PART II.--MALICIOUS GILLIATT

BOOK I

THE ROCK

I

THE PLACE WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO REACH, AND DIFFICULT TO LEAVE

The bark which had been observed at so many points on the coast of Guernsey on the previous evening was, as the reader has guessed, the old Dutch barge or sloop. Gilliatt had chosen the channel along the coast among the rocks. It was the most dangerous way, but it was the most direct. To take the shortest route was his only thought. Shipwrecks will not wait; the sea is a pressing creditor; an hour's delay may be irreparable. His anxiety was to go quickly to the rescue of the

machinery in danger.

One of his objects in leaving Guernsey was to avoid arousing attention. He set out like one escaping from justice, and seemed anxious to hide from human eyes. He shunned the eastern coast, as if he did not care to pass in sight of St. Sampson and St. Peter's Port, and glided silently along the opposite coast, which is comparatively uninhabited. Among the breakers, it was necessary to ply the oars; but Gilliatt managed them on scientific principles; taking the water quietly, and dropping it with exact regularity, he was able to move in the darkness with as little noise and as rapidly as possible. So stealthy were his movements, that he might have seemed to be bent upon some evil errand.

In truth, though embarking desperately in an enterprise which might well be called impossible, and risking his life with nearly every chance against him, he feared nothing but the possibility of some rival in the work which he had set before him.

As the day began to break, those unknown eyes which look down upon the world from boundless space might have beheld, at one of the most dangerous and solitary spots at sea, two objects, the distance between which was gradually decreasing, as the one was approaching the other. One, which was almost imperceptible in the wide movement of the waters, was a sailing boat. In this was a man. It was the sloop. The other, black, motionless, colossal, rose above the waves, a singular form. Two tall pillars issuing from the sea bore aloft a sort of cross-beam which was like a bridge between them. This bridge, so singular in shape that

it was impossible to imagine what it was from a distance, touched each of the two pillars. It resembled a vast portal. Of what use could such an erection be in that open plain, the sea, which stretched around it far and wide? It might have been imagined to be a Titanic Cromlech, planted there in mid-ocean by an imperious whim, and built up by hands accustomed to proportion their labours to the great deep. Its wild outline stood well-defined against the clear sky.

The morning light was growing stronger in the east; the whiteness in the horizon deepened the shadow on the sea. In the opposite sky the moon was sinking.

The two perpendicular forms were the Douvres. The huge mass held fast between them, like an architrave between two pillars, was the wreck of the Durande.

The rock, thus holding fast and exhibiting its prey, was terrible to behold. Inanimate things look sometimes as if endowed with a dark and hostile spirit towards man. There was a menace in the attitude of the rocks. They seemed to be biding their time.

Nothing could be more suggestive of haughtiness and arrogance than their whole appearance: the conquered vessel; the triumphant abyss. The two rocks, still streaming with the tempest of the day before, were like two wrestlers sweating from a recent struggle. The wind had sunk; the sea rippled gently; here and there the presence of breakers might be detected in the graceful streaks of foam upon the surface of the waters.

A sound came from the sea like the murmuring of bees. All around was level except the Douvres, rising straight, like two black columns. Up to a certain height they were completely bearded with seaweed; above this their steep haunches glittered at points like polished armour. They seemed ready to commence the strife again. The beholder felt that they were rooted deep in mountains whose summits were beneath the sea. Their aspect was full of a sort of tragic power.

Ordinarily the sea conceals her crimes. She delights in privacy. Her unfathomable deeps keep silence. She wraps herself in a mystery which rarely consents to give up its secrets. We know her savage nature, but who can tell the extent of her dark deeds? She is at once open and secret; she hides away carefully, and cares not to divulge her actions; wrecks a vessel, and, covering it with the waves, engulfs it deep, as if conscious of her guilt. Among her crimes is hypocrisy. She slays and steals, conceals her booty, puts on an air of unconsciousness, and smiles.

Here, however, was nothing of the kind. The Douvres, lifting above the level of the waters the shattered hull of the Durande, had an air of triumph. The imagination might have pictured them as two monstrous arms, reaching upwards from the gulf, and exhibiting to the tempest the lifeless body of the ship. Their aspect was like that of an assassin boasting of his evil deeds.

The solemnity of the hour contributed something to the impression of the scene. There is a mysterious grandeur in the dawn, as of the border-land

between the region of consciousness and the world of our dreams. There is something spectral in that confused transition time. The immense form of the two Douvres, like a capital letter H, the Durande forming its cross stroke, appeared against the horizon in all their twilight majesty.

Gilliatt was attired in his seaman's clothing: a Guernsey shirt, woollen stockings, thick shoes, a homespun jacket, trousers of thick stuff, with pockets, and a cap upon his head of red worsted, of a kind then much in use among sailors, and known in the last century as a galérienne.

He recognised the rocks, and steered towards them.

The situation of the Durande was exactly the contrary of that of a vessel gone to the bottom: it was a vessel suspended in the air.

No problem more strange was ever presented to a salvor.

It was broad daylight when Gilliatt arrived in the waters about the rock.

As we have said, there was but little sea. The slight agitation of the water was due almost entirely to its confinement among the rocks. Every passage, small or large, is subject to this chopping movement. The inside of a channel is always more or less white with foam. Gilliatt did not approach the Douvres without caution.

He cast the sounding lead several times.

He had a cargo to disembark.

Accustomed to long absences, he had at home a number of necessaries always ready. He had brought a sack of biscuit, another of rye-meal, a basket of salt fish and smoked beef, a large can of fresh water; a Norwegian chest painted with flowers, containing several coarse woollen shirts, his tarpaulin and his waterproof overalls, and a sheepskin which he was accustomed to throw at night over his clothes. On leaving the Bû de la Rue he had put all these things hastily into the barge, with the addition of a large loaf. In his hurry he had brought no other tools but his huge forge-hammer, his chopper and hatchet, and a knotted rope. Furnished with a grappling-iron and with a ladder of that sort, the steepest rocks become accessible, and a good sailor will find it possible to scale the rudest escarpment. In the island of Sark the visitor may see what the fishermen of the Havre Gosselin can accomplish with a knotted cord.

His nets and lines and all his fishing apparatus were in the barge. He had placed them there mechanically and by habit; for he intended, if his enterprise continued, to sojourn for some time in an archipelago of rocks and breakers, where fishing nets and tackle are of little use.

At the moment when Gilliatt was skirting the great rock the sea was retiring; a circumstance favourable to his purpose. The departing tide laid bare, at the foot of the smaller Douvre, one or two table-rocks,

horizontal, or only slightly inclined, and bearing a fanciful resemblance to boards supported by crows. These table-rocks, sometimes narrow, sometimes broad, standing at unequal distances along the side of the great perpendicular column, were continued in the form of a thin cornice up to a spot just beneath the Durande, the hull of which stood swelling out between the two rocks. The wreck was held fast there as in a vice.

This series of platforms was convenient for approaching and surveying the position. It was convenient also for disembarking the contents of the barge provisionally; but it was necessary to hasten, for it was only above water for a few hours. With the rising tide the table-rocks would be again beneath the foam.

It was before these table-rocks, some level, some slanting, that Gilliatt pushed in and brought the barge to a stand. A thick mass of wet and slippery sea-wrack covered them, rendered more slippery here and there by their inclined surfaces.

Gilliatt pulled off his shoes and sprang bare-footed on to the slimy weeds, and made fast the barge to a point of rock.

Then he advanced as far as he could along the granite cornice, reached the rock immediately beneath the wreck, looked up, and examined it.

The Durande had been caught suspended, and, as it were, fitted in between the two rocks, at about twenty feet above the water. It must

have been a heavy sea which had cast her there.

Such effects from furious seas have nothing surprising for those who are familiar with the ocean. To cite one example only:--On the 25th January 1840, in the Gulf of Stora, a tempest struck with its expiring force a brig, and casting it almost intact completely over the broken wreck of the corvette La Marne, fixed it immovable, bowsprit first, in a gap between the cliffs.

The Douvres, however, held only a part of the Durande.

The vessel snatched from the waves had been, as it were, uprooted from the waters by the hurricane. A whirlwind had wrenched it against the counteracting force of the rolling waves, and the vessel thus caught in contrary directions by the two claws of the tempest had snapped like a lath. The after-part with the engine and the paddles, lifted out of the foam and driven by all the fury of the cyclone into the defile of the Douvres, had plunged in up to her midship beam, and remained there. The blow had been well directed. To drive it in this fashion between the two rocks, the storm had struck it as with an enormous hammer. The forecastle carried away and rolled down by the sea, had gone to fragments among the breakers.

The hold, broken in, had scattered out the bodies of the drowned cattle upon the sea.

A large portion of the forward side and bulwarks still hung to the

riders by the larboard paddle-box, and by some shattered braces easy to strike off with the blow of a hatchet.

Here and there, among beams, planks, rags of canvas, pieces of chains, and other remains of wreck were seen lying about among the rugged fragments of shattered rock.

Gilliatt surveyed the Durande attentively. The keel formed a roofing over his head.

A serene sky stretched far and wide over the waters, scarcely wrinkled with a passing breath. The sun rose gloriously in the midst of the vast azure circle.

From time to time a drop of water was detached from the wreck and fell into the sea.

II

A CATALOGUE OF DISASTERS

The Douvres differed in shape as well as in height.

Upon the Little Douvre, which was curved and pointed, long veins of reddish-coloured rock, of a comparatively soft kind, could be seen branching out and dividing the interior of the granite. At the edges of these red dykes were fractures, favourable to climbing. One of these fractures, situated a little above the wreck, had been so laboriously worn and scooped out by the splashing of the waves, that it had become a sort of niche, in which it would have been quite possible to place a statue. The granite of the Little Douvre was rounded at the surface, and, to the feel at least, soft like touchstone; but this feeling detracted nothing from its durability. The Little Douvre terminated in a point like a horn. The Great Douvre, polished, smooth, glossy, perpendicular, and looking as if cut out by the builder's square, was in one piece, and seemed made of black ivory. Not a hole, not a break in its smooth surface. The escarpment looked inhospitable. A convict could not have used it for escape, nor a bird for a place for its nest. On the summit there was a horizontal surface as upon "The Man Rock;" but the summit of the Great Douvre was inaccessible.

It was possible to scale the Little Douvre, but not to remain on the

summit; it would have been possible to rest on the summit of the Great Douvre, but impossible to scale it.

Gilliatt, having rapidly surveyed the situation of affairs, returned to the barge, landed its contents upon the largest of the horizontal cornice rocks, made of the whole compact mass a sort of bale, which he rolled up in tarpaulin, fitted a sling rope to it with a hoisting block, pushed the package into a corner of the rocks where the waves could not reach it, and then clutching the Little Douvre with his hands, and holding on with his naked feet, he clambered from projection to projection, and from niche to niche, until he found himself level with the wrecked vessel high up in the air.

Having reached the height of the paddles, he sprang upon the poop.

The interior of the wreck presented a mournful aspect.

Traces of a great struggle were everywhere visible. There were plainly to be seen the frightful ravages of the sea and wind. The action of the tempest resembles the violence of a band of pirates. Nothing is more like the victim of a criminal outrage than a wrecked ship violated and stripped by those terrible accomplices, the storm-cloud, the thunder, the rain, the squall, the waves, and the breakers.

Standing upon the dismantled deck, it was natural to dream of the presence of something like a furious stamping of the spirits of the storm. Everywhere around were the marks of their rage. The strange

contortions of certain portions of the ironwork bore testimony to the terrific force of the winds. The between-decks were like the cell of a lunatic, in which everything has been broken.

No wild beast can compare with the sea for mangling its prey. The waves are full of talons. The north wind bites, the billows devour, the waves are like hungry jaws. The ocean strikes like a lion with its heavy paw, seizing and dismembering at the same moment.

The ruin conspicuous in the Durande presented the peculiarity of being detailed and minute. It was a sort of horrible stripping and plucking. Much of it seemed done with design. The beholder was tempted to exclaim, "What wanton mischief!" The ripping of the planking was edged here and there artistically. This peculiarity is common with the ravages of the cyclone. To chip and tear away is the caprice of the great devastator. Its ways are like those of the professional torturer. The disasters which it causes wear a look of ingenious punishments. One might fancy it actuated by the worst passions of man. It refines in cruelty like a savage. While it is exterminating it dissects bone by bone. It torments its victim, avenges itself, and takes delight in its work. It even appears to descend to petty acts of malice.

Cyclones are rare in our latitudes, and are, for that reason, the more dangerous, being generally unexpected. A rock in the path of a heavy wind may become the pivot of a storm. It is probable that the squall had thus rotated upon the point of the Douvres, and had turned suddenly into a waterspout on meeting the shock of the rocks, a fact which explained

the casting of the vessel so high among them. When the cyclone blows, a vessel is of no more weight in the wind than a stone in a sling.

The damage received by the Durande was like the wound of a man cut in twain. It was a divided trunk from which issued a mass of débris like the entrails of a body. Various kinds of cordage hung floating and trembling, chains swung chattering; the fibres and nerves of the vessel were there naked and exposed. What was not smashed was disjointed.

Fragments of the sheeting resembled currycombs bristling with nails; everything bore the appearance of ruin; a handspike had become nothing but a piece of iron; a sounding-lead, nothing but a lump of metal; a dead-eye had become a mere piece of wood; a halliard, an end of rope; a strand of cord, a tangled skein; a bolt-rope, a thread in the hem of a sail. All around was the lamentable work of demolition. Nothing remained that was not unhooked, unnailed, cracked, wasted, warped, pierced with holes, destroyed: nothing hung together in the dreadful mass, but all was torn, dislocated, broken. There was that air of drift which characterises the scene of all struggles--from the melées of men, which are called battles, to the melées of the elements, to which we give the name of chaos. Everything was sinking and dropping away; a rolling mass of planks, panelling, ironwork, cables, and beams had been arrested just at the great fracture of the hull, whence the least additional shock must have precipitated them into the sea. What remained of her powerful frame, once so triumphant, was cracked here and there, showing through large apertures the dismal gloom within.

The foam from below spat its flakes contemptuously upon this broken and forlorn outcast of the sea.

III

SOUND; BUT NOT SAFE

Gilliatt did not expect to find only a portion of the ship existing. Nothing in the description, in other respects so precise, of the captain of the Shealtiel had led him to anticipate this division of the vessel in the centre. It was probable that the "diabolical crash" heard by the captain of the Shealtiel marked the moment when this destruction had taken place under the blows of a tremendous sea. The captain had, doubtless, worn ship just before this last heavy squall; and what he had taken for a great sea was probably a waterspout. Later, when he drew nearer to observe the wreck, he had only been able to see the stern of the vessel--the remainder, that is to say, the large opening where the fore-part had given way, having been concealed from him among the masses of rock.

With that exception, the information given by the captain of the Shealtiel was strictly correct. The hull was useless, but the engine remained intact.

Such chances are common in the history of shipwreck. The logic of disaster at sea is beyond the grasp of human science.

The masts having snapped short, had fallen over the side; the chimney

was not even bent. The great iron plating which supported the machinery had kept it together, and in one piece. The planks of the paddle-boxes were disjointed, like the leaves of wooden sunblinds; but through their apertures the paddles themselves could be seen in good condition. A few of their floats only were missing.

Besides the machinery, the great stern capstan had resisted the destruction. Its chain was there, and, thanks to its firm fixture in a frame of joists, might still be of service, unless the strain of the voyal should break away the planking. The flooring of the deck bent at almost every point, and was tottering throughout.

On the other hand, the trunk of the hull, fixed between the Douvres, held together, as we have already said, and it appeared strong.

There was something like derision in this preservation of the machinery; something which added to the irony of the misfortune. The sombre malice of the unseen powers of mischief displays itself sometimes in such bitter mockeries. The machinery was saved, but its preservation did not make it any the less lost. The ocean seemed to have kept it only to demolish it at leisure. It was like the playing of the cat with her prey.

Its fate was to suffer there and to be dismembered day by day. It was to be the plaything of the savage amusements of the sea. It was slowly to dwindle, and, as it were, to melt away. For what could be done? That this vast block of mechanism and gear, at once massive and delicate,

condemned to fixity by its weight, delivered up in that solitude to the destructive elements, exposed in the gripe of the rock to the action of the wind and wave, could, under the frown of that implacable spot, escape from slow destruction, seemed a madness even to imagine.

The Durande was the captive of the Douvres.

How could she be extricated from that position?

How could she be delivered from her bondage?

The escape of a man is difficult; but what a problem was this--the escape of a vast and cumbrous machine.

IV

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Gilliatt was pressed on all sides by demands upon his labours. The most pressing, however, was to find a safe mooring for the barge; then a shelter for himself.

The Durande having settled down more on the larboard than on the starboard side, the right paddle-box was higher than the left.

Gilliatt ascended the paddle-box on the right. From that position, although the gut of rocks stretching in abrupt angles behind the Douvres had several elbows, he was able to study the ground-plan of the group.

This survey was the preliminary step of his operations.

The Douvres, as we have already described them, were like two high gable-ends, forming the narrow entrance to a straggling alley of small cliffs with perpendicular faces. It is not rare to find in primitive submarine formations these singular kinds of passages, which seem cut out with a hatchet.

This defile was extremely tortuous, and was never without water even in the low tides. A current, much agitated, traversed it at all times from

end to end. The sharpness of its turnings was favourable or unfavourable, according to the nature of the prevailing wind; sometimes it broke the swell and caused it to fall; sometimes it exasperated it. This latter effect was the most frequent. An obstacle arouses the anger of the sea, and pushes it to excesses. The foam is the exaggeration of the waves.

The stormy winds in these narrow and tortuous passages between the rocks are subjected to a similar compression, and acquire the same malignant character. The tempest frets in its sudden imprisonment. Its bulk is still immense, but sharpened and contracted; and it strikes with the massiveness of a huge club and the keenness of an arrow. It pierces even while it strikes down. It is a hurricane contracted, like the draught through the crevice of a door.

The two chains of rocks, leaving between them this kind of street in the sea, formed stages at a lower level than the Douvres, gradually decreasing, until they sunk together at a certain distance beneath the waves.

There was another such gullet of less height than the gullet of the Douvres, but narrower still, and which formed the eastern entrance of the defile. It was evident that the double prolongation of the ridge of rocks continued the kind of street under the water as far as "The Man Rock," which stood like a square citadel at the extremity of the group.

At low water, indeed, which was the time at which Gilliatt was observing

them, the two rows of sunken rock showed their tips, some high and dry, and all visible and preserving their parallel without interruption.

"The Man" formed the boundary, and buttressed on the eastern side the entire mass of the group, which was protected on the opposite side by the two Douvres.

The whole, from a bird's-eye view, appeared like a winding chaplet of rocks, having the Douvres at one extremity and "The Man" at the other.

The Douvres, taken together, were merely two gigantic shafts of granite protruding vertically and almost touching each other, and forming the crest of one of the mountainous ranges lying beneath the ocean. Those immense ridges are not only found rising out of the unfathomable deep. The surf and the squall had broken them up and divided them like the teeth of a saw. Only the tip of the ridge was visible; this was the group of rocks. The remainder, which the waves concealed, must have been enormous. The passage in which the storm had planted the Durande was the way between these two colossal shafts.

This passage, zigzag in form as the forked lightning, was of about the same width in all parts. The ocean had so fashioned it. Its eternal commotion produces sometimes those singular regularities. There is a sort of geometry in the action of the sea.

From one extremity to the other of the defile, the two parallel granite walls confronted each other at a distance which the midship frame of the

Durande measured exactly. Between the two Douvres, the widening of the Little Douvre, curved and turned back as it was, had formed a space for the paddles. In any other part they must have been shattered to fragments.

The high double façade of rock within the passage was hideous to the sight. When, in the exploration of the desert of water which we call the ocean, we come upon the unknown world of the sea, all is uncouth and shapeless. So much as Gilliatt could see of the defile from the height of the wreck, was appalling. In the rocky gorges of the ocean we may often trace a strange permanent impersonation of shipwreck. The defile of the Douvres was one of these gorges, and its effect was exciting to the imagination. The oxydes of the rock showed on the escarpment here and there in red places, like marks of clotted blood; it resembled the splashes on the walls of an abattoir. Associations of the charnel-house haunted the place. The rough marine stones, diversely tinted--here by the decomposition of metallic amalgams mingling with the rock, there by the mould of dampness, manifested in places by purple scales, hideous green blotches, and ruddy splashes, awakened ideas of murder and extermination. It was like the unwashed walls of a chamber which had been the scene of an assassination; or it might have been imagined that men had been crushed to death there, leaving traces of their fate. The peaked rocks produced an indescribable impression of accumulated agonies. Certain spots appeared to be still dripping with the carnage; here the wall was wet, and it looked impossible to touch it without leaving the fingers bloody. The blight of massacre seemed everywhere. At the base of the double parallel escarpment, scattered along the water's

edge, or just below the waves, or in the worn hollows of the rocks, were monstrous rounded masses of shingle, some scarlet, others black or purple, which bore a strange resemblance to internal organs of the body; they might have been taken for human lungs, or heart, or liver, scattered and putrefying in that dismal place. Giants might have been disembowelled there. From top to bottom of the granite ran long red lines, which might have been compared to oozings from a funeral bier.

Such aspects are frequent in sea caverns.

V

A WORD UPON THE SECRET CO-OPERATIONS OF THE ELEMENTS

Those who, by the disastrous chances of sea-voyages, happen to be condemned to a temporary habitation upon a rock in mid-ocean, find that the form of their inhospitable refuge is by no means a matter of indifference. There is the pyramidal-shaped rock, a single peak rising from the water; there is the circle rock somewhat resembling a round of great stones; and there is the corridor-rock. The latter is the most alarming of all. It is not only the ceaseless agony of the waves between its walls, or the tumult of the imprisoned sea; there are also certain obscure meteorological characteristics which appear to appertain to this parallelism of two marine rocks. The two straight sides seem a veritable electric battery.

The first result of the peculiar position of these corridor-rocks is an action upon the air and the water. The corridor-rock acts upon the waves and the wind mechanically by its form; galvanically, by the different magnetic action rendered possible by its vertical height, its masses in juxtaposition and contrary to each other.

This form of rock attracts to itself all the forces scattered in the winds, and exercises over the tempest a singular power of concentration.

Hence there is in the neighbourhood of these breakers a certain accentuation of storms.

It must be borne in mind that the wind is composite. The wind is believed to be simple; but it is by no means simple. Its power is not merely dynamic, it is chemical also; but this is not all, it is magnetic. Its effects are often inexplicable. The wind is as much electrical as aerial. Certain winds coincide with the aurores boreales. The wind blowing from the bank of the Aiguilles rolls the waves one hundred feet high; a fact observed with astonishment by Dumont-d'Urville. The corvette, he says, "knew not what to obey."

In the south seas the waters will sometimes become inflated like an outbreak of immense tumours; and at such times the ocean becomes so terrible that the savages fly to escape the sight of it. The blasts in the north seas are different. They are mingled with sharp points of ice; and their gusts, unfit to breathe, will blow the sledges of the Esquimaux backwards in the snow. Other winds burn. The simoon of Africa is the typhoon of China and the samiel of India. Simoon, typhoon, and samiel, are believed to be the names of demons. They descend from the heights of the mountains. A storm vitrified the volcano of Toluca. This hot wind, a whirlwind of inky colour, rushing upon red clouds, is alluded to in the Vedas: "Behold the black god, who comes to steal the red cows." In all these facts we trace the presence of the electric mystery.

The wind indeed is full of it; so are the waves. The sea, too, is

composite in its nature. Under its waves of water which we see, it has its waves of force which are invisible. Its constituents are innumerable. Of all the elements the ocean is the most indivisible and the most profound.

Endeavour to conceive this chaos so enormous that it dwarfs all other things to one level. It is the universal recipient, reservoir of germs of life, and mould of transformations. It amasses and then disperses, it accumulates and then sows, it devours and then creates. It receives all the waste and refuse waters of the earth, and converts them into treasure. It is solid in the iceberg, liquid in the wave, fluid in the estuary. Regarded as matter, it is a mass; regarded as a force, it is an abstraction. It equalises and unites all phenomena. It may be called the infinite in combination. By force and disturbance, it arrives at transparency. It dissolves all differences, and absorbs them into its own unity. Its elements are so numerous that it becomes identity. One of its drops is complete, and represents the whole. From the abundance of its tempests, it attains equilibrium. Plato beheld the mazy dances of the spheres. Strange fact, though not the less real, the ocean, in the vast terrestrial journey round the sun, becomes, with its flux and reflux, the balance of the globe.

In a phenomenon of the sea, all other phenomena are resumed. The sea is blown out of a waterspout as from a syphon; the storm observes the principle of the pump; the lightning issues from the sea as from the air. Aboard ships dull shocks are sometimes felt, and an odour of sulphur issues from the receptacles of chain cables. The ocean boils.

"The devil has put the sea in his cauldron," said De Ruyter. In certain tempests, which characterise the equinoxes and the return to equilibrium of the prolific power of nature, vessels breasting the foam seem to give out a kind of fire, phosphoric lights chase each other along the rigging, so close sometimes to the sailors at their work that the latter stretch forth their hands and try to catch, as they fly, these birds of flame. After the great earthquake of Lisbon, a blast of hot air, as from a furnace, drove before it towards the city a wave sixty feet high. The oscillation of the ocean is closely related to the convulsions of the earth.

These immeasurable forces produce sometimes extraordinary inundations. At the end of the year 1864, one of the Maldive Islands, at a hundred leagues from the Malabar coast, actually foundered in the sea. It sunk to the bottom like a shipwrecked vessel. The fishermen who sailed from it in the morning, found nothing when they returned at night; scarcely could they distinguish their villages under the sea. On this occasion boats were the spectators of the wrecks of houses.

In Europe, where nature seems restrained by the presence of civilisation, such events are rare and are thought impossible. Nevertheless, Jersey and Guernsey originally formed part of Gaul, and at the moment while we are writing these lines, an equinoctial gale has demolished a great portion of the cliff of the Firth of Forth in Scotland.

Nowhere do these terrific forces appear more formidably conjoined than

in the surprising strait known as the Lyse-Fiord. The Lyse-Fiord is the most terrible of all the gut rocks of the ocean. Their terrors are there complete. It is in the northern sea, near the inhospitable Gulf of Stavanger, and in the 59th degree of latitude. The water is black and heavy, and subject to intermitting storms. In this sea, and in the midst of this solitude, rises a great sombre street--a street for no human footsteps. None ever pass through there; no ship ever ventures in. It is a corridor ten leagues in length, between two rocky walls of three thousand feet in height. Such is the passage which presents an entrance to the sea. The defile has its elbows and angles like all these streets of the sea--never straight, having been formed by the irregular action of the water. In the Lyse-Fiord, the sea is almost always tranquil; the sky above is serene; the place terrible. Where is the wind? Not on high. Where is the thunder? Not in the heavens. The wind is under the sea; the lightnings within the rock. Now and then there is a convulsion of the water. At certain moments, when there is perhaps not a cloud in the sky, nearly half way up the perpendicular rock, at a thousand or fifteen hundred feet above the water, and rather on the southern than on the northern side, the rock suddenly thunders, lightnings dart forth, and then retire like those toys which lengthen out and spring back again in the hands of children. They contract and enlarge; strike the opposite cliff, re-enter the rock, issue forth again, recommence their play, multiply their heads and tips of flame, grow bristling with points, strike wherever they can, recommence again, and then are extinguished with a sinister abruptness. Flocks of birds fly wide in terror. Nothing is more mysterious than that artillery issuing out of the invisible. One cliff attacks the other, raining lightning blows from side to side.

Their war concerns not man. It signals the ancient enmity of two rocks in the impassable gulf.

In the Lyse-Fiord, the wind whirls like the water in an estuary; the rock performs the function of the clouds; and the thunder breaks forth like volcanic fire. This strange defile is a voltaic pile; the plates of which are the double line of cliffs.

VI

A STABLE FOR THE HORSE

Gilliatt was sufficiently familiar with marine rocks to grapple in earnest with the Douvres. Before all, as we have just said, it was necessary to find a safe shelter for the barge.

The double row of reefs, which stretched in a sinuous form behind the Douvres, connected itself here and there with other rocks, and suggested the existence of blind passages and hollows opening out into the straggling way, and joining again to the principal defile like branches to a trunk.

The lower part of these rocks was covered with kelp, the upper part with lichens. The uniform level of the seaweed marked the line of the water at the height of the tide, and the limit of the sea in calm weather. The points which the water had not touched presented those silver and golden hues communicated to marine granite by the white and yellow lichen.

A crust of conoidical shells covered the rock at certain points, the dry rot of the granite.

At other points in the retreating angles, where fine sand had accumulated, ribbed on its surface rather by the wind than by the waves,

appeared tufts of blue thistles.

In the indentations, sheltered from the winds, could be traced the little perforations made by the sea-urchin. This shelly mass of prickles, which moves about a living ball, by rolling on its spines, and the armour of which is composed of ten thousand pieces, artistically adjusted and welded together--the sea-urchin, which is popularly called, for some unknown reason, "Aristotle's lantern," wears away the granite with his five teeth, and lodges himself in the hole. It is in such holes that the samphire gatherers find them. They cut them in halves and eat them raw, like an oyster. Some steep their bread in the soft flesh. Hence its other name, "Sea-egg."

The tips of the further reefs, left out of the water by the receding tide, extended close under the escarpment of "The Man" to a sort of creek, enclosed nearly on all sides by rocky walls. Here was evidently a possible harbourage. It had the form of a horse-shoe, and opened only on one side to the east wind, which is the least violent of all winds in that sea labyrinth. The water was shut in there, and almost motionless. The shelter seemed comparatively safe. Gilliatt, moreover, had not much choice.

If he wished to take advantage of the low water, it was important to make haste.

The weather continued to be fine and calm. The insolent sea was for a while in a gentle mood.

Gilliatt descended, put on his shoes again, unmoored the cable, re-embarked, and pushed out into the water. He used the oars, coasting the side of the rock.

