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The Survivors of the Chancellor

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大臣号遇难者

上海译文出版社

(二)

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his own profession; but in connection with that he prated away the merest nonsense. He suffered greatly, but steadily declined all my offers of attention, and pertinaciously refused to leave his cabin.

Today, an acrid, nauseating smoke made its way through the panellings that partition off the quarters of the crew. At once Curtis ordered the partition to be enveloped in wet tarpaulin, but the fumes penetrated even this, and filled the whole neighbourhood of the ship's bows with a reeking vapour that was positively stifling. As we listened, too, we could hear a dull rumbling sound, but we were as mystified as ever to comprehend where the air could have entered that was evidently fanning the flames. Only too certainly, it was now becoming a question not of days nor even of hours before we must be prepared for the final catastrophe. The sea was still running high, and escape by the boats was plainly impossible. Fortunately, the main-mast and the mizen are of iron; otherwise the heat at their base would long ago have brought them down and our chances of safety would have been much imperilled; but by crowding on sail the "Chancellor" in the full north-east wind continued to make her way with undiminished speed.

It is now a fortnight since the fire was first discovered, and the proper working of the ship has gradually become a more and more difficult matter. Even with thick shoes any attempt to walk upon deck up to the forecastle was soon impracticable, and the poop, simply because its door is elevated somewhat above the level of the hold, is now the only available standing-place. Water began to lose its effect upon the scorched and shrivelling planks; the resin oozed out from the knots in the wood, the seams burst open, and the tar, melted by the heat, followed the rollings of the vessel, and formed fantastic pat-

不涉及他的职业方面的问题，他说话还是非常有条理的。但只要一谈到航海的话题，他就语无伦次。他正经受着巨大的痛苦的折磨，我想关心一下他，可他一直拒绝接受我的一番好意，情愿紧闭在自己的舱室里。

今天，有一股刺鼻难闻的浓烟透过壁缝钻进船员室里。卡尔蒂斯立即下令，往舱室的墙壁上蒙上一层湿油布，但是，烟还是不断冒出来，甚至透过油布源源不断袭来，并向船头弥散，使那儿的空气呛得人几乎透不过气来。我们侧耳细听，听得见火烧得呼呼作响。但我们跟以前一样仍然不知道这助长火势的空气是从哪漏进去的。哪些开口躲过了我们的视线？我们惟一非常确信的是大难就要临头了！或许还有几天，或许只有几个小时！而这时海上波涛汹涌，谁也不能乘救生艇逃生。幸亏主桅和前桅都是铁制的，不然的话，它们早就会被大火烧断，而我们则会根本无可逃生之机了。“大臣号”扬起所有船帆，速度不减，乘着东北风飞速航行。

大火至今已经烧了半个月了，更让人束手无策。帆船也越来越难以操纵，从甲板到前首楼这段距离，就是穿着厚底鞋也难以行走，只有尾楼，因为没直接与底舱接触，人们还可以在那儿落脚。但是，现在再往甲板上浇水也不能使被火烤着的地板冷却下来。木板从铁质横档上翘起，木缝裂成大口，被高温烤融化了的油脂流了出来，随着船的摇摆自然漫

terns about the deck.

Then to complete our perplexity, the wind shifted suddenly round to the north-west, whence it blew a perfect hurricane. To no purpose did Curtis do everything in his power to bring the ship ahull; every effort was vain; the "Chancellor" could not bear her trysail, so there was nothing to be done but to let her go with the wind, and drift further and further from the land for which we are longing so eagerly.

Today, the 29th, the tempest seemed to reach its height; the waves appeared to us mountains high, and dashed the spray most violently across the deck. A boat could not live for a moment in such a sea.

Our situation is terrible. We all wait in silence, some few on the fore-castle, the great proportion of us on the poop. As for the picrate, for the time we have quite forgotten its existence; indeed it might almost seem as though its explosion would come as a relief, for no catastrophe, however terrible, could far exceed the torture of our suspense.

