

THROUGH THE VORTEX OF A CYCLONE

By WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON



IT was in the middle of November that the four - masted bark *Golconda* came down from Crockett and anchored off Tele-

graph Hill, San Francisco. She was loaded with grain, and was homeward bound round Cape Horn. Five days later she was towed out through the Golden Gate, and cast loose off the Heads, and so set sail upon the voyage that was to come so near to being her last.

For a fortnight we had baffling winds, but after that time got a good slant that carried us down to within a couple of degrees of the line. Here it left us, and over a week passed before we had managed to tack and drift our way into the southern hemisphere. About five degrees south of the line we met with a fair wind that helped us southward another ten or twelve degrees, and there,

early one morning, it dropped us, ending with a short, but violent, thunder-storm.

During the day, the wind, as I have remarked, left us entirely and we lay becalmed under a blazing hot sun. We hauled up the lower sails to prevent them from chafing as the vessel rolled lazily. As the day proceeded so did the heat seem to increase, and so, hour by hour, the day moved steadily onward, the sense of oppression growing ever more acute. Then it was, I should think about four-thirty in the afternoon, that I became conscious of the fact that a strange, unnatural, dull, brick-red glare was in the sky. As I stood looking at it the mate came up beside me. After about half a minute he gave out a sudden exclamation.

"Hark!" he said, "did you hear that?"

"No, Mr. Jackson," I replied, "what was it like?"

"Listen!" was all his reply, and I obeyed, and so for perhaps a

couple of minutes we stood there in silence.

"There!— There it is again!" he exclaimed, suddenly, and in the same instant I heard it, a sound like low, strange growling far away in

presently, a little while after he had relieved the second mate, he ceased his pacing of the poop-deck and came and leant over the rail alongside of me.

"I wish to goodness the Old Man



IT FALLS A CALM AND WE HAUL UP THE SAILS
TO PREVENT THEM FROM CHAFING

the northeast. That evening we experienced a sunset of quite indescribable gorgeousness, which had, to me, an unnatural glow about it. It was about this time, I remember, that I heard the mate remark to the captain that we were in for bad weather, and that it was his belief a cyclone was coming down upon us; but this the captain, who was quite a young fellow, pooh-poohed, telling him that he pinned *his* faith to the barometer, which was perfectly steady.

That night, I recollect, it was my watch from midnight until four in the morning. That the mate was uneasy I very soon perceived; for

would have her shortened right down to lower topsails," he said, a moment later, in a low voice. "There's some rotten dirty weather knocking around. I can smell it!"

As he spoke, there sounded a faint, far-drawn-out, wailing noise that seemed to echo queerly across the quiet sea. And after that—silence. The mate stood upright and faced round at me.

"Do you know," he said, "only once before in my life have I heard anything like that, and that was before the cyclone in which the *Loncing* and the *Eurasian* were lost in the Indian Ocean."

"Do you think, then there's *really* any danger of a cyclone now?" I asked him, with something of a little thrill of excitement.

"I think—" he began to reply, and then stopped and swore suddenly. "Look! 'Stalk' lightning, as I'm a living man!" And he pointed to the northeast. "Photograph that while you've got the chance; you'll never have another as long as you live!"

I looked in the direction which he indicated, and there, sure enough, were great, pale, flickering streaks and tongues of flame *rising apparently out of the sea*. They remained steady for some ten or fifteen seconds, and in that time I was able to take a snap of them. It was after I had secured a snap-shot of the phenomenon that the mate declared it to be his conviction that a great cyclonic storm was coming down upon us from the northeast.

With the daylight there came a change, a low, slow-moving scud driving down from the northeast, and drifting across the face of the newly-risen sun, which was shining with a queer, unnatural glare. The glass also showed a change at last, rising a little for a short while and then dropping about a tenth.