Having reached "The Man Rock," he examined the entrance to the little creek.

A fixed, wavy line in the motionless sea, a sort of wrinkle, imperceptible to any eye but that of a sailor, marked the channel.

Gilliatt studied for a moment its lineament, almost indistinct under the water; then he held off a little in order to veer at ease, and steer well into channel; and suddenly with a stroke of the oars he entered the little bay.

He sounded.

The anchorage appeared to be excellent.

The sloop would be protected there against almost any of the contingencies of the season.

The most formidable reefs have quiet nooks of this sort. The ports which are thus found among the breakers are like the hospitality of the fierce Bedouin--friendly and sure.

Gilliatt placed the sloop as near as he could to "The Man," but still far enough to escape grazing the rock; and he cast his two anchors.

That done, he crossed his arms, and reflected on his position.

The sloop was sheltered. Here was one problem solved. But another remained. Where could he now shelter himself?

He had the choice of two places: the sloop itself, with its corner of cabin, which was scarcely habitable, and the summit of "The Man Rock," which was not difficult to scale.

From one or other of these refuges it was possible at low water, by jumping from rock to rock, to gain the passage between the Douvres where the Durande was fixed, almost without wetting the feet.

But low water lasts but a short while, and all the rest of the time he would be cut off either from his shelter or from the wreck by more than two hundred fathoms. Swimming among breakers is difficult at all times; if there is the least commotion in the sea it is impossible.

He was driven to give up the idea of shelter in the sloop or on "The Man."

No resting-place was possible among the neighbouring rocks.

The summits of the lower ones disappeared twice a day beneath the rising

tide.

The summits of the higher ones were constantly swept by the flakes of foam, and promised nothing but an inhospitable drenching.

No choice remained but the wreck itself.

Was it possible to seek refuge there?

Gilliatt hoped it might be.

VII

A CHAMBER FOR THE VOYAGER

Half-an-hour afterwards, Gilliatt having returned to the wreck, climbed to the deck, went below, and descended into the hold, completing the summary survey of his first visit.

By the help of the capstan he had raised to the deck of the Durande the package which he had made of the lading of the sloop. The capstan had worked well. Bars for turning it were not wanting. Gilliatt had only to take his choice among the heap of wreck.

He found among the fragments a chisel, dropped, no doubt, from the carpenter's box, and which he added to his little stock of tools.

Besides this--for in poverty of appliances so complete everything counts for a little--he had his jack-knife in his pocket.

Gilliatt worked the whole day long on the wreck, clearing away, propping, arranging.

At nightfall he observed the following facts:

The entire wreck shook in the wind. The carcass trembled at every step

he took. There was nothing stable or strong except the portion of the hull jammed between the rocks which contained the engine. There the beams were powerfully supported by the granite walls.

Fixing his home in the Durande would be imprudent. It would increase the weight; but far from adding to her burden, it was important to lighten it. To burden the wreck in any way was indeed the very contrary of what he wanted.

The mass of ruin required, in fact, the most careful management. It was like a sick man at the approach of dissolution. The wind would do sufficient to help it to its end.

It was, moreover, unfortunate enough to be compelled to work there. The amount of disturbance which the wreck would have to withstand would necessarily distress it, perhaps beyond its strength.

Besides, if any accident should happen in the night while Gilliatt was sleeping, he must necessarily perish with the vessel. No assistance was possible; all would be over. In order to help the shattered vessel, it was absolutely necessary to remain outside it.

How to be outside and yet near it, this was the problem.

The difficulty became more complicated as he considered it.

Where could he find a shelter under such conditions?

Gilliatt reflected.

There remained nothing but the two Douvres. They seemed hopeless enough.

From below, it was possible to distinguish upon the upper plateau of the Great Douvre a sort of protuberance.

High rocks with flattened summits, like the Great Douvre and "The Man," are a sort of decapitated peaks. They abound among the mountains and in the ocean. Certain rocks, particularly those which are met with in the open sea, bear marks like half-felled trees. They have the appearance of having received blows from a hatchet. They have been subjected, in fact, to the blows of the gale, that indefatigable pioneer of the sea.

There are other still more profound causes of marine convulsions. Hence the innumerable bruises upon these primeval masses of granite. Some of these sea giants have their heads struck off.

Sometimes these heads, from some inexplicable cause, do not fall, but remain shattered on the summit of the mutilated trunk. This singularity is by no means rare. The Devil's Rock, at Guernsey, and the Table, in the Valley of Anweiler, illustrate some of the most surprising features of this strange geological enigma.

Some such phenomena had probably fashioned the summit of the Great Douvre.

If the protuberance which could be observed on the plateau were not a natural irregularity in the stone, it must necessarily be some remaining fragment of the shattered summit.

Perhaps the fragment might contain some excavation--some hole into which a man could creep for cover. Gilliatt asked for no more.

But how could he reach the plateau? How could he scale that perpendicular wall, hard and polished as a pebble, half covered with the growth of glutinous confervæ, and having the slippery look of a soapy surface?

The ridge of the plateau was at least thirty feet above the deck of the Durande.

Gilliatt took out of his box of tools the knotted cord, hooked it to his belt by the grapnel, and set to work to scale the Little Douvre. The ascent became more difficult as he climbed. He had forgotten to take off his shoes, a fact which increased the difficulty. With great labour and straining, however, he reached the point. Safely arrived there, he raised himself and stood erect. There was scarcely room for his two feet. To make it his lodging would be difficult. A Stylite might have contented himself there; Gilliatt, more luxurious in his requirements, wanted something more commodious.

The Little Douvre, leaning towards the great one, looked from a distance

as if it was saluting it, and the space between the Douvres, which was some score of feet below, was only eight or ten at the highest points.

From the spot to which he had climbed, Gilliatt saw more distinctly the rocky excrescence which partly covered the plateau of the Great Douvre.

This plateau rose three fathoms at least above his head.

A precipice separated him from it. The curved escarpment of the Little Douvre sloped away out of sight beneath him.

He detached the knotted rope from his belt, took a rapid glance at the dimensions of the rock, and slung the grapnel up to the plateau.

The grapnel scratched the rock, and slipped. The knotted rope with the hooks at its end fell down beneath his feet, swinging against the side of the little Douvre.

He renewed the attempt; slung the rope further, aiming at the granite protuberance, in which he could perceive crevices and scratches.

The cast was, this time, so neat and skilful, that the hooks caught.

He pulled from below. A portion of the rock broke away, and the knotted rope with its heavy iron came down once more, striking the escarpment beneath his feet.

He slung the grapnel a third time.

It did not fall.

He put a strain upon the rope; it resisted. The grapnel was firmly anchored.

The hooks had caught in some fracture of the plateau which he could not see.

It was necessary to trust his life to that unknown support.

He did not hesitate.

The matter was urgent. He was compelled to take the shortest route.

Moreover, to descend again to the deck of the Durande, in order to devise some other step, was impossible. A slip was probable, and a fall almost certain. It was easier to climb than to descend.

Gilliatt's movements were decisive, as are those of all good sailors. He never wasted force. He always proportioned his efforts to the work in hand. Hence the prodigies of strength which he executed with ordinary muscles. His biceps were no more powerful than that of ordinary men; but his heart was firmer. He added, in fact, to strength which is physical, energy which belongs to the moral faculties.

The feat to be accomplished was appalling.

It was to cross the space between the two Douvres, hanging only by this slender line.

Oftentimes in the path of duty and devotedness, the figure of death rises before men to present these terrible questions:

Wilt thou do this? asks the shadow.

Gilliatt tested the cord again; the grappling-iron held firm.

Wrapping his left hand in his handkerchief, he grasped the knotted cord with his right hand, which he covered with his left; then stretching out one foot, and striking out sharply with the other against the rock, in order that the impetus might prevent the rope twisting, he precipitated himself from the height of the Little Douvre on to the escarpment of the great one.

The shock was severe.

There was a rebound.

His clenched fists struck the rocks in their turn; the handkerchief had loosened, and they were scratched; they had indeed narrowly escaped being crushed.

Gilliatt remained hanging there a moment dizzy.

He was sufficiently master of himself not to let go his hold of the cord.

A few moments passed in jerks and oscillations before he could catch the cord with his feet; but he succeeded at last.

Recovering himself, and holding the cord at last between his naked feet as with two hands, he gazed into the depth below.

He had no anxiety about the length of the cord, which had many a time served him for great heights. The cord, in fact, trailed upon the deck of the Durande.

Assured of being able to descend again, he began to climb hand over hand, and still clinging with his feet.

In a few moments he had gained the summit.

Never before had any creature without wings found a footing there. The plateau was covered in parts with the dung of birds. It was an irregular trapezium, a mass struck off from the colossal granitic prism of the Great Douvre. This block was hollowed in the centre like a basin--a work of the rain.

Gilliatt, in fact, had guessed correctly.

At the southern angle of the block, he found a mass of superimposed rocks, probably fragments of the fallen summit. These rocks, looking like a heap of giant paving-stones, would have left room for a wild beast, if one could have found its way there, to secrete himself between them. They supported themselves confusedly one against the other, leaving interstices like a heap of ruins. They formed neither grottoes nor caves, but the pile was full of holes like a sponge. One of these holes was large enough to admit a man.

This recess had a flooring of moss and a few tufts of grass. Gilliatt could fit himself in it as in a kind of sheath. The recess at its entrance was about two feet high. It contracted towards the bottom. Stone coffins sometimes have this form. The mass of rocks behind lying towards the south-west, the recess was sheltered from the showers, but was open to the cold north wind.

Gilliatt was satisfied with the place.

The two chief problems were solved; the sloop had a harbour, and he had found a shelter.

The chief merit of his cave was its accessibility from the wreck.

The grappling-iron of the knotted cord having fallen between two blocks, had become firmly hooked, but Gilliatt rendered it more difficult to give way by rolling a huge stone upon it.

He was now free to operate at leisure upon the Durande.

Henceforth he was at home.

The Great Douvre was his dwelling; the Durande was his workshop.

Nothing was more simple for him than going to and fro, ascending and descending.

He dropped down easily by the knotted cord on to the deck.

The day's work was a good one, the enterprise had begun well; he was satisfied, and began to feel hungry.

He untied his basket of provisions, opened his knife, cut a slice of smoked beef, took a bite out of his brown loaf, drank a draught from his can of fresh water, and supped admirably.

To do well and eat well are two satisfactions. A full stomach resembles an easy conscience.

This supper was ended, and there was still before him a little more daylight. He took advantage of it to begin the lightening of the wreck--an urgent necessity.

He had passed part of the day in gathering up the fragments. He put on

one side, in the strong compartment which contained the machine, all that might become of use to him, such as wood, iron, cordage, and canvas. What was useless he cast into the sea.

The cargo of the sloop hoisted on to the deck by the capstan, compact as he had made it, was an encumbrance. Gilliatt surveyed the species of niche, at a height within his reach, in the side of the Little Douvre. These natural closets, not shut in, it is true, are often seen in the rocks. It struck him that it was possible to trust some stores to this depôt, and he accordingly placed in the back of the recess his two boxes containing his tools and his clothing, and his two bags holding the rye-meal and the biscuit. In the front--a little too near the edge perhaps, but he had no other place--he rested his basket of provisions.

He had taken care to remove from the box of clothing his sheepskin, his loose coat with a hood, and his waterproof overalls.

To lessen the hold of the wind upon the knotted cord, he made the lower extremity fast to one of the riders of the Durande.

The Durande being much driven in, this rider was bent a good deal, and it held the end of the cord as firmly as a tight hand.

There was still the difficulty of the upper end of the cord. To control the lower part was well, but at the summit of the escarpment at the spot where the knotted cord met the ridge of the plateau, there was reason to fear that it would be fretted and worn away by the sharp angle of the

rock.

Gilliatt searched in the heap of rubbish in reserve, and took from it some rags of sail-cloth, and from a bunch of old cables he pulled out some strands of rope-yarn with which he filled his pockets.

A sailor would have guessed that he intended to bind with these pieces of sail-cloth and ends of yarn the part of the knotted rope upon the edge of the rock, so as to preserve it from all friction--an operation which is called "keckling."

Having provided himself with these things, he drew on his overalls over his legs, put on his waterproof coat over his jacket, drew its hood over his red cap, hung the sheepskin round his neck by the two legs, and clothed in this complete panoply, he grasped the cord, now firmly fixed to the side of the Great Douvre, and mounted to the assault of that sombre citadel in the sea.

In spite of his scratched hands, Gilliatt easily regained the summit.

The last pale tints of sunset were fading in the sky. It was night upon the sea below. A little light still lingered upon the height of the Douvre.

Gilliatt took advantage of this remains of daylight to bind the knotted rope. He wound it round again and again at the part which passed over the edge of the rock, with a bandage of several thicknesses of canvas

strongly tied at every turn. The whole resembled in some degree the padding which actresses place upon their knees, to prepare them for the agonies and supplications of the fifth act.

This binding completely accomplished, Gilliatt rose from his stooping position.

For some moments, while he had been busied in his task, he had had a confused sense of a singular fluttering in the air.

It resembled, in the silence of the evening, the noise which an immense bat might make with the beating of its wings.

Gilliatt raised his eyes.

A great black circle was revolving over his head in the pale twilight sky.

Such circles are seen in pictures round the heads of saints. These, however, are golden on a dark ground, while the circle around Gilliatt was dark upon a pale ground. The effect was strange. It spread round the Great Douvre like the aureole of night.

The circle drew nearer, then retired; grew narrower, and then spread wide again.

It was an immense flight of gulls, seamews, and cormorants; a vast

multitude of affrighted sea birds.

The Great Douvre was probably their lodging, and they were coming to rest for the night. Gilliatt had taken a chamber in their home. It was evident that their unexpected fellow-lodger disturbed them.

A man there was an object they had never beheld before.

Their wild flutter continued for some time.

They seemed to be waiting for the stranger to leave the place.

Gilliatt followed them dreamily with his eyes.

The flying multitude seemed at last to give up their design. The circle suddenly took a spiral form, and the cloud of sea birds came down upon "The Man Rock" at the extremity of the group, where they seemed to be conferring and deliberating.

Gilliatt, after settling down in his alcove of granite, and covering a stone for a pillow for his head, could hear the birds for a long time chattering one after the other, or croaking, as if in turns.

Then they were silent, and all were sleeping--the birds upon their rock, Gilliatt upon his.

VIII

IMPORTUNÆQUE VOLUCRES

Gilliatt slept well; but he was cold, and this awoke him from time to time. He had naturally placed his feet at the bottom, and his head at the entrance to his cave. He had not taken the precaution to remove from his couch a number of angular stones, which did not by any means conduce to sleep.

Now and then he half-opened his eyes.

At intervals he heard loud noises. It was the rising tide entering the caverns of the rocks with a sound like the report of a cannon.

All the circumstances of his position conspired to produce the effect of a vision. Hallucinations seemed to surround him. The vagueness of night increased this effect; and Gilliatt felt himself plunged into some region of unrealities. He asked himself if all were not a dream?

Then he dropped to sleep again; and this time, in a veritable dream, found himself at the Bû de la Rue, at the Bravées, at St. Sampson. He heard Déruchette singing; he was among realities. While he slept he seemed to wake and live; when he awoke again he appeared to be sleeping.

In truth, from this time forward he lived in a dream.

Towards the middle of the night a confused murmur filled the air. Gilliatt had a vague consciousness of it even in his sleep. It was perhaps a breeze arising.

Once, when awakened by a cold shiver, he opened his eyes a little wider than before. Clouds were moving in the zenith; the moon was flying through the sky, with one large star following closely in her footsteps.

Gilliatt's mind was full of the incidents of his dreams. The wild outlines of things in the darkness were exaggerated by this confusion with the impressions of his sleeping hours.

At daybreak he was half-frozen; but he slept soundly.

The sudden daylight aroused him from a slumber which might have been dangerous. The alcove faced the rising sun.

Gilliatt yawned, stretched himself, and sprang out of his sleeping place.

His sleep had been so deep that he could not at first recall the circumstances of the night before.

By degrees the feeling of reality returned, and he began to think of breakfast.

The weather was calm; the sky cool and serene. The clouds were gone; the night wind had cleared the horizon, and the sun rose brightly. Another fine day was commencing. Gilliatt felt joyful.

He threw off his overcoat and his leggings; rolled them up in the sheepskin with the wool inside, fastened the roll with a length of rope-yarn, and pushed it into the cavern for a shelter in case of rain.

This done, he made his bed--an operation which consisted in removing the stones which had annoyed him in the night.

His bed made, he slid down the cord on to the deck of the Durande, and approached the niche where he had placed his basket of provisions. As it was very near the edge, the wind in the night had swept it down, and rolled it into the sea.

It was evident that it would not be easy to recover it. There was a spirit of mischief and malice in a wind which had sought out his basket in that position.

It was the commencement of hostilities. Gilliatt understood the token.

To those who live in a state of rude familiarity with the sea, it becomes natural to regard the wind as an individuality, and the rocks as sentient beings.

Nothing remained but the biscuit and the rye-meal, except the shell-fish, on which the shipwrecked sailor had supported a lingering existence upon "The Man Rock."

It was useless to think of subsisting by net or line fishing. Fish are naturally averse to the neighbourhood of rocks. The drag and bow net fishers would waste their labour among the breakers, the points of which would be destructive only to their nets.

Gilliatt breakfasted on a few limpets which he plucked with difficulty from the rocks. He narrowly escaped breaking his knife in the attempt.

While he was making his spare meal, he was sensible of a strange disturbance on the sea. He looked around.

It was a swarm of gulls and seamews which had just alighted upon some low rocks, and were beating their wings, tumbling over each other, screaming, and shrieking. All were swarming noisily upon the same point. This horde with beaks and talons were evidently pillaging something.

It was Gilliatt's basket.

Rolled down upon a sharp point by the wind, the basket had burst open. The birds had gathered round immediately. They were carrying off in their beaks all sorts of fragments of provisions. Gilliatt recognised from the distance his smoked beef and his salted fish.

It was their turn now to be aggressive. The birds had taken to reprisals. Gilliatt had robbed them of their lodging, they deprived him of his supper.

IX

THE ROCK, AND HOW GILLIATT USED IT

A week passed.

Although it was in the rainy season no rain fell, a fact for which Gilliatt felt thankful. But the work he had entered upon surpassed, in appearance at least, the power of human hand or skill. Success appeared so improbable that the attempt seemed like madness.

It is not until a task is fairly grappled with that its difficulties and perils become fully manifest. There is nothing like making a commencement for making evident how difficult it will be to come to the end. Every beginning is a struggle against resistance. The first step is an exorable undeceiver. A difficulty which we come to touch pricks like a thorn.

Gilliatt found himself immediately in the presence of obstacles.

In order to raise the engine of the Durande from the wreck in which it was three-fourths buried, with any chance of success--in order to accomplish a salvage in such a place and in such a season, it seemed almost necessary to be a legion of men. Gilliatt was alone; a complete apparatus of carpenters' and engineers' tools and implements were

wanted. Gilliatt had a saw, a hatchet, a chisel, and a hammer. He wanted both a good workshop and a good shed; Gilliatt had not a roof to cover him. Provisions, too, were necessary, but he had not even bread.

Any one who could have seen Gilliatt working on the rock during all that first work might have been puzzled to determine the nature of his operations. He seemed to be no longer thinking either of the Durande or the two Douvres. He was busy only among the breakers: he seemed absorbed in saving the smaller parts of the shipwreck. He took advantage of every high tide to strip the reefs of everything which the shipwreck had distributed among them. He went from rock to rock, picking up whatever the sea had scattered--tatters of sail-cloth, pieces of iron, splinters of panels, shattered planking, broken yards--here a beam, there a chain, there a pulley.

At the same time he carefully surveyed all the recesses of the rocks. To his great disappointment none were habitable. He had suffered from the cold in the night, where he lodged between the stones on the summit of the rock, and he would gladly have found some better refuge.

Two of those recesses were somewhat extensive. Although the natural pavement of rock was almost everywhere oblique and uneven it was possible to stand upright, and even to walk within them. The wind and the rain wandered there at will, but the highest tides did not reach them. They were near the Little Douvre, and were approachable at any time. Gilliatt decided that one should serve him as a storehouse, the other as a forge.

With all the sail, rope-bands, and all the reef-earrings he could collect, he made packages of the fragments of wreck, tying up the wood and iron in bundles, and the canvas in parcels. He lashed all these together carefully. As the rising tide approached these packages, he began to drag them across the reefs to his storehouse. In the hollow of the rocks he had found a top rope, by means of which he had been able to haul even the large pieces of timber. In the same manner he dragged from the sea the numerous portions of chains which he found scattered among the breakers.

Gilliatt worked at these tasks with astonishing activity and tenacity. He accomplished whatever he attempted--nothing could withstand his ant-like perseverance.

At the end of the week he had gathered into this granite warehouse of marine stores, and ranged into order, all this miscellaneous and shapeless mass of salvage. There was a corner for the tacks of sails and a corner for sheets. Bow-lines were not mixed with halliards; parrels were arranged according to their number of holes. The coverings of rope-yarn, unwound from the broken anchorings, were tied in bunches; the dead-eyes without pulleys were separated from the tackle-blocks. Belaying-pins, bullseyes, preventer-shrouds, down-hauls, snatch-blocks, pendents, kevels, trusses, stoppers, sailbooms, if they were not completely damaged by the storm, occupied different compartments. All the cross-beams, timber-work, uprights, stanchions, mast-heads, binding-strakes, portlids, and clamps, were heaped up apart. Wherever it

was possible, he had fixed the fragments of planks, from the vessel's bottom, one in the other. There was no confusion between reef-points and nippers of the cable, nor of crow's-feet with towlines; nor of pulleys of the small with pulleys of the large ropes; nor of fragments from the waist with fragments from the stern. A place had been reserved for a portion of the cat-harpings of the Durande, which had supported the shrouds of the topmast and the futtock-shrouds. Every portion had its place. The entire wreck was there classed and ticketed. It was a sort of chaos in a storehouse.

A stay-sail, fixed by huge stones, served, though torn and damaged, to protect what the rain might have injured.

Shattered as were the bows of the wreck, he had succeeded in saving the two cat-heads with their three pulley-blocks.

He had found the bowsprit too, and had had much trouble in unrolling its gammoning; it was very hard and tight, having been, according to custom, made by the help of the windlass, and in dry weather. Gilliatt, however, persevered until he had detached it, this thick rope promising to be very useful to him.

He had been equally successful in discovering the little anchor which had become fast in the hollow of a reef, where the receding tide had left it uncovered.

In what had been Tangrouille's cabin he had found a piece of chalk,

which he preserved carefully. He reflected that he might have some marks to make.

A fire-bucket and several pails in pretty good condition completed this stock of working materials.

All that remained of the store of coal of the Durande he carried into the warehouse.

In a week this salvage of débris was finished; the rock was swept clean, and the Durande was lightened. Nothing remained now to burden the hull except the machinery.

The portion of the fore-side bulwarks which hung to it did not distress the hull. The mass hung without dragging, being partly sustained by a ledge of rock. It was, however, large and broad, and heavy to drag, and would have encumbered his warehouse too much. This bulwarking looked something like a boat-builder's stocks. Gilliatt left it where it was.

He had been profoundly thoughtful during all this labour. He had sought in vain for the figure-head--the "doll," as the Guernsey folks called it, of the Durande. It was one of the things which the waves had carried away for ever. Gilliatt would have given his hands to find it--if he had not had such peculiar need of them at that time.

At the entrance to the storehouse and outside were two heaps of refuse--a heap of iron good for forging, and a heap of wood good for

burning.

Gilliatt was always at work at early dawn. Except his time of sleep, he did not take a moment of repose.

The wild sea birds, flying hither and thither, watched him at his work.

X

THE FORGE

The warehouse completed, Gilliatt constructed his forge.

The other recess which he had chosen had within it a species of passage like a gallery in a mine of pretty good depth. He had had at first an idea of making this his lodging, but the draught was so continuous and so persevering in this passage that he had been compelled to give it up. This current of air, incessantly renewed, first gave him the notion of the forge. Since it could not be his chamber, he was determined that this cabin should be his smithy. To bend obstacles to our purposes is a great step towards triumph. The wind was Gilliatt's enemy. He had set about making it his servant.

The proverb applied to certain kinds of men--"Fit for everything, good for nothing"--may also be applied to the hollows of rocks. They give no advantages gratuitously. On one side we find a hollow fashioned conveniently in the shape of a bath; but it allows the water to run away through a fissure. Here is a rocky chamber, but without a roof; here a bed of moss, but oozy with wet; here an arm-chair, but one of hard stone.

The forge which Gilliatt intended was roughly sketched out by nature;

but nothing could be more troublesome than to reduce this rough sketch to manageable shape, to transform this cavern into a laboratory and smith's shop. With three or four large rocks, shaped like a funnel, and ending in a narrow fissure, chance had constructed there a species of vast ill-shapen blower, of very different power to those huge old forge bellows of fourteen feet long, which poured out at every breath ninety-eight thousand inches of air. This was quite a different sort of construction. The proportions of the hurricane cannot be definitely measured.

This excess of force was an embarrassment. The incessant draught was difficult to regulate.

The cavern had two inconveniences; the wind traversed it from end to end; so did the water.

This was not the water of the sea, but a continual little trickling stream, more like a spring than a torrent.

The foam, cast incessantly by the surf upon the rocks and sometimes more than a hundred feet in the air, had filled with sea water a natural cave situated among the high rocks overlooking the excavation. The overflowings of this reservoir caused, a little behind the escarpment, a fall of water of about an inch in breadth, and descending four or five fathoms. An occasional contribution from the rains also helped to fill the reservoir. From time to time a passing cloud dropped a shower into the rocky basin, always overflowing. The water was brackish, and unfit

to drink, but clear. This rill of water fell in graceful drops from the extremities of the long marine grasses, as from the ends of a length of hair.

He was struck with the idea of making this water serve to regulate the draught in the cave. By the means of a funnel made of planks roughly and hastily put together to form two or three pipes, one of which was fitted with a valve, and of a large tub arranged as a lower reservoir, without checks or counterweight, and completed solely by air-tight stuffing above and air-holes below, Gilliatt, who, as we have already said, was handy at the forge and at the mechanic's bench, succeeded in constructing, instead of the forge-bellows, which he did not possess, an apparatus less perfect than what is known now-a-days by the name of a "cagniardelle," but less rude than what the people of the Pyrenees anciently called a "trompe."

He had some rye-meal, and he manufactured with it some paste. He had also some white rope, which picked out into tow. With this paste and tow, and some bits of wood, he stopped all the crevices of the rock, leaving only a little air passage made of a powder-flask which he had found aboard the Durande, and which had served for loading the signal gun. This powder-flask was directed horizontally to a large stone, which Gilliatt made the hearth of the forge. A stopper made of a piece of tow served to close it in case of need.

After this, he heaped up the wood and coal upon the hearth, struck his steel against the bare rock, caught a spark upon a handful of loose tow,

and having ignited it, soon lighted his forge fire.

He tried the blower: it worked well.

Gilliatt felt the pride of a Cyclops: he was the master of air, water, and fire. Master of the air; for he had given a kind of lungs to the wind, and changed the rude draught into a useful blower. Master of water, for he had converted the little cascade into a "trompe." Master of fire, for out of this moist rock he had struck a flame.

The cave being almost everywhere open to the sky, the smoke issued freely, blackening the curved escarpment. The rocks which seemed destined for ever to receive only the white foam, became now familiar with the blackening smoke.

Gilliatt selected for an anvil a large smooth round stone, of about the required shape and dimensions. It formed a base for the blows of his hammer; but one that might fly and was very dangerous. One of the extremities of this block, rounded and ending in a point, might, for want of anything better, serve instead of a conoid bicorn; but the other kind of bicorn of the pyramidal form was wanting. It was the ancient stone anvil of the Troglodytes. The surface, polished by the waves, had almost the firmness of steel.

He regretted not having brought his anvil. As he did not know that the Durande had been broken in two by the tempest, he had hoped to find the carpenter's chest and all his tools generally kept in the forehold. But

it was precisely the fore-part of the vessel which had been carried away.

These two excavations which he had found in the rock were contiguous. The warehouse and the forge communicated with each other.

Every evening, when his work was ended, he supped on a little biscuit, moistened in water, a sea-urchin or a crab, or a few châtaignes de mer, the only food to be found among those rocks; and shivering like his knotted cord, mounted again to sleep in his cell upon the Great Douvre.

The very materialism of his daily occupation increased the kind of abstraction in which he lived. To be steeped too deeply in realities is in itself a cause of visionary moods. His bodily labour, with its infinite variety of details, detracted nothing from the sensation of stupor which arose from the strangeness of his position and his work. Ordinary bodily fatigue is a thread which binds man to the earth; but the very peculiarity of the enterprise he was engaged in kept him in a sort of ideal twilight region. There were times when he seemed to be striking blows with his hammer in the clouds. At other moments his tools appeared to him like arms. He had a singular feeling, as if he was repressing or providing against some latent danger of attack. Untwisting ropes, unravelling threads of yarn in a sail, or propping up a couple of beams, appeared to him at such times like fashioning engines of war. The thousand minute pains which he took about his salvage operations produced at last in his mind the effect of precautions against

aggressions little concealed, and easy to anticipate. He did not know the words which express the ideas, but he perceived them. His instincts became less and less those of the worker; his habits more and more those of the savage man.

His business there was to subdue and direct the powers of nature. He had an indistinct perception of it. A strange enlargement of his ideas!

