

He was soon amongst them and he found that all eyes were turned on a vessel which had stuck on a rock within two hundred yards of the cliff. It was evident that she would go to pieces under their very eyes.

'Is there no way of opening communication with her?' he asked of an old coast-guard man.

'Why, ye see, sir, we have sent to Bilford for Manby's rockets, but she must break up before they come.'

'How far is it to Bilford?'

'Better than seven mile, your honor.'

'If we could get a rope to them, we might save the crew.'

'Every one of them, your honor; but it ain't possible.'

'I think a man might swim out.'

'The first wave would dash him to pieces against the cliff.'

'What depth of water is there?'

'The cliff goes down like a wall, forty fathom, at least.'

'The deeper the better. What distance to the water?'

'A good fifty feet.'

'Well, I have dived off the main-yard of the Chesapeake. Now listen to me. Have you got some light, strong rope?'

'As much as you like.'

'Well, take a double coil round my chest, and do you take care to pay it out fast enough as I draw upon it.'

'You won't draw mach after the first plunge; it will be the same thing as suicide, every bit.'

'Well, we shall see. There's no time to be lost, lend me a knife.'

And in an instant he whipped off his hat, boots, and pea-jacket, then with the knife he cut off its sleeves and passed the rope through them that it might chafe him less.

The eyes of the old boatman brightened. There was evidently a method in his madness. 'You are a very good swimmer, I suppose, sir?'

'I have dived through the surf at Nukuheva a few times.'

'I never knew a white man that could do that.'

Tyrawley smiled. 'But whatever you do,' he said, 'mind and let me have plenty of rope. Now out of the way, my friends, and let me have a clear start.'

He walked slowly to the edge of the cliff, looked over to see how much the rock shelved outwards, then returned, looked to see that there was plenty of rope for him to carry out, then took a short run, and then leaped as if from the spring-board of a plinging-bath. He touched the water full five-and-twenty feet from the edge of the cliff. Down into its dark depths he went, like a plummet but soon to rise again. As he reached the surface he saw the crest of a mighty wave a few yards in front of him—the wave that he had been told was to dash him lifeless against the cliff. But now his old experience of the Pacific stands him in good stead. For two moments he draws breath, then, ere it reaches him, he dives below its centre. The water dashes against the cliff, but the swimmer rises far beyond it. A faint cheer rises from the shore as they feel him draw upon the rope. The waves follow in succession, and he dives again and again, rising like an otter to take breath, making very steadily onward, though more below the water than above it.

We must now turn to the ship. The waves had made a clean breach over her bows. The crew are crowded upon the stern. They hold on the bulwarks, and await the end, for no boat can live in such a sea. Suddenly she is halted from the waters. 'Ship-a-hoy!' shouts a loud, clear voice, which makes itself heard above the storm, throw me a rope or a buoy! The life-buoy was still hanging in its accustomed place by the mainmast. The captain almost mechanically takes it down, and with well-directed arm throws it within a yard or two of the swimmer. In a moment it is under his

arms, and in half a minute he is on board.

'Come on board sir,' he says to the captain, pulling one of his wet curls professionally. The captain appeared to be regarding him as a visitor from the lower world; so turning to the crew he lifted up the rope he had brought from the shore. Then for the first time the object of his mission flashed upon their minds, and a desperate cheer broke forth from all hands, instantly echoed from the shore. Then a strong cable is attached to the small rope and drawn on board, then a second and the communication is complete. But no time is to be lost for the stern shows signs of breaking up, and there is a lady passenger. Whilst the captain is planning a sort of chair in which she might be moved, Tyrawley lifts her up on his left arm, steadies himself with his right by the upper rope, and walks along the lower as if he had been a dancer. He is the first on shore, for no sailor would leave till the lady was safe. But they soon follow, and in five minutes the ship is clear, five minutes more and no trace of her is left.

Ravelstoke Hall has been aroused by the news of the wreck, and Mr. Ravelstoke has just arrived with brandy and blankets. Hum Trawley avoids, and thinking he can be of no further use, he betakes himself across the country once more, and by the aid of the friendly elm regains his chamber without observation.

The lady, whom Tyrawley had deposited in a cottage, with a strong recommendation that she should go to sleep immediately, was soon carried off in triumph by Mr. Ravelstoke to the Hall, and welcomed by Lady Grace at half-past three in the morning. There were very few of the guests who slept undisturbed that night. The unusual noise in the house aroused everybody, and many excursions were made in unfinished costume to endeavor to ascertain what was going on. The excitement culminated when the miscellaneous assemblage who had conducted the captain and some of the crew to the hall, after being well supplied with ale and stronger liquids, conceived that it would be the correct thing to give three cheers at the hour of half-past five.