Presently, at eight bells, we were relieved by the other watch, and went below for a short sleep. At eight o'clock, when again I came on deck, I found that the sea had begun to rise somewhat, and that the sun was hidden by a heavy squall to windward, which was coming down upon us. Some fifteen minutes later it struck the ship, making the foam fly and carrying away the main topsail sheet. Immediately upon this the heavy iron ring in the clew of the sail began to thresh and beat about, as the sail flapped in the wind, striking great blows against the steel yard; but the clewline was manned, and some of the men went aloft to repair the damage, after which the sail was once more sheeted home, and we continued to carry on. About this time the mate sent me down into the saloon to take another look at

the glass, and I found that it had fallen a further tenth. When I reported this to him he had the main t'gallant taken in, but hung on to the mainsail, waiting for eight bells, when the whole crowd would be on deck to give a hand.

A little before one o'clock in the afternoon I went out on deck and found that the wind had freshened considerably. At four o'clock, the spray was flying over us with a good deal of freedom, and the solid water coming aboard occasionally in odd tons. Yet, so far there was, to a sailorman nothing worthy of note in the severity of the weather. It was merely blowing a moderately heavy gale. Indeed, it seemed to me at this time that the captain was right in his belief that we were not in for any very dirty weather, and I said as much to the mate, whereat he laughed somewhat bitterly.

"Don't you make any sort of mistake!" he said, and pointed to leeward, where continual flashes of lightning darted down from a dark bank of cloud. "We're already within the borders of the cyclone. Mark my words, within twelve hours it'll be upon us!"

It was our watch that night from eight to twelve. At midnight I went below for a sleep. When I was called at four o'clock I found a very different state of affairs. The day had broken, and showed the sea in a very confused state, with a tendency to run up into heaps, and the sky everywhere one great glare of gloomy, orange-colored light, streaked here and there with red, and presenting an effect of astounding and uncanny grandeur.

I made my way up on to the poop, carrying my camera. There I met the mate.

"You'll not want that pretty little box of yours," he remarked, and tapped my camera. "I guess you'll find a coffin more useful. Look!"

I saw in an instant what it was at which he pointed—it was a great black wall of cloud that seemed to cover about seven points of the

horizon, extending almost from north to east, and reaching upward some fifteen degrees towards the zenith. The intense, solid blackness of this cloud was astonishing, and threatening to the beholder, seeming, indeed,

of clouds had disappeared, and in place thereof it seemed to me that the clouds in that quarter were assuming a hard, tufted appearance, and changing their shapes with surprising rapidity. Then, as sudden



SOME OF THE MEN WENT ALOFT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE

to be more like a line of great black cliffs standing out of the sea than a mass of thick vapor. I glanced aloft, and saw that the other watch were securing the mizzen upper topsail. At the same moment the captain appeared on deck, and walked over to the mate.

"Glass has dropped another tenth, Mr. Greyson," he remarked, and glanced to windward. "I think we'd better have the fore and main upper topsails off her." Scarcely had he given the order before the mate was down on the main deck, shouting: "Fore and main topsail halyards, lower away! Man clewlines and spillings!" By the time that the upper topsails were furled I noted that the red glare had gone out of the greater part of the sky to windward, and that the black rampart

as the report of a heavy gun, a great bellowing came out of the north and east, and died away into a series of muttered growls. It was not thunder. It was the voice of the approaching cyclone.

In the same instant the mate nudged my shoulder and pointed, and I saw that a large waterspout had formed about two hundred yards astern, and was coming towards us. All about the base of it the sea was foaming in a strange manner, and the whole thing seemed to have a curious luminous quality.

As I watched it, I realized suddenly that the thing was coming straight for the ship. I ran hastily to the taffrail, raised my camera, and snapped it. In the same instant there came a blinding flash of lightning, almost in my face, followed instan-

taneously by a tremendous roar of thunder, and I saw that the thing had burst within about fifty yards of the ship. The sea, immediately beneath where it had been, leaped up in a great hummock of solid water and foam, as though something as great as a house had been cast into the ocean. Then, rushing towards us, it struck the stern of the vessel, flying as high as our topsail yards in spray, and knocking me backwards on to the deck.

As I stood up and hastily wiped the water from my camera, I heard the mate shout out to know if I were hurt, and then, before I could reply, he cried out:

"It's coming! Look out, everybody! Hold on for your lives!"