Around him, far as eye could reach, was the vast prospect of endless labour wasted and lost. Nothing is more disturbing to the mind than the contemplation of the diffusion of forces at work in the unfathomable and illimitable space of the ocean. The mind tends naturally to seek the object of these forces. The unceasing movement in space, the unwearying sea, the clouds that seem ever hurrying somewhere, the vast mysterious prodigality of effort, all this is a problem. Whither does this perpetual movement tend? What do these winds construct? What do these giant blows build up? These howlings, shocks, and sobbings of the storm, what do they end in? and what is the business of this tumult? The ebb and flow of these questionings is eternal, as the flux and reflux of the sea itself. Gilliatt could answer for himself; his work he knew, but the agitation which surrounded him far and wide at all times perplexed him confusedly with its eternal questionings. Unknown to himself, mechanically, by the mere pressure of external things, and without any other effect than a strange, unconscious bewilderment, Gilliatt, in this dreamy mood, blended his own toil somehow with the prodigious wasted labour of the sea-waves. How, indeed, in that position, could he escape the influence of that mystery of the dread, laborious ocean? how do

other than meditate, so far as meditation was possible, upon the vacillation of the waves, the perseverance of the foam, the imperceptible wearing down of rocks, the furious beatings of the four winds? How terrible that perpetual recommencement, that ocean bed, those Danaïdes-like clouds, all that travail and weariness for no end!

For no end? Not so! But for what? O Thou Infinite Unknown, Thou only knowest!

XI

DISCOVERY

A rock near the coast is sometimes visited by men; a rock in mid-ocean never. What object could any one have there? No supplies can be drawn thence; no fruit-trees are there, no pasturage, no beasts, no springs of water fitted for man's use. It stands aloft, a rock with its steep sides and summits above water, and its sharp points below. Nothing is to be found there but inevitable shipwreck.

This kind of rocks, which in the old sea dialect were called Isolés, are, as we have said, strange places. The sea is alone there; she works her own will. No token of terrestrial life disturbs her. Man is a terror to the sea; she is shy of his approach, and hides from him her deeds. But she is bolder among the lone sea rocks. The everlasting soliloquy of the waves is not troubled there. She labours at the rock, repairs its damage, sharpens its peaks, makes them rugged or renews them. She pierces the granite, wears down the soft stone, and denudes the hard; she rummages, dismembers, bores, perforates, and grooves; she fills the rock with cells, and makes it sponge-like, hollows out the inside, or sculptures it without. In that secret mountain which is hers, she makes to herself caves, sanctuaries, palaces. She has her splendid and monstrous vegetation, composed of floating plants which bite, and of monsters which take root; and she hides away all this terrible

magnificence in the twilight of her deeps. Among the isolated rocks no eye watches over her; no spy embarrasses her movements. It is there that she develops at liberty her mysterious side, which is inaccessible to man. Here she keeps all strange secretions of life. Here that the unknown wonders of the sea are assembled.

Promontories, forelands, capes, headlands, breakers, and shoals are veritable constructions. The geological changes of the earth are trifling compared with the vast operations of the ocean. These breakers, these habitations in the sea, these pyramids, and spouts of the foam are the practicers of a mysterious art which the author of this book has somewhere called "the Art of Nature." Their style is known by its vastness. The effects of chance seem here design. Its works are multiform. They abound in the mazy entanglement of the rock-coral groves, the sublimity of the cathedral, the extravagance of the pagoda, the amplitude of the mountain, the delicacy of the jeweller's work, the horror of the sepulchre. They are filled with cells like the wasps' nest, with dens like menageries, with subterranean passages like the haunts of moles, with dungeons like Bastiles, with ambuscades like a camp. They have their doors, but they are barricaded; their columns, but they are shattered; their towers, but they are tottering; their bridges, but they are broken. Their compartments are unaccommodating; these are fitted for the birds only, those only for fish. They are impassable. Their architectural style is variable and inconsistent; it regards or disregards at will the laws of equilibrium, breaks off, stops short, begins in the form of an archivolt, and ends in an architrave, block on block. Enceladus is the mason. A wondrous science of dynamics exhibits

here its problems ready solved. Fearful overhanging blocks threaten, but fall not: the human mind cannot guess what power supports their bewildering masses. Blind entrances, gaps, and ponderous suspensions multiply and vary infinitely. The laws which regulate this Babel baffle human induction. The great unknown architect plans nothing, but succeeds in all. Rocks massed together in confusion form a monstrous monument, defy reason, yet maintain equilibrium. Here is something more than strength; it is eternity. But order is wanting. The wild tumult of the waves seems to have passed into the wilderness of stone. It is like a tempest petrified and fixed for ever. Nothing is more impressive than that wild architecture; always standing, yet always seeming to fall; in which everything appears to give support, and yet to withdraw it. A struggle between opposing lines has resulted in the construction of an edifice, filled with traces of the efforts of those old antagonists, the ocean and the storm.

This architecture has its terrible masterpieces, of which the Douvres rock was one.

The sea had fashioned and perfected it with a sinister solicitude. The snarling waters licked it into shape. It was hideous, treacherous, dark, full of hollows.

It had a complete system of submarine caverns ramifying and losing themselves in unfathomed depths. Some of the orifices of this labyrinth of passages were left exposed by the low tides. A man might enter there, but at his risk and peril.

Gilliatt determined to explore all these grottoes, for the purpose of his salvage labour. There was not one which was not repulsive. Everywhere about the caverns that strange aspect of an abattoir, those singular traces of slaughter, appeared again in all the exaggeration of the ocean. No one who has not seen in excavations of this kind, upon the walls of everlasting granite, these hideous natural frescoes, can form a notion of their singularity.

These pitiless caverns, too, were false and sly. Woe betide him who would loiter there. The rising tide filled them to their roofs.

Rock limpets and edible mosses abounded among them.

They were obstructed by quantities of shingle, heaped together in their recesses. Some of their huge smooth stones weighed more than a ton. They were of every proportion, and of every hue; but the greater part were blood coloured. Some, covered with a hairy and glutinous seaweed, seemed like large green moles boring a way into the rock.

Several of the caverns terminated abruptly in the form of a demi-cupola. Others, main arteries of a mysterious circulation, lengthened out in the rock in dark and tortuous fissures. They were the alleys of the submarine city; but they gradually contracted from their entrances, and at length left no way for a man to pass. Peering in by the help of a lighted torch, he could see nothing but dark hollows dripping with moisture.

One day, Gilliatt, exploring, ventured into one of these fissures. The state of the tide favoured the attempt. It was a beautiful day of calm and sunshine. There was no fear of any accident from the sea to increase the danger.

Two necessities, as we have said, compelled him to undertake these explorations. He had to gather fragments of wreck and other things to aid him in his labour, and to search for crabs and crayfish for his food. Shell-fish had begun to fail him on the rocks.

The fissure was narrow, and the passage difficult. Gilliatt could see daylight beyond. He made an effort, contorted himself as much as he could, and penetrated into the cave as far as he was able.

He had reached, without suspecting it, the interior of the rock, upon the point of which Clubin had steered the Durande. Though abrupt and almost inaccessible without, it was hollowed within. It was full of galleries, pits, and chambers, like the tomb of an Egyptian king. This network of caverns was one of the most complicated of all that labyrinth, a labour of the water, the undermining of the restless sea. The branches of the subterranean maze probably communicated with the sea without by more than one issue, some gaping at the level of the waves, the others profound and invisible. It was near here, but Gilliatt knew it not, that Clubin had dived into the sea.

In this crocodile cave--where crocodiles, it is true, were not among the

dangers--Gilliatt wound about, clambered, struck his head occasionally, bent low and rose again, lost his footing and regained it many times, advancing laboriously. By degrees the gallery widened; a glimmer of daylight appeared, and he found himself suddenly at the entrance to a cavern of a singular kind.

XII

THE INTERIOR OF AN EDIFICE UNDER THE SEA

The gleam of daylight was fortunate.

One step further, and Gilliatt must have fallen into a pool, perhaps without bottom. The waters of these cavern pools are so cold and paralysing as to prove fatal to the strongest swimmers.

There is, moreover, no means of remounting or of hanging on to any part of their steep walls.

He stopped short. The crevice from which he had just issued ended in a narrow and slippery projection, a species of corbel in the peaked wall. He leaned against the side and surveyed it.

He was in a large cave. Over his head was a roofing not unlike the inside of a vast skull, which might have been imagined to have been recently dissected. The dripping ribs of the striated indentations of the roof seemed to imitate the branching fibres and jagged sutures of the bony cranium. A stony ceiling and a watery floor. The rippled waters between the four walls of the cave were like wavy paving tiles. The grotto was shut in on all sides. Not a window, not even an air-hole visible. No breach in the wall, no crack in the roof. The light came

from below and through the water, a strange, sombre light.

Gilliatt, the pupils of whose eyes had contracted during his explorations of the dusky corridor, could distinguish everything about him in the pale glimmer.

He was familiar, from having often visited them, with the caves of Plémont in Jersey, the Creux-Maillé at Guernsey, the Boutiques at Sark; but none of these marvellous caverns could compare with the subterranean and submarine chamber into which he had made his way.

Under the water at his feet he could see a sort of drowned arch. This arch, a natural ogive, fashioned by the waves, was glittering between its two dark and profound supports. It was by this submerged porch that the daylight entered into the cavern from the open sea. A strange light shooting upward from a gulf.

The glimmer spread out beneath the waters like a large fan, and was reflected on the rocks. Its direct rays, divided into long, broad shafts, appeared in strong relief against the darkness below, and becoming brighter or more dull from one rock to another, looked as if seen here and there through plates of glass. There was light in that cave it is true; but it was the light that was unearthly. The beholder might have dreamed that he had descended in some other planet. The glimmer was an enigma, like the glaucous light from the eye-pupil of a Sphinx. The whole cave represented the interior of a death's-head of enormous proportions, and of a strange splendour. The vault was the

hollow of the brain, the arch the mouth; the sockets of the eyes were wanting. The cavern, alternately swallowing and rendering up the flux and reflux through its mouth wide opened to the full noonday without, seemed to drink in the light and vomit forth bitterness; a type of some beings intelligent and evil. The light, in traversing this inlet through the vitreous medium of the sea-water, became green, like a ray of starlight from Aldebaran. The water, filled with the moist light, appeared like a liquid emerald. A tint of aqua-marina of marvellous delicacy spread a soft hue throughout the cavern. The roof, with its cerebral lobes, and its rampant ramifications, like the fibres of nerves, gave out a tender reflection of chrysoprase. The ripples reflected on the roof were falling in order and dissolving again incessantly, and enlarging and contracting their glittering scales in a mysterious and mazy dance. They gave the beholder an impression of something weird and spectral: he wondered what prey secured, or what expectation about to be realised, moved with a joyous thrill this magnificent network of living fire. From the projections of the vault, and the angles of the rock, hung lengths of delicate fibrous plants, bathing their roots probably through the granite in some upper pool of water, and distilling from their silky ends one after the other, a drop of water like a pearl. These drops fell in the water now and then with a gentle splash. The effect of the scene was singular. Nothing more beautiful could be imagined; nothing more mournful could anywhere be found.

It was a wondrous palace, in which death sat smiling and content.

XIII

WHAT WAS SEEN THERE; AND WHAT PERCEIVED DIMLY

A place of shade, which yet was dazzling to the eyes--such was this surprising cavern.

The beating of the sea made itself felt throughout the cavern. The oscillation without raised and depressed the level of the waters within, with the regularity of respiration. A mysterious spirit seemed to fill this great organism, as it swelled and subsided in silence.

The water had a magical transparency, and Gilliatt distinguished at various depths submerged recesses, and surfaces of jutting rocks ever of a deeper and a deeper green. Certain dark hollows, too, were there, probably too deep for soundings.

On each side of the submarine porch, rude elliptical arches, filled with shallows, indicated the position of small lateral caves, low alcoves of the central cavern, accessible, perhaps, at certain tides. These openings had roofs in the form of inclined planes, and at angles more or less acute. Little sandy beaches of a few feet wide, laid bare by the action of the water, stretched inward, and were lost in these recesses.

Here and there seaweeds of more than a fathom in length undulated beneath the water, like the waving of long tresses in the wind; and there were glimpses of a forest of sea plants.

Above and below the surface of the water, the wall of the cavern from top to bottom--from the vault down to the depth at which it became invisible--was tapestried with that prodigious efflorescence of the sea, rarely perceived by human eyes, which the old Spanish navigators called praderias del mar. A luxuriant moss, having all the tints of the olive, enlarged and concealed the protuberances of granite. From all the jutting points swung the thin fluted strips of varech, which sailors use as their barometers. The light breath which stirred in the cavern waved to and fro their glossy bands.

Under these vegetations there showed themselves from time to time some of the rarest bijoux of the casket of the ocean; ivory shells, strombi, purple-fish, univalves, struthiolaires, turriculated cerites. The bell-shaped limpet shells, like tiny huts, were everywhere adhering to the rocks, distributed in settlements, in the alleys between which prowled oscabrions, those beetles of the sea. A few large pebbles found their way into the cavern; shell-fish took refuge there. The crustacea are the grandees of the sea, who, in their lacework and embroidery, avoid the rude contact of the pebbly crowd. The glittering heap of their shells, in certain spots under the wave, gave out singular irradiations, amidst which the eye caught glimpses of confused azure and gold, and mother-of-pearl, of every tint of the water.

Upon the side of the cavern, a little above the water-line, a magnificent and singular plant, attaching itself, like a fringe, to the border of seaweed, continued and completed it. This plant, thick, fibrous, inextricably intertwined, and almost black, exhibited to the eye large confused and dusky festoons, everywhere dotted with innumerable little flowers of the colour of lapis-lazuli. In the water they seemed to glow like small blue flames. Out of the water they were flowers; beneath it they were sapphires. The water rising and inundating the basement of the grotto clothed with these plants, seemed to cover the rock with gems.

At every swelling of the wave these flowers increased in splendour, and at every subsidence grew dull again. So it is with the destiny of man; aspiration is life, the outbreathing of the spirit is death.

One of the marvels of the cavern was the rock itself. Forming here a wall, there an arch, and here again a pillar or pilaster, it was in places rough and bare, and sometimes close beside, was wrought with the most delicate natural carving. Strange evidences of mind mingled with the massive stolidity of the granite. It was the wondrous art-work of the ocean. Here a sort of panel, cut square, and covered with round embossments in various positions, simulated a vague bas-relief. Before this sculpture, with its obscure designs, a man might have dreamed of Prometheus roughly sketching for Michael Angelo. It seemed as if that great genius with a few blows of his mallet could have finished the indistinct labours of the giant. In other places the rock was damasked

like a Saracen buckler, or engraved like a Florentine vase. There were portions which appeared like Corinthian brass, then like arabesques, as on the door of a mosque; then like Runic stones with obscure and mystic prints of claws. Plants with twisted creepers and tendrils, crossing and recrossing upon the groundwork of golden lichens, covered it with filigree. The grotto resembled in some wise a Moorish palace. It was a union of barbarism and of goldsmith's work, with the imposing and rugged architecture of the elements.

The magnificent stains and moulderings of the sea covered, as with velvet, the angles of granite. The escarpments were festooned with large-flowered bindweed, sustaining itself with graceful ease, and ornamenting the walls as by intelligent design. Wall-pellitories showed their strange clusters in tasteful arrangement. The wondrous light which came from beneath the water, at once a submarine twilight and an Elysian radiance, softened down and blended all harsh lineaments. Every wave was a prism. The outlines of things under these rainbow-tinted undulations produced the chromatic effects of optical glasses made too convex. Solar spectra shot through the waters. Fragments of rainbows seemed floating in that transparent dawn. Elsewhere--in other corners--there was discernible a kind of moonlight in the water. Every kind of splendour seemed to mingle there, forming a strange sort of twilight. Nothing could be more perplexing or enigmatical than the sumptuous beauties of this cavern. Enchantment reigned over all. The fantastic vegetation, the rude masonry of the place seemed to harmonise. It was a happy marriage this, between these strange wild things. The branches seeming but to touch one another clung closely each to each. The stern rock and

the pale flower met in a passionate embrace. Massive pillars had capitals and entwining wreaths of delicate garlands, that quivered through every fibre, suggestive of fairy fingers tickling the feet of a Behemoth, and the rock upheld the plant, and the plant clasped the rock with unnatural joy of attraction.

The effect produced by the mysterious reconciliation of these strange forms was of a supreme and inexpressible beauty.

The works of nature, not less than the works of genius, contain the absolute, and produce an impression of awe. Something unexpected about them imperiously insists on our mental submission; we are conscious of a premeditation beyond our human scope, and at no time are they more startling than when we suddenly become aware of the beauty that is mingled with their terror.

This hidden grotto was, if we may use the expression, siderealised. There was everything in it to surprise and overwhelm. An apocalyptic light illuminated this crypt. One could not tell if that which the eyes looked upon was a reality, for reality bore the impress of the impossible. One could see, and touch, and know that one was standing there, and yet it was difficult to believe in it all.

Was it daylight which entered by this casement beneath the sea? Was it indeed water which trembled in this dusky pool? Were not these arched roofs and porches fashioned out of sunset clouds to imitate a cavern to men's eyes? What stone was that beneath the feet? Was not this solid

shaft about to melt and pass into thin air? What was that cunning jewellery of glittering shells, half seen beneath the wave? How far away were life, and the green earth, and human faces? What strange enchantment haunted that mystic twilight? What blind emotion, mingling its sympathies with the uneasy restlessness of plants beneath the wave?

At the extremity of the cavern, which was oblong, rose a Cyclopean archivolte, singularly exact in form. It was a species of cave within a cave, of tabernacle within a sanctuary. Here, behind a sheet of bright verdure, interposed like the veil of a temple, arose a stone out of the waves, having square sides, and bearing some resemblance to an altar. The water surrounded it in all parts. It seemed as if a goddess had just descended from it. One might have dreamed there that some celestial form beneath that crypt or upon that altar dwelt for ever pensive in naked beauty, but grew invisible at the approach of mortals. It was hard to conceive that majestic chamber without a vision within. The day-dream of the intruder might evoke again the marvellous apparition. A flood of chaste light falling upon white shoulders scarcely seen; a forehead bathed with the light of dawn; an Olympian visage oval-shaped; a bust full of mysterious grace; arms modestly drooping; tresses unloosened in the aurora; a body delicately modelled of pure whiteness, half-wrapped in a sacred cloud, with the glance of a virgin; a Venus rising from the sea, or Eve issuing from chaos; such was the dream which filled the mind.

It seemed improbable that no phantom figure haunted this abode. Some woman's form, the embodiment of a star, had no doubt but shortly left

the altar. Enveloped in this atmosphere of mute adoration the mind pictured an Amphitryon, a Tethys, some Diana capable of passion, some idealistic figure formed of light, looking softly down in the surrounding dusk. It was she who had left behind in the cave this perfumed luminosity, an emanation from her star-body. The dazzling phantom was no longer visible, she was only revealed by the invisible, and the sense of her presence lingered, setting the whole being voluptuously a-quiver. The goddess had departed, but divinity remained.

The beauty of the recess seemed made for this celestial presence. It was for the sake of this deity, this fairy of the pearl caverns, this queen of the Zephyrs, this Grace born of the waves, it was for her--as the mind, at least, imagined--that this subterranean dwelling had been thus religiously walled in, so that nothing might ever trouble the reverent shadows and the majestic silence round about that divine spirit.

Gilliatt, who was a kind of seer amid the secrets of nature, stood there musing, and sensible of confused emotions.

Suddenly, at a few feet below him, in the delightful transparence of that water like liquid jewels, he became sensible of the approach of something of mystic shape. A species of long ragged band was moving amidst the oscillation of the waves. It did not float, but darted about of its own will. It had an object; was advancing somewhere rapidly. The object had something of the form of a jester's bauble with points, which hung flabby and undulating. It seemed covered with a dust incapable of being washed away by the water. It was more than horrible; it was foul.

The beholder felt that it was something monstrous. It was a living thing; unless, indeed, it were but an illusion. It seemed to be seeking the darker portion of the cavern, where at last it vanished. The heavy shadows grew darker as its sinister form glided into them, and disappeared.

BOOK II

THE LABOUR

I

THE RESOURCES OF ONE WHO HAS NOTHING

The cavern did not easily part with its explorers. The entry had been difficult; going back was more difficult still. Gilliatt, however, succeeded in extricating himself; but he did not return there. He had found nothing of what he was in quest of, and he had not the time to indulge curiosity.

He put the forge in operation at once. Tools were wanting; he set to work and made them.

For fuel he had the wreck; for motive force the water; for his bellows the wind; for his anvil a stone; for art his instinct; for power his will.

He entered with ardour upon his sombre labours.

The weather seemed to smile upon his work. It continued to be dry and free from equinoctial gales. The month of March had come, but it was tranquil. The days grew longer. The blue of the sky, the gentleness of all the movements of the scene, the serenity of the noontide, seemed to exclude the idea of mischief. The waves danced merrily in the sunlight. A Judas kiss is the first step to treachery; of such caresses the ocean is prodigal. Her smile, like that of woman's sometimes, cannot be trusted.

There was little wind. The hydraulic bellows worked all the better for that reason. Much wind would have embarrassed rather than aided it. Gilliatt had a saw; he manufactured for himself a file. With the saw he attacked the wood; with the file the metal. Then he availed himself of the two iron hands of the smith--the pincers and the pliers. The pincers gripe, the pliers handle; the one is like the closed hand, the other like the fingers. By degrees he made for himself a number of auxiliaries, and constructed his armour. With a piece of hoop-wood he made a screen for his forge-fire.

One of his principal labours was the sorting and repair of pulleys. He mended both the blocks and the sheaves of tackle. He cut down the irregularities of all broken joists, and reshaped the extremities. He had, as we have said, for the necessities of his carpentry, a quantity of pieces of wood, stored away, and arranged according to the forms, the dimensions, and the nature of their grain; the oak on one side, the pine on the other; the short pieces like riders, separated from the straight

pieces like binding strakes. This formed his reserve of supports and levers, of which he might stand in great need at any moment.

Any one who intends to construct hoisting tackle ought to provide himself with beams and small cables. But that is not sufficient. He must have cordage. Gilliatt restored the cables, large and small. He frayed out the tattered sails, and succeeded in converting them into an excellent yarn, of which he made twine. With this he joined the ropes. The joins, however, were liable to rot. It was necessary, therefore, to hasten to make use of these cables. He had only been able to make white tow, for he was without tar.

The ropes mended, he proceeded to repair the chains.

Thanks to the lateral point of the stone anvil, which served the part of the conoid bicorn, he was able to forge rings rude in shape but strong. With these he fastened together the severed lengths of chains, and made long pieces.

To work at a forge without assistance is something more than troublesome. He succeeded nevertheless. It is true that he had only to forge and shape articles of comparatively small size, which he was able to handle with the pliers in one hand, while he hammered with the other.

He cut into lengths the iron bars of the captain's bridge on which Clubin used to pass to and fro from paddle-box to paddle-box giving his orders; forged at one extremity of each piece a point, and at the other

a flat head. By this means he manufactured large nails of about a foot in length. These nails, much used in pontoon making, are useful in fixing anything in rocks.

What was his object in all these labours? We shall see.

He was several times compelled to renew the blade of his hatchet and the teeth of his saw. For renotching the saw he had manufactured a three-sided file.

Occasionally he made use of the capstan of the Durande. The hook of the chain broke: he made another.

By the aid of his pliers and pincers, and by using his chisel as a screwdriver, he set to work to remove the two paddle-wheels of the vessel; an object which he accomplished. This was rendered practicable by reason of a peculiarity in their construction. The paddle-boxes which covered them served him to stow them away. With the planks of these paddle-boxes, he made two cases in which he deposited the two paddles, piece by piece, each part being carefully numbered.

His lump of chalk became precious for this purpose.

He kept the two cases upon the strongest part of the wreck.

When these preliminaries were completed, he found himself face to face with the great difficulty. The problem of the engine of the Durande was

now clearly before him.

Taking the paddle-wheels to pieces had proved practicable. It was very different with the machinery.

In the first place, he was almost entirely ignorant of the details of the mechanism. Working thus blindly he might do some irreparable damage. Then, even in attempting to dismember it, if he had ventured on that course, far other tools would be necessary than such as he could fabricate with a cavern for a forge, a wind-draught for bellows, and a stone for an anvil. In attempting, therefore, to take to pieces the machinery, there was the risk of destroying it.

The attempt seemed at first sight wholly impracticable.

The apparent impossibility of the project rose before him like a stone wall, blocking further progress.

What was to be done?

II

WHEREIN SHAKESPEARE AND ÆSCHYLUS MEET

Gilliatt had a notion.

Since the time of the carpenter-mason of Salbris, who, in the sixteenth century, in the dark ages of science--long before Amontons had discovered the first law of electricity, or Lahire the second, or Coulomb the third--without other helper than a child, his son, with ill-fashioned tools, in the chamber of the great clock of La Charité-sur-Loire, resolved at one stroke five or six problems in statics and dynamics inextricably intervolved like the wheels in a block of carts and waggons--since the time of that grand and marvellous achievement of the poor workman, who found means, without breaking a single piece of wire, without throwing one of the teeth of the wheels out of gear, to lower in one piece, by a marvellous simplification, from the second story of the clock-tower to the first, that massive monitor of the hours, made all of iron and brass, "large as the room in which the man watches at night from the tower," with its motion, its cylinders, its barrels, its drum, its hooks, and its weights, the barrel of its spring steel-yard, its horizontal pendulum, the holdfasts of its escapement, its reels of large and small chains, its stone weights, one of which weighed five hundred pounds, its bells, its peals, its jacks that strike the hours--since the days, I say, of the man who

accomplished this miracle, and of whom posterity knows not even the name--nothing that could be compared with the project which Gilliatt was meditating had ever been attempted.

The ponderousness, the delicacy, the involvement of the difficulties were not less in the machinery of the Durande than in the clock of La Charité-sur-Loire.

The untaught mechanic had his helpmate--his son; Gilliatt was alone.

A crowd gathered together from Meung-sur-Loire, from Nevers, and even from Orleans, able at time of need to assist the mason of Salbris, and to encourage him with their friendly voices. Gilliatt had around him no voices but those of the wind; no crowd but the assemblage of waves.

There is nothing more remarkable than the timidity of ignorance, unless it be its temerity. When ignorance becomes daring, she has sometimes a sort of compass within herself--the intuition of the truth, clearer oftentimes in a simple mind than in a learned brain.

Ignorance invites to an attempt. It is a state of wonderment, which, with its concomitant curiosity, forms a power. Knowledge often enough disconcerts and makes over-cautious. Gama, had he known what lay before him, would have recoiled before the Cape of Storms. If Columbus had been a great geographer, he might have failed to discover America.

The second successful climber of Mont Blanc was the savant, Saussure;

the first the goatherd, Balmat.

These instances I admit are exceptions, which detract nothing from science, which remains the rule. The ignorant man may discover; it is the learned who invent.

The sloop was still at anchor in the creek of "The Man Rock," where the sea left it in peace. Gilliatt, as will be remembered, had arranged everything for maintaining constant communication with it. He visited the sloop and measured her beam carefully in several parts, but particularly her midship frame. Then he returned to the Durande and measured the diameter of the floor of the engine-room. This diameter, of course, without the paddles, was two feet less than the broadest part of the deck of his bark. The machinery, therefore, might be put aboard the sloop.

But how could it be got there?

III

GILLIATT'S MASTERPIECE COMES TO THE RESCUE OF THAT OF LETHIERRY

Any fisherman who had been mad enough to loiter in that season in the neighbourhood of Gilliatt's labours about this time would have been repaid for his hardihood, by a singular sight between the two Douvres.

Before his eyes would have appeared four stout beams, at equal distances, stretching from one Douvre to the other, and apparently forced into the rock, which is the firmest of all holds. On the Little Douvre, their extremities were laid and buttressed upon the projections of rock. On the Great Douvre, they had been driven in by blows of a hammer, by the powerful hand of a workman standing upright upon the beam itself. These supports were a little longer than the distance between the rocks. Hence the firmness of their hold; and hence, also, their slanting position. They touched the Great Douvre at an acute, and the Little Douvre at an obtuse angle. Their inclination was only slight; but it was unequal, which was a defect. But for this defect, they might have been supposed to be prepared to receive the planking of a deck. To these four beams were attached four sets of hoisting apparatus, each having its pendent and its tackle-fall, with the bold peculiarity of having the tackle-blocks with two sheaves at one extremity of the beam, and the simple pulleys at the opposite end. This distance, which was too great not to be perilous, was necessitated by the operations to be effected.

The blocks were firm, and the pulleys strong. To this tackle-gear cables were attached, which from a distance looked like threads; while beneath this apparatus of tackle and carpentry, in the air, the massive hull of the Durande seemed suspended by threads.

She was not yet suspended, however. Under the cross beams, eight perpendicular holes had been made in the deck, four on the port, and four on the starboard side of the engine; eight other holes had been made beneath them through the keel. The cables, descending vertically from the four tackle-blocks, through the deck, passed out at the keel, and under the machinery, re-entered the ship by the holes on the other side, and passing again upward through the deck, returned, and were wound round the beams. Here a sort of jigger-tackle held them in a bunch bound fast to a single cable, capable of being directed by one arm. The single cable passed over a hook, and through a dead-eye, which completed the apparatus, and kept it in check. This combination compelled the four tacklings to work together, and acting as a complete restraint upon the suspending powers, became a sort of dynamical rudder in the hand of the pilot of the operation, maintaining the movements in equilibrium. The ingenious adjustment of this system of tackling had some of the simplifying qualities of the Weston pulley of these times, with a mixture of the antique polyspaston of Vitruvius. Gilliatt had discovered this, although he knew nothing of the dead Vitruvius or of the still unborn Weston. The length of the cables varied, according to the unequal declivity of the cross-beams. The ropes were dangerous, for the untarred hemp was liable to give way. Chains would have been better in this respect, but chains would not have passed well through the

tackle-blocks.

The apparatus was full of defects; but as the work of one man, it was surprising. For the rest, it will be understood that many details are omitted which would render the construction perhaps intelligible to practical mechanics, but obscure to others.

The top of the funnel passed between the two beams in the middle.

Gilliatt, without suspecting it, had reconstructed, three centuries later, the mechanism of the Salbris carpenter--a mechanism rude and incorrect, and hazardous for him who would dare to use it.

