

**THE WRECK OF THE "GROSVENOR": AN
ACCOUNT OF THE MUTINY OF THE
CREW AND THE LOSS OF THE SHIP WHEN
TRYING TO MAKE THE BERMUDAS. IN
THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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WILLIAM CLARK RUSSELL

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VOL. II.

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THE WRECK OF THE "GROSVENOR."

CHAPTER I.

As the men had been up all night, I recommended the carpenter to go to them and tell them that the watches would not be altered, and that the watch whose spell it was below should turn in.

Some, it appeared, asked that rum should be served out to them; but the carpenter answered that none should be given them until breakfast time, and that if they got talking too much about the drink, he'd run a bradawl into the casks and let the contents drain out; for if the men fell to

drinking, the ship was sure to get into a mess, in which case they might be boarded by the crew of another vessel and carried to England, where nothing less than hanging or transportation awaited them.

This substantial advice from the lips of the man who had been foremost in planning the mutiny produced a good effect, and the fellows who had asked for spirits were at once clamorously assailed by their mates; so that, in their temper, had the carpenter proposed to fling the rum casks overboard, most of the hands would have consented and the thing being done.

All this I was told by the boatswain, who had left the poop with the carpenter, but returned before him. I took this opportunity of being alone with the man to ask him some questions relative to the mutiny, and particularly inquired if he could tell me what was that intention which the man

named "Bill" had asked the carpenter to communicate to me, but which he had refused to explain. The boatswain, who was at bottom a very honest man, declared that he had no notion of the intention the carpenter was concealing, but promised to try and worm the secret out of Johnson or others who were in it, and impart it to me.

He now informed me that he had come into the mutiny because he saw the men were resolved, and also because they thought he took the captain's part, which was a belief full of peril to him. He said that he could not foresee how this trouble would end; for though the idea of the men to quit the ship and make for the shore in open boats was feasible, yet they would run very heavy risks of capture any way; for if they came across a ship while in the boats they could not refuse to allow themselves to be taken on board, where, some of the muti-

neers being very gross and ignorant men, the truth would certainly leak out; whilst as to escaping on shore, it was fifty to one if the answers they made to inquiries would not differ so widely one from another as to betray them.

But at this point our conversation was interrupted by the carpenter coming aft to ask me to keep watch whilst he and the boatswain turned in, as he for one was "dead beat," and would not be of any service until he had rested.

It was now broad daylight, the east filled with the silver splendours of the rising sun. I descried a sail to windward, on the starboard tack, heading eastward. I made her out through the glass to be a small topsail schooner, but as we were going free with a fresh breeze we soon sank her hull.

The sight of this vessel, however, set me thinking on my own position. What would

be thought and how should I be dealt with when (supposing I should ever reach land) I should come to tell the story of this mutiny? But this was a secondary consideration. My real anxiety was to foresee how the men would act when I had brought them to the place they wished to arrive at. Would they give such a witness against their murderous dealings as I was, a chance to save my life?—I, whose plain testimony could set justice on the hunt for every one of them. I could not place confidence in their assurances. The oaths of such ruffians as many of them undoubtedly were, were worthless. They would murder me without an instant's scruple if by so doing they could improve their own chances of escape; and I was fully persuaded that I should have shared the fate of Coxon and Duckling in spite of the sympathy I had shown them, and their declaration that they did not want