Directly afterwards a shrill yelling noise seemed to fill the whole sky with a deafening, piercing sound. I glanced hastily over the port quarter. In that direction the whole surface of the ocean seemed to be torn up into the air in monstrous clouds of spray. The yelling sound passed into a vast scream, and the next instant the cyclone was upon us. Immediately the air was so full of flying spray that I could not see a yard before me, and the wind slapped me back against the teak companion, pinning me there for a few moments helpless. The ship heeled over to a terrible angle, so that for some seconds I thought we were going to capsize. Then, with a sudden lurch, she hove herself upright, and I became able to see about me a little, by switching the water from my face and shielding my eyes. Near to me the helmsman—a little Dago—was clinging to the wheel, looking like nothing so much as a drowned monkey, and palpably frightened to such an extent that he could hardly stand upright.

From him I looked round at so much of the vessel as I could see, and up at the spars, and so, presently, I discovered how it was that she had righted. The mizzen topmast was gone just below the heel of the t'gallantmast, and the fore topmast a little above the cap. The

main topmast alone stood. It was the losing of these spars which had eased her, and allowed her to right so suddenly. Marvellously enough, the foresail—a small, new No. 1 canvas storm-sail—had stood the strain, and was now bellying out, with a high foot, the sheets evidently having surged under the wind pressure. What was more extraordinary was that the fore and main lower topsails were standing, and this despite the fact that the bare upper spars on both the fore and mizzen masts had been carried away.

And now, the first awful burst of the cyclone having passed with the righting of the vessel, the three sails stood, though tested to their utmost, and the ship, under the tremendous urging force of the storm, was tearing forward at a high speed through the seas.

Then I saw the mate. He was up against the lee-rail, chopping at something with a hatchet. At times the water left him visible to his knees; anon, he was completely submerged; but ever there was the whirl of his weapon amid the chaos of water, as he hacked and cut at the gear that held the mizzen t'gallantmast crashing against the side. I saw him glance round once, and he beckoned with the hatchet to a couple of his watch who were fighting their way aft along the streaming decks. He did not attempt to shout; for no shout could have been heard in the incredible roaring of the wind. Indeed, so vastly loud was the noise made by this element that I had not even heard the topmasts carry away, though the sound of a large spar breaking will make as great a noise as the report of a big gun. The next instant I had thrust my camera into one of the hencoops upon the poop, and turned to struggle aft to the companion way, for I knew it was no use going to the mate's aid without axes. Two axes I procured, and was soon up to my neck in water on the maindeck, helping to clear away the wreckage. The second axe I had pushed into the hands of one of the men, and now, very soon, we had the

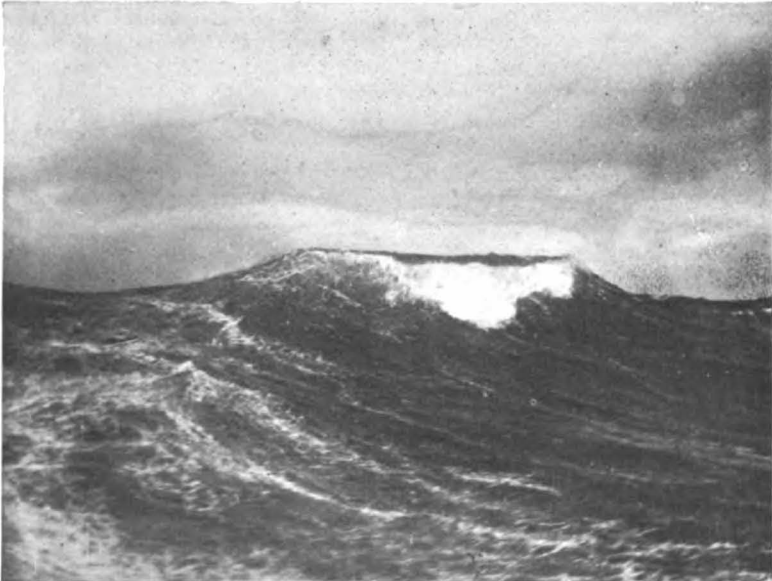


A LARGE WATERSPOUT HAD FORMED

tangle cleared away. Then we scrambled away forward along the decks, through the boiling swirls of foam and water that swept the vessel, as the seas thundered aboard, and so we came to the assistance of the second mate, who was desperately busied,

along with some of his watch, in clearing away the broken foretopmast and yards that were held by their gear, thundering against the side of the ship.