Here let us remark, that the rudest defects do not prevent a mechanism from working well or ill. It may limp, but it moves. The obelisk in the square of St. Peter's at Rome is erected in a way which offends against all the principles of statics. The carriage of the Czar Peter was so constructed that it appeared about to overturn at every step; but it travelled onward for all that. What deformities are there in the machinery of Marly! Everything that is heterodox in hydraulics. Yet it did not supply Louis XIV. any the less with water.

Come what might, Gilliatt had faith. He had even anticipated success so confidently as to fix in the bulwarks of the sloop, on the day when he measured its proportions, two pairs of corresponding iron rings on each side, exactly at the same distances as the four rings on board the Durande, to which were attached the four chains of the funnel.

He had in his mind a very complete and settled plan. All the chances being against him, he had evidently determined that all the precautions at least should be on his side.

He did some things which seemed useless; a sign of attentive premeditation.

His manner of proceeding would, as we have said, have puzzled an observer, even though familiar with mechanical operations.

A witness of his labour who had seen him, for example, with enormous efforts, and at the risk of breaking his neck, driving with blows of his hammer eight or ten great nails which he had forged into the base of the two Douvres at the entrance of the defile between them, would have had some difficulty in understanding the object of these nails, and would probably have wondered what could be the use of all that trouble.

If he had then seen him measuring the portion of the fore bulwark which had remained, as we have described it, hanging on by the wreck, then attaching a strong cable to the upper edge of that portion, cutting away with strokes of his hatchet the dislocated fastenings which held it, then dragging it out of the defile, pushing the lower part by the aid of the receding tide, while he dragged the upper part; finally, by great labour, fastening with the cable this heavy mass of planks and piles wider than the entrance of the defile itself, with the nails driven into the base of the Little Douvre, the observer would perhaps have found it

still more difficult to comprehend, and might have wondered why Gilliatt, if he wanted for the purpose of his operations to disencumber the space between the two rocks of this mass, had not allowed it to fall into the sea, where the tide would have carried it away.

Gilliatt had probably his reasons.

In fixing the nails in the basement of the rocks, he had taken advantage of all the cracks in the granite, enlarged them where needful, and driven in first of all wedges of wood, in which he fixed the nails. He made a rough commencement of similar preparations in the two rocks which rose at the other extremity of the narrow passage on the eastern side. He furnished with plugs of wood all the crevices, as if he desired to keep these also ready to hold nails or clamps; but this appeared to be a simple precaution, for he did not use them further. He was compelled to economise, and only to use his materials as he had need, and at the moment when the necessity for them came. This was another addition to his numerous difficulties.

As fast as one labour was accomplished another became necessary. Gilliatt passed without hesitation from task to task, and resolutely accomplished his giant strides.

IV

SUB RE

The aspect of the man who accomplished all these labours became terrible.

Gilliatt in his multifarious tasks expended all his strength at once, and regained it with difficulty.

Privations on the one hand, lassitude on the other, had much reduced him. His hair and beard had grown long. He had but one shirt which was not in rags. He went about bare-footed, the wind having carried away one of his shoes and the sea the other. Fractures of the rude and dangerous stone anvil which he used had left small wounds upon his hands and arms, the marks of labour. These wounds, or rather scratches, were superficial; but the keen air and the salt sea irritated them continually.

He was generally hungry, thirsty, and cold.

His store of fresh water was gone; his rye-meal was used or eaten. He had nothing left but a little biscuit.

This he broke with his teeth, having no water in which to steep it.

By little and little, and day by day, his powers decreased.

The terrible rocks were consuming his existence.

How to obtain food was a problem; how to get drink was a problem; how to find rest was a problem.

He ate when he was fortunate enough to find a crayfish or a crab; he drank when he chanced to see a sea-bird descend upon a point of rock; for on climbing up to the spot he generally found there a hollow with a little fresh water. He drank from it after the bird; sometimes with the bird; for the gulls and seamews had become accustomed to him, and no longer flew away at his approach. Even in his greatest need of food he did not attempt to molest them. He had, as will be remembered, a superstition about birds. The birds on their part--now that his hair was rough and wild and his beard long--had no fear of him. The change in his face gave them confidence; he had lost resemblance to men, and taken the form of the wild beast.

The birds and Gilliatt, in fact, had become good friends. Companions in poverty, they helped each other. As long as he had had any meal, he had crumbled for them some little bits of the cakes he made. In his deeper distress they showed him in their turn the places where he might find the little pools of water.

He ate the shell-fish raw. Shell-fish help in a certain degree to quench the thirst. The crabs he cooked. Having no kettle, he roasted them between two stones made red-hot in his fire, after the manner of the

savages of the Feroe islands.

Meanwhile signs of the equinoctial season had begun to appear. There came rain--an angry rain. No showers or steady torrents, but fine, sharp, icy, penetrating points which pierced to his skin through his clothing, and to his bones through his skin. It was a rain which yielded little water for drinking, but which drenched him none the less.

Chary of assistance, prodigal of misery--such was the character of these rains. During one week Gilliatt suffered from them all day and all night.

At night, in his rocky recess, nothing but the overpowering fatigue of his daily work enabled him to get sleep. The great sea-gnats stung him, and he awakened covered with blisters.

He had a kind of low fever, which sustained him; this fever is a succour which destroys. By instinct he chewed the mosses, or sucked the leaves of wild cochlearia, scanty tufts of which grew in the dry crevices of the rocks. Of his suffering, however, he took little heed. He had no time to spare from his work to the consideration of his own privations. The rescue of the machinery of the Durande was progressing well. That sufficed for him.

Every now and then, for the necessities of his work, he jumped into the water, swam to some point, and gained a footing again. He simply plunged into the sea and left it, as a man passes from one room in his dwelling

to another.

His clothing was never dry. It was saturated with rain water, which had no time to evaporate, and with sea water, which never dries. He lived perpetually wet.

Living in wet clothing is a habit which may be acquired. The poor groups of Irish people--old men, mothers, girls almost naked, and infants--who pass the winter in the open air, under the snow and rain, huddled together, sometimes at the corners of houses in the streets of London, live and die in this condition.

To be soaked with wet, and yet to be thirsty: Gilliatt grew familiar with this strange torture. There were times when he was glad to suck the sleeve of his loose coat.

The fire which he made scarcely warmed him. A fire in open air yields little comfort. It burns on one side, and freezes on the other.

Gilliatt often shivered even while sweating over his forge.

Everywhere about him rose resistance amidst a terrible silence. He felt himself the enemy of an unseen combination. There is a dismal non possumus in nature. The inertia of matter is like a sullen threat. A mysterious persecution environed him. He suffered from heats and shiverings. The fire ate into his flesh; the water froze him; feverish thirst tormented him; the wind tore his clothing; hunger undermined the

organs of the body. The oppression of all these things was constantly exhausting him. Obstacles silent, immense, seemed to converge from all points, with the blind irresponsibility of fate, yet full of a savage unanimity. He felt them pressing inexorably upon him. No means were there of escaping from them. His sufferings produced the impression of some living persecutor. He had a constant sense of something working against him, of a hostile form ever present, ever labouring to circumvent and to subdue him. He could have fled from the struggle; but since he remained, he had no choice but to war with this impenetrable hostility. He asked himself what it was. It took hold of him, grasped him tightly, overpowered him, deprived him of breath. The invisible persecutor was destroying him by slow degrees. Every day the oppression became greater, as if a mysterious screw had received another turn.

His situation in this dreadful spot resembled a duel, in which a suspicion of some treachery haunts the mind of one of the combatants.

Now it seemed a coalition of obscure forces which surrounded him. He felt that there was somewhere a determination to be rid of his presence. It is thus that the glacier chases the loitering ice-block.

Almost without seeming to touch him this latent coalition had reduced him to rags; had left him bleeding, distressed, and, as it were, hors de combat, even before the battle. He laboured, indeed, not the less--without pause or rest; but as the work advanced, the workman himself lost ground. It might have been fancied that Nature, dreading his bold spirit, adopted the plan of slowly undermining his bodily

power. Gilliatt kept his ground, and left the rest to the future. The sea had begun by consuming him; what would come next?

The double Douvres--that dragon made of granite, and lying in ambush in mid-ocean--had sheltered him. It had allowed him to enter, and to do his will; but its hospitality resembled the welcome of devouring jaws.

The desert, the boundless surface, the unfathomable space around him and above, so full of negatives to man's will; the mute, inexorable determination of phenomena following their appointed course; the grand general law of things, implacable and passive; the ebbs and flows; the rocks themselves, dark Pleiades whose points were each a star amid vortices, a centre of an irradiation of currents; the strange, indefinable conspiracy to stifle with indifference the temerity of a living being; the wintry winds, the clouds, and the beleaguering waves enveloped him, closed round him slowly, and in a measure shut him in, and separated him from companionship, like a dungeon built up by degrees round a living man. All against him; nothing for him; he felt himself isolated, abandoned, enfeebled, sapped, forgotten. His storehouse empty, his tools broken or defective; he was tormented with hunger and thirst by day, with cold by night. His sufferings had left him with wounds and tatters, rags covering sores, torn hands, bleeding feet, wasted limbs, pallid cheeks, and eyes bright with a strange light; but this was the steady flame of his determination.

The virtue of a man is betrayed by his eyes. How much of the man there is in us may be read in their depths. We make ourselves known by the

light that gleams beneath our brows. The petty natures wink at us, the larger send forth flashes. If there is no brilliancy under the lids, there is no thought in the brain, no love in the heart. Those who love desire, and those who desire sparkle and flash. Determination gives a fire to the glance, a magnificent fire that consumes all timid thoughts.

It is the self-willed ones who are sublime. He who is only brave, has but a passing fit, he who is only valiant has temperament and nothing more, he who is courageous has but one virtue. He who persists in the truth is the grand character. The secret of great hearts may be summed up in the word: Perseverando. Perseverance is to courage what the wheel is to the lever; it is the continual renewing of the centre of support. Let the desired goal be on earth or in heaven, only make for the goal. Everything is in that; in the first case one is a Columbus, in the second a god. Not to allow conscience to argue or the will to fail--this is the way to suffering and glory. In the world of ethics to fall does not exclude the possibility of soaring, rather does it give impetus to flight. The mediocrities allow themselves to be dissuaded by the specious obstacles--the great ones never. To perish is their perhaps, to conquer their conviction. You may propose many good reasons to the martyr why he should not allow himself to be stoned to death. Disdain of every reasonable objection begets that sublime victory of the vanquished which we call martyrdom.

All his efforts seemed to tend to the impossible. His success was trifling and slow. He was compelled to expend much labour for very little results. This it was that gave to his struggle its noble and

pathetic character.

That it should have required so many preparations, so much toil, so many cautious experiments, such nights of hardship, and such days of danger, merely to set up four beams over a shipwrecked vessel, to divide and isolate the portion that could be saved, and to adjust to that wreck within a wreck four tackle-blocks with their cables was only the result of his solitary labour. Fate had decreed him the work, and necessity obliged him to carry it out.

That solitary position Gilliatt had more than accepted; he had deliberately chosen it. Dreading a competitor, because a competitor might have proved a rival, he had sought for no assistance. The overwhelming enterprise, the risk, the danger, the toil multiplied by itself, the possible destruction of the salvor in his work, famine, fever, nakedness, distress--he had chosen all these for himself! Such was his selfishness. He was like a man placed in some terrible chamber which is being slowly exhausted of air. His vitality was leaving him by little and little. He scarcely perceived it.

Exhaustion of the bodily strength does not necessarily exhaust the will. Faith is only a secondary power; the will is the first. The mountains, which faith is proverbially said to move, are nothing beside that which the will can accomplish. All that Gilliatt lost in vigour, he gained in tenacity. The destruction of the physical man under the oppressive influence of that wild surrounding sea, and rock, and sky, seemed only to reinvigorate his moral nature.

Gilliatt felt no fatigue; or, rather, would not yield to any. The refusal of the mind to recognise the failings of the body is in itself an immense power.

He saw nothing, except the steps in the progress of his labours.

His object--now seeming so near attainment--wrapped him in perpetual illusions.

He endured all this suffering without any other thought than is comprised in the word "Forward." His work flew to his head; the strength of the will is intoxicating. Its intoxication is called heroism.

He had become a kind of Job, having the ocean for the scene of his sufferings. But he was a Job wrestling with difficulty, a Job combating and making head against afflictions; a Job conquering! a combination of Job and Prometheus, if such names are not too great to be applied to a poor sailor and fisher of crabs and crayfish.

V

SUB UMBRA

Sometimes in the night-time Gilliatt woke and peered into the darkness.

He felt a strange emotion.

His eyes were opened upon the black night; the situation was dismal; full of disquietude.

There is such a thing as the pressure of darkness.

A strange roof of shadow; a deep obscurity, which no diver can explore; a light mingled with that obscurity, of a strange, subdued, and sombre kind; floating atoms of rays, like a dust of seeds or of ashes; millions of lamps, but no illumining; a vast sprinkling of fire, of which no man knows the secret; a diffusion of shining points, like a drift of sparks arrested in their course; the disorder of the whirlwind, with the fixedness of death; a mysterious and abyssmal depth; an enigma, at once showing and concealing its face; the Infinite in its mask of darkness--these are the synonyms of night. Its weight lies heavily on the soul of man.

This union of all mysteries--the mystery of the Cosmos and the mystery

of Fate--oppresses human reason.

The pressure of darkness acts in inverse proportion upon different kinds of natures. In the presence of night man feels his own incompleteness. He perceives the dark void and is sensible of infirmity. It is like the vacancy of blindness. Face to face with night, man bends, kneels, prostrates himself, crouches on the earth, crawls towards a cave, or seeks for wings. Almost always he shrinks from that vague presence of the Infinite Unknown. He asks himself what it is; he trembles and bows the head. Sometimes he desires to go to it.

To go whither?

He can only answer, "Yonder."

But what is that? and what is there?

This curiosity is evidently forbidden to the spirit of man; for all around him the roads which bridge that gulf are broken up or gone. No arch exists for him to span the Infinite. But there is attraction in forbidden knowledge, as in the edge of the abyss. Where the footstep cannot tread, the eye may reach; where the eye can penetrate no further, the mind may soar. There is no man, however feeble or insufficient his resources, who does not essay. According to his nature he questions or recoils before that mystery. With some it has the effect of repressing; with others it enlarges the soul. The spectacle is sombre, indefinite.

Is the night calm and cloudless? It is then a depth of shadow. Is it stormy? It is then a sea of cloud. Its limitless deeps reveal themselves to us, and yet baffle our gaze: close themselves against research, but open to conjecture. Its innumerable dots of light only make deeper the obscurity beyond. Jewels, scintillations, stars; existences revealed in the unknown universes; dread defiances to man's approach; landmarks of the infinite creation; boundaries there, where there are no bounds; sea-marks impossible, and yet real, numbering the fathoms of those infinite deeps. One microscopic glittering point; then another; then another; imperceptible, yet enormous. Yonder light is a focus; that focus is a star; that star is a sun; that sun is a universe; that universe is nothing. For all numbers are as zero in the presence of the Infinite.

These worlds, which yet are nothing, exist. Through this fact we feel the difference which separates the being nothing from the not to be.

The inaccessible joined to the inexplicable, such is the universe. From the contemplation of the universe is evolved a sublime phenomenon: the soul growing vast through its sense of wonder. A reverent fear is peculiar to man; the beasts know no such fear.

His intelligence becomes conscious in this august terror of its own power and its own weakness.

Darkness has unity, hence arises horror; at the same time it is complex, and hence terror. Its unity weighs on the spirit and destroys all desire

of resistance. Its complexity causes us to look around on all sides; apparently we have reason to fear sudden happenings. We yield and yet are on guard. We are in presence of the whole, hence submission; and of the many, hence defiance.

The unity of darkness contains a multiple, a mysterious plurality--visible in matter, realised in thought. Silence rules all; another reason for watchfulness.

Night--and he who writes this has said it elsewhere--is the right and normal condition of that special part of creation to which we belong. Light, brief of duration here as throughout space, is but the nearness of a star. This universal, prodigious night does not fulfil itself, without friction, and all such friction in such a mechanism means what we call evil. We feel this darkness to be evil, a latent denial of divine order, the implicit blasphemy of the real rebelling against the ideal. Evil complicates, by one knows not what hydra-headed monstrosity, the vast, cosmic whole.

Everywhere it arises and resists.

It is the tempest, and hinders the hastening ship; it is chaos, and trammels the birth of a world. Good is one; evil is ubiquitous. Evil dislocates the logic of Life. It causes the bird to devour the fly and the comet to destroy the planet. Evil is a blot on the page of creation.

The darkness of night is full of vertiginous uncertainty.

Whoso would sound its depths is submerged, and struggles therein.

What fatigue to be compared to this contemplation of shadows. It is the study of annihilation.

There is no sure hold on which the soul may rest. There are ports of departure, and no havens for arrival. The interlacing of contradictory solutions; all the branches of doubt seen at a glance; the ramifications of phenomena budding limitlessly from some undefined impulse; laws intersecting each other; an incomprehensible promiscuity causing the mineral to become vegetable; the vegetable to rise to higher life; thought to gather weight; love to shine and gravitation to attract; the immense range presented to view by all questions, extending itself into the limitless obscurity; the half seen, suggesting the unknown; the cosmic correlation appearing clearly, not to sight but to intelligence, in the vast, dim space; the invisible become visible--these are the great overshadowing! Man lives beneath it. He is ignorant of detail, but he carries, in such proportion as he is able to bear, the weight of the monstrous whole. This obsession prompted the astronomy of the Chaldean shepherds. Involuntary revelations flow from creation; hints of science fall from it unconsciously and are absorbed by the ignorant. Every solitary, impregnated in this mysterious way, becomes, without being aware of it, a natural philosopher.

The darkness is indivisible. It is inhabited. Inhabited by the changeless absolute; inhabited also by change. Action exists there,

disquieting thought! An awful creative will works out its phases. Premeditations, Powers, fore-ordained Destinies, elaborate there together an incommensurable work. A life of horror and terror is hidden therein. There are vast evolutions of suns; the stellar family, the planetary family; zodiacal pollen; the Quid Divinum of currents; effluvia, polarisations, and attractions; there are embraces and antagonisms; a magnificent flux and reflux of universal antithesis; the imponderable, free-floating around fixed centres; there is the sap of globes and light beyond globes; the wandering atom, the scattered germ, the processes of fecundity, meetings for union and for combat; unimagined profusion, distances which are as a dream, vertiginous orbits, the rush of worlds into the incalculable; marvels following each other in the obscurity. One mechanism works throughout in the breath of fleeing spheres, and the wheels that we know are turning. The sage conjectures; the ignorant man believes and trembles. These things exist and yet are hidden; they are inexpugnable, beyond reach, beyond approach.

We are convinced and oppressed--we feel, we know not what dark evidence within us; we realise nothing, but are crushed by the impalpable.

All is incomprehensible, but nothing is unintelligible.

And add to all that, the tremendous question: Is this immanent universe a Being?

We exist beneath the shadow. We look; we listen. And meanwhile the dark

earth rolls onward. The flowers are conscious of this tremendous motion; the one opens at eleven in the evening and the other at five in the morning. Astounding sense of law! And in other depths of wonder, the drop of water is a world; the infusoria breed; animalculæ display gigantic fecundity, the imperceptible reveals its grandeur, immensity manifests itself, in an inverse sense; there are algæ that produce in an hour thirteen hundred millions of their kind. Every enigma is propounded in one. The irreducible is before us. Hence we are constrained to some kind of faith. An involuntary belief is the result. But belief does not ensure peace of mind. Faith has an extraordinary desire to take shape. Hence religions. Nothing is so overwhelming as a formless faith.

And despite of thought or desire or inward resistance, to look at the darkness is to fall into profound and wondering meditation. What can we make of these phenomena! How should we act beneath their united forces? To divide such weight of oppression is impossible. What reverie can follow all these mystic vistas? What abstruse revelations arise, stammering, and are obscure from their very mass, as a hesitating speech. Darkness is silence, but such a silence suggests everything. One majestic thought is the result: God--God is the irrepressible idea that springs within man's soul. Syllogisms, feuds, negations, systems, religions cannot destroy it. This idea is affirmed by the whole dark universe. Yet unrest is everywhere in fearful immanence. The wondrous correlation of forces is manifested in the upholding of the balanced darkness. The universe is suspended and nothing falls. Incessant and immeasurable changes operate without accident or destruction. Man participates in the constant changes, and in experiencing such he names

them Destiny. But where does destiny begin? And where does nature end? What difference is there between an event and a season? between a sorrow and a rainfall? between a virtue and a star? An hour, is it not a rolling wave? The wheels of creation revolve mechanically regardless of man. The starry sky is a vision of wheels, pendulums, and counterpoise.

He who contemplates it cannot but ponder upon it.

It is the whole reality and yet the whole abstraction. And nothing more. We are in prison and at the mercy of the darkness, and no evasion is possible.

We are an integral part of the working of this unknown whole; and we feel the mystery within us fraternising with the mystery beyond us. Hence the sublimity of Death. What anguish! And yet what bliss to belong to the Infinite, and through the sense of the Infinite to recognise our inevitable immortality, the possibility of an eternity; to grasp amid this prodigious deluge of universal life, the persistent, imperishable Me; to look at the stars and say, The living soul within me is akin to you; to gaze into darkness and cry, I am as unfathomable as thou! Such immensity is of night, and, added to solitude, weighed heavily on Gilliatt's mind.

Did he understand it? No.

Did he feel it? Yes.

All these vague imaginings, increased and intensified by solitude, weighed upon Gilliatt.

He understood them little, but he felt them. His was a powerful intellect clouded; a great spirit wild and untaught.

VI

GILLIATT PLACES THE SLOOP IN READINESS

This rescue of the machinery of the wreck as meditated by Gilliatt was, as we have already said, like the escape of a criminal from a prison--necessitating all the patience and industry recorded of such achievements; industry carried to the point of a miracle, patience only to be compared with a long agony. A certain prisoner named Thomas, at the Mont Saint Michel, found means of secreting the greater part of a wall in his paillasse. Another at Tulle, in 1820, cut away a quantity of lead from the terrace where the prisoners walked for exercise. With what kind of knife? No one would guess. And melted this lead with what fire? None have ever discovered; but it is known that he cast it in a mould made of the crumbs of bread. With this lead and this mould he made a key, and with this key succeeded in opening a lock of which he had never seen anything but the keyhole. Some of this marvellous ingenuity Gilliatt possessed. He had once climbed and descended from the cliff at Boisrosé. He was the Baron Trenck of the wreck, and the Latude of her machinery.

The sea, like a jailor, kept watch over him.

For the rest, mischievous and inclement as the rain had been, he had contrived to derive some benefit from it. He had in part replenished his

stock of fresh water; but his thirst was inextinguishable, and he emptied his can as fast as he filled it.

One day--it was on the last day of April or the first of May--all was at length ready for his purpose.

The engine-room was, as it were, enclosed between the eight cables hanging from the tackle-blocks, four on one side, four on the other. The sixteen holes upon the deck and under the keel, through which the cables passed, had been hooped round by sawing. The planking had been sawed, the timber cut with the hatchet, the ironwork with a file, the sheathing with the chisel. The part of the keel immediately under the machinery was cut squarewise, and ready to descend with it while still supporting it. All this frightful swinging mass was held only by one chain, which was itself only kept in position by a filed notch. At this stage, in such a labour and so near its completion, haste is prudence.

The water was low; the moment favourable.

Gilliatt had succeeded in removing the axle of the paddles, the extremities of which might have proved an obstacle and checked the descent. He had contrived to make this heavy portion fast in a vertical position within the engine-room itself.

It was time to bring his work to an end. The workman, as we have said, was not weary, for his will was strong; but his tools were. The forge was by degrees becoming impracticable. The blower had begun to work

badly. The little hydraulic fall being of sea-water, saline deposits had encrusted the joints of the apparatus, and prevented its free action.

Gilliatt visited the creek of "The Man Rock," examined the sloop, and assured himself that all was in good condition, particularly the four rings fixed to starboard and to larboard; then he weighed anchor, and worked the heavy barge-shaped craft with the oars till he brought it alongside the two Douvres. The defile between the rocks was wide enough to admit it. There was also depth enough. On the day of his arrival he had satisfied himself that it was possible to push the sloop under the Durande.

The feat, however, was difficult; it required the minute precision of a watchmaker. The operation was all the more delicate from the fact that, for his objects, he was compelled to force it in by the stern, rudder first. It was necessary that the mast and the ringing of the sloop should project beyond the wreck in the direction of the sea.

These embarrassments rendered all Gilliatt's operations awkward. It was not like entering the creek of "The Man," where it was a mere affair of the tiller. It was necessary here to push, drag, row, and take soundings all together. Gilliatt consumed but a quarter of an hour in these manoeuvres; but he was successful.

In fifteen or twenty minutes the sloop was adjusted under the wreck. It was almost wedged in there. By means of his two anchors he moored the boat by head and stern. The strongest of the two was placed so as to be

efficient against the strongest wind that blows, which was that from the south-west. Then by the aid of a lever and the capstan, he lowered into the sloop the two cases containing the pieces of the paddle-wheel, the slings of which were all ready. The two cases served as ballast.

Relieved of these encumbrances, he fastened to the hook of the chain of the capstan the sling of the regulating tackle-gear, intending to check the pulleys.

Owing to the peculiar objects of this labour, the defects of the old sloop became useful qualities. It had no deck; her burden therefore would have greater depth, and could rest upon the hold. Her mast was very forward--too far forward indeed for general purposes; her contents therefore would have more room, and the mast standing thus beyond the mass of the wreck, there would be nothing to hinder its disembarkation. It was a mere shell, or case for receiving it; but nothing is more stable than this on the sea.

While engaged in these operations, Gilliatt suddenly perceived that the sea was rising. He looked around to see from what quarter the wind was coming.

VII

SUDDEN DANGER

The breeze was scarcely perceptible; but what there was came from the west. A disagreeable habit of the winds during the equinoxes.

The rising sea varies much in its effects upon the Douvres rocks, depending upon the quarter of the wind.

According to the gale which drives them before it, the waves enter the rocky corridor either from the east or from the west. Entering from the east, the sea is comparatively gentle; coming from the west, it is always furious. The reason of this is, that the wind from the east blowing from the land has not had time to gather force; while the westerly winds, coming from the Atlantic, blow unchecked from a vast ocean. Even a very slight breeze, if it comes from the west, is serious. It rolls the huge billows from the illimitable space and dashes the waves against the narrow defile in greater bulk than can find entrance there.

A sea which rolls into a gulf is always terrible. It is the same with a crowd of people: a multitude is a sort of fluid body. When the quantity which can enter is less than the quantity endeavouring to force a way, there is a fatal crush among the crowd, a fierce convulsion on the

water. As long as the west wind blows, however slight the breeze, the Douvres are twice a day subjected to that rude assault. The sea rises, the tide breasts up, the narrow gullet gives little entrance, the waves, driven against it violently, rebound and roar, and a tremendous surf beats the two sides of the gorge. Thus the Douvres, during the slightest wind from the west, present the singular spectacle of a sea comparatively calm without, while within the rocks a storm is raging. This tumult of waters, altogether confined and circumscribed, has nothing of the character of a tempest. It is a mere local outbreak among the waves, but a terrible one. As regards the winds from the north and south, they strike the rocks crosswise, and cause little surf in the passage. The entrance by the east, a fact which must be borne in mind, was close to "The Man Rock." The dangerous opening to the west was at the opposite extremity, exactly between the two Douvres.

It was at this western entrance that Gilliatt found himself with the wrecked Durande, and the sloop made fast beneath it.

A catastrophe seemed inevitable. There was not much wind, but it was sufficient for the impending mischief.

Before many hours, the swell which was rising would be rushing with full force into the gorge of the Douvres. The first waves were already breaking. This swell, and eddy of the entire Atlantic, would have behind it the immense sea. There would be no squall; no violence, but a simple overwhelming wave, which commencing on the coasts of America, rolls towards the shores of Europe with an impetus gathered over two thousand

leagues. This wave, a gigantic ocean barrier, meeting the gap of the rocks, must be caught between the two Douvres, standing like watch-towers at the entrance, or like pillars of the defile. Thus swelled by the tide, augmented by resistance, driven back by the shoals, and urged on by the wind, it would strike the rock with violence, and with all the contortions from the obstacles it had encountered, and all the frenzy of a sea confined in limits, would rush between the rocky walls, where it would reach the sloop and the Durande, and, in all probability, destroy them.

A shield against this danger was wanting. Gilliatt had one.

The problem was to prevent the sea reaching it at one bound; to obstruct it from striking, while allowing it to rise; to bar the passage without refusing it admission; to prevent the compression of the water in the gorge, which was the whole danger; to turn an eruption into a simple flood; to extract as it were from the waves all their violence, and constrain the furies to be gentle; it was, in fact, to substitute an obstacle which will appease, for an obstacle which irritates.

Gilliatt, with all that dexterity which he possessed, and which is so much more efficient than mere force, sprang upon the rocks like a chamois among the mountains or a monkey in the forest; using for his tottering and dizzy strides the smallest projecting stone; leaping into the water, and issuing from it again; swimming among the shoals and clambering the rocks, with a rope between his teeth and a mallet in his hand. Thus he detached the cable which kept suspended and also fast to

the basement of the Little Douvre the end of the forward side of the Durande; fashioned out of some ends of hawsers a sort of hinges, holding this bulwark to the huge nails fixed in the granite; swung this apparatus of planks upon them, like the gates of a great dock, and turned their sides, as he would turn a rudder, outward to the waves, which pushed the extremities upon the Great Douvre, while the rope hinges detained the other extremities upon the Little Douvre; next he contrived, by means of the huge nails placed beforehand for the purpose, to fix the same kind of fastenings upon the Great Douvre as on the little one; made completely fast the vast mass of woodwork against the two pillars of the gorge, slung a chain across this barrier like a baldric upon a cuirass; and in less than an hour, this barricade against the sea was complete and the gullet of the rocks closed as by a folding-door.

This powerful apparatus, a heavy mass of beams and planks, which laid flat would have made a raft, and upright formed a wall, had by the aid of the water been handled by Gilliatt with the adroitness of a juggler. It might almost have been said that the obstruction was complete before the rising sea had the time to perceive it.