It was then that Lord Todmoulton, an Irish peer laboring under an erroneous impression that the house was attacked, was discovered on the landing-place, in array consisting principally of a short dressing-gown, flannel waistcoat, and a fowl-ing-piece.

Breakfast that morning was a desultory meal. People hushed and talked about the wreck and began again. It seemed quite impossible to obtain anything like an accurate account of what had taken place. At last the captain appeared, and though almost overwhelmed by the multiplicity of questions, nevertheless, between the intervals of broiled ham and coffee, he managed to elucidate matters a little.

Then came the question, 'Who is it who swam to the vessel?' Tyrawley had only been at Ravelstoke a few days, and was a stranger in the neighborhood. None of the servants had reached the coast till it was all over, so there had been no one to recognise him.

'I scarcely saw him,' said the captain, 'but he was a dark, tallish man, with a great deal of beard.'

'Was he a gentleman?' asked Miss Constance Baynton, who had been taking a deep interest in the whole affair.

'Well, I've seen Miss I can't exactly say, for he hadn't much on, but if he isn't, he'd make a good one—that I'll go bail for. He's the coolest hand I ever saw. Stay! now I think of it, I shouldn't wonder if he was a naval man, for he pulled his forelock, half-laughing like, and said, "Come on board, sir," to me, when we pulled him up.'

'Perhaps it was Rutherford,' said Mr. Ravelstoke, naming the lieutenant in the navy; 'he is tall and dark.'

'And he has been letting his moustache grow since he came on shore,' observed a young lady.

'Where is he?'

But Mr Rutherford was gone down to the cliff to inspect the scene of the disaster.

'Begging your pardon, sir,' said the butler, 'it could not have been any gentleman stopping in the house, for the door was fastened till the people came down to tell you of the wreck.'

At this moment half-past ten a.m., Mr. Tyrawley walked into the breakfast room. He was got up, if possible, more elaborately than usual.

'Now here's a gentleman, captain, Mr. Tyrawley, who has been all over the world and met with some strange adventures. I'll be bound he never saw anything to equal the affair of last night.'

'You'd a nearish thing of it, captain?' inquired Tyrawley, speaking very slowly. His manner and appearance quite disarmed any suspicion the captain might have had of his identity.

'Five minutes more, sir, and Davy Jones's locker would have held us all. Begging your pardon, miss,' apologising to Constance.

The captain had already repeated the story a reasonable number of times, and was anxious to finish his breakfast. So Miss Constance gave it all for the benefit of Mr. Tyrawley, dressed in her own glowing periods.

Tyrawley made no observation upon her recital, but took a third egg.

'Well, Mr Tyrawley,' said she at last, 'what do you think of the man who swam out to the wreck?'

'Why, I think, Miss Baynton—I think,' said he, hesitating, 'that he must have got very wet, and I sincerely hope he won't catch cold.'

There was a general laugh at this, in which the captain joined, but it is to be feared that Miss Constance stamped her pretty little foot under the table.

Tyrawley turned and began to talk to Miss Melish, who was sitting on his right.

As he was speaking the door on his left opened and Lady Grace Ravelstoke entered with the lady passenger. The lady heard him speak, and there are some voices which a woman never forgets, and the dangerous journey over the rope had not passed in silence.

She laid her hand upon his arm and said, 'Oh, sir, how can I thank you?'

Tyrawley rose, as in duty bound, saying, 'Do not speak of it. I did not know when I came off that I was to have the pleasure of assisting you?'

But the astonishment of the captain was beautiful to behold.

'Why, you don't mean to say—well, I never—dash my wig—well, I'm—Here, shake hands, sir, will you?' And he stretched across the table a brawny hand not much smaller than a shoulder of mutton.

The grin with which Tyrawley met his seemed to do a great deal more to convince him of his identity than the lady's recognition of their preserver.

The day was as wet as the preceding. Half an hour after breakfast, Mr Tyrawley lounged into the back drawing room. There sat Miss Constance Baynton, and, by the singular coincidence which favors lovers of historians, she sat alone.

Now Constance had made up her mind that she was bound to apologise to Mr Tyrawley for her rude speeches of yesterday, she had also decided that she would compliment him on his gallant conduct.

She had, in fact, arranged a neat, quiet, cold, formal, appropriate form of words in which she would give her views expression. And how do you think she delivered them? She got up, said 'Oh, Mr. Tyrawley,' and