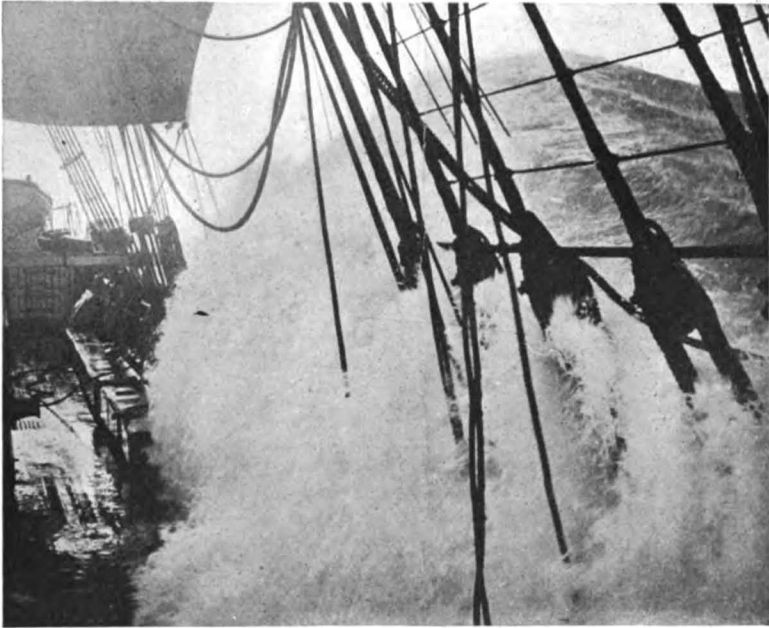
Yet it must not be supposed that we were to manage this piece of



THE FOLLOWING SEAS HAD RISEN TO A TRULY FORMIDABLE HEIGHT

work without coming to some harm. An enormous sea swept aboard, and dashed one of the men against a spare topmast that was lashed along inside the bulwarks below the pin-rail. When we managed to pull the poor senseless fellow out from underneath the spar, where the sea had jammed him, we found that his left arm and collar-bone were broken. We took

tainly have had serious consequences. In the course of the afternoon the mate and I went down into the saloon to get something to eat, and here, out of the deafening roar of the wind, I managed to get a short chat with my senior officer. I asked him why the captain did not heave to, and ride the storm out, instead of running before it, and risking being pooped,



BREAKING ABOUT AS MUCH AS A HUNDRED TONS AT A TIME

him forrard to the fo'cas'le, and there made him as comfortable as we could, after which we left him but half-conscious in his bunk. After that the rest of us, men as well as officers, made our way aft to the poop, there to wait, desperately ready to cope with any emergency. With great difficulty the carpenter managed to sound the well, and, to our delight, found that we were not making any water; so that the blows of the broken spars had done us no vital harm.

By mid-day the following seas had risen to a truly formidable height, and two hands were working half-naked at the wheel; for any carelessness in steering would most cer-

or broaching to. To this the mate made reply that we were right in the line of translation — in other words, that we were directly in the track of the vortex, or centre, of the cyclone — and that the skipper was doing his best to edge the ship to leeward, before the centre, with the awful pyramidal sea, should overtake us.