It was one of those occasions on which Jean Bart would have employed the famous expression which he applied to the sea every time he narrowly escaped shipwreck. "We have cheated the Englishman;" for it is well known that when that famous admiral meant to speak contemptuously of the ocean he called it "the Englishman."

The entrance to the defile being thus protected, Gilliatt thought of the sloop. He loosened sufficient cable for the two anchors to allow her to rise with the tide; an operation similar to what the mariners of old called "mouiller avec des embossures." In all this, Gilliatt was not taken the least by surprise; the necessity had been foreseen. A seaman would have perceived it by the two pulleys of the top ropes cut in the form of snatch-blocks, and fixed behind the sloop, through which passed two ropes, the ends of which were slung through the rings of the anchors.

Meanwhile the tide was rising fast; the half flood had arrived, a moment when the shock of the waves, even in comparatively moderate weather, may become considerable. Exactly what Gilliatt expected came to pass. The waves rolled violently against the barrier, struck it, broke heavily and passed beneath. Outside was the heavy swell; within, the waters ran quietly. He had devised a sort of marine Furculæ caudinæ. The sea was conquered.

VIII

MOVEMENT RATHER THAN PROGRESS

The moment so long dreaded had come.

The problem now was to place the machinery in the bark.

Gilliatt remained thoughtful for some moments, holding the elbow of his left arm in his right hand, and applying his left hand to his forehead.

Then he climbed upon the wreck, one part of which, containing the engine, was to be parted from it, while the other remained.

He severed the four slings which fixed the four chains from the funnel on the larboard and the starboard sides. The slings being only of cord, his knife served him well enough for this purpose.

The four chains set free, hung down along the sides of the funnel.

From the wreck he climbed up to the apparatus which he had constructed, stamped with his feet upon the beams, inspected the tackle-blocks, looked to the pulleys, handled the cables, examined the eking-pieces, assured himself that the untarred hemp was not saturated through, found that nothing was wanting and nothing giving way; then springing from the

height of the suspending props on to the deck, he took up his position near the capstan, in the part of the Durande which he intended to leave jammed in between the two Douvres. This was to be his post during his labours.

Earnest, but troubled with no impulses but what were useful to his work, he took a final glance at the hoisting-tackle, then seized a file and began to saw with it through the chain which held the whole suspended.

The rasping of the file was audible amidst the roaring of the sea.

The chain from the capstan, attached to the regulating gear, was within his reach, quite near his hand.

Suddenly there was a crash. The link which he was filing snapped when only half cut through: the whole apparatus swung violently. He had only just time sufficient to seize the regulating gear.

The severed chain beat against the rock; the eight cables strained; the huge mass, sawed and cut through, detached itself from the wreck; the belly of the hull opened, and the iron flooring of the engine-room was visible below the keel.

If he had not seized the regulating tackle at that instant it would have fallen. But his powerful hand was there, and it descended steadily.

When the brother of Jean Bart, Peter Bart, that powerful and sagacious

toper, that poor Dunkirk fisherman, who used to talk familiarly with the Grand Admiral of France, went to the rescue of the galley Langeron, in distress in the Bay of Ambleteuse, endeavouring to save the heavy floating mass in the midst of the breakers of that furious bay, he rolled up the mainsail, tied it with sea-reeds, and trusted to the ties to break away of themselves, and give the sail to the wind at the right moment. Just so Gilliatt trusted to the breaking of the chain; and the same eccentric feat of daring was crowned with the same success.

The tackle, taken in hand by Gilliatt, held out and worked well. Its function, as will be remembered, was to moderate the powers of the apparatus, thus reduced from many to one, by bringing them into united action. The gear had some similarity to a bridle of a bowline, except that instead of trimming a sail it served to balance a complicated mechanism.

Erect, and with his hand upon the capstan, Gilliatt, so to speak, was enabled to feel the pulse of the apparatus.

It was here that his inventive genius manifested itself.

A remarkable coincidence of forces was the result.

While the machinery of the Durande, detached in a mass, was lowering to the sloop, the sloop rose slowly to receive it. The wreck and the salvage vessel assisting each other in opposite ways, saved half the labour of the operation.

The tide swelling quietly between the two Douvres raised the sloop and brought it nearer to the Durande. The sea was more than conquered; it was tamed and broken in. It became, in fact, part and parcel of the organisation of power.

The rising waters lifted the vessel without any sort of shock, gently, and almost with precaution, as one would handle porcelain.

Gilliatt combined and proportioned the two labours, that of the water and that of the apparatus; and standing steadfast at the capstan, like some terrible statue obeyed by all the movement around it at the same moment, regulated the slowness of the descent by the slow rise of the sea.

There was no jerk given by the waters, no slip among the tackle. It was a strange collaboration of all the natural forces subdued. On one side, gravitation lowering the huge bulk, on the other the sea raising the bark. The attraction of heavenly bodies which causes the tide, and the attractive force of the earth, which men call weight, seemed to conspire together to aid his plans. There was no hesitation, no stoppage in their service; under the dominance of mind these passive forces became active auxiliaries. From minute to minute the work advanced; the interval between the wreck and the sloop diminished insensibly. The approach continued in silence, and as in a sort of terror of the man who stood there. The elements received his orders and fulfilled them.

Nearly at the moment when the tide ceased to raise it, the cable ceased to slide. Suddenly, but without commotion, the pulleys stopped. The vast machine had taken its place in the bark, as if placed there by a powerful hand. It stood straight, upright, motionless, firm. The iron floor of the engine-room rested with its four corners evenly upon the hold.

The work was accomplished.

Gilliatt contemplated it, lost in thought.

He was not the spoiled child of success. He bent under the weight of his great joy. He felt his limbs, as it were, sinking; and contemplating his triumph, he, who had never been shaken by danger, began to tremble.

He gazed upon the sloop under the wreck and at the machinery in the sloop. He seemed to feel it hard to believe it true. It might have been supposed that he had never looked forward to that which he had accomplished. A miracle had been wrought by his hands, and he contemplated it in bewilderment.

His reverie lasted but a short time.

Starting like one awakening from a deep sleep, he seized his saw, cut the eight cables, separated now from the sloop, thanks to the rising of the tide, by only about ten feet; sprang aboard, took a bunch of cord, made four slings, passed them through the rings prepared beforehand, and

fixed on both sides aboard the sloop the four chains of the funnel which only an hour before had been still fastened to their places aboard the Durande.

The funnel being secured, he disengaged the upper part of the machinery. A square portion of the planking of the Durande was adhering to it; he struck off the nails and relieved the sloop of this encumbrance of planks and beams; which fell over on to the rocks--a great assistance in lightening it.

For the rest, the sloop, as has been foreseen, behaved well under the burden of the machinery. It had sunk in the water, but only to a good water-line. Although massive, the engine of the Durande was less heavy than the pile of stones and the cannon which he had once brought back from Herm in the sloop.

All then was ended; he had only to depart.

IX

A SLIP BETWEEN CUP AND LIP

All was not ended.

To re-open the gorge thus closed by the portion of the Durande's bulwarks, and at once to push out with the sloop beyond the rocks, nothing could appear more clear and simple. On the ocean every minute is urgent. There was little wind; scarcely a wrinkle on the open sea. The afternoon was beautiful, and promised a fine night. The sea, indeed, was calm, but the ebb had begun. The moment was favourable for starting. There would be the ebb-tide for leaving the Douvres; and the flood would carry him into Guernsey. It would be possible to be at St. Sampson's at daybreak.

But an unexpected obstacle presented itself. There was a flaw in his arrangements which had baffled all his foresight.

The machinery was freed; but the chimney was not.

The tide, by raising the sloop to the wreck suspended in the air, had diminished the dangers of the descent, and abridged the labour. But this diminution of the interval had left the top of the funnel entangled in the kind of gaping frame formed by the open hull of the Durande. The

funnel was held fast there as between four walls.

The services rendered by the sea had been accompanied by that unfortunate drawback. It seemed as if the waves, constrained to obey, had avenged themselves by a malicious trick.

It is true that what the flood-tide had done, the ebb would undo.

The funnel, which was rather more than three fathoms in height, was buried more than eight feet in the wreck. The water-level would fall about twelve feet. Thus the funnel descending with the falling tide would have four feet of room to spare, and would clear itself easily.

But how much time would elapse before that release would be completed? Six hours.

In six hours it would be near midnight. What means would there be of attempting to start at such an hour? What channel could he find among all those breakers, so full of dangers even by day? How was he to risk his vessel in the depth of black night in that inextricable labyrinth, that ambuscade of shoals?

There was not help for it. He must wait for the morrow. These six hours lost, entailed a loss of twelve hours at least.

He could not even advance the labour by opening the mouth of the gorge. His breakwater was necessary against the next tide.

He was compelled to rest. Folding his arms was almost the only thing which he had not yet done since his arrival on the rocks.

This forced inaction irritated, almost vexed him with himself, as if it had been his fault. He thought "what would Déruchette say of me if she saw me thus doing nothing?"

And yet this interval for regaining his strength was not unnecessary.

The sloop was now at his command; he determined to pass the night in it.

He mounted once more to fetch his sheepskin upon the Great Douvre; descended again, supped off a few limpets and châtaignes de mer, drank, being very thirsty, a few draughts of water from his can, which was nearly empty, enveloped himself in the skin, the wool of which felt comforting, lay down like a watch-dog beside the engine, drew his red cap over his eyes and slept.

His sleep was profound. It was such sleep as men enjoy who have completed a great labour.

X

SEA-WARNINGS

In the middle of the night he awoke suddenly and with a jerk like the recoil of a spring.

He opened his eyes.

The Douvres, rising high over his head, were lighted up as by the white glow of burning embers. Over all the dark escarpment of the rock there was a light like the reflection of a fire.

Where could this fire come from?

It was from the water.

The aspect of the sea was extraordinary.

The water seemed a-fire. As far as the eye could reach, among the reefs and beyond them, the sea ran with flame. The flame was not red; it had nothing in common with the grand living fires of volcanic craters or of great furnaces. There was no sparkling, no glare, no purple edges, no noise. Long trails of a pale tint simulated upon the water the folds of a winding-sheet. A trembling glow was spread over the waves. It was the

spectre of a great fire, rather than the fire itself. It was in some degree like the glow of unearthly flames lighting the inside of a sepulchre. A burning darkness.

The night itself, dim, vast, and wide-diffused, was the fuel of that cold flame. It was a strange illumination issuing out of blindness. The shadows even formed part of that phantom-fire.

The sailors of the Channel are familiar with those indescribable phosphorescences, full of warning for the navigator. They are nowhere more surprising than in the "Great V," near Isigny.

By this light, surrounding objects lose their reality. A spectral glimmer renders them, as it were, transparent. Rocks become no more than outlines. Cables of anchors look like iron bars heated to a white heat. The nets of the fishermen beneath the water seem webs of fire. The half of the oar above the waves is dark as ebony, the rest in the sea like silver. The drops from the blades uplifted from the water fall in starry showers upon the sea. Every boat leaves a furrow behind it like a comet's tail. The sailors, wet and luminous, seem like men in flames. If you plunge a hand into the water, you withdraw it clothed in flame. The flame is dead, and is not felt. Your arm becomes a firebrand. You see the forms of things in the sea roll beneath the waves as in liquid fire. The foam twinkles. The fish are tongues of fire, or fragments of the forked lightning, moving in the depths.

The reflection of this brightness had passed over the closed eyelids of

Gilliatt in the sloop. It was this that had awakened him.

His awakening was opportune.

The ebb tide had run out, and the waters were beginning to rise again. The funnel, which had become disengaged during his sleep, was about to enter again into the yawning hollow above it.

It was rising slowly.

A rise of another foot would have entangled it in the wreck again. A rise of one foot is equivalent to half-an-hour's tide. If he intended, therefore, to take advantage of that temporary deliverance once more within his reach, he had just half-an-hour before him.

He leaped to his feet.

Urgent as the situation was, he stood for a few moments meditative, contemplating the phosphorescence of the waves.

Gilliatt knew the sea in all its phases. Notwithstanding all her tricks, and often as he had suffered from her terrors, he had long been her companion. That mysterious entity which we call the ocean had nothing in its secret thoughts which he could not divine. Observation, meditation, and solitude, had given him a quick perception of coming changes, of wind, or cloud, or wave.

Gilliatt hastened to the top ropes and payed out some cable; then being no longer held fast by the anchors, he seized the boat-hook of the sloop, and pushed her towards the entrance to the gorge some fathoms from the Durande, and quite near to the breakwater. Here, as the Guernsey sailors say, it had du rang. In less than ten minutes the sloop was withdrawn from beneath the carcase of the wreck. There was no further danger of the funnel being caught in a trap. The tide might rise now.

And yet Gilliatt's manner was not that of one about to take his departure.

He stood considering the light upon the sea once more; but his thoughts were not of starting. He was thinking of how to fix the sloop again, and how to fix it more firmly than ever, though near to the exit from the defile.

Up to this time he had only used the two anchors of the sloop and had not yet employed the little anchor of the Durande, which he had found, as will be remembered, among the breakers. This anchor had been deposited by him in readiness for any emergency, in a corner of the sloop, with a quantity of hawsers, and blocks of top-ropes, and his cable, all furnished beforehand with large knots, which prevented its dragging. He now let go this third anchor, taking care to fasten the cable to a rope, one end of which was slung through the anchor ring, while the other was attached to the windlass of the sloop. In this manner he made a kind of triangular, triple anchorage, much stronger

than the moorings with two anchors. All this indicated keen anxiety, and a redoubling of precautions. A sailor would have seen in this operation something similar to an anchorage in bad weather, when there is fear of a current which might carry the vessel under the wind.

The phosphorescence which he had been observing, and upon which his eye was now fixed once more, was threatening, but serviceable at the same time. But for it he would have been held fast locked in sleep, and deceived by the night. The strange appearance upon the sea had awakened him, and made things about him visible.

The light which it shed among the rocks was, indeed, ominous; but disquieting as it appeared to be to Gilliatt, it had served to show him the dangers of his position, and had rendered possible his operations in extricating the sloop. Henceforth, whenever he should be able to set sail, the vessel, with its freight of machinery, would be free.

And yet the idea of departing was further than ever from his mind. The sloop being fixed in its new position, he went in quest of the strongest chain which he had in his store-cavern, and attaching it to the nails driven into the two Douvres, he fortified from within with this chain the rampart of planks and beams, already protected from without by the cross chain. Far from opening the entrance to the defile, he made the barrier more complete.

The phosphorescence lighted him still, but it was diminishing. The day, however, was beginning to break.

Suddenly he paused to listen.

XI

A WORD TO THE WISE IS ENOUGH

A feeble, indistinct sound seemed to reach his ear from somewhere in the far distance.

At certain hours the great deeps give forth a murmuring noise.

He listened a second time. The distant noise recommenced. Gilliatt shook his head like one who recognises at last something familiar to him.

A few minutes later he was at the other extremity of the alley between the rocks, at the entrance facing the east, which had remained open until then, and by heavy blows of his hammer was driving large nails into the sides of the gullet near "The Man Rock," as he had done at the gullet of the Douvres.

The crevices of these rocks were prepared and well furnished with timber, almost all of which was heart of oak. The rock on this side being much broken up, there were abundant cracks, and he was able to fix even more nails there than in the base of the two Douvres.

Suddenly, and as if some great breath had passed over it, the luminous appearance on the waters vanished. The twilight becoming paler every

moment, assumed its functions.

The nails being driven, Gilliatt dragged beams and cords, and then chains to the spot; and without taking his eyes off his work, or permitting his mind to be diverted for a moment, he began to construct across the gorge of "The Man" with beams fixed horizontally, and made fast by cables, one of those open barriers which science has now adopted under the name of breakwaters.

Those who have witnessed, for example, at La Rocquaine in Guernsey, or at Bourg-d'Eau in France, the effect produced by a few posts fixed in the rock, will understand the power of these simple preparations. This sort of breakwater is a combination of what is called in France épi with what is known in England as "a dam." The breakwater is the chevaux-de-frise of fortifications against tempests. Man can only struggle against the sea by taking advantage of this principle of dividing its forces.

Meanwhile, the sun had risen, and was shining brightly. The sky was clear, the sea calm.

Gilliatt pressed on his work. He, too, was calm; but there was anxiety in his haste. He passed with long strides from rock to rock, and returned dragging wildly sometimes a rider, sometimes a binding strake. The utility of all this preparation of timbers now became manifest. It was evident that he was about to confront a danger which he had foreseen.

A strong iron bar served him as a lever for moving the beams.

The work was executed so fast that it was rather a rapid growth than a construction. He who has never seen a military pontooner at his work can scarcely form an idea of this rapidity.

The eastern gullet was still narrower than the western. There were but five or six feet of interval between the rocks. The smallness of this opening was an assistance. The space to be fortified and closed up being very little, the apparatus would be stronger, and might be more simple. Horizontal beams, therefore, sufficed, the upright ones being useless.

The first cross pieces of the breakwater being fixed, Gilliatt mounted upon them and listened once more.

The murmurs had become significant.

He continued his construction. He supported it with the two cat-heads of the Durande, bound to the frame of beams by cords passed through the three pulley-sheaves. He made the whole fast by chains.

The construction was little more than a colossal hurdle, having beams for rods and chains in the place of wattles.

It seemed woven together, quite as much as built.

He multiplied the fastenings, and added nails where they were necessary.

Having obtained a great quantity of bar iron from the wreck, he had been able to make a large number of these heavy nails.

While still at work, he broke some biscuit with his teeth. He was thirsty, but he could not drink, having no more fresh water. He had emptied the can at his meal of the evening before.

He added afterwards four or five more pieces of timber; then climbed again upon the barrier and listened.

The noises from the horizon had ceased; all was still.

The sea was smooth and quiet; deserving all those complimentary phrases which worthy citizens bestow upon it when satisfied with a trip. "A mirror," "a pond," "like oil," and so forth. The deep blue of the sky responded to the deep green tint of the ocean. The sapphire and the emerald hues vied with each other. Each were perfect. Not a cloud on high, not a line of foam below. In the midst of all this splendour, the April sun rose magnificently. It was impossible to imagine a lovelier day.

On the verge of the horizon a flight of birds of passage formed a long dark line against the sky. They were flying fast as if alarmed.

Gilliatt set to work again to raise the breakwater.

He raised it as high as he could; as high, indeed, as the curving of the rocks would permit.

Towards noon the sun appeared to him to give more than its usual warmth. Noon is the critical time of the day. Standing upon the powerful frame which he had built up, he paused again to survey the wide expanse.

The sea was more than tranquil. It was a dull dead calm. No sail was visible. The sky was everywhere clear; but from blue it had become white. The whiteness was singular. To the west, and upon the horizon, was a little spot of a sickly hue. The spot remained in the same place, but by degrees grew larger. Near the breakers the waves shuddered; but very gently.

Gilliatt had done well to build his breakwater.

A tempest was approaching.

The elements had determined to give battle.

BOOK III

THE STRUGGLE

I

EXTREMES MEET

Nothing is more threatening than a late equinox.

The appearance of the sea presents a strange phenomenon, resulting from what may be called the arrival of the ocean winds.

In all seasons, but particularly at the epoch of the Syzygies, at the moment when least expected, the sea sometimes becomes singularly tranquil. That vast perpetual movement ceases; a sort of drowsiness and languor overspreads it; and it seems weary and about to rest. Every rag of bunting, from the tiny streamer of the fishing-boat to the great flag of ships of war, droops against the mast. The admiral's flag, the Royal and Imperial ensigns sleep alike.

Suddenly all these streamers begin to flutter gently.

If there happen to be clouds, the moment has then come for marking the formation of the cirri; if the sun is setting, for observing the red tints of the horizon; or if it be night and there is a moon, for looking attentively for the halo.

It is then that the captain or commander of a squadron, if he happen to possess one of those storm indicators, the inventor of which is unknown, notes his instrument carefully and takes his precautions against the south wind, if the clouds have an appearance like dissolved sugar; or against the north, if they exfoliate in crystallisations like brakes of brambles, or like fir woods. Then, too, the poor Irish or Breton fisherman, after having consulted some mysterious gnomon engraved by the Romans or by demons upon one of those straight enigmatical stones, which are called in Brittany Menhir, and in Ireland Cruach, hauls his boat up on the shore.

Meanwhile the serenity of sky and ocean continues. The day dawns radiant, and Aurora smiles. It was this which filled the old poets and seers with religious horror; for men dared to suspect the falsity of the sun. Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?

The sombre vision of nature's secret laws is interdicted to man by the fatal opacity of surrounding things. The most terrible and perfidious of her aspects is that which masks the convulsions of the deep.

Some hours, and even days sometimes, pass thus. Pilots raise their

telescopes here and there. The faces of old seamen have always an expression of severity left upon them by the vexation of perpetually looking out for changes.

Suddenly a great confused murmur is heard. A sort of mysterious dialogue takes place in the air.

Nothing unusual is seen.

The wide expanse is tranquil.

Yet the noises increase. The dialogue becomes more audible.

There is something beyond the horizon.

Something terrible. It is the wind.

The wind; or rather that populace of Titans which we call the gale. The unseen multitude.

India knew them as the Maroubs, Judea as the Keroubim, Greece as the Aquilones. They are the invisible winged creatures of the Infinite.
Their blasts sweep over the earth.

II

THE OCEAN WINDS

They come from the immeasurable deep. Their wide wings need the breadth of the ocean gulf; the spaciousness of desert solitudes. The Atlantic, the Pacific--those vast blue plains--are their delight. They hasten thither in flocks. Commander Page witnessed, far out at sea, seven waterspouts at once. They wander there, wild and terrible! The ever-ending yet eternal flux and reflux is their work. The extent of their power, the limits of their will, none know. They are the Sphinxes of the abyss: Gama was their oedipus. In that dark, ever-moving expanse, they appear with faces of cloud. He who perceives their pale lineaments in that wide dispersion, the horizon of the sea, feels himself in presence of an unsubduable power. It might be imagined that the proximity of human intelligence disquieted them, and that they revolted against it. The mind of man is invincible, but the elements baffle him. He can do nothing against the power which is everywhere, and which none can bind. The gentle breath becomes a gale, smites with the force of a war-club, and then becomes gentle again. The winds attack with a terrible crash, and defend themselves by fading into nothingness. He who would encounter them must use artifice. Their varying tactics, their swift redoubled blows, confuse. They fly as often as they attack. They are tenacious and impalpable. Who can circumvent them? The prow of the Argo, cut from an oak of Dodona's grove, that mysterious pilot of the

bark, spoke to them, and they insulted that pilot-goddess. Columbus, beholding their approach at La Pinta, mounted upon the poop, and addressed them with the first verses of St. John's Gospel. Surcouf defied them: "Here come the gang," he used to say. Napier greeted them with cannon-balls. They assume the dictatorship of chaos.

Chaos is theirs, in which to wreak their mysterious vengeance: the den of the winds is more monstrous than that of lions. How many corpses lie in its deep recesses, where the howling gusts sweep without pity over that obscure and ghastly mass! The winds are heard wheresoever they go, but they give ear to none. Their acts resemble crimes. None know on whom they cast their hoary surf; with what ferocity they hover over shipwrecks, looking at times as if they flung their impious foam-flakes in the face of heaven. They are the tyrants of unknown regions. "Luoghi spaventosi," murmured the Venetian mariners.

The trembling fields of space are subjected to their fierce assaults. Things unspeakable come to pass in those deserted regions. Some horseman rides in the gloom; the air is full of a forest sound; nothing is visible; but the tramp of cavalcades is heard. The noonday is overcast with sudden night; a tornado passes. Or it is midnight, which suddenly becomes bright as day; the polar lights are in the heavens. Whirlwinds pass in opposite ways, and in a sort of hideous dance, a stamping of the storms upon the waters. A cloud overburdened opens and falls to earth. Other clouds, filled with red light, flash and roar; then frown again ominously. Emptied of their lightnings, they are but as spent brands. Pent-up rains dissolve in mists. Yonder sea appears a fiery furnace in

which the rains are falling: flames seem to issue from the waves. The white gleam of the ocean under the shower is reflected to marvellous distances. The different masses transform themselves into uncouth shapes. Monstrous whirlpools make strange hollows in the sky. The vapours revolve, the waves spin, the giddy Naiads roll; sea and sky are livid; noises as of cries of despair are in the air.

Great sheaves of shadow and darkness are gathered up, trembling in the far depths of the sky. Now and then there is a convulsion. The rumour becomes tumult as the wave becomes surge. The horizon, a confused mass of strata, oscillating ceaselessly, murmurs in a continual undertone. Strange and sudden outbursts break through the monotony. Cold airs rush forth, succeeded by warm blasts. The trepidation of the sea betokens anxious expectation, agony, terror profound. Suddenly the hurricane comes down, like a wild beast, to drink of the ocean: a monstrous draught! The sea rises to the invisible mouth; a mound of water is formed; the swell increases, and the waterspout appears; the Prester of the ancients, stalactite above, stalagmite below, a whirling double-inverted cone, a point in equilibrium upon another, the embrace of two mountains--a mountain of foam ascending, a mountain of vapour descending--terrible coition of the cloud and the wave. Like the column in Holy Writ, the waterspout is dark by day and luminous by night. In its presence the thunder itself is silent and seems cowed.

The vast commotion of those solitudes has its gamut, a terrible crescendo. There are the gust, the squall, the storm, the gale, the tempest, the whirlwind, the waterspout--the seven chords of the lyre of

the winds, the seven notes of the firmament. The heavens are a clear space, the sea a vast round; but a breath passes, they have vanished, and all is fury and wild confusion.

Such are these inhospitable realms.

The winds rush, fly, swoop down, dwindle away, commence again; hover above, whistle, roar, and smile; they are frenzied, wanton, unbridled, or sinking at ease upon the raging waves. Their howlings have a harmony of their own. They make all the heavens sonorous. They blow in the cloud as in a trumpet; they sing through the infinite space with the mingled tones of clarions, horns, bugles, and trumpets--a sort of Promethean fanfare.

Such was the music of ancient Pan. Their harmonies are terrible. They have a colossal joy in the darkness. They drive and disperse great ships. Night and day, in all seasons, from the tropics to the pole, there is no truce; sounding their fatal trumpet through the tangled thickets of the clouds and waves, they pursue the grim chase of vessels in distress. They have their packs of bloodhounds, and take their pleasure, setting them to bark among the rocks and billows. They huddle the clouds together, and drive them diverse. They mould and knead the supple waters as with a million hands.

The water is supple because it is incompressible. It slips away without effort. Borne down on one side, it escapes on the other. It is thus that waters become waves, and that the billows are a token of their liberty.

III

THE NOISES EXPLAINED

The grand descent of winds upon the world takes place at the equinoxes. At this period the balance of tropic and pole librates, and the vast atmospheric tides pour their flood upon one hemisphere and their ebb upon another. The signs of Libra and Aquarius have reference to these phenomena.

It is the time of tempests.

The sea awaits their coming, keeping silence.

Sometimes the sky looks sickly. Its face is wan. A thick dark veil obscures it. The mariners observe with uneasiness the angry aspect of the clouds.

But it is its air of calm contentment which they dread the most. A smiling sky in the equinoxes is the tempest in gay disguise. It was under skies like these that "The Tower of Weeping Women," in Amsterdam, was filled with wives and mothers scanning the far horizon.

When the vernal or autumnal storms delay to break, they are gathering

strength; hoarding up their fury for more sure destruction. Beware of the gale that has been long delayed. It was Angot who said that "the sea pays well old debts."

When the delay is unusually long, the sea betokens her impatience only by a deeper calm, but the magnetic intensity manifests itself by what might be called a fiery humour in the sea. Fire issues from the waves; electric air, phosphoric water. The sailors feel a strange lassitude. This time is particularly perilous for iron vessels; their hulls are then liable to produce variations of the compass, leading them to destruction. The transatlantic steam-vessel Iowa perished from this cause.

To those who are familiar with the sea, its aspect at these moments is singular. It may be imagined to be both desiring and fearing the approach of the cyclone. Certain unions, though strongly urged by nature, are attended by this strange conjunction of terror and desire. The lioness in her tenderest moods flies from the lion. Thus the sea, in the fire of her passion, trembles at the near approach of her union with the tempest. The nuptials are prepared. Like the marriages of the ancient emperors, they are celebrated with immolations. The fête is heralded with disasters.

Meanwhile, from yonder deeps, from the great open sea, from the unapproachable latitudes, from the lurid horizon of the watery waste, from the utmost bounds of the free ocean, the winds pour down.

Listen; for this is the famous equinox.

The storm prepares mischief. In the old mythology these entities were recognised, indistinctly moving, in the grand scene of nature. Eolus plotted with Boreas. The alliance of element with element is necessary; they divide their task. One has to give impetus to the wave, the cloud, the stream: night is an auxiliary, and must be employed. There are compasses to be falsified, beacons to be extinguished, lanterns of lighthouses to be masked, stars to be hidden. The sea must lend her aid. Every storm is preceded by a murmur. Behind the horizon line there is a premonitory whispering among the hurricanes.

This is the noise which is heard afar off in the darkness amidst the terrible silence of the sea.

It was this significant whispering which Gilliatt had noted. The phosphorescence on the water had been the first warning: this murmur the second.

If the demon Legion exists, he is assuredly no other than the wind.

The wind is complex, but the air is one.

Hence it follows that all storms are mixed--a principle which results from the unity of the air.

The entire abyss of heaven takes part in a tempest: the entire ocean

also. The totality of its forces is marshalled for the strife. A wave is the ocean gulf; a gust is a gulf of the atmosphere. A contest with a storm is a contest with all the powers of sea and sky.

