

the cloud which enveloped us consisted chiefly of the foam blown off the crests of the waves, or of the driving mist and rain which were falling during the greater part of the day.

Among our passengers were some experienced American sea-captains, who had commanded vessels of their own round Cape Horn, and, being now for the first time in a steamer at sea, were watching with professional interest the *Britannia's* behavior in the storm. They came to the conclusion, that one of these vessels, well appointed, with a full crew, skilled officers, and good engineers, was safer than any sailing packet; being light in their rigging, and having small sails, they run no danger of having their masts carried away in a stiff breeze, and the power of steam enables them always to make way, so as to steer and keep their head to the wind, on which safety depends. It sometimes happens, when a wave strikes a sailing vessel in a squall, that before she has time to work round and get her head to windward, another wave breaks over and swamps her, and to such an accident the loss of several packets between the United States and Liverpool is attributed.

I observed that there was no lightning conductor in our ship; and it seems to be the prevailing belief that steam-boats are less liable than other vessels to suffer from lightning, although the steamers in the royal navy are fitted with copper-wire rope conductors.

My chief amusement, when the weather was moderate, was to watch the porpoises (*Delphinus phocæna*) gamboling, rolling, and tumbling in the water, and yet keeping up with our ship when she was running eleven miles an hour. They were very numerous, usually following each other in a line at short intervals, each individual about four or five feet long, their backs of a blueish-black color, swimming without effort, and seeming scarcely to move either their fins or tail. Occasionally they dive, and then re-appear to take breath at a great distance, often leaping up out of the water, so as to display their silvery white bodies. The only other living creatures which attracted our attention, when still far from land, were enormous flights of sea-birds, which filled the air, or were seen swimming on the ocean near the shoal called