While he had still the remaining chance, Curtis rescued from the store-room such few provisions as the heat of the compartment allowed him to obtain; and a lot of cases of salt meat and biscuits, a cask of brandy, some barrels of fresh water, together with some sails and wraps, a compass and other instruments are now lying packed in a mass all ready for prompt removal to the boats whenever we shall be obliged to leave the ship.

About eight o'clock in the evening, a noise is heard, distinct even above the raging of the hurricane. The panels of the deck are upheaved, and volumes of black smoke issue upwards as if from a safety-valve. An universal consternation seizes one and all: we must leave the volcano which is about to burst beneath

延,形成错落交织的图案。

这时,大风又来火上浇油,我们的情况危急万分。西北风骤然怒起,一下子变成了一场名符其实的飓风。罗伯特·卡尔蒂斯竭尽全力想让船顶风缓慢前进,但不过是徒然无功。风力太大,‘大臣号’根本抵不住它那股疯劲,只能任风把船刮走,我们于是越来越偏离了我们迫切想到那停靠的安的列斯海岸。

今天,29日,暴风似乎达到了它最猛烈的程度,海面上巨浪排山倒海般地向甲板扑来。救生艇一旦放入海中,顷刻间就会被海水吞没。

目前的形势岌岌可危。大家只有眼睁睁地等着,不敢言语。船上的人四处躲避风浪,一些人去首楼,而大部分人都聚在尾楼上。至于那包苦味酸盐,有好长一段时间我们把它忘了个一干二净。其实现在要发生一场爆炸对大家而言反而是种解脱。因为坐以待毙的滋味要比大祸加身更加难受千倍。

趁着还有时间,卡尔蒂斯派人从贮藏室中搬出部分食品,其中一部分食品都已经因为高温而变质了。这时,几箱咸肉和饼干、一大桶葡萄酒和几大桶淡水已放在了甲板上,放在一块的还有一些毛毯、器械、一只罗盘和几张帆布,到我们不得不弃船而逃时,这些东西就会大派用场。

约晚上8点时,尽管狂风呼啸,但仍能清楚听到大火燃烧的声音。甲板上的舱盖被掀起,一股股黑色的浓烟仿佛从锅炉阀门下喷出的蒸气,直冲云天。此时每个人的心中都涌

our feet. The crew run to Curtis for orders. He hesitates; looks first at the huge and threatening waves; looks then at the boats. The longboat is there, suspended right along the centre of the deck; but it is impossible to approach it now; the yawl, however, hoisted on the starboard side, and the whale-boat suspended aft, are still available. The sailors make frantically for the yawl.

"Stop, stop," shouts Curtis; "do you mean to cut off our last and only chance of safety? Would you launch a boat in such a sea as this?"

A few of them, with Owen at their head, give no heed to what he says. Rushing to the poop, and seizing a cutlass, Curtis shouts again, -

"Touch the tackling of the davit, one of you; only touch it, and I'll cleave your skull."

Awed by his determined manner, the men retire, some clambering into the shrouds, whilst others mount to the very top of the masts.

At eleven o'clock, several loud reports are heard, caused by the bursting asunder of the partitions of the hold. Clouds of smoke issue from the front, followed by a long tongue of lambent flame that seems to encircle the mizenmast. The fire now reaches to the cabin occupied by Mrs. Kear, who, shrieking wildly, is brought on deck by Miss Herbey. A moment more, and Silas Huntly makes his appearance, his face all blackened with the grimy smoke; he bows to Curtis, as he passes, and then proceeds in the calmest manner to mount the aftshrouds, and installs himself at the very top of the mizen.

