

of this kind gave to the Gulf Stream the name of "King of the Tempest." But owing to the manifold nautical documents collected of late years at the Washington Observatory, by Mr. Redfield and Captain Maury, scientific men have learned how to define the direction and track of these formidable cyclones, so that their disastrous influence may to a certain extent be avoided.

We proceed to furnish an example of the usefulness of Maury's labours, which will speak more powerfully than pages of elaborate description.

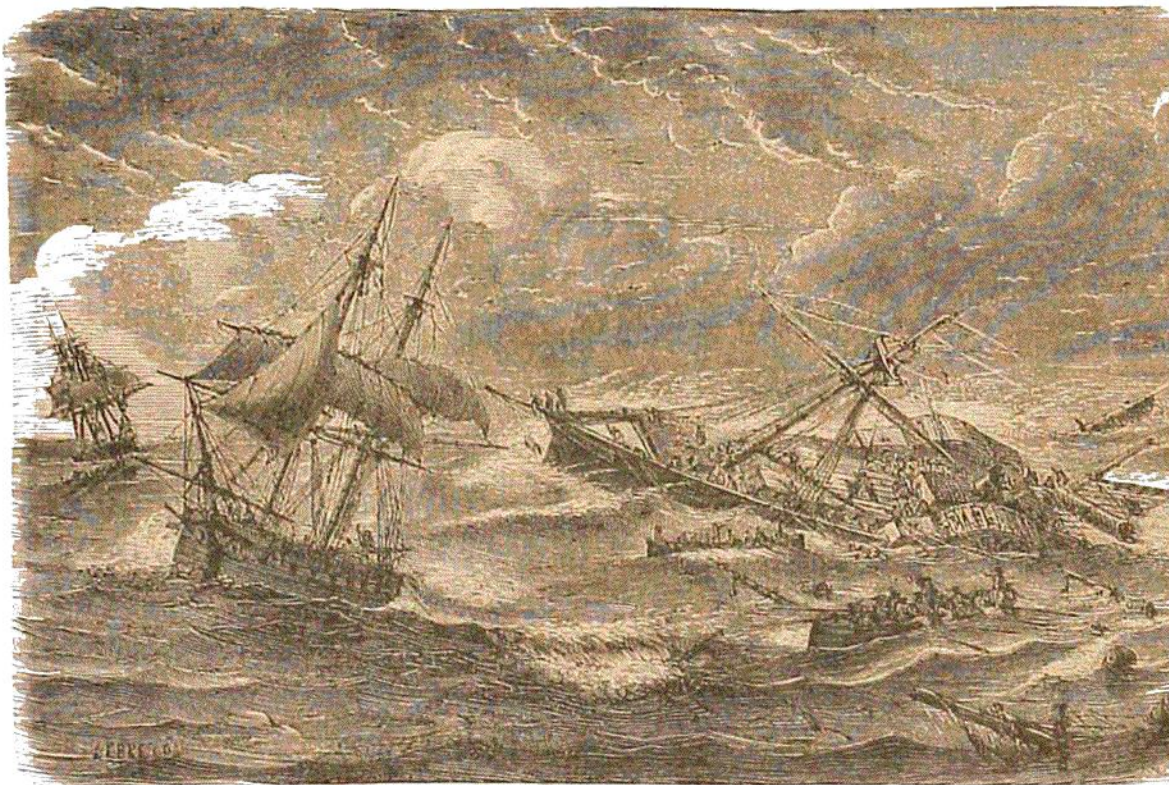


FIG. 215.—RESCUE OF THE "SAN FRANCISCO" BY THE "KILBY," IN 1853.

In the month of December 1853, the American packet-boat *San Francisco*, having on board a regiment of soldiers for California, was encountered, in the Gulf Stream, by a gale which speedily reduced her to a most lamentable condition. A single wave, sweeping the deck from stem to stern, carried away the masts, destroyed the machinery, and hurried into a premature death 199 officers and soldiers. The unhappy vessel lay upon the waters a miserable wreck, drifting in whatever direction the wind and the billows carried it. On the following day it was seen in this lamentable condition by a ship bound for New York; a few days later another vessel fell in with it; but neither could lend it any assistance, for they were occupied in endeavouring to ensure their own safety.

As soon as news of the calamity reached New York, two steam-tugs were ordered to the assistance of the *San Francisco*. But in what direction should they