It was Messier, that great authority among naval men, the pensive astronomer of the little lodge at Cluny, who said, "The wind comes from everywhere and is everywhere." He had no faith in the idea of winds imprisoned even in inland seas. With him there were no Mediterranean winds; he declared that he recognised them as they wandered about the earth. He affirmed that on a certain day, at a certain hour, the Föhn of the Lake of Constance, the ancient Favonius of Lucretius, had traversed the horizon of Paris; on another day, the Bora of the Adriatic; on another day, the whirling Notus, which is supposed to be confined in the round of the Cyclades. He indicated their currents. He did not believe it impossible that the "Autan," which circulates between Corsica and the Balearic Isles, could escape from its bounds. He did not admit the theory of winds imprisoned like bears in their dens. It was he, too, who said that "every rain comes from the tropics, and every flash of lightning from the pole." The wind, in fact, becomes saturated with electricity at the intersection of the colures which marks the extremity of the axis, and with water at the equator; bringing moisture from the equatorial line and the electric fluid from the poles.

The wind is ubiquitous.

It is certainly not meant by this that the winds never move in zones. Nothing is better established than the existence of those continuous air

currents; and aerial navigation by means of the wind boats, to which the passion for Greek terminology has given the name of "aeroscaphes," may one day succeed in utilising the chief of these streams of wind. The regular course of air streams is an incontestable fact. There are both rivers of wind and rivulets of wind, although their branches are exactly the reverse of water currents: for in the air it is the rivulets which flow out of the rivers, and the smaller rivers which flow out of the great streams instead of falling into them. Hence instead of concentration we have dispersion.

The united action of the winds and the unity of the atmosphere result from this dispersion. The displacement of one molecule produces the displacement of another. The vast body of air becomes subject to one agitation. To these profound causes of coalition we must add the irregular surface of the earth, whose mountains furrow the atmosphere, contorting and diverting the winds from their course, and determining the directions of counter currents in infinite radiations.

The phenomenon of the wind is the oscillation of two oceans one against the other; the ocean of air, superimposed upon the ocean of water, rests upon these currents, and is convulsed with this vast agitation.

The indivisible cannot produce separate action. No partition divides wave from wave. The islands of the Channel feel the influence of the Cape of Good Hope. Navigation everywhere contends with the same monster; the sea is one hydra. The waves cover it as with a coat of scales. The ocean is Ceto.

Upon that unity reposes an infinite variety.

IV

TURBA TURMA

According to the compass there are thirty-two winds, that is to say, thirty-two points. But these directions may be subdivided indefinitely. Classed by its directions, the wind is incalculable; classed by its kinds, it is infinite. Homer himself would have shrunk from the task of enumerating them.

The polar current encounters the tropical current. Heat and cold are thus combined; the equilibrium is distributed by a shock, the wave of wind issues forth and is distended, scattered and broken up in every direction in fierce streams. The dispersion of the gusts shakes the streaming locks of the wind upon the four corners of the horizon.

All the winds which blow are there. The wind of the Gulf Stream, which disgorges the great fogs of Newfoundland; the wind of Peru, in the region of silent heavens, where no man ever heard the thunder roar; the wind of Nova Scotia, where flies the great auk (Alca impennis) with his furrowed beak; the iron whirlwinds of the Chinese seas; the wind of Mozambique, which destroys the canoes and junks; the electric wind, which the people of Japan denounce by the beating of a gong; the African wind, which blows between Table Mountain and the Devil's Peak, where it gains its liberty; the currents of the equator, which pass over the

trade winds, describing a parabola, the summit of which is always to the west; the Plutonian wind, which issues from craters, the terrible breath of flames; the singular wind peculiar to the volcano Awa, which occasions a perpetual olive tint in the north; the Java monsoon, against which the people construct those casemates known as hurricane houses; the branching north winds called by the English "Bush winds;" the curved squalls of the Straits of Malacca, observed by Horsburgh; the powerful south-west wind, called Pampero in Chili, and Rebojo at Buenos Ayres, which carries the great condor out to sea, and saves him from the pit where the Indian, concealed under a bullock-hide newly stripped, watches for him, lying on his back and bending his great bow with his feet; the chemical wind, which, according to Lemery, produces thunder-bolts from the clouds; the Harmattan of the Caffres; the Polar snow-driver, which harnesses itself to the everlasting icebergs; the wind of the Gulf of Bengal, which sweeps over a continent to pillage the triangular town of wooden booths at Nijni-Novogorod, in which is held the great fair of Asia; the wind of the Cordilleras, agitator of great

waves and forests; the wind of the Australian Archipelago, where the bee-hunters take the wild hives hidden under the forks of the branches of the giant eucalyptus; the Sirocco, the Mistral, the Hurricane, the dry winds, the inundating and diluvian winds, the torrid winds, which scatter dust from the plains of Brazil upon the streets of Genoa, which both obey and revolt against diurnal rotation, and of which Herrara said, "Malo viento torna contra el sol;" those winds which hunt in couples, conspiring mischief, the one undoing the work of the other; and those old winds which assailed Columbus on the coast of Veragua, and

which during forty days, from the 21st of October to the 28th of November 1520, delayed and nearly frustrated Magellan's approach to the Pacific; and those which dismasted the Armada and confounded Philip II. Others, too, there are, of the names of which there is no end. The winds, for instance, which carry showers of frogs and locusts, and drive before them clouds of living things across the ocean; those which blow in what are called "Wind-leaps," and whose function is to destroy ships at sea; those which at a single blast throw the cargo out of trim, and compel the vessel to continue her course half broadside over; the winds which construct the circum-cumuli; the winds which mass together the circum-strati; the dark heavy winds swelled with rains; the winds of the hailstorms; the fever winds, whose approach sets the salt springs and sulphur springs of Calabria boiling; those which give a glittering appearance to the fur of African panthers, prowling among the bushes of Cape Ferro; those which come shaking from the cloud, like the tongue of a trigonocephal, the terrible forked lightning; and those which bring whirlwinds of black snow. Such is the legion of winds.

The Douvres rock heard their distant tramp at the moment when Gilliatt was constructing his breakwater.

As we have said, the wind means the combination of all the winds of the earth.

V

GILLIATT'S ALTERNATIVES

The mysterious forces had chosen their time well.

Chance, if chance exists, is sometimes far-seeing.

While the sloop had been anchored in the little creek of "The Man Rock," and as long as the machinery had been prisoned in the wreck, Gilliatt's position had been impregnable. The sloop was in safety; the machinery sheltered. The Douvres, which held the hull of the Durande fast, condemned it to slow destruction, but protected it against unexpected accidents. In any event, one resource had remained to him. If the engine had been destroyed, Gilliatt would have been uninjured. He had still the sloop by which to escape.

But to wait till the sloop was removed from the anchorage where she was inaccessible; to allow it to be fixed in the defile of the Douvres; to watch until the sloop, too, was, as it were, entangled in the rocks; to permit him to complete the salvage, the moving, and the final embarkation of the machinery; to do no damage to that wonderful construction by which one man was enabled to put the whole aboard his bark; to acquiesce, in fact, in the success of his exploits so far; this was but the trap which the elements had laid for him. Now for the first

time he began to perceive in all its sinister characteristics the trick which the sea had been meditating so long.

The machinery, the sloop, and their master were all now within the gorge of the rocks. They formed but a single point. One blow, and the sloop might be dashed to pieces on the rock, the machinery destroyed, and Gilliatt drowned.

The situation could not have been more critical.

The sphinx, which men have imagined concealing herself in the cloud, seemed to mock him with a dilemma.

"Go or stay."

To go would have been madness; to remain was terrible.

VI

THE COMBAT

Gilliatt ascended to the summit of the Great Douvre.

From hence he could see around the horizon.

The western side was appalling. A wall of cloud spread across it, barring the wide expanse from side to side, and ascending slowly from the horizon towards the zenith. This wall, straight lined, vertical, without a crevice in its height, without a rent in its structure, seemed built by the square and measured by the plumb-line. It was cloud in the likeness of granite. Its escarpment, completely perpendicular at the southern extremity, curved a little towards the north, like a bent sheet of iron, presenting the steep slippery face of an inclined plane. The dark wall enlarged and grew; but its entablature never ceased for a moment to be parallel with the horizon line, which was almost indistinguishable in the gathering darkness. Silently, and altogether, the airy battlements ascended. No undulation, no wrinkle, no projection changed its shape or moved its place. The aspect of this immobility in movement was impressive. The sun, pale in the midst of a strange sickly transparence, lighted up this outline of the Apocalypse. Already the cloudy bank had blotted out one half the space of the sky: shelving like the fearful talus of the abyss. It was the uprising of a dark mountain

between earth and heaven.

It was night falling suddenly upon midday.

There was a heat in the air as from an oven door, coming from that mysterious mass on mass. The sky, which from blue had become white, was now turning from white to a slatey grey. The sea beneath was leaden-hued and dull. There was no breath, no wave, no noise. Far as eye could reach, the desert ocean. No sail was visible on any side. The birds had disappeared. Some monstrous treason seemed abroad.

The wall of cloud grew visibly larger.

This moving mountain of vapours, which was approaching the Douvres, was one of those clouds which might be called the clouds of battle. Sinister appearances; some strange, furtive glance seemed cast upon the beholder through that obscure mass up-piled.

The approach was terrible.

Gilliatt observed it closely, and muttered to himself, "I am thirsty enough, but you will give me plenty to drink."

He stood there motionless a few moments, his eye fixed upon the cloud bank, as if mentally taking a sounding of the tempest.

His galérienne was in the pocket of his jacket; he took it out and

placed it on his head. Then he fetched from the cave, which had so long served him for a sleeping-place, a few things which he had kept there in reserve; he put on his overalls, and attired himself in his waterproof overcoat, like a knight who puts on his armour at the moment of battle. He had no shoes; but his naked feet had become hardened to the rocks.

This preparation for the storm being completed, he looked down upon his breakwater, grasped the knotted cord hurriedly, descended from the plateau of the Douvre, stepped on to the rocks below, and hastened to his store cavern. A few moments later he was at work. The vast silent cloud might have heard the strokes of his hammer. With the nails, ropes, and beams which still remained, he constructed for the eastern gullet a second frame, which he succeeded in fixing at ten or twelve feet from the other.

The silence was still profound. The blades of grass between the cracks of the rocks were not stirred.

The sun disappeared suddenly. Gilliatt looked up.

The rising cloud had just reached it. It was like the blotting out of day, succeeded by a mingled pale reflection.

The immense wall of cloud had changed its appearance. It no longer retained its unity. It had curved on reaching the zenith, whence it spread horizontally over the rest of the heavens. It had now its various stages. The tempest formation was visible, like the strata in the side

of a trench. It was possible to distinguish the layers of the rain from the beds of hail. There was no lightning, but a horrible, diffused glare; for the idea of horror may be attached to light. The vague breathing of the storm was audible; the silence was broken by an obscure palpitation. Gilliatt, silent also, watched the giant blocks of vapour grouping themselves overhead forming the shapeless mass of clouds. Upon the horizon brooded and lengthened out a band of mist of ashen hue; in the zenith, another band of lead colour. Pale, ragged fragments of cloud hung from the great mass above upon the mist below. The pile of cloud which formed the background was wan, dull, gloomy. A thin, whitish transverse cloud, coming no one could tell whither, cut the high dark wall obliquely from north to south. One of the extremities of this cloud trailed along the surface of the sea. At the point where it touched the waters, a dense red vapour was visible in the midst of the darkness. Below it, smaller clouds, quite black and very low, were flying as if bewildered or moved by opposite currents of air. The immense cloud beyond increased from all points at once, darkened the eclipse, and continued to spread its sombre pall. In the east, behind Gilliatt, there was only one clear porch in the heavens, which was rapidly being closed. Without any feeling of wind abroad, a strange flight of grey downy particles seemed to pass; they were fine and scattered as if some gigantic bird had been plucked of its plumage behind the bank of cloud. A dark compact roof had gradually formed itself, which on the verge of the horizon touched the sea, and mingled in darkness with it. The beholder had a vague sense of something advancing steadily towards him. It was vast, heavy, ominous. Suddenly an immense peal of thunder burst upon the air.

Gilliatt himself felt the shock. The rude reality in the midst of that visionary region has something in it terrific. The listener might fancy that he hears something falling in the chamber of giants. No electric flash accompanied the report. It was a blind peal. The silence was profound again. There was an interval, as when combatants take up their position. Then appeared slowly, one after the other, great shapeless flashes; these flashes were silent. The wall of cloud was now a vast cavern, with roofs and arches. Outlines of forms were traceable among them; monstrous heads were vaguely shadowed forth; rocks seemed to stretch out; elephants bearing turrets, seen for a moment, vanished. A column of vapour, straight, round, and dark, and surmounted by a white mist, simulated the form of a colossal steam-vessel engulfed, hissing, and smoking beneath the waves. Sheets of cloud undulated like folds of giant flags. In the centre, under a thick purple pall, a nucleus of dense fog sunk motionless, inert, impenetrable by the electric fires; a sort of hideous foetus in the bosom of the tempest.

Suddenly Gilliatt felt a breath moving his hair. Two or three large spots of rain fell heavily around him on the rock. Then there was a second thunder-clap. The wind was rising.

The terror of darkness was at its highest point. The first peal of thunder had shaken the sea; the second rent the wall of cloud from top to base; breach was visible; the pent-up deluge rushed towards it; the rent became like a gulf filled with rain. The outpouring of the tempest had begun.

The moment was terrible.

Rain, wind, lightnings, thunder, waves swirling upwards to the clouds, foam, hoarse noises, whistlings, mingled together like monsters suddenly unloosened.

For a solitary man, imprisoned with an overloaded vessel, between two dangerous rocks in mid-ocean, no crisis could have been more menacing. The danger of the tide, over which he had triumphed, was nothing compared with the danger of the tempest.

Surrounded on all sides by dangers, Gilliatt, at the last moment, and before the crowning peril, had developed an ingenious strategy. He had secured his basis of operations in the enemies' territory; had pressed the rock into his service. The Douvres, originally his enemy, had become his second in that immense duel. Out of that sepulchre he had constructed a fortress. He was built up among those formidable sea ruins. He was blockaded, but well defended. He had, so to speak, set his back against the wall, and stood face to face with the hurricane. He had barricaded the narrow strait, that highway of the waves. This, indeed, was the only possible course. It seemed as if the ocean, like other despots, might be brought to reason by the aid of barricades. The sloop might be considered secure on three sides. Closely wedged between the two interior walls of the rock, made fast by three anchorings, she was sheltered from the north by the Little Douvre, on the south by the Great one; terrible escarpments, more accustomed to wreck vessels than to save

them. On the western side she was protected by the frame of timbers made fast and nailed to the rocks--a tried barrier which had withstood the rude flood-tide of the sea; a veritable citadel-gate, having for its sides the columns of the rock--the two Douvres themselves. Nothing was to be feared from that side. It was on the eastern side only that there was danger.

On that side there was no protection but the breakwater. A breakwater is an apparatus for dividing and distributing. It requires at least two frames. Gilliatt had only had time to construct one. He was compelled to build the second in the very presence of the tempest.

Fortunately the wind came from the north-west. The wind is not always adroit in its attacks. The north-west wind, which is the ancient "galerno," had little effect upon the Douvres. It assailed the rocks in flank, and drove the waves neither against the one nor the other of the two gullets; so that instead of rushing into a defile, they dashed themselves against a wall.

But the currents of the wind are curved, and it was probable that there would be some sudden change. If it should veer to the east before the second frame could be constructed the peril would be great. The irruption of the sea into the gorge would be complete, and all would probably be lost.

The wildness of the storm went on increasing. The essence of a tempest is the rapid succession of its blows. That is its strength; but it is

also its weakness. Its fury gives the opportunity to human intelligence, and man spies its weak points for his defence; but under what overwhelming assaults! No respite, no interruption, no truce, no pause for taking breath. There seems an unspeakable cowardice in that prodigality of inexhaustible resources.

All the tumult of the wide expanse rushed towards the Douvres. Voices were heard in the darkness. What could they be? The ancient terror of the sea was there. At times they seemed to speak as if some one was uttering words of command. There were clamours, strange trepidations, and then that majestic roar which the mariners call the "Ocean cry." The indefinite and flying eddies of the wind whistled, while curling the waves and flinging them like giant quoits, cast by invisible athletes, against the breakers. The enormous surf streamed over all the rocks; torrents above; foam below. Then the roaring was redoubled. No uproar of men or beasts could yield an idea of that din which mingled with the incessant breaking of the sea. The clouds cannonaded, the hailstones poured their volleys, the surf mounted to the assault. As far as eye could reach, the sea was white; ten leagues of yeasty water filled the horizon. Doors of fire were opened, clouds seemed burnt by clouds, and showed like smoke above a nebulous red mass, resembling burning embers. Floating conflagrations rushed together and amalgamated, each changing the shape of the other. From the midst of the dark roof a terrible arsenal appeared to be emptied out, hurling downward from the gulf, pell-mell, waterspouts, hail torrents, purple fire, phosphoric gleams, darkness, and lightnings.

Meanwhile Gilliatt seemed to pay no attention to the storm. His head was bent over his work. The second framework began to approach completion. To every clap of thunder he replied with a blow of his hammer, making a cadence which was audible even amidst that tumult. He was bareheaded, for a gust had carried away his galérienne.

He suffered from a burning thirst. Little pools of rain had formed in the rocks around him. From time to time he took some water in the hollow of his hand and drank. Then, without even looking upward to observe the storm, he applied himself anew to his task.

All might depend upon a moment. He knew the fate that awaited him if his breakwater should not be completed in time. Of what avail could it be to lose a moment in looking for the approach of death?

The turmoil around him was like that of a vast bubbling cauldron. Crash and uproar were everywhere. Sometimes the lightning seemed to descend a sort of ladder. The electric flame returned incessantly to the same points of the rock, where there were probably metallic veins. Hailstones fell of enormous size. Gilliatt was compelled to shake the folds of his overcoat, even the pockets of which became filled with hail.

The storm had now rotated to the west, and was expending its fury upon the barricades of the two Douvres. But Gilliatt had faith in his breakwaters, and with good reason. These barricades, made of a great portion of the fore-part of the Durande, took the shock of the waves easily. Elasticity is a resistance. The experiments of Stephenson

establish the fact that against the waves, which are themselves elastic, a raft of timber, joined and chained together in a certain fashion, will form a more powerful obstacle than a breakwater of masonry. The barriers of the Douvres fulfilled these conditions. They were, moreover, so ingeniously made fast, that the waves striking them beneath were like hammers beating in nails, pressing and consolidating the work upon the rocks. To demolish them it would have been necessary to overthrow the Douvres themselves. The surf, in fact, was only able to cast over upon the sloop some flakes of foam. On that side, thanks to the barrier, the tempest ended only in harmless insult. Gilliatt turned his back upon the scene. He heard composedly its useless rage upon the rocks behind him.

The foam-flakes coming from all sides were like flights of down. The vast irritated ocean deluged the rocks, dashed over them and raged within, penetrated into the network of their interior fissures, and issued again from the granitic masses by the narrow chinks, forming a kind of inexhaustible fountains playing peacefully in the midst of that deluge. Here and there a silvery network fell gracefully from these spouts in the sea.

The second frame of the eastern barrier was nearly completed. A few more knots of rope and ends of chains and this new rampart would be ready to play its part in barring out the storm.

Suddenly there was a great brightness; the rain ceased; the clouds rolled asunder; the wind had just shifted; a sort of high, dark window opened in the zenith, and the lightnings were extinguished. The end

seemed to have come. It was but the commencement.

The change of wind was from the north-west to the north-east.

The storm was preparing to burst forth again with a new legion of hurricanes. The north was about to mount to the assault. Sailors call this dreaded moment of transition the "Return storm." The southern wind brings most rain, the north wind most lightning.

The attack, coming now from the east, was directed against the weak point of the position.

This time Gilliatt interrupted his work and looked around him.

He stood erect, upon a curved projection of the rock behind the second barrier, which was nearly finished. If the first frame had been carried away, it would have broken down the second, which was not yet consolidated, and must have crushed him. Gilliatt, in the place that he had chosen, must in that case have been destroyed before seeing the sloop, the machinery, and all his work shattered and swallowed up in the gulf. Such was the possibility which awaited him. He accepted it, and contemplated it sternly.

In that wreck of all his hope, to die at once would have been his desire; to die first, as he would have regarded it--for the machinery produced in his mind the effect of a living being. He moved aside his hair, which was beaten over his eyes by the wind, grasped his trusty

mallet, drew himself up in a menacing attitude, and awaited the event.

He was not kept long in suspense.

A flash of lightning gave the signal; the livid opening in the zenith closed; a driving torrent of rain fell; then all became dark, save where the lightnings broke forth once more. The attack had recommenced in earnest.

A heavy swell, visible from time to time in the blaze of the lightning, was rolling in the east beyond "The Man Rock." It resembled a huge wall of glass. It was green and without foam, and it stretched across the wide expanse. It was advancing towards the breakwater, increasing as it approached. It was a singular kind of gigantic cylinder, rolling upon the ocean. The thunder kept up a hollow rumbling.

The great wave struck "The Man Rock," broke in twain, and passed beyond. The broken wave, rejoined, formed a mountain of water, and instead of advancing in parallel line as before, came down perpendicularly upon the breakwater.

The shock was terrific: the whole wave became a roaring surf.

It is impossible for those who have not witnessed them to imagine those snowy avalanches which the sea thus precipitates, and under which it engulfs for the moment rocks of more than a hundred feet in height, such, for example, as the Great Anderlo at Guernsey, and the Pinnacle at

Jersey. At Saint Mary of Madagascar it passes completely over the promontory of Tintingue.

For some moments the sea drowned everything. Nothing was visible except the furious waters, an enormous breadth of foam, the whiteness of a winding-sheet blowing in the draught of a sepulchre; nothing was heard but the roaring storm working devastation around.

When the foam subsided, Gilliatt was still standing at his post.

The barrier had stood firm. Not a chain was broken, not a nail displaced. It had exhibited under the trial the two chief qualities of a breakwater; it had proved flexible as a hurdle and firm as a wall. The surf falling upon it had dissolved into a shower of drops.

A river of foam rushing along the zigzags of the defile subsided as it approached the sloop.

The man who had put this curb upon the fury of the ocean took no rest.

The storm fortunately turned aside its fury for a moment. The fierce attack of the waves was renewed upon the wall of the rock. There was a respite, and Gilliatt took advantage of it to complete the interior barrier.

The daylight faded upon his labours. The hurricane continued its violence upon the flank of the rocks with a mournful solemnity. The

stores of fire and water in the sky poured out incessantly without exhausting themselves. The undulations of the wind above and below were like the movements of a dragon.

Nightfall brought scarcely any deeper night. The change was hardly felt, for the darkness was never complete. Tempests alternately darkening and illumining by their lightnings, are merely intervals of the visible and invisible. All is pale glare, and then all is darkness. Spectral shapes issue forth suddenly, and return as suddenly into the deep shade.

A phosphoric zone, tinged with the hue of the aurora borealis, appeared like ghastly flames behind the dense clouds, giving to all things a wan aspect, and making the rain-drifts luminous.

This uncertain light aided Gilliatt, and directed him in his operations. By its help he was enabled to raise the forward barrier. The breakwater was now almost complete. As he was engaged in making fast a powerful cable to the last beam, the gale blew directly in his face. This compelled him to raise his head. The wind had shifted abruptly to the north-east. The assault upon the eastern gullet recommenced. Gilliatt cast his eyes around the horizon. Another great wall of water was approaching.

The wave broke with a great shock; a second followed; then another and another still; then five or six almost together; then a last shock of tremendous force.

This last wave, which was an accumulation of forces, had a singular resemblance to a living thing. It would not have been difficult to imagine in the midst of that swelling mass the shapes of fins and gill-coverings. It fell heavily and broke upon the barriers. Its almost animal form was torn to pieces in the shape of spouts and gushes, resembling the crushing to death of some sea hydra upon that block of rocks and timbers. The swell rushed through, subsiding but devastating as it went. The huge wave seemed to bite and cling to its victim as it died. The rock shook to its base. A savage howling mingled with the roar; the foam flew far like the spouting of a leviathan.

The subsidence exhibited the extent of the ravages of the surf. This last escalade had not been ineffectual. The breakwater had suffered this time. A long and heavy beam, torn from the first barrier, had been carried over the second, and hurled violently upon the projecting rock on which Gilliatt had stood but a moment before. By good fortune he had not returned there. Had he done so, his death had been inevitable.

There was a remarkable circumstance in the fall of this beam, which by preventing the framework rebounding, saved Gilliatt from greater dangers. It even proved useful to him, as will be seen, in another way.

Between the projecting rock and the interior wall of the defile there was a large interval, something like the notch of an axe, or the split of a wedge. One of the extremities of the timber hurled into the air by the waves had stuck fast into this notch in falling. The gap had become enlarged.

Gilliatt was struck with an idea. It was that of bearing heavily on the other extremity.

The beam caught by one end in the nook, which it had widened, projected from it straight as an outstretched arm. This species of arm projected parallel with the anterior wall of the defile, and the disengaged end stretched from its resting place about eighteen or twenty inches. A good distance for the object to be attained.

Gilliatt raised himself by means of his hands, feet, and knees to the escarpment, and then turned his back, pressing both his shoulders against the enormous lever. The beam was long, which increased its raising power. The rock was already loosened; but he was compelled to renew his efforts again and again. The sweat-drops rolled from his forehead as rapidly as the spray. The fourth attempt exhausted all his powers. There was a cracking noise; the gap spreading in the shape of a fissure, opened its vast jaws, and the heavy mass fell into the narrow space of the defile with a noise like the echo of the thunder.

The mass fell straight, and without breaking; resting in its bed like a Druid cromlech precipitated in one piece.

The beam which had served as a lever descended with the rock, and Gilliatt, stumbling forward as it gave way, narrowly escaped falling.

The bed of the pass at this part was full of huge round stones, and

there was little water. The monolith lying in the boiling foam, the flakes of which fell on Gilliatt where he stood, stretched from side to side of the great parallel rocks of the defile, and formed a transversal wall, a sort of cross-stroke between the two escarpments. Its two ends touched the rocks. It had been a little too long to lie flat, but its summit of soft rock was struck off with the fall. The result of this fall was a singular sort of cul-de-sac, which may still be seen. The water behind this stony barrier is almost always tranquil.

This was a rampart more invincible still than the forward timbers of the Durande fixed between the two Douvres.

The barrier came opportunely.

The assaults of the sea had continued. The obstinacy of the waves is always increased by an obstacle. The first frame began to show signs of breaking up. One breach, however small, in a breakwater, is always serious. It inevitably enlarges, and there is no means of supplying its place, for the sea would sweep away the workmen.

A flash which lighted up the rocks revealed to Gilliatt the nature of the mischief; the beams broken down, the ends of rope and fragments of chain swinging in the winds, and a rent in the centre of the apparatus. The second frame was intact.

Though the block of stone so powerfully overturned by Gilliatt in the defile behind the breakwater was the strongest possible barrier, it had

a defect. It was too low. The surge could not destroy, but could sweep over it.

It was useless to think of building it higher. Nothing but masses of rock could avail upon a barrier of stone; but how could such masses be detached? or, if detached, how could they be moved, or raised, or piled, or fixed? Timbers may be added, but rocks cannot.

Gilliatt was not Enceladus.

The very little height of this rocky isthmus rendered him anxious.

The effects of this fault were not long in showing themselves. The assaults upon the breakwater were incessant; the heavy seas seemed not merely to rage, but to attack with determination to destroy it. A sort of trampling noise was heard upon the jolted framework.

Suddenly the end of a binding strake, detached from the dislocated frame, was swept away over the second barrier and across the transversal rock, falling in the defile, where the water seized and carried it into the sinuosities of the pass. Gilliatt lost sight of it. It seemed probable that it would do some injury to the sloop. Fortunately, the water in the interior of the rocks, shut in on all sides, felt little of the commotion without. The waves there were comparatively trifling, and the shock was not likely to be very severe. For the rest, he had little time to spare for reflection upon this mishap. Every variety of danger was arising at once; the tempest was concentrated upon the vulnerable

point; destruction was imminent.

The darkness was profound for a moment: the lightnings paused--a sort of sinister connivance. The cloud and the sea became one: there was a dull peal.

This was followed by a terrible outburst. The frame which formed the front of the barriers was swept away. The fragments of beams were visible in the rolling waters. The sea was using the first breakwater as an engine for making a breach in the second.

Gilliatt experienced the feeling of a general who sees his advanced guard driven in.

The second construction of beams resisted the shock. The apparatus behind it was powerfully secured and buttressed. But the broken frame was heavy, and was at the mercy of the waves, which were incessantly hurling it forward and withdrawing it. The ropes and chains which remained unsevered prevented its entirely breaking up, and the qualities which Gilliatt had given it as a means of defence made it, in the end, a more effective weapon of destruction. Instead of a buckler, it had become a battering-ram. Besides this, it was now full of irregularities from breaking; ends of timbers projected from all parts; and it was, as it were, covered with teeth and spikes. No sort of arm could have been more effective, or more fitted for the handling of the tempest. It was the projectile, while the sea played the part of the catapult.

The blows succeeded each other with a dismal regularity. Gilliatt, thoughtful and anxious, behind that barricaded portal, listened to the

sound of death knocking loudly for admittance.

He reflected with bitterness that, but for the fatal entanglement of the funnel of the Durande in the wreck, he would have been at that very moment, and even since the morning, once more at Guernsey, in the port, with the sloop out of danger and with the machinery saved.

The dreaded moment arrived. The destruction was complete. There was a sound like a death-rattle. The entire frame of the breakwater, the double apparatus crushed and mingled confusedly, came in a whirl of foam, rushing upon the stone barricade like chaos upon a mountain, where it stopped. Here the fragments lay together, a mass of beams penetrable by the waves, but still breaking their force. The conquered barrier struggled nobly against destruction. The waves had shattered it, and in their turn were shattered against it. Though overthrown, it still remained in some degree effective. The rock which barred its passage, an immovable obstacle held it fast. The defile, as we have said, was very narrow at that point; the victorious whirlwind had driven forward, mingled and piled up the wreck of the breakwater in this narrow pass. The very violence of the assault, by heaping up the mass and driving the broken ends one into the other, had contributed to make the pile firm. It was destroyed, but immovable. A few pieces of timber only were swept away and dispersed by the waves. One passed through the air very near to Gilliatt. He felt the counter current upon his forehead.