The sight of Huntly recalls to my recollection the prisoner still below, and my first impulse is to rush to the staircase and do what I can to set him free. But the maniac has already e-

起了一阵恐慌，我们必须逃离这座将要在我们脚下轰然喷发的火山。船员们慌忙奔向卡尔蒂斯请求他下达命令。他看了看波涛汹涌，险恶万分的海面，又看了看悬挂在甲板正中央的救生艇，有些犹豫不决。这时已经很难靠近救生艇了。不过取下悬在左舷吊艇杆上的小船和挂在船尾上的小舢舨倒没什么问题。水手们向小船狂奔过去。

“住手！住手！”罗伯特·卡尔蒂斯大声喝道，“你们想完全断了我们的后路吗？这种条件下，你们就想乘这条小船走？”

以欧文为首的几个水手根本把他的的话视为耳边风，他们不顾一切地扑向救生艇。卡尔蒂斯冲上尾楼，操起一把斧头喊道：

“谁再敢碰一下复滑车，我就劈开他的脑袋！”

震于他的凛凛气势，水手们退缩了，一些人登上桅侧的绳梯横索，另一些人躲回了桅楼。

11点钟，从底舱传出巨大的爆炸声，这是因舱壁被炸开而起的。这给空气和浓烟开辟了通道。眨眼间浓烟从船前部滚滚冒出，腾空升起的火焰眼看就要舔到前桅杆了。这时火已经烧到了科尔夫人住着的那间舱室，她失声惊叫着，在奥尔贝小姐的扶持下逃到了甲板上，接着西拉斯·亨特利出现了，脸被浓烟熏得黑不溜秋。他对卡尔蒂斯略一弯腰打了个招呼，随后走向后桅的侧支索，攀上绳梯横索，在左舷桅楼那儿安歇下来。

看见西拉斯·亨特利，让我想起还有一个人关在尾楼下，我立马想奔向楼梯，尽我所能把他救出来。但是这个疯

luded his confinement, and with singed hair and his clothes already alight, rushes upon deck. Like a salamander he passes across the burning deck with unscathed feet, and glides through the stifling smoke with unchoked breath. Not a sound escapes his lips.

Another loud report; the long-boat is shivered into fragments; the middle panel bursts the tarpaulin that covered it, and a stream of fire, free at length from the restraint that had held it, rises half-mast high.

The picrate! the picrate! shrieks the madman; "we shall all be blown up! the picrate will blow us all up."

And in an instant, before we can get near him, he has hurled himself, through the open hatchway, down into the fiery furnace below.

子已经挣脱了绳索，他的头发已被烧焦，身上的衣服也着了火，他就这么一副样子冲到了甲板上。他仿佛一个火魔一样，穿过甲板而丝毫不觉灼热烫脚，钻进浓烟竟呼吸依然顺畅，嘴里一声不出。

这时，又响起了一声惊天动地的轰响声。小船被炸成碎片，船中央的舱盖冲天而起，压抑许久的火头猛然窜出，一下烧到了桅杆的中部。

“苦味酸盐！苦味酸盐！”疯子狂呼乱叫起来，“炸上天啦！我们要被炸上天啦！”

他正喊着，没等我们抓住，他纵身跳进大敞的舱门，落入滚滚熔炉中。

Chapter 14

October 29th Night.

The scene, as night came on, was terrible indeed. Notwithstanding the desperateness of our situation, however, there was not one of us so paralyzed by fear, but that we fully realized the horror of it all.

Poor Ruby, indeed, is lost and gone, but his last words were productive of serious consequences. The sailors caught his cry of "Picrate, picrate!" and being thus for the first time made aware of the true nature of their peril, they resolved at every hazard to accomplish their escape. Beside themselves with terror, they either did not or would not, see that no boat could brave the tremendous waves that were raging around, and accordingly they made a frantic rush towards the yawl. Curtis again made a vigorous endeavour to prevent them, but this time all in vain; Owen urged them on, and already the tackling was loosened, so that the boat was swung over to the ship's side, For a moment it hung suspended in mid-air, and then, with a final effort from the sailors, it was quickly lowered into the sea. But scarcely had it touched the water, when it was caught by an enormous wave which, recoiling with resistless violence, dashed it to atoms against the "Chancellor's" side.