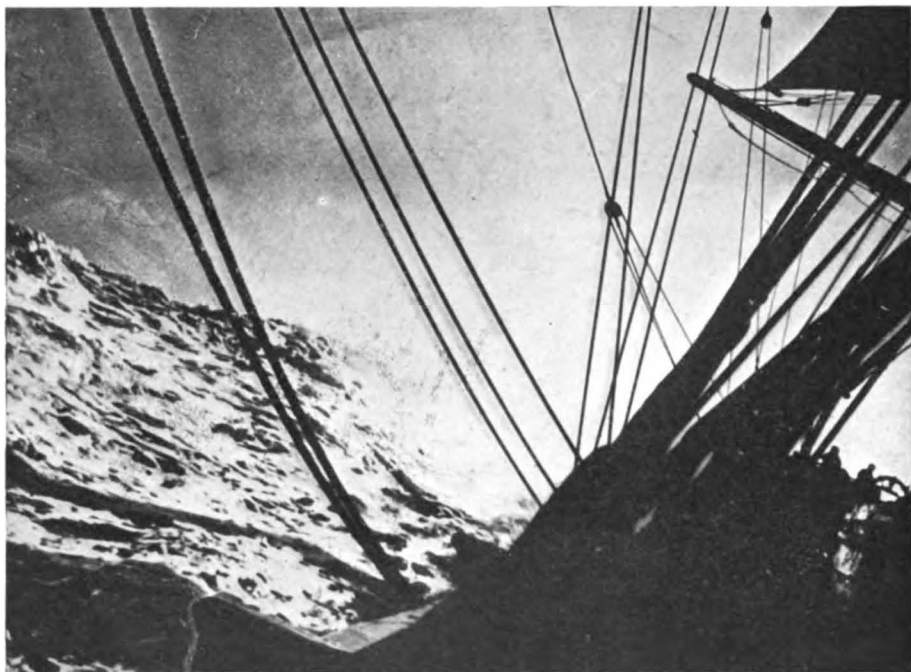
"If we can't manage to get out of the way," he concluded grimly, "you'll probably have a chance to photograph something that you'll never have time to develop!" I asked him how he knew that the ship was directly in the track of the vortex, and he replied that the facts that the wind was not hauling, but getting

steadily worse, with the barometer constantly falling, were sure signs. And soon after that we returned to the deck.

By four P.M. the seas were so much worse that it was impossible to pass fore or aft along the decks, the

would make a clean breach over us if we tried that. It's a case of "run till you're blind, and pray till you bust."

A few minutes later we went up on deck. There we found that the



A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS THROUGH WHICH THE SUN WAS SHINING WITH A QUEER BRIGHTNESS

water breaking aboard as much as a hundred tons at a time, and sweeping all before it. To get for a little out of the painful and exhausting pressure of the wind, each of the officers would in turn—sometimes singly and sometimes two at once—go down to the saloon for a short rest and smoke. It was in one of these brief "smoke-ohs" that the mate told me the vortex of the cyclone was within eighty miles of us, and coming down on us at something like twenty knots an hour, which, as this speed exceeded ours by perhaps twelve to fifteen miles an hour, made it probable that it would be upon us before midnight.

"Is there no chance of getting out of the way?" I asked.

"No," replied the mate, "the seas

wind had increased, and blown the foresail bodily away; yet, despite the greater weight of the wind, there had come a rift in the clouds, through which the sun was shining with a queer brightness. Within ten minutes the sun had vanished, and the clouds seemed to be right down upon our mast-heads, great bellying webs of black vapor that seemed almost to mingle with the flying clouds of foam and spray. About five-thirty P.M. I heard a louder roar in the air above us, and, in the same instant, the two topsails were blown out of the bolt-ropes, and one of the hencoops was lifted bodily off the poop, and hurled into the air. Luckily it was not the one into which I had thrust my camera.

With the losing of the topsails,

we might be very truly described as running under bare poles, for now we had not a single stitch of sail set anywhere; yet so furious was the increasing wind, so tremendous the weight of it, that the vessel, though urged forward only by the pressure of the element upon her anked spars and hull, managed to keep ahead of the monstrous following seas, which now were grown to truly awesome proportions. Hour by hour, the wind increased as the vortex of the cyclone—the “death-patch,” as it has been called—drew nearer and ever nearer.

