

alone, for others of the crew, frightened by the cry, came thronging about us.

"What is it?" they asked—"Speak up."  
"What hurt you?" "What ails you?"

He made no answer, but pointed, rolling his eyes in terror, to the door of the fore-castle which had closed behind him.

"What is it?" I asked again.

He opened his mouth wide, gasping like a great fish, and pointed again to the door:

"There!" he cried, "It is there—behind the door! and it's coming—it's coming here! Look! God, it's coming now!"

Under the edge of the closed door there glimmered a faint light, green and ghostly as the phosphorescence of the waves.

The negro fell upon the deck, moaning, huddled in an agonized heap, his face hidden in his hands, while a perfect yell of terror went up from the other negroes.

At this moment the captain joined us. He called me by name:

"Mr. Rugg, you will take two men and examine the fore-castle. This nonsense must be stopped! Come, move quickly!"

My heart sank within me, but summoning two of the bravest fellows, I stepped forward to the door, they following at a cautious distance.

At that moment the light vanished. One of the men carried a lantern—I took this in my hand and laid hold of the handle of the door. It resisted my first attempt, and it was only by a united effort that we dragged it open at last.

Within, all seemed in order, except that, in the middle of the floor, the negro's pipe lay broken where he had thrown it down in his fright, and, strange to say, his coat lay beside it, torn into fantastic fragments. As we looked, a sudden gust of air extinguished the lantern, and, at the same time, the door closed with a crash. All sense, save of fear, left us in an instant. We sprang for the door, stumbling blindly—striving only to get away—to go anywhere; so long as we escaped from that darkness, where we felt that we were not alone. For a moment the door resisted our efforts—and as, defeating

our own object in our fright, we struggled against it, I glanced for a moment back—and there outside the porthole, against the black background of the night, I saw what the negro must have seen—and well it was that I did not, like him, go mad at the sight. It was a sight no word can describe—a sight which I would not describe if I could, since even now, after all these years, I do not dare to think of it—though I have seen it again and again in the midnight terror of dreams and have started awake in fright as helpless and total as when, in that moment of confused fright, I saw it first! Yet it was but the glance of a moment, for, frantic with fear, we dashed with all our strength at the door, it yielded before us, and we staggered out on deck.

The crew stood huddled like frightened sheep at the foot of the ladder that led to the upper deck—the captain in their midst, calm, upright and defiant. As I drew near, he called:

"Well, Mr. Rugg, what have you found?"

I made no answer. The look of our faces must have told our story, for all the men shrank back closer together, and there ran a frightened murmur among them. The captain motioned to us to be silent, and we stood for a moment; waiting the nearing consummation, we did not know how or why, of the night's catastrophe.

Then, as we stood there, our minds drawn to the utmost tension, there came a loud outcry from the wheel-house above. The captain turned quickly, and, pushing aside the men that stood in his way, sprang up the ladder, beckoning me as he went. Mechanically I obeyed. Not another followed; but again a great murmur of fear ran through the crowd.

At the door of the wheel-house stood the two wheelmen. They had deserted the helm, and the ship was left to take her own course.

"What ails you?" shouted the captain, "Go back to your places! quick, before the ship turns!"

They stared at him blankly—with open