The men stood aghast; they were dumbfounded. Long-boat and yawl both gone, there was nothing now remaining to us but a small whale-boat. Not a word was spoken; not a sound was heard but the hoarse whistling of the wind, and the mournful roaring of the flames. From the centre of the ship, which was hollowed out like a furnace, there issued a column of sooty vapour that ascended to the sky. All the pas-

第十四章

10月29日晚。

这真是触目惊心的一幕，尽管目前我们形势危急，但没有一人因恐惧而瘫软。但是现在每个人都完全意识到了我们所面临的危险如何。

不幸的吕比肯定已经死了，可他最后喊出的几句话却祸害无穷。水手们曾听到他大声喊“苦味酸盐！苦味酸盐！”他们随即意识到了他们危险处境的真正情况，船上不仅起了火，而且爆炸的杀身之祸正威胁着他们。有的人吓得晕头转向，他们什么也顾不上了，只想拔腿逃之夭夭。惊慌之下，他们根本不去想，也不想想，区区一艘小船何以能抵得住海中的滔天巨浪。他们什么也顾不上了，而是狂奔着冲向救生艇，卡尔蒂斯努力想再次阻止住他们，可这一次他的努力完全无济于事。欧文继续煽动他的同伙，救生艇的系绳已被解开了，它被推向船外。小艇摇摆了片刻，然后水手们最后一使劲，把它迅速地推向海里去，但是小艇还没入海，就被一股突如其来的巨浪抛向空中，然后重重地砸向“大臣号”。

水手们呆呆地站着，全吓傻了，救生艇和小船全毁了。现在，我们只剩下一条单薄而又窄小的舢舨。没人说一句话，除了狂风的呼啸声，烈火燃烧时发出的炸裂声，也不再

sengers, and several of the crew, took refuge in the aft-quarters of the poop. Mrs. Kear was lying senseless on one of the hen-coops, with Miss Herbey sitting passively at her side; M. Letourneur held his son tightly clasped to his bosom. I saw Falsten calmly consult his watch, and note down the time in his memorandum-book, but I was far from sharing his composure, for I was overcome by a nervous agitation that I could not suppress.

As far as we knew, Lieutenant Walter, the boatswain, and such of the crew as were not with us, were safe in the bow; but it was impossible to tell how they were faring because the sheet of fire intervened like a curtain, and cut off all communication between stem and stern.

I broke the dismal silence, saying "All over now, Curtis."

"No, sir, not yet," he replied, "now that the panel is open we will set to work, and pour water with all our might down into the furnace, and may be, we shall put it out, even yet."

"But how can you work your pumps while the deck is burning? and how can you get at your men beyond that sheet of flame?"

He made no answer to my impetuous questions, and finding that he had nothing more to say, I repeated that it was all over now.

After a pause, he said, "As long as a plank of the ship remains to stand on, Mr, Kazallon, I shall not give up my hope."

But the conflagration raged with redoubled fury, the sea around us was lighted with a crimson glow, and the clouds above shone with a lurid glare. Long jets of fire darted across the hatchways, and we were forced to take refuge on the taffrail at the extreme end of the poop. Mrs. Kear was laid in the

有别的声响。船中央被火烧得陷了下去，仿佛一个大火炉一般。从那冒出的滚滚黑烟，冲向空中。乘客们和两三个船员躲在尾楼的后面。科尔夫人仰面卧在木板上，已经失去了知觉，奥尔贝小姐守候在她的身边。勒杜拉尔先生把儿子紧紧抱在怀里。我看到法尔斯顿工程师旁若无事地看了看表，把时间记在小本上。但是我却远没他这样镇静，我不由自主地急躁不安。

据我们所知二副水手长和其余的船员可能都安全地呆在船首，但是我们不知道彼此间距离多远，因为一堵火墙把我们隔开，船两边的人完全中断了联络。

我打破了这悲伤的寂静，说道：“我们全完了，卡尔蒂斯。”我说。

“不，先生，还没有，”他答道，“既然舱盖已经掀开，我们可以马上往火堆中注水，或许能把火灭掉。”