Night came on early, or, if not night, a darkness that was fully its equivalent. And now I was able to see how tremendous was the electric action that was going on all about us. There seemed to be no lightning flashes, but, instead, there came at times across the darkness queer luminous shudders of light. A further sign of electric action was to be seen in the “corpse-candles” which ornamented every yard-arm. Not only were they upon the yard-arms, but occasionally several at a time would glide up and down one or more of the fore and aft stays, at whiles swinging off to one side or the other, as the ship rolled, the sight having in it a distant touch of weirdness.

It was an hour or so later, I believe a little after nine P.M., that I witnessed the most striking manifestation of electrical action that I have ever seen, this being a display of aurora borealis lightning. It occurred suddenly. First a ripple of “stalk” lightning showed right away over the oncoming seas to the northward; then suddenly a red glare shone out in the sky, and, immediately afterwards, vast streamers of greenish flame appeared above the red glare. These lasted, perhaps, half a minute.

I don't know how I can convey any vivid impression of our case and chances at this time, but imagine a noise as loud as the loudest thunder you have ever heard; then imagine this noise to last hour after hour, without intermission, and to have

in it a hideously threatening hoarse note, and, blending with this, a constant yelling scream that rises at times to such a pitch that the very ear-drums seem to experience pain, and then, perhaps, you will be able to comprehend the *sound* that has to be endured during one of these storms.

I found, too, that with my face to the wind I could not breathe. To give some idea of the wind's power, as shown in a larger way, one of the lifeboats on the after skids was up-ended against the mizzenmast, and there crushed flat by the wind. Apart from the wind, it must be borne in mind that the gigantic seas pitch the ship about in a most abominable manner; indeed, I have seen the stern of a ship hove up to such a height that I could see the seas ahead over the foretopsail yards, and when I explain that these will be something like seventy to eighty feet above the deck, you may be able to imagine what manner of sea is to be met with in a great cyclonic storm. Regarding this matter of the size and ferocity of the seas, I possess a photograph that was taken about ten o'clock at night. This was photographed by the aid of flashlight, an operation in which the captain assisted me. We filled an old percussion pistol with flashlight powder; then, when I was ready, I opened the shutter of the camera, and pointed it over the stern into the darkness. The captain fired the pistol, and, in the instantaneous great blaze of light that followed, I saw what manner of sea it was that pursued us. To say it was a mountain is to be futile. *It was like a moving cliff.*

I turned from the taffrail, and hurried below to wipe the lens and cover of my camera, for the whole air was full of driving spray, that soaked everything, and hurt the face intolerably, being driven with such force by the storm.

Whilst I was doing so, the mate came down for a minute's breathing-space, and said quietly:

“I suppose you know we expect to meet the centre in less than an hour? If we're not pooped before

the centre reaches us, it'll finish us in quick time!" It was on the deck, a little later, that the captain plucked me hard by the sleeve, then dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled aft along the streaming poop-deck, I following, my camera held between my teeth by the handle. We made our way to the saloon. Here he turned to me. He was a devil-may-care sort of man, and I found that he had brought me down to say that the vortex would be upon us very soon, and that I should have the chance of a lifetime to get a snap of the much-talked-of pyramidal sea. And, in short, that he wished me to have everything prepared, and the pistol ready loaded with flashlight powder; for, as he remarked, "If we get through, it'll be a rare curiosity to show some of these unbelieving devils ashore." In a little we had everything ready, and then we made our way once more up on deck, the captain placing the pistol in the pocket of his silk oil-skin coat.

There together we waited under the after weather-cloth. Shortly we saw a tremendous flash of lightning burst through the clouds. It was followed almost directly by another, which seemed to rive the sky apart. Then, so quickly that the succeeding thunderclap was *audible* to our wind-deafened ears, the wind ceased, and, in the comparative, but hideously unnatural, silence, I caught the Captain's voice shouting:

"The vortex—quick!"