Some waves, however, of that kind which in great tempests return with an imperturbable regularity, swept over the ruins of the breakwater. They fell into the defile, and in spite of the many angles of the passage, set the waters within in commotion. The waters began to roll through the gorge ominously. The mysterious embraces of the waves among the rocks were audible.

What means were there of preventing this agitation extending as far as the sloop? It would not require a long time for the blast of wind to create a tempest through all the windings of the pass. A few heavy seas would be sufficient to stave in the sloop and scatter her burden.

Gilliatt shuddered as he reflected.

But he was not disconcerted. No defeat could daunt his soul.

The hurricane had now discovered the true plan of attack, and was rushing fiercely between the two walls of the strait.

Suddenly a crash was heard, resounding and prolonging itself through the defile at some distance behind him: a crash more terrible than any he had yet heard.

It came from the direction of the sloop.

Something disastrous was happening there.

Gilliatt hastened towards it.

From the eastern gullet where he was, he could not see the sloop on account of the sharp turns of the pass. At the last turn he stopped and waited for the lightning.

The first flash revealed to him the position of affairs.

The rush of the sea through the eastern entrance had been met by a blast of wind from the other end. A disaster was near at hand.

The sloop had received no visible damage; anchored as she was, the storm had little power over her, but the carcase of the Durande was distressed.

In such a tempest, the wreck presented a considerable surface. It was entirely out of the sea in the air, exposed. The breach which Gilliatt had made, and which he had passed the engine through, had rendered the hull still weaker. The keelson was snapped, the vertebral column of the skeleton was broken.

The hurricane had passed over it. Scarcely more than this was needed to complete its destruction. The planking of the deck had bent like an opened book. The dismemberment had begun. It was the noise of this dislocation which had reached Gilliatt's ears in the midst of the tempest.

The disaster which presented itself as he approached appeared almost irremediable.

The square opening which he had cut in the keel had become a gaping wound. The wind had converted the smooth-cut hole into a ragged fracture. This transverse breach separated the wreck in two. The after-part, nearest to the sloop, had remained firm in its bed of rocks. The forward portion which faced him was hanging. A fracture, while it holds, is a sort of hinge. The whole mass oscillated, as the wind moved it, with a doleful noise. Fortunately the sloop was no longer beneath it.

But this swinging movement shook the other portion of the hull, still wedged and immovable as it was between the two Douvres. From shaking to casting down the distance is not far. Under the obstinate assaults of the gale, the dislocated part might suddenly carry away the other portion, which almost touched the sloop. In this case, the whole wreck, together with the sloop and the engine, must be swept into the sea and swallowed up.

All this presented itself to his eyes. It was the end of all. How could it be prevented?

Gilliatt was one of those who are accustomed to snatch the means of safety out of danger itself. He collected his ideas for a moment. Then he hastened to his arsenal and brought his hatchet.

The mallet had served him well, it was now the turn of the axe.

He mounted upon the wreck, got a footing on that part of the planking which had not given way, and leaning over the precipice of the pass between the Douvres, he began to cut away the broken joists and the planking which supported the hanging portion of the hull.

His object was to effect the separation of the two parts of the wreck, to disencumber the half which remained firm, to throw overboard what the waves had seized, and thus share the prey with the storm. The hanging portion of the wreck, borne down by the wind and by its own weight, adhered only at one or two points. The entire wreck resembled a folding-screen, one leaf of which, half-hanging, beat against the other. Five or six pieces of the planking only, bent and started, but not broken, still held. Their fractures creaked and enlarged at every gust, and the axe, so to speak, had but to help the labour of the wind. This more than half-severed condition, while it increased the facility of the work, also rendered it dangerous. The whole might give way beneath him at any moment.

The tempest had reached its highest point. The convulsion of the sea reached the heavens. Hitherto the storm had been supreme, it had seemed to work its own imperious will, to give the impulse, to drive the waves to frenzy, while still preserving a sort of sinister lucidity. Below was fury--above, anger. The heavens are the breath, the ocean only foam, hence the authority of the wind. But the intoxication of its own horrors

had confused it. It had become a mere whirlwind; it was a blindness leading to night. There are times when tempests become frenzied, when the heavens are attacked with a sort of delirium; when the firmament raves and hurls its lightnings blindly. No terror is greater than this. It is a hideous moment. The trembling of the rock was at its height. Every storm has a mysterious course, but now it loses its appointed path. It is the most dangerous point of the tempest. "At that moment," says Thomas Fuller, "the wind is a furious maniac." It is at that instant that that continuous discharge of electricity takes place which Piddington calls "the cascade of lightnings." It is at that instant that in the blackest spot of the clouds, none know why, unless it be to spy the universal terror, a circle of blue light appears, which the Spanish sailors of ancient times called the eye of the tempest, el ojo de la tempestad. That terrible eye looked down upon Gilliatt.

Gilliatt on his part was surveying the heavens. He raised his head now. After every stroke of his hatchet he stood erect and gazed upwards, almost haughtily. He was, or seemed to be, too near destruction not to feel self-sustained. Would he despair? No! In the presence of the wildest fury of the ocean he was watchful as well as bold. He planted his feet only where the wreck was firm. He ventured his life, and yet was careful; for his determined spirit, too, had reached its highest point. His strength had grown tenfold greater. He had become heated with his own intrepidity. The strokes of his hatchet were like blows of defiance. He seemed to have gained in directness what the tempest had lost. A pathetic struggle! On the one hand, an indefatigable will; on the other, inexhaustible power. It was a contest with the elements for

the prize at his feet. The clouds took the shape of Gorgon masks in the immensity of the heavens; every possible form of terror appeared; the rain came from the sea, the surf from the cloud; phantoms of the wind bent down; meteoric faces revealed themselves and were again eclipsed, leaving the darkness more monstrous: then there was nothing seen but the torrents coming from all sides--a boiling sea; cumuli heavy with hail, ashen-hued, ragged-edged, appeared seized with a sort of whirling frenzy; strange rattlings filled the air; the inverse currents of electricity observed by Volta darted their sudden flashes from cloud to cloud. The prolongation of the lightnings was terrible; the flashes passed near to Gilliatt. The very ocean seemed astonished. He passed to and fro upon the tottering wreck, making the deck tremble under his steps, striking, cutting, hacking with the hatchet in his hand, pallid in the gleam of the lightning, his long hair streaming, his feet naked, in rags, his face covered with the foam of the sea, but grand still amid that maelstrom of the thunderstorm.

Against these furious powers man has no weapon but his invention. Invention was Gilliatt's triumph. His object was to allow all the dislocated portions of the wreck to fall together. For this reason he cut away the broken portions without entirely separating them, leaving some parts on which they still swung. Suddenly he stopped, holding his axe in the air. The operation was complete. The entire portion went with a crash.

The mass rolled down between the two Douvres, just below Gilliatt, who stood upon the wreck, leaning over and observing the fall. It fell

perpendicularly into the water, struck the rocks, and stopped in the defile before touching the bottom. Enough remained out of the water to rise more than twelve feet above the waves. The vertical mass of planking formed a wall between the two Douvres; like the rock overturned crosswise higher up the defile, it allowed only a slight stream of foam to pass through at its two extremities, and thus was a fifth barricade improvised by Gilliatt against the tempest in that passage of the seas.

The hurricane itself, in its blind fury, had assisted in the construction of this last barrier.

It was fortunate that the proximity of the two walls had prevented the mass of wreck from falling to the bottom. This circumstance gave the barricade greater height; the water, besides, could flow under the obstacle, which diminished the power of the waves. That which passes below cannot pass over. This is partly the secret of the floating breakwater.

Henceforth, let the storm do what it might, there was nothing to fear for the sloop or the machinery. The water around them could not become agitated again. Between the barrier of the Douvres, which covered them on the west, and the barricade which protected them from the east, no heavy sea or wind could reach them.

Gilliatt had plucked safety out of the catastrophe itself. The storm had been his fellow-labourer in the work.

This done, he took a little water in the palm of his hand from one of the rain-pools, and drank: and then, looking upward at the storm, said with a smile, "Bungler!"

Human intelligence combating with brute force experiences an ironical joy in demonstrating the stupidity of its antagonist, and compelling it to serve the very objects of its fury, and Gilliatt felt something of that immemorial desire to insult his invisible enemy, which is as old as the heroes of the Iliad.

He descended to the sloop and examined it by the gleam of the lightning. The relief which he had been able to give to his distressed bark was well-timed. She had been much shaken during the last hour, and had begun to give way. A hasty glance revealed no serious injury. Nevertheless, he was certain that the vessel had been subjected to violent shocks. As soon as the waves had subsided, the hull had righted itself; the anchors had held fast; as to the machine, the four chains had supported it admirably.

While Gilliatt was completing this survey, something white passed before his eyes and vanished in the gloom. It was a sea-mew.

No sight could be more welcome in tempestuous weather. When the birds reappear the storm is departing. The thunder redoubled; another good sign.

The violent efforts of the storm had broken its force. All mariners know

that the last ordeal is severe, but short. The excessive violence of the thunderstorm is the herald of the end.

The rain stopped suddenly. Then there was only a surly rumbling in the heavens. The storm ceased with the suddenness of a plank falling to the ground. The immense mass of clouds became disorganised. A strip of clear sky appeared between them. Gilliatt was astonished: it was broad daylight.

The tempest had lasted nearly twenty hours.

The wind which had brought the storm carried it away. A dark pile was diffused over the horizon, the broken clouds were flying in confusion across the sky. From one end to the other of the line there was a movement of retreat: a long muttering was heard, gradually decreasing, a few last drops of rain fell, and all those dark masses charged with thunder, departed like a terrible multitude of chariots.

Suddenly the wide expanse of sky became blue.

Gilliatt perceived that he was wearied. Sleep swoops down upon the exhausted frame like a bird upon its prey. He drooped and sank upon the deck of the bark without choosing his position, and there slept. Stretched at length and inert, he remained thus for some hours, scarcely distinguishable from the beams and joists among which he lay.

BOOK IV

PITFALLS IN THE WAY

I

HE WHO IS HUNGRY IS NOT ALONE

When he awakened he was hungry.

The sea was growing calmer. But there was still a heavy swell, which made his departure, for the present at least, impossible. The day, too, was far advanced. For the sloop with its burden to get to Guernsey before midnight, it was necessary to start in the morning.

Although pressed by hunger, Gilliatt began by stripping himself, the only means of getting warmth. His clothing was saturated by the storm, but the rain had washed out the sea-water, which rendered it possible to dry them.

He kept nothing on but his trousers, which he turned up nearly to the

knees.

His overcoat, jacket, overalls, and sheepskin he spread out and fixed with large round stones here and there.

Then he thought of eating.

He had recourse to his knife, which he was careful to sharpen, and to keep always in good condition; and he detached from the rocks a few limpets, similar in kind to the clonisses of the Mediterranean. It is well known that these are eaten raw: but after so many labours, so various and so rude, the pittance was meagre. His biscuit was gone; but of water he had now abundance.

He took advantage of the receding tide to wander among the rocks in search of crayfish. There was extent enough of rock to hope for a successful search.

But he had not reflected that he could do nothing with these without fire to cook them. If he had taken the trouble to go to his store-cavern, he would have found it inundated with the rain. His wood and coal were drowned, and of his store of tow, which served him for tinder, there was not a fibre which was not saturated. No means remained of lighting a fire.

For the rest, his blower was completely disorganised. The screen of the hearth of his forge was broken down; the storm had sacked and devastated

his workshop. With what tools and apparatus had escaped the general wreck, he could still have done carpentry work; but he could not have accomplished any of the labours of the smith. Gilliatt, however, never thought of his workshop for a moment.

Drawn in another direction by the pangs of hunger, he had pursued without much reflection his search for food. He wandered, not in the gorge of the rocks, but outside among the smaller breakers. It was there that the Durande, ten weeks previously, had first struck upon the sunken reef.

For the search that Gilliatt was prosecuting, this part was more favourable than the interior. At low water the crabs are accustomed to crawl out into the air. They seem to like to warm themselves in the sun, where they swarm sometimes to the disgust of loiterers, who recognise in these creatures, with their awkward sidelong gait, climbing clumsily from crack to crack the lower stages of the rocks like the steps of a staircase, a sort of sea vermin.

For two months Gilliatt had lived upon these vermin of the sea.

On this day, however, the crayfish and crabs were both wanting. The tempest had driven them into their solitary retreats; and they had not yet mustered courage to venture abroad. Gilliatt held his open knife in his hand, and from time to time scraped a cockle from under the bunches of seaweed, which he ate while still walking.

He could not have been far from the very spot where Sieur Clubin had perished.

As Gilliatt was determining to content himself with the sea-urchins and the châtaignes de mer, a little clattering noise at his feet aroused his attention. A large crab, startled by his approach, had just dropped into a pool. The water was shallow, and he did not lose sight of it.

He chased the crab along the base of the rock; the crab moved fast.

Suddenly it was gone.

It had buried itself in some crevice under the rock.

Gilliatt clutched the projections of the rock, and stretched out to observe where it shelved away under the water.

As he suspected, there was an opening there in which the creature had evidently taken refuge. It was more than a crevice; it was a kind of porch.

The sea entered beneath it, but was not deep. The bottom was visible, covered with large pebbles. The pebbles were green and clothed with confervæ, indicating that they were never dry. They were like the tops of a number of heads of infants, covered with a kind of green hair.

Holding his knife between his teeth, Gilliatt descended, by the help of

feet and hands, from the upper part of the escarpment, and leaped into the water. It reached almost to his shoulders.

He made his way through the porch, and found himself in a blind passage, with a roof in the form of a rude arch over his head. The walls were polished and slippery. The crab was nowhere visible. He gained his feet and advanced in daylight growing fainter, so that he began to lose the power to distinguish objects.

At about fifteen paces the vaulted roof ended overhead. He had penetrated beyond the blind passage. There was here more space, and consequently more daylight. The pupils of his eyes, moreover, had dilated; he could see pretty clearly. He was taken by surprise.

He had made his way again into the singular cavern which he had visited in the previous month. The only difference was that he had entered by the way of the sea.

It was through the submarine arch, that he had remarked before, that he had just entered. At certain low tides it was accessible.

His eyes became more accustomed to the place. His vision became clearer and clearer. He was astonished. He found himself again in that extraordinary palace of shadows; saw again before his eyes that vaulted roof, those columns, those purple and blood-like stains, that vegetation rich with gems, and at the farther end, that crypt or sanctuary, and that altar-like stone. He took little notice of these details, but their

impression was in his mind, and he saw that the place was unchanged.

He observed before him, at a certain height in the wall, the crevice through which he had penetrated the first time, and which, from the point where he now stood, appeared inaccessible.

Near the moulded arch, he remarked those low dark grottoes, a sort of caves within a cavern, which he had already observed from a distance. He now stood nearer to them. The entrance to the nearest to him was out of the water, and easily approachable. Nearer still than this recess he noticed, above the level of the water, and within reach of his hand, a horizontal fissure. It seemed to him probable that the crab had taken refuge there, and he plunged his hand in as far as he was able, and groped about in that dusky aperture.

Suddenly he felt himself seized by the arm. A strange indescribable horror thrilled through him.

Some living thing, thin, rough, flat, cold, slimy, had twisted itself round his naked arm, in the dark depth below. It crept upward towards his chest. Its pressure was like a tightening cord, its steady persistence like that of a screw. In less than a moment some mysterious spiral form had passed round his wrist and elbow, and had reached his shoulder. A sharp point penetrated beneath the armpit.

Gilliatt recoiled; but he had scarcely power to move! He was, as it were, nailed to the place. With his left hand, which was disengaged, he

seized his knife, which he still held between his teeth, and with that hand, holding the knife, he supported himself against the rocks, while he made a desperate effort to withdraw his arm. He succeeded only in disturbing his persecutor, which wound itself still tighter. It was supple as leather, strong as steel, cold as night.

A second form, sharp, elongated, and narrow, issued out of the crevice, like a tongue out of monstrous jaws. It seemed to lick his naked body. Then suddenly stretching out, it became longer and thinner, as it crept over his skin, and wound itself round him. At the same time a terrible sense of pain, comparable to nothing he had ever known, compelled all his muscles to contract. He felt upon his skin a number of flat rounded points. It seemed as if innumerable suckers had fastened to his flesh and were about to drink his blood.

A third long undulating shape issued from the hole in the rock; seemed to feel its way about his body; lashed round his ribs like a cord, and fixed itself there.

Agony when at its height is mute. Gilliatt uttered no cry. There was sufficient light for him to see the repulsive forms which had entangled themselves about him. A fourth ligature, but this one swift as an arrow, darted towards his stomach, and wound around him there.

It was impossible to sever or tear away the slimy bands which were twisted tightly round his body, and were adhering by a number of points. Each of the points was the focus of frightful and singular pangs. It was

as if numberless small mouths were devouring him at the same time.

A fifth long, slimy, riband-shaped strip issued from the hole. It passed over the others, and wound itself tightly around his chest. The compression increased his sufferings. He could scarcely breathe.

These living thongs were pointed at their extremities, but broadened like a blade of a sword towards its hilt. All belonged evidently to the same centre. They crept and glided about him; he felt the strange points of pressure, which seemed to him like mouths, change their places from time to time.

Suddenly a large, round, flattened, glutinous mass issued from beneath the crevice. It was the centre; the five thongs were attached to it like spokes to the nave of a wheel. On the opposite side of this disgusting monster appeared the commencement of three other tentacles, the ends of which remained under the rock. In the middle of this slimy mass appeared two eyes.

The eyes were fixed on Gilliatt.

He recognised the Devil-Fish.

II

THE MONSTER

It is difficult for those who have not seen it to believe in the existence of the devil-fish.

Compared to this creature, the ancient hydras are insignificant.

At times we are tempted to imagine that the vague forms which float in our dreams may encounter in the realm of the Possible attractive forces, having power to fix their lineaments, and shape living beings, out of these creatures of our slumbers. The Unknown has power over these strange visions, and out of them composes monsters. Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod imagined only the Chimera: Providence has created this terrible creature of the sea.

Creation abounds in monstrous forms of life. The wherefore of this perplexes and affrights the religious thinker.

If terror were the object of its creation, nothing could be imagined more perfect than the devil-fish.

The whale has enormous bulk, the devil-fish is comparatively small; the jararaca makes a hissing noise, the devil-fish is mute; the rhinoceros

has a horn, the devil-fish has none; the scorpion has a dart, the devil-fish has no dart; the shark has sharp fins, the devil-fish has no fins; the vespertilio-bat has wings with claws, the devil-fish has no wings; the porcupine has his spines, the devil-fish has no spines; the sword-fish has his sword, the devil-fish has none; the torpedo has its electric spark, the devil-fish has none; the toad has its poison, the devil-fish has none; the viper has its venom, the devil-fish has no venom; the lion has its talons, the devil-fish has no talons; the griffon has its beak, the devil-fish has no beak; the crocodile has its jaws, the devil-fish has no teeth.

The devil-fish has no muscular organisation, no menacing cry, no breastplate, no horn, no dart, no claw, no tail with which to hold or bruise; no cutting fins, or wings with nails, no prickles, no sword, no electric discharge, no poison, no talons, no beak, no teeth. Yet he is of all creatures the most formidably armed.

What, then, is the devil-fish? It is the sea vampire.

The swimmer who, attracted by the beauty of the spot, ventures among breakers in the open sea, where the still waters hide the splendours of the deep, or in the hollows of unfrequented rocks, in unknown caverns abounding in sea plants, testacea, and crustacea, under the deep portals of the ocean, runs the risk of meeting it. If that fate should be yours, be not curious, but fly. The intruder enters there dazzled; but quits the spot in terror.

This frightful apparition, which is always possible among the rocks in the open sea, is a greyish form which undulates in the water. It is of the thickness of a man's arm, and in length nearly five feet. Its outline is ragged. Its form resembles an umbrella closed, and without handle. This irregular mass advances slowly towards you. Suddenly it opens, and eight radii issue abruptly from around a face with two eyes. These radii are alive: their undulation is like lambent flames; they resemble, when opened, the spokes of a wheel, of four or five feet in diameter. A terrible expansion! It springs upon its prey.

The devil-fish harpoons its victim.

It winds around the sufferer, covering and entangling him in its long folds. Underneath it is yellow; above, a dull, earthy hue: nothing could render that inexplicable shade dust coloured. Its form is spider-like, but its tints are like those of the chamelion. When irritated it becomes violet. Its most horrible characteristic is its softness.

Its folds strangle, its contact paralyses.

It has an aspect like gangrened or scabrous flesh. It is a monstrous embodiment of disease.

It adheres closely to its prey, and cannot be torn away; a fact which is due to its power of exhausting air. The eight antennæ, large at their roots, diminish gradually, and end in needle-like points. Underneath each of these feelers range two rows of pustules, decreasing in size,

the largest ones near the head, the smaller at the extremities. Each row contains twenty-five of these. There are, therefore, fifty pustules to each feeler, and the creature possesses in the whole four hundred. These pustules are capable of acting like cupping-glasses. They are cartilaginous substances, cylindrical, horny, and livid. Upon the large species they diminish gradually from the diameter of a five-franc piece to the size of a split pea. These small tubes can be thrust out and withdrawn by the animal at will. They are capable of piercing to a depth of more than an inch.

This sucking apparatus has all the regularity and delicacy of a key-board. It stands forth at one moment and disappears the next. The most perfect sensitiveness cannot equal the contractibility of these suckers; always proportioned to the internal movement of the animal, and its exterior circumstances. The monster is endowed with the qualities of the sensitive plant.

This animal is the same as those which mariners call Poulps; which science designates Cephalopteræ, and which ancient legends call Krakens. It is the English sailors who call them "Devil-fish," and sometimes Bloodsuckers. In the Channel Islands they are called pieuvres.

They are rare at Guernsey, very small at Jersey; but near the island of Sark are numerous as well as very large.

An engraving in Sonnini's edition of Buffon represents a Cephaloptera crushing a frigate. Denis Montfort, in fact, considers the Poulp, or

Octopod, of high latitudes, strong enough to destroy a ship. Bory Saint Vincent doubts this; but he shows that in our regions they will attack men. Near Brecq-Hou, in Sark, they show a cave where a devil-fish a few years since seized and drowned a lobster-fisher. Peron and Lamarck are in error in their belief that the "poulp" having no fins cannot swim. He who writes these lines has seen with his own eyes, at Sark, in the cavern called the Boutiques, a pieuvre swimming and pursuing a bather. When captured and killed, this specimen was found to be four English feet broad, and it was possible to count its four hundred suckers. The monster thrust them out convulsively in the agony of death.

According to Denis Montfort, one of those observers whose marvellous intuition sinks or raises them to the level of magicians, the poulp is almost endowed with the passions of man: it has its hatreds. In fact, in the Absolute to be hideous is to hate.

Hideousness struggles under the natural law of elimination, which necessarily renders it hostile.

When swimming, the devil-fish rests, so to speak, in its sheath. It swims with all its parts drawn close. It may be likened to a sleeve sewn up with a closed fist within. The protuberance, which is the head, pushes the water aside and advances with a vague undulatory movement. Its two eyes, though large, are indistinct, being of the colour of the water.

When in ambush, or seeking its prey, it retires into itself, grows

smaller and condenses itself. It is then scarcely distinguishable in the submarine twilight.

At such times, it looks like a mere ripple in the water. It resembles anything except a living creature.

The devil-fish is crafty. When its victim is unsuspicious, it opens suddenly.

A glutinous mass, endowed with a malignant will, what can be more horrible?

It is in the most beautiful azure depths of the limpid water that this hideous, voracious polyp delights. It always conceals itself, a fact which increases its terrible associations. When they are seen, it is almost invariably after they have been captured.

At night, however, and particularly in the hot season, it becomes phosphorescent. These horrible creatures have their passions; their submarine nuptials. Then it adorns itself, burns and illumines; and from the height of some rock, it may be seen in the deep obscurity of the waves below, expanding with a pale irradiation--a spectral sun.

The devil-fish not only swims, it walks. It is partly fish, partly reptile. It crawls upon the bed of the sea. At these times, it makes use of its eight feelers, and creeps along in the fashion of a species of swift-moving caterpillar.

It has no blood, no bones, no flesh. It is soft and flabby; a skin with nothing inside. Its eight tentacles may be turned inside out like the fingers of a glove.

It has a single orifice in the centre of its radii, which appears at first to be neither the vent nor the mouth. It is, in fact, both one and the other. The orifice performs a double function. The entire creature is cold.

The jelly-fish of the Mediterranean is repulsive. Contact with that animated gelatinous substance which envelopes the bather, in which the hands sink, and the nails scratch ineffectively; which can be torn without killing it, and which can be plucked off without entirely removing it--that fluid and yet tenacious creature which slips through the fingers, is disgusting; but no horror can equal the sudden apparition of the devil-fish, that Medusa with its eight serpents.

No grasp is like the sudden strain of the cephaloptera.

It is with the sucking apparatus that it attacks. The victim is oppressed by a vacuum drawing at numberless points: it is not a clawing or a biting, but an indescribable scarification. A tearing of the flesh is terrible, but less terrible than a sucking of the blood. Claws are harmless compared with the horrible action of these natural air-cups. The talons of the wild beast enter into your flesh; but with the cephaloptera it is you who enter into the creature. The muscles swell,

the fibres of the body are contorted, the skin cracks under the loathsome oppression, the blood spurts out and mingles horribly with the lymph of the monster, which clings to its victim by innumerable hideous mouths. The hydra incorporates itself with the man; the man becomes one with the hydra. The spectre lies upon you: the tiger can only devour you; the devil-fish, horrible, sucks your life-blood away. He draws you to him, and into himself; while bound down, glued to the ground, powerless, you feel yourself gradually emptied into this horrible pouch, which is the monster itself.

These strange animals, Science, in accordance with its habit of excessive caution even in the face of facts, at first rejects as fabulous; then she decides to observe them; then she dissects, classifies, catalogues, and labels; then procures specimens, and exhibits them in glass cases in museums. They enter then into her nomenclature; are designated mollusks, invertebrata, radiata: she determines their position in the animal world a little above the calamaries, a little below the cuttle-fish; she finds for these hydras of the sea an analogous creature in fresh water called the argyronecte: she divides them into great, medium, and small kinds; she admits more readily the existence of the small than of the large species, which is, however, the tendency of science in all countries, for she is by nature more microscopic than telescopic. She regards them from the point of view of their construction, and calls them Cephaloptera; counts their antennæ, and calls them Octopedes. This done, she leaves them. Where science drops them, philosophy takes them up.

Philosophy in her turn studies these creatures. She goes both less far and further. She does not dissect, but meditate. Where the scalpel has laboured, she plunges the hypothesis. She seeks the final cause. Eternal perplexity of the thinker. These creatures disturb his ideas of the Creator. They are hideous surprises. They are the death's-head at the feast of contemplation. The philosopher determines their characteristics in dread. They are the concrete forms of evil. What attitude can he take towards this treason of creation against herself? To whom can he look for the solution of these riddles? The Possible is a terrible matrix. Monsters are mysteries in their concrete form. Portions of shade issue from the mass, and something within detaches itself, rolls, floats, condenses, borrows elements from the ambient darkness, becomes subject to unknown polarisations, assumes a kind of life, furnishes itself with some unimagined form from the obscurity, and with some terrible spirit from the miasma, and wanders ghostlike among living things. It is as if night itself assumed the forms of animals. But for what good? with what object? Thus we come again to the eternal questioning.

These animals are indeed phantoms as much as monsters. They are proved and yet improbable. Their fate is to exist in spite of à priori reasonings. They are the amphibia of the shore which separates life from death. Their unreality makes their existence puzzling. They touch the frontier of man's domain and people the region of chimeras. We deny the possibility of the vampire, and the cephaloptera appears. Their swarming is a certainty which disconcerts our confidence. Optimism, which is nevertheless in the right, becomes silenced in their presence. They form the visible extremity of the dark circles. They mark the transition of

our reality into another. They seem to belong to that commencement of terrible life which the dreamer sees confusedly through the loophole of the night.

That multiplication of monsters, first in the Invisible, then in the Possible, has been suspected, perhaps perceived by magi and philosophers in their austere ecstasies and profound contemplations. Hence the conjecture of a material hell. The demon is simply the invisible tiger. The wild beast which devours souls has been presented to the eyes of human beings by St. John, and by Dante in his vision of Hell.

If, in truth, the invisible circles of creation continue indefinitely, if after one there is yet another, and so forth in illimitable progression; if that chain, which for our part we are resolved to doubt, really exist, the cephaloptera at one extremity proves Satan at the other. It is certain that the wrongdoer at one end proves the existence of wrong at the other.

Every malignant creature, like every perverted intelligence, is a sphinx. A terrible sphinx propounding a terrible riddle; the riddle of the existence of Evil.

It is this perfection of evil which has sometimes sufficed to incline powerful intellects to a faith in the duality of the Deity, towards that terrible bifrons of the Manichæans.

A piece of silk stolen during the last war from the palace of the

Emperor of China represents a shark eating a crocodile, who is eating a serpent, who is devouring an eagle, who is preying on a swallow, who in his turn is eating a caterpillar.

All nature which is under our observation is thus alternately devouring and devoured. The prey prey on each other.

Learned men, however, who are also philosophers, and therefore optimists in their view of creation, find, or believe they find, an explanation. Among others, Bonnet of Geneva, that mysterious exact thinker, who was opposed to Buffon, as in later times Geoffrey St. Hilaire has been to Cuvier, was struck with the idea of the final object. His notions may be summed up thus: universal death necessitates universal sepulture; the devourers are the sextons of the system of nature. All created things enter into and form the elements of other. To decay is to nourish. Such is the terrible law from which not even man himself escapes.

In our world of twilight this fatal order of things produces monsters. You ask for what purpose. We find the solution here.

