

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CARGO UNLOADED

NOVEMBER 6 to November 15. -- For the first five days after the Chancellor had run aground, there was a dense black smoke continually rising from the hold; but it gradually diminished until the 6th of November, when we might consider that the fire was extinguished. Curtis, nevertheless, deemed it prudent to persevere in working the pumps, which he did until the entire hull of the ship, right up to the deck, had been completely inundated.

The rapidity, however, with which the water, at every retreat of the tide, drained off to the level of the sea, was an indication that the leak must be of considerable magnitude; and such, on investigation, proved to be the case. One of the sailors, named Flaypole, dived one day at low water to examine the extent of the damage, and found that the hole was not much less than four feet square, and was situated thirty feet fore of the helm, and two feet above the rider of the keel; three planks had been stove in by a sharp point of rock and it was only a wonder that the violence with which the heavily-laden vessel had been thrown ashore did not result in the smashing in of many parts beside.

As it would be a couple of days or more before the hold

would be in a condition for the bales of cotton to be removed for the carpenter to examine the damage from the interior of the ship, Curtis employed the interval in having the broken mizzen-mast repaired. Dowlas the carpenter, with considerable skill, contrived to mortise it into its former stump. and made the junction thoroughly secure by strong iron-belts and bolts. The shrouds, the stays and backstays, were then carefully refitted, some of the sails were changed, and the whole of the running rigging was renewed. Injury, to some extent, had been done to the poop and to the crew's lockers in the front; but time and labor were all that were wanted to make them good; and with such a will did everybody set to work that it was not long before all the cabins were again available for use.

On the 8th the unloading of the ship commenced. Pulleys and tackling were put over the hatches, and passengers and crew together proceeded to haul up the heavy bales which had been deluged so frequently by water that the cotton was all but spoiled. One by one the sodden bales were placed in the boat to be transported to the reef. After the first layer of cotton had been removed it became necessary to drain off part of the water that filled the hold. For this purpose the leak in the side had somehow or other to be stopped, and this was an operation which was cleverly accomplished by Dowlas and Flaypole, who contrived to dive at low tide

and nail a sheet of copper over the entire hole. This, however, of itself would have been utterly inadequate to sustain the pressure that would arise from the action of the pumps; so Curtis ordered that a number of the bales should be piled up inside against the broken planks. The scheme succeeded very well, and as the water got lower and lower in the hold the men were enabled to résumé their task of unlading.

Curtis thinks it quite probable that the leaks may be mended from the interior. By far the best way of repairing the damage would be to careen the ship, and to shift the planking, but the appliances are wanting for such an undertaking; moreover, any bad weather which might occur while the ship was on her flank would only too certainly be fatal to her altogether. But the captain has very little doubt that by some device or other he shall manage to patch up the hole in such a way as will insure our reaching land in safety.

After two days' toil the water was entirely reduced, and without further difficulty the unlading was completed. All of us, including even Andre Letourneur, have been taking our turn at the pumps, for the work is so extremely fatiguing that the crew require some occasional respite; arms and back soon become strained and weary with the incessant swing of the handles, and I can well understand the dislike which sailors always express to the labor.

One thing there is which is much in our favor; the ship lies on a firm and solid bottom, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that we are not contending with a flood that encroaches faster than it can be resisted. Heaven grant that we may not be called to make like efforts, and to make them hopelessly, for a foundering ship!