Even as I pointed my camera over the rail, and opened the shutter, my brain was working with a preternatural avidity, drinking in a thousand uncanny sounds and echoes; and then—*flash!* in the same instant in which I had taken in these varied impressions the captain had fired the pistol, and I saw the pyramidal sea—a sight never to be forgotten, a sight rather for the dead than the living, a sea such as I could never have imagined, boiling and bursting upward in monstrous clots of water and foam as big as houses. Then one of those vast flying hills of water had

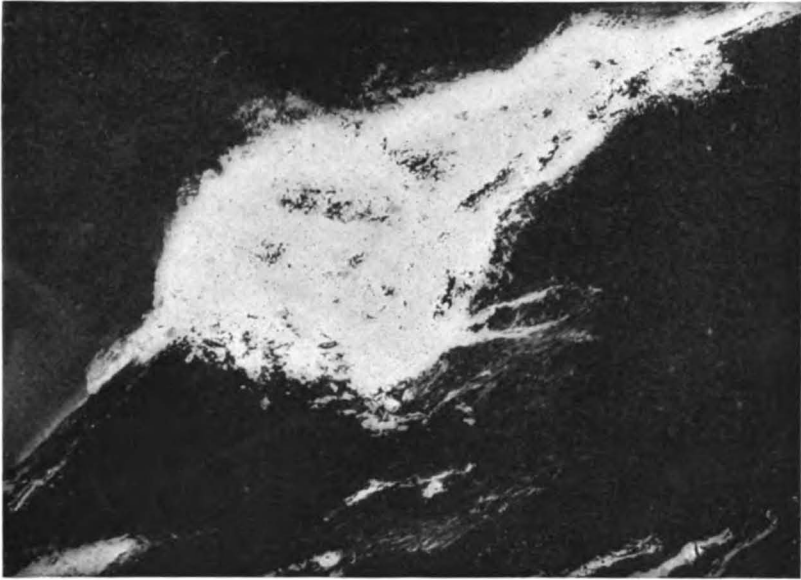
struck the ship, and, for some moments, I had a sickening feeling that she was sinking beneath me. The water cleared, and I found myself clinging to the weather-cloth stanchion; the weather-cloth had gone. I wiped my eyes, and coughed dizzily for a little; then I glanced round for the captain. I could see something dimly up against the rail, something that moved and stood upright. I called out to know if it were the captain, and whether he were all right, to which he replied, heartily enough, that he was "All right so far."

From him I glanced across to the wheel. There was no light in the binnacle, and, later, I found that it had been washed away, and with it one of the helmsmen. The other man, also, was gone, but we discovered him, nigh an hour later, jammed half through the rail that ran round the poop. To leeward, I heard the mate singing out to know whether we were safe, to which both the captain and I made reply so as to assure him. It was then I became aware that my camera had been washed out of my hands. I found it eventually among a tangle of ropes and gear to leeward.

Again and again the great hills of water struck the vessel, seeming to rise up on every side at once, towering, live pyramids of brine, hurling upward with a harsh, unceasing roaring. From her taffrail to her knight-heads the ship was swept fore and aft, so that no living thing could have existed a moment down upon the main deck, which was practically submerged; indeed, the whole vessel seemed at times to be lost beneath the chaos of water that thundered down and over her in clouds and cataracts of brine and foam, so that each moment seemed like to be our last. Occasionally I would hear the hoarse voice of the captain or the mate calling through the gloom to one another, or to the figures of the clinging men. And then again would come the thunder of water, as the sea burst over us. And all this in an almost impenetrable darkness,

save for when some unnatural glare of lightning sundered the clouds, and lit up the thirty-mile cauldron which had engulfed us. And, anon, round about, seeming to come from every point of the horizon, sounded a vast, but distant, bellowing and screaming

On every side tumbled an interminable chaos of seas. And the vessel herself! A wreck she appeared. The mizzenmast had gone some dozen feet above the deck, the main-topmast had gone, and so had the jigger-topmast. I struggled forrard to the break of



IT WAS LIKE A MOVING CLIFF

noise, which now appeared to be growing louder upon our port beam. It was the storm circling round about us.

Again there came a short period of windlessness, and then once more the yelling of an approaching gust. It struck us; but now the vessel had paid off before the wind, and she was not again forced over on to her side. From now onward we drove forward over vast seas, with the cyclone bellowing and wailing over us in one unbroken roar. . . . The vortex had passed, and, could we but last out a few more hours, then might we hope to win through.

