

Her infant, too,—she was sure, if she tried to force her way through the hills, it would perish in the snow. The master, though unwilling to cumber us with a passenger in such weather, was induced, out of pity for the poor destitute creature, to take her aboard. And she was now, with her child, all alone, below in the cabin. I was stationed a-head on the outlook beside the foresail *horse*; the night had grown pitch dark; and the lamp in the binnacle threw just light enough through the gray of the shower to show me the master at the helm. He looked more anxious, I thought, than I had almost ever seen him before, though I have been with him, mistress, in very bad weather; and all at once I saw he had got company, and strange company too, for such a night; there was a woman moving round him, with a child in her arms. I could see her as distinctly as I ever saw anything,—now on the one side, now on the other,—at one time full in the light, at another half lost in the darkness. That, I said to myself, must be the soldier's wife and her child; but how in the name of wonder can the master allow a woman to come on deck in such a night as this, when we ourselves have just enough ado to keep footing! He takes no notice of her neither, but keeps looking on, quite in his wont, at the binnacle. ‘Master,’ I said, stepping up to him, ‘the woman had surely better go below.’ ‘What woman, Jack?’ said he; ‘our passenger, you may be sure, is nowhere else.’ I looked round, mistress, and found he was quite alone, and that the companion-head was hasped down. There came a cold sweat all over me. ‘Jack,’ said the master, ‘the night is getting worse, and the roll of the waves heightening every moment. I’m convinced, too, our cargo is shifting. As the last sea struck us, I could hear the coals rattle below; and see how stiffly we heel to the larboard. Say nothing, however, to the men, but have all your wits about you; and look, meanwhile, to the boat-tackle and the oars. I have seen a boat live in as bad a night as this.’ As he spoke, a blue light from above glimmered on the deck. We looked up, and saw a dead-fire sticking to the cross-trees. ‘It’s all over with us now, master,’ said I. ‘Nay, man,’ replied the