) towards his residence on the Mount road.

By this time the surf has risen to a terrific height, and roars again as it pours its millions of tons of water and foam against the strong breastwork built along the beach. The first breeze, *avant courier* of the coming gale, sweeps over the city of Madras. All the flagstaves in the town are struck half-mast high, and a new-comer, like myself, whose habitation is situated some three miles from the beach, and who is looking over the balcony of his front upstairs verandah, facing towards the sea, and watching the sublime aspect of sea and clouds, affirms that he can distinctly feel the spray of the sea blown into his face. It is quite correct; before the hurricane is over, the spray will have been blown much fur-