Slowly, with an undreamt-of slowness, the remainder of the night passed, minute by minute, and at last the day broke in a weary dawn, the sky full of a stormy, sickly light.

the poop, and glanced along the decks. The boats had gone. All the iron scupper doors were either bent or had disappeared. On the starboard side, opposite to the stump of the mizzenmast, was a great ragged gap in the steel bulwarks, where the mast had struck when it carried away. In several other places the t'gallant-rail was either smashed or dinged where it had been struck by falling spars. The side of the teak deckhouse had been stove, and the water was roaring in and out with each roll of the ship. The sheep-pen had vanished, and so, as I discovered later, had the pigsty. Further forrard my glance went, and I saw that the sea had breached the bulkhead across the after end of the fo'cas'le, and with each biggish sea that we shipped a torrent of water drove in, and then floated out, sometimes bearing with it an odd board,

or perhaps a man's boot, or some other article of wearing apparel. In two places on the main deck I saw men's sea-chests washing to and fro in the water that streamed over the deck. And there came into my mind a memory of the poor fellow who had broken his arm when we were cutting loose the wreck of the foretopmast.

Already the strength of the cyclone was spent, so far, at least, as we were concerned, and I was thinking of making a try for the fo'cas'le, when, close beside me, I heard the mate's voice. I turned with a little start. He had evidently noticed the breach in the bulkhead, for he told me to watch a chance, and see if we could not get forrard. This we did, though not without a further thorough sousing, as we were still shipping water by the score of tons. Moreover, the risk was considerably greater than might be conceived, for the doorless scupper-ports offered uncomfortable facilities for going gurgling out into the ocean along with a ton or two of brine from the decks.

We reached the fo'cas'le, and pulled open the lee door. We stepped inside. It was like stepping into a dank, gloomy cavern. Water was dripping from every beam and stanchion. We struggled across the slippery deck to where we had left the sick man in his bunk. In the dim light we saw that man and bunk, everything, had vanished; only the bare steel sides of the vessel remained. Every bunk and fitting in the place had been swept away, and all of the men's sea-chests. Nothing remained, save, it might be, an odd soaked rag of clothing or a sodden bunk-board. The mate and I looked at one another in silence. "Poor devil!" he said. He repeated his expression of pity, staring hard at the place where had been the bunk; then, grave of face, he turned to go out on deck. As he did so a heavier sea than usual broke aboard, and swept in through the broken bulkhead and the lee doorway. It swirled round the sides, caught us, and threw us down in a heap, then swept out through the breach and the

doorway, carrying the mate with it. He managed to grasp the lintel of the doorway, else I do believe he would have gone out through one of the open scupper-traps—a doubly hard fate after coming safely through the cyclone.

Outside of the fo'cas'le, I saw that the ladders leading up to the head had both gone; but I managed to scramble up. Here I found that both anchors had been washed away, and the rails all round, only the bare stanchions remaining. Beyond the bows, the jib-boom had gone, and all the gear was draggled inboard over the fo'cas'le head, or trailing in the sea. We made our way aft, and reported; then the roll was called, and we found that one other was missing, besides the two I have already mentioned, and the man we found jammed half through the poop-rails, who was now under the steward's care. From that time on the sea went down steadily, and we proceeded to work to get the ship cleared up a bit, after which one watch turned in on the floor of the saloon, and the other was told to "stand easy."

Hour by hour through the day the sea went down, until it was difficult to believe that only a short twelve hours gone we had despaired for our lives. And so the evening came, calm and restful, the wind no more than a light summer's breeze, and the sea calming steadily. About seven bells that night a big steamer crossed our stern, and slowed down to ask us if we were in need of a tow; for, even by moonlight, it was easy to see our dismantled condition. This offer, however, Captain Avery refused; and, with many good wishes, the big vessel swung off into the moonlight, and so, presently, we were left alone.

When she had gone, the captain, who had been walking the poop-deck along with the mate, called across to me to know when I was going to develop those negatives.

"Never thought he'd need to," interjected the mate.

"Oh! you're an old croaker," replied the Captain, laughing. "though I'll admit it *was* stiff."