

contrary winds, except