

HOLIDAY HOUSE

he saw, and thinking how often Frank must have been in such scenes, when suddenly a wave washed quite over the deck, and he felt his arm grasped by Mrs. Crabtree, who desired him to come down immediately in a tone of authority which he did not even yet feel bold enough to disobey; therefore, slowly and reluctantly, he descended to the cabin, where the only living thing that seemed well enough to move was Miss Perceval's tongue.

"Steward!" she cried, in sharp, angry accents. "Steward! here is water pouring down the skylights like a shower-bath! Look at my bandbox swimming on the floor! Mary! tiresome creature! don't you see that? My best bonnet will be destroyed! Send the captain here! He must positively stop that noise on deck; it is quite intolerable! My head aches as if it would burst like the boiler of a steam-boat! Stupid man! Can't he put into some port or cast anchor? How can he keep us all uncomfortable in this way? Mary! Mary! I say, are you deaf? Steward, send one of the sailors here to take care of this dog! I declare poor Frisk is going to be sick! Mary! Mary! This is insufferable. I wish the captain would come and help me to scold my maid! I shall certainly give you warning, Mary!"

This awful threat had but little effect on one who thought herself on the brink of being buried beneath the waves, besides being too sick to care whether she died the next minute or not; and even Miss Perceval's voice became drowned at last in

AN UNEXPECTED VOYAGE

the tremendous storm which raged throughout the night, during which the captain rather increased Laura's panic, if that were possible, by considerably putting his head into the cabin now and then to say, "Don't be afraid, ladies! There is no danger!"

"But I must come up and see what you are about, captain!" exclaimed Miss Perceval.

"You had better be still, ma'am," replied Mrs. Crabtree. "It is as well to be drowned in bed as on deck."

Nothing gives a more fearful idea of the helplessness of man and the wrath of God than a tempestuous sea during the gloom of midnight; and every mind on board became awed into silence and solemnity during this war of elements, till at length, towards morning, while the hurricane seemed yet raging with undiminished fury, Laura suddenly gave an exclamation of rapture on hearing a sailor at the helm begin to sing "Tom Bowling." "Now I feel sure the danger is over," said she, "otherwise that man could not have the heart to sing. If I live a century, I shall always like a sailor's song for the future."

It is seldom that any person's thankfulness after danger bears a fair proportion to the fear they felt while it lasted; but Harry and Laura had been taught to remember where their gratitude was due, and felt it the more deeply next day, when they entered the Yarmouth Roads, and were shown the masts of several vessels appearing partly above the

water, which had on various occasions been lost in that wilderness of shoals where so many melancholy catastrophes have occurred.

After sailing up the Thames, and duly staring at Greenwich Hospital, the hulks, and the Tower of London, they landed at last ; and, having offered Mrs. Crabtree a place in the cab, they hurried impatiently into it, eager for the happy moment of meeting with Frank. Harry, in his ardour, thought that no carriage had ever driven so slowly before. He wished there had been a railroad through the town ; and, far from wasting a thought upon the novelties of Holborn or Piccadilly, he and Laura gained no idea of the metropolis more distinct than that of the Irishman who complained he could not see London for the quantity of houses. One only idea filled their hearts and brightened their countenances, while they looked at each other with a smile of delight, saying, " Now, at last, we are going to see Frank ! "