But is this the solution? Is this the answer to our questionings? And if so, why not some different order of things? Thus the question returns.

Let us live: be it so.

But let us endeavour that death shall be progress. Let us aspire to an

existence in which these mysteries shall be made clear. Let us follow that conscience which leads us thither.

For let us never forget that the highest is only attained through the high.

III

ANOTHER KIND OF SEA-COMBAT

Such was the creature in whose power Gilliatt had fallen for some minutes.

The monster was the inhabitant of the grotto; the terrible genii of the place. A kind of sombre demon of the water.

All the splendours of the cavern existed for it alone.

On the day of the previous month when Gilliatt had first penetrated into the grotto, the dark outline, vaguely perceived by him in the ripples of the secret waters, was this monster. It was here in its home.

When entering for the second time into the cavern in pursuit of the crab, he had observed the crevice in which he supposed that the crab had taken refuge, the pieuvre was there lying in wait for prey.

Is it possible to imagine that secret ambush?

No bird would brood, no egg would burst to life, no flower would dare to open, no breast to give milk, no heart to love, no spirit to soar, under the influence of that apparition of evil watching with sinister patience

in the dusk.

Gilliatt had thrust his arm deep into the opening; the monster had snapped at it. It held him fast, as the spider holds the fly.

He was in the water up to his belt; his naked feet clutching the slippery roundness of the huge stones at the bottom; his right arm bound and rendered powerless by the flat coils of the long tentacles of the creature, and his body almost hidden under the folds and cross folds of this horrible bandage.

Of the eight arms of the devil-fish three adhered to the rock, while five encircled Gilliatt. In this way, clinging to the granite on the one hand, and with the other to its human prey, it enchained him to the rock. Two hundred and fifty suckers were upon him, tormenting him with agony and loathing. He was grasped by gigantic hands, the fingers of which were each nearly a yard long, and furnished inside with living blisters eating into the flesh.

As we have said, it is impossible to tear oneself from the folds of the devil-fish. The attempt ends only in a firmer grasp. The monster clings with more determined force. Its effort increases with that of its victim; every struggle produces a tightening of its ligatures.

Gilliatt had but one resource, his knife.

His left hand only was free; but the reader knows with what power he

could use it. It might have been said that he had two right hands.

His open knife was in his hand.

The antenna of the devil-fish cannot be cut; it is a leathery substance impossible to divide with the knife, it slips under the edge; its position in attack also is such that to cut it would be to wound the victim's own flesh.

The creature is formidable, but there is a way of resisting it. The fishermen of Sark know this, as does any one who has seen them execute certain movements in the sea. The porpoises know it also; they have a way of biting the cuttle-fish which decapitates it. Hence the frequent sight on the sea of pen-fish, poulps, and cuttle-fish without heads.

The cephaloptera, in fact, is only vulnerable through the head.

Gilliatt was not ignorant of this fact.

He had never seen a devil-fish of this size. His first encounter was with one of the larger species. Another would have been powerless with terror.

With the devil-fish, as with a furious bull, there is a certain moment in the conflict which must be seized. It is the instant when the bull lowers the neck; it is the instant when the devil-fish advances its head. The movement is rapid. He who loses that moment is destroyed.

The things we have described occupied only a few moments. Gilliatt, however, felt the increasing power of its innumerable suckers.

The monster is cunning; it tries first to stupefy its prey. It seizes and then pauses awhile.

Gilliatt grasped his knife; the sucking increased.

He looked at the monster, which seemed to look at him.

Suddenly it loosened from the rock its sixth antenna, and darting it at him, seized him by the left arm.

At the same moment it advanced its head with a violent movement. In one second more its mouth would have fastened on his breast. Bleeding in the sides, and with his two arms entangled, he would have been a dead man.

But Gillian was watchful. He avoided the antenna, and at the moment when the monster darted forward to fasten on his breast, he struck it with the knife clenched in his left hand. There were two convulsions in opposite directions; that of the devil-fish and that of its prey. The movement was rapid as a double flash of lightnings.

He had plunged the blade of his knife into the flat slimy substance, and by a rapid movement, like the flourish of a whip in the air, describing a circle round the two eyes, he wrenched the head off as a man would

draw a tooth.

The struggle was ended. The folds relaxed. The monster dropped away, like the slow detaching of bands. The four hundred suckers, deprived of their sustaining power, dropped at once from the man and the rock. The mass sank to the bottom of the water.

Breathless with the struggle, Gilliatt could perceive upon the stones at his feet two shapeless, slimy heaps, the head on one side, the remainder of the monster on the other.

Fearing, nevertheless, some convulsive return of his agony, he recoiled to avoid the reach of the dreaded tentacles.

But the monster was quite dead.

Gilliatt closed his knife.

IV

NOTHING IS HIDDEN, NOTHING LOST

It was time that he killed the devil-fish. He was almost suffocated. His right arm and his chest were purple. Numberless little swellings were distinguishable upon them; the blood flowed from them here and there. The remedy for these wounds is sea-water. Gilliatt plunged into it, rubbing himself at the same time with the palms of his hands. The swellings disappeared under the friction.

By stepping further into the waters he had, without perceiving, approached to the species of recess already observed by him near the crevice where he had been attacked by the devil-fish.

This recess stretched obliquely under the great walls of the cavern, and was dry. The large pebbles which had become heaped up there had raised the bottom above the level of ordinary tides. The entrance was a rather large elliptical arch; a man could enter by stooping. The green light of the submarine grotto penetrated into it and lighted it feebly.

It happened that, while hastily rubbing his skin, Gilliatt raised his eyes mechanically.

He was able to see far into the cavern.

He shuddered.

He fancied that he perceived, in the furthest depth of the dusky recess, something smiling.

Gilliatt had never heard the word "hallucination," but he was familiar with the idea. Those mysterious encounters with the invisible, which, for the sake of avoiding the difficulty of explaining them, we call hallucinations, are in nature. Illusions or realities, visions are a fact. He who has the gift will see them. Gilliatt, as we have said, was a dreamer. He had, at times, the faculty of a seer. It was not in vain that he had spent his days in musing among solitary places.

He imagined himself the dupe of one of those mirages which he had more than once beheld when in his dreamy moods.

The opening was somewhat in the shape of a chalk-burner's oven. It was a low niche with projections like basket-handles. Its abrupt groins contracted gradually as far as the extremity of the crypt, where the heaps of round stones and the rocky roof joined.

Gilliatt entered, and lowering his head, advanced towards the object in the distance.

There was indeed something smiling.

It was a death's head; but it was not only the head. There was the entire skeleton. A complete human skeleton was lying in the cavern.

In such a position a bold man will continue his researches.

Gilliatt cast his eyes around. He was surrounded by a multitude of crabs. The multitude did not stir. They were but empty shells.

These groups were scattered here and there among the masses of pebbles in irregular constellations.

Gilliatt, having his eyes fixed elsewhere, had walked among them without perceiving them.

At this extremity of the crypt, where he had now penetrated, there was a still greater heap of remains. It was a confused mass of legs, antennæ, and mandibles. Claws stood wide open; bony shells lay still under their bristling prickles; some reversed showed their livid hollows. The heap was like a mêlée of besiegers who had fallen, and lay massed together.

The skeleton was partly buried in this heap.

Under this confused mass of scales and tentacles, the eye perceived the cranium with its furrows, the vertebræ, the thigh bones, the tibias, and the long-jointed finger bones with their nails. The frame of the ribs was filled with crabs. Some heart had once beat there. The green mould of the sea had settled round the sockets of the eyes. Limpets had left

their slime upon the bony nostrils. For the rest, there were not in this cave within the rocks either sea-gulls, or weeds, or a breath of air. All was still. The teeth grinned.

The sombre side of laughter is that strange mockery of expression which is peculiar to a human skull.

This marvellous palace of the deep, inlaid and incrusted with all the gems of the sea, had at length revealed and told its secret. It was a savage haunt; the devil-fish inhabited it; it was also a tomb, in which the body of a man reposed.

The skeleton and the creatures around it oscillated vaguely in the reflections of the subterranean water which trembled upon the roof and wall. The horrible multitude of crabs looked as if finishing their repast. These crustacea seemed to be devouring the carcase. Nothing could be more strange than the aspect of the dead vermin upon their dead prey.

Gilliatt had beneath his eyes the storehouse of the devil-fish.

It was a dismal sight. The crabs had devoured the man: the devil-fish had devoured the crabs.

There were no remains of clothing anywhere visible. The man must have been seized naked.

Gilliatt, attentively examining, began to remove the shells from the skeleton. What had this man been? The body was admirably dissected; it looked as if prepared for the study of anatomy; all the flesh was stripped; not a muscle remained; not a bone was missing. If Gilliatt had been learned in science, he might have demonstrated the fact. The periostea, denuded of their covering, were white and smooth, as if they had been polished. But for some green mould of sea-mosses here and there, they would have been like ivory. The cartilaginous divisions were delicately inlaid and arranged. The tomb sometimes produces this dismal mosaic work.

The body was, as it were, interred under the heap of dead crabs. Gilliatt disinterred it.

Suddenly he stooped, and examined more closely.

He had perceived around the vertebral column a sort of belt.

It was a leathern girdle, which had evidently been worn buckled upon the waist of the man when alive.

The leather was moist; the buckle rusty.

Gilliatt pulled the girdle; the vertebra of the skeleton resisted, and he was compelled to break through them in order to remove it. A crust of small shells had begun to form upon it.

He felt it, and found a hard substance within, apparently of square form. It was useless to endeavour to unfasten the buckle, so he cut the leather with his knife.

The girdle contained a little iron box and some pieces of gold. Gilliatt counted twenty guineas.

The iron box was an old sailor's tobacco-box, opening and shutting with a spring. It was very tight and rusty. The spring being completely oxidised would not work.

Once more the knife served Gilliatt in a difficulty. A pressure with the point of the blade caused the lid to fly up.

The box was open.

There was nothing inside but pieces of paper.

A little roll of very thin sheets, folded in four, was fitted in the bottom of the box. They were damp, but not injured. The box, hermetically sealed, had preserved them. Gilliatt unfolded them.

They were three bank-notes of one thousand pounds sterling each; making together seventy-five thousand francs.

Gilliatt folded them again, replaced them in the box, taking advantage of the space which remained to add the twenty guineas; and then reclosed

the box as well as he could.

Next he examined the girdle.

The leather, which had originally been polished outside, was rough within. Upon this tawny ground some letters had been traced in black thick ink. Gilliatt deciphered them, and read the words, "Sieur Clubin."

V

THE FATAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIX INCHES AND TWO FEET

Gilliatt replaced the box in the girdle, and placed the girdle in the pocket of his trousers.

He left the skeleton among the crabs, with the remains of the devil-fish beside it.

While he had been occupied with the devil-fish and the skeleton, the rising tide had submerged the entrance to the cave. He was only enabled to leave it by plunging under the arched entrance. He got through without difficulty; for he knew the entrance well, and was master of these gymnastics in the sea.

It is easy to understand the drama which had taken place there during the ten weeks preceding. One monster had preyed upon another; the devil-fish had seized Clubin.

These two embodiments of treachery had met in the inexorable darkness. There had been an encounter at the bottom of the sea between these two compounds of mystery and watchfulness; the monster had destroyed the man: a horrible fulfilment of justice.

The crab feeds on carrion, the devil-fish on crabs. The devil-fish seizes as it passes any swimming animal--an otter, a dog, a man if it can--sucks the blood, and leaves the body at the bottom of the water. The crabs are the spider-formed scavengers of the sea. Putrefying flesh attracts them; they crowd round it, devour the body, and are in their turn consumed by the devil-fish. Dead creatures disappear in the crab, the crab disappears in the pieuvre. This is the law which we have already pointed out.

The devil-fish had laid hold of him, and drowned him. Some wave had carried his body into the cave, and deposited it at the extremity of the inner cavern, where Gilliatt had discovered it.

He returned searching among the rocks for sea-urchins and limpets. He had no desire for crabs; to have eaten them now would have seemed to him like feeding upon human flesh.

For the rest, he thought of nothing but of eating what he could before starting. Nothing now interposed to prevent his departure. Great tempests are always followed by a calm, which lasts sometimes several days. There was, therefore, no danger from the sea. Gilliatt had resolved to leave the rocks on the following day. It was important, on account of the tide, to keep the barrier between the two Douvres during the night, but he intended to remove it at daybreak, to push the sloop out to sea, and set sail for St. Sampson. The light breeze which was blowing came from the south-west, which was precisely the wind which he would want.

It was in the first quarter of the moon, in the month of May; the days were long.

When Gilliatt, having finished his wanderings among the rocks, and appeased his appetite to some extent, returned to the passage between the two Douvres, where he had left the sloop, the sun had set, the twilight was increased by that pale light which comes from a crescent moon; the tide had attained its height, and was beginning to ebb. The funnel standing upright above the sloop had been covered by the foam during the tempest with a coating of salt which glittered white in the light of the moon.

This circumstance reminded Gilliatt that the storm had inundated the sloop, both with surf and rain-water, and that if he meant to start in the morning, it would be necessary to bail it out.

Before leaving to go in quest of crabs, he had ascertained that it had about six inches of water in the hold. The scoop which he used for the purpose would, he thought, be sufficient for throwing the water overboard.

On arriving at the barrier, Gilliatt was struck with terror. There were nearly two feet of water in the sloop. A terrible discovery; the bark had sprung a leak.

She had been making water gradually during his absence. Burdened as she

was, two feet of water was a perilous addition. A little more, and she must inevitably founder. If he had returned but an hour later, he would probably have found nothing above water but the funnel and the mast.

There was not a minute to be lost in deliberation. It was absolutely necessary to find the leakage, stop it, and then empty the vessel, or at all events, lighten it. The pumps of the Durande had been lost in the break-up of the wreck. He was reduced to use the scoop of the bark.

To find the leak was the most urgent necessity.

Gilliatt set to work immediately, and without even giving himself time to dress. He shivered; but he no longer felt either hunger or cold.

The water continued to gain upon his vessel. Fortunately there was no wind. The slightest swell would have been fatal.

The moon went down.

Bent low, and plunged in the water deeper than his waist he groped about for a long time. He discovered the mischief at last.

During the gale, at the critical moment when the sloop had swerved, the strong bark had bumped and grazed rather violently on the rocks. One of the projections of the Little Douvre had made a fracture in the starboard side of the hull.

The leak unluckily--it might almost have been said, maliciously--had been made near the joint of the two riders, a fact which, joined with the fury of the hurricane, had prevented him perceiving it during his dark and rapid survey in the height of the storm.

The fracture was alarming on account of its size; but fortunately, although the vessel was sunk lower than usual by the weight of water, it was still above the ordinary water-line.

At the moment when the accident had occurred, the waves had rolled heavily into the defile, and had flooded through the breach; and the vessel had sunk a few inches under the additional weight, so that, even after the subsidence of the water, the weight having raised the water-line, had kept the hole still under the surface. Hence the imminence of the danger. But if he could succeed in stopping the leak, he could empty the sloop; the hole once staunched, the vessel would rise to its usual water-line, the fracture would be above water, and in this position the repair would be easy, or at least possible. He had still, as we have already said, his carpenters' tools in good condition.

But meanwhile what uncertainty must he not endure! What perils, what chances of accidents! He heard the water rising inexorably. One shock, and all would have perished. What misery seemed in store for him. Perhaps his endeavours were even now too late.

He reproached himself bitterly. He thought that he ought to have seen the damage immediately. The six inches of water in the hold ought to

have suggested it to him. He had been stupid enough to attribute these six inches of water to the rain and the foam. He was angry with himself for having slept and eaten; he taxed himself even with his weariness, and almost with the storm and the dark night. All seemed to him to have been his own fault.

These bitter self-reproaches filled his mind while engaged in his labour, but they did not prevent his considering well the work he was engaged in.

The leak had been found; that was the first step: to staunch it was the second. That was all that was possible for the moment. Joinery work cannot be carried on under water.

It was a favourable circumstance that the breach in the hull was in the space between the two chains which held the funnel fast on the starboard side. The stuffing with which it was necessary to stop it could be fixed to these chains.

The water meanwhile was gaining. Its depth was now between two and three feet; and it reached above his knees.

VI

DE PROFUNDIS AD ALTUM

Gilliatt had to his hand among his reserve of rigging for the sloop a pretty large tarpaulin, furnished with long laniards at the four corners.

He took this tarpaulin, made fast the two corners by the laniards to the two rings of the chains of the funnel on the same side as the leak, and threw it over the gunwale. The tarpaulin hung like a sheet between the Little Douvre and the bark, and sunk in the water. The pressure of the water endeavouring to enter into the hold, kept it close to the hull upon the gap. The heavier the pressure the closer the sail adhered. It was stuck by the water itself right upon the fracture. The wound of the bark was staunched.

The tarred canvas formed an effectual barrier between the interior of the hold and the waves without. Not a drop of water entered. The leak was masked, but was not stopped. It was a respite only.

Gilliatt took the scoop and began to bale the sloop. It was time that she were lightened. The labour warmed him a little, but his weariness was extreme. He was forced to acknowledge to himself that he could not complete the work of staunching the hold. He had scarcely eaten

anything, and he had the humiliation of feeling himself exhausted.

He measured the progress of his work by the sinking of the level of water below his knees. The fall was slow.

Moreover, the leakage was only interrupted; the evil was moderated, not repaired. The tarpaulin pushed into the gap began to bulge inside; looking as if a fist were under the canvas, endeavouring to force it through. The canvas, strong and pitchy, resisted; but the swelling and the tension increased; it was not certain that it would not give way, and at any moment the swelling might become a rent. The irruption of water must then recommence.

In such a case, as the crews of vessels in distress know well, there is no other remedy than stuffing. The sailors take rags of every kind which they can find at hand, everything, in fact, which in their language is called "service;" and with this they push the bulging sail-cloth as far as they can into the leak.

Of this "service," Gilliatt had none. All the rags and tow which he had stored up had been used in his operations, or carried away by the storm.

If necessary, he might possibly have been able to find some remains by searching among the rocks. The sloop was sufficiently lightened for him to leave it with safety for a quarter of an hour; but how could he make this search without a light? The darkness was complete. There was no longer any moon; nothing but the starry sky. He had no dry tow with

which to make a match, no tallow to make a candle, no fire to light one, no lantern to shelter it from the wind. In the sloop and among the rocks all was confused and indistinct. He could hear the water lapping against the wounded hull, but he could not even see the crack. It was with his hands that he had ascertained the bulging of the tarpaulin. In that darkness it was impossible to make any useful search for rags of canvas or pieces of tow scattered among the breakers. Who could glean these waifs and strays without being able to see his path? Gilliatt looked sorrowfully at the sky; all those stars, he thought, and yet no light!

The water in the bark having diminished, the pressure from without increased. The bulging of the canvas became larger, and was still increasing, like a frightful abscess ready to burst. The situation, which had been improved for a short time, began to be threatening.

Some means of stopping it effectually was absolutely necessary. He had nothing left but his clothes, which he had stretched to dry upon the projecting rocks of the Little Douvre.

He hastened to fetch them, and placed them upon the gunwale of the sloop.

Then he took his tarpaulin overcoat, and kneeling in the water, thrust it into the crevice, and pushing the swelling of the sail outward, emptied it of water. To the tarpaulin coat he added the sheepskin, then his Guernsey shirt, and then his jacket. The hole received them all. He had nothing left but his sailor's trousers, which he took off, and

pushed in with the other articles. This enlarged and strengthened the stuffing.

The stopper was made, and it appeared to be sufficient.

These clothes passed partly through the gap, the sail-cloth outside enveloping them. The sea making an effort to enter, pressed against the obstacle, spread it over the gap, and blocked it. It was a sort of exterior compression.

Inside, the centre only of the bulging having been driven out, there remained all around the gap and the stuffing just thrust through a sort of circular pad formed by the tarpaulin, which was rendered still firmer by the irregularities of the fracture with which it had become entangled.

The leak was staunched, but nothing could be more precarious. Those sharp splinters of the gap which fixed the tarpaulin might pierce it and make holes, by which the water would enter; while he would not even perceive it in the darkness. There was little probability of the stoppage lasting until daylight. Gilliatt's anxiety changed its form; but he felt it increasing at the same time that he found his strength leaving him.

He had again set to work to bale out the hold, but his arms, in spite of all his efforts, could scarcely lift a scoopfull of water. He was naked and shivering. He felt as if the end were now at hand.

One possible chance flashed across his mind. There might be a sail in sight. A fishing-boat which should by any accident be in the neighbourhood of the Douvres, might come to his assistance. The moment had arrived when a helpmate was absolutely necessary. With a man and a lantern all might yet be saved. If there were two persons, one might easily bale the vessel. Since the leak was temporarily staunched, as soon as she could be relieved of this burden, she would rise, and regain her ordinary water-line. The leak would then be above the surface of the water, the repairs would be practicable, and he would be able immediately to replace the stuff by a piece of planking, and thus substitute for the temporary stoppage a complete repair. If not, it would be necessary to wait till daylight--to wait the whole night long; a delay which might prove ruinous. If by chance some ship's lantern should be in sight, Gilliatt would be able to signal it from the height of the Great Douvre. The weather was calm, there was no wind or rolling sea; there was a possibility of the figure of a man being observed moving against the background of the starry sky. A captain of a ship, or even the master of a fishing-boat, would not be at night in the waters of the Douvres without directing his glass upon the rock, by way of precaution.

Gilliatt hoped that some one might perceive him.

He climbed upon the wreck, grasped the knotted rope, and mounted upon the Great Douvre.

Not a sail was visible around the horizon; not a boat's lantern. The wide expanse, as far as eye could reach, was a desert. No assistance was possible, and no resistance possible.

Gilliatt felt himself without resources; a feeling which he had not felt until then.

A dark fatality was now his master. With all his labour, all his success, all his courage, he and his bark, and its precious burden, were about to become the sport of the waves. He had no other means of continuing the struggle; he became listless. How could he prevent the tide from returning, the water from rising, the night from continuing? The temporary stoppage which he had made was his sole reliance. He had exhausted and stripped himself in constructing and completing it; he could neither fortify nor add to it. The stopgap was such that it must remain as it was; and every further effort was useless. The apparatus, hastily constructed, was at the mercy of the waves. How would this inert obstacle work? It was this obstacle now, not Gilliatt, which had to sustain the combat, that handfull of rags, not that intelligence. The swell of a wave would suffice to re-open the fracture. More or less of pressure; the whole question was comprised in that formula.

All depended upon a brute struggle between two mechanical quantities. Henceforth he could neither aid his auxiliary, nor stop his enemy. He was no longer any other than a mere spectator of this struggle, which was one for him of life or death. He who had ruled over it, a supreme intelligence, was at the last moment compelled to resign all to a mere

blind resistance.

No trial, no terror that he had yet undergone, could bear comparison with this.

From the time when he had taken up his abode upon the Douvres, he had found himself environed, and, as it were, possessed by solitude. This solitude more than surrounded, it enveloped him. A thousand menaces at once had met him face to face. The wind was always there, ready to become furious; the sea, ready to roar. There was no stopping that terrible mouth the wind, no imprisoning that dread monster the sea. And yet he had striven, he, a solitary man, had combated hand to hand with the ocean, had wrestled even with the tempest.

Many other anxieties, many other necessities had he made head against. There was no form of distress with which he had not become familiar. He had been compelled to execute great works without tools, to move vast burdens without aid, without science to resolve problems, without provisions to find food, without bed or roof to cover it, to find shelter and sleep.

Upon that solitary rock he had been subjected by turns to all the varied and cruel tortures of nature; oftentimes a gentle mother, not less often a pitiless destroyer.

He had conquered his isolation, conquered hunger, conquered thirst, conquered cold, conquered fever, conquered labour, conquered sleep. He

had encountered a mighty coalition of obstacles formed to bar his progress. After his privations there were the elements; after the sea the tempest, after the tempest the devil-fish, after the monster the spectre.

A dismal irony was then the end of all. Upon this rock, whence he had thought to arise triumphant, the spectre of Clubin had only arisen to mock him with a hideous smile.

The grin of the spectre was well founded. Gilliatt saw himself ruined; saw himself no less than Clubin in the grasp of death.

Winter, famine, fatigue, the dismemberment of the wreck, the removal of the machinery, the equinoctial gale, the thunder, the monster, were all as nothing compared with this small fracture in a vessel's planks. Against the cold one could procure--and he had procured--fire; against hunger, the shell-fish of the rocks; against thirst, the rain; against the difficulties of his great task, industry and energy; against the sea and the storm, the breakwater; against the devil-fish, the knife; but against the terrible leak he had no weapon.

The hurricane had bequeathed him this sinister farewell. The last struggle, the traitorous thrust, the treacherous side blow of the vanquished foe. In its flight the tempest had turned and shot this arrow in the rear. It was the final and deadly stab of his antagonist.

It was possible to combat with the tempest, but how could he struggle

with that insidious enemy who now attacked him.

If the stoppage gave way, if the leak re-opened, nothing could prevent the sloop foundering. It would be the bursting of the ligature of the artery; and once under the water with its heavy burden, no power could raise it. The noble struggle, with two months' Titanic labour, ended then in annihilation. To recommence would be impossible. He had neither forge nor materials. At daylight, in all probability, he was about to see all his work sink slowly and irrecoverably into the gulf. Terrible, to feel that sombre power beneath. The sea snatched his prize from his hands.

With his bark engulfed, no fate awaited him but to perish of hunger and cold, like the poor shipwrecked sailor on "The Man Rock."

During two long months the intelligences which hover invisibly over the world had been the spectators of these things; on one hand the wide expanse, the waves, the winds, the lightnings, the meteors; on the other a man. On one hand the sea, on the other a human mind; on the one hand the infinite, on the other an atom.

The battle had been fierce, and behold the abortive issue of these prodigies of valour.

Thus did this heroism without parallel end in powerlessness; thus ended in despair that formidable struggle; that struggle of a nothing against all; that Iliad against one.

Gilliatt gazed wildly into space.

He had no clothing. He stood naked in the midst of that immensity.

Then overwhelmed by the sense of that unknown infinity, like one bewildered by a strange persecution, confronting the shadows of night, in the presence of that impenetrable darkness, in the midst of the murmur of the waves, the swell, the foam, the breeze, under the clouds, under that vast diffusion of force, under that mysterious firmament of wings, of stars, of gulfs, having around him and beneath him the ocean, above him the constellations, under the great unfathomable deep, he sank, gave up the struggle, lay down upon the rock, his face towards the stars, humbled, and uplifting his joined hands towards the terrible depths, he cried aloud, "Have mercy."

Weighed down to earth by that immensity, he prayed.

He was there alone, in the darkness upon the rock, in the midst of that sea, stricken down with exhaustion like one smitten by lightning, naked like the gladiator in the circus, save that for circus he had the vast horizon, instead of wild beasts the shadows of darkness, instead of the faces of the crowd the eyes of the Unknown, instead of the Vestals the stars, instead of Cæsar the All-powerful.

His whole being seemed to dissolve in cold, fatigue, powerlessness, prayer, and darkness, and his eyes closed.

VII

THE APPEAL IS HEARD

Some hours passed.

The sun rose in an unclouded sky.

Its first ray shone upon a motionless form upon the Great Douvre. It was Gilliatt.

He was still outstretched upon the rock.

He was naked, cold, and stiff; but he did not shiver. His closed eyelids were wan. It would have been difficult for a beholder to say whether the form before him was not a corpse.

The sun seemed to look upon him.

If he were not dead, he was already so near death that the slightest cold wind would have sufficed to extinguish life.

The wind began to breathe, warm and animating: it was the opening breath of May.

Meanwhile the sun ascended in the deep blue sky; its rays, less horizontal, flushed the sky. Its light became warmth. It enveloped the slumbering form.

Gilliatt moved not. If he breathed, it was only that feeble respiration which could scarcely tarnish the surface of a mirror.

The sun continued its ascent; its rays striking less and less obliquely upon the naked man. The gentle breeze which had been merely tepid became hot.

The rigid and naked body remained still without movement; but the skin seemed less livid.

The sun, approaching the zenith, shone almost perpendicularly upon the plateau of the Douvres. A flood of light descended from the heavens; the vast reflection from the glassy sea increased its splendour: the rock itself imbibed the rays and warmed the sleeper.

A sigh raised his breast.

He lived.

The sun continued its gentle offices. The wind, which was already the breath of summer and of noon, approached him like loving lips that breathed upon him softly.

Gilliatt moved.

The peaceful calm upon the sea was perfect. Its murmur was like the droning of the nurse beside the sleeping infant. The rock seemed cradled in the waves.

The sea-birds, who knew that form, fluttered above it; not with their old wild astonishment, but with a sort of fraternal tenderness. They uttered plaintive cries: they seemed to be calling to him. A sea-mew, who no doubt knew him, was tame enough to come near him. It began to caw as if speaking to him. The sleeper seemed not to hear. The bird hopped upon his shoulder, and pecked his lips softly.

Gilliatt opened his eyes.

The birds dispersed, chattering wildly.

Gilliatt arose, stretched himself like a roused lion, ran to the edge of the platform, and looked down into the space between the two Douvres.

The sloop was there, intact; the stoppage had held out; the sea had probably disturbed it but little.

All was saved.

He was no longer weary. His powers had returned. His swoon had ended in a deep sleep.

He descended and baled out the sloop, emptied the hold, raised the leakage above the water-line, dressed himself, ate, drank some water, and was joyful.

The gap in the side of his vessel, examined in broad daylight, proved to require more labour than he had thought. It was a serious fracture. The entire day was not too much for its repair.

At daybreak on the morrow, after removing the barrier and re-opening the entrance to the defile, dressed in the tattered clothing which had served to stop the leak, having about him Clubin's girdle and the seventy-five thousand francs, standing erect in the sloop, now repaired, by the side of the machinery which he had rescued, with a favourable breeze and a good sea, Gilliatt pushed off from the Douvres.

He put the sloop's head for Guernsey.

At the moment of his departure from the rocks, any one who had been there might have heard him singing, in an undertone, the air of "Bonnie Dundee."