“可是甲板这么烫，你们怎么能操作水泵啊？而且你怎么才能把命令传到船的另一头去呢？”

罗伯特·卡尔蒂斯没回答我这个冒失的问题。而我发现一切全完了。没什么别的可说，又重复说了一遍。

片刻停顿后，他说：“只要船上还有一块木板让我立足，我绝不放弃！”

但是烈火已倍加猛烈，它四周的海浪都被它染成了浅红色，头顶上的云层映着火光，显得狰狞恐怖。长长的火舌从舱中吐出，把我们逼向尾楼楼顶的后方。科尔夫人被抬进

whaleboat that hung from the stern, Miss Herbey persisting to the last in retaining her post by her side.

No pen could adequately portray the horrors of this fearful night. The "Chancellor" under bare poles, was driven, like a gigantic fire-ship with frightful velocity across the raging ocean; her very speed as it were, making common cause with the hurricane to fan the fire that was consuming her. Soon there could be no alternative between throwing ourselves into the sea, or perishing in the flames.

But where, all this time, was the picrate? perhaps, after all, Ruby had deceived us and there was no volcano, such as we dreaded, below our feet.

At half-past eleven, when the tempest seems at its very height there is heard a peculiar roar distinguishable even above the crash of the elements. The sailors in an instant recognize its import.

"Breakers to starboard!"

Curtis leaps on to the netting, casts a rapid glance at the snow white billows, and turning to the helmsman shouts with all his might "Starboard the helm!"

But it is too late. There is a sudden shock; the ship is caught up by an enormous wave; she rises upon her beam ends; several times she strikes the ground; the mizen-mast snaps short off level with the deck, falls into the sea, and the "Chancellor" is motionless.

悬挂在支架上的捕鲸船中，奥尔贝小姐寸步不离地守在她身旁。

没有一支笔能准确描述出这恐怖夜晚的情形。“大臣号”仿佛一艘巨大的火船，在巨浪滔天的海面上狂驶而去。飓风刮动船飞驶，也同样助长火势。很快，我们要么跳海，要么葬身烈火！除此之外，别无选择。

但这会儿那苦味酸盐在哪呢？或许，吕比的话纯粹是谎言？在我们脚下根本没有让我们胆颤心惊的火山。

11时30分，海上的风浪空前险恶。狂风怒吼，突然传来了一声异乎寻常的轰隆巨响，船员们立即意识到情况严重。

“礁石！右舷触礁了！”

卡尔蒂斯跳上舷墙，匆忙向白浪滚滚的海面扫了一眼，转身回到操舵手身旁。“右满舵！”他声色严厉地叫道。

但为时已晚，突然一震，船触礁了！船尾的龙骨在礁石上连连碰撞了数次，主桅杆齐根折断，倒向大海。‘大臣号’不再动弹。

Chapter 15

The Night of the 29th Continued.

It was not yet midnight; the darkness was most profound, and we could see nothing. But was it probable that we had stranded on the coast of America?

Very shortly after the ship had thus come to a standstill a clanking of chains was heard proceeding from her bows.

"That is well," said Curtis; "Walter and the boatswain have cast both the anchors. Let us hope they will hold."

Then, clinging to the netting, he clambered along the star-board side, on which the ship had heeled, as far as the flames would allow him. He clung to the holdfasts of the shrouds, and in spite of the heavy seas that dashed against the vessel he maintained his position for a considerable time, evidently listening to some sound that had caught his ear in the midst of the tempest. In about a quarter of an hour he returned to the poop.

"Heaven be praised!" he said, "the water is coming in, and perhaps may get the better of the fire."

"True," said I, "but what then?"

"That," he replied, "is a question for by and-by. We can now only think of the present."

Already I fancied that the violence of the flames was somewhat abated, and that the two opposing elements were in fierce contention. Some plank in the ship's side was evidently stove in, admitting free passage for the waves. But how, when the water had mastered the fire, should we be able to master the water? Our natural course would be to use the pumps, but these, in the very midst of the conflagration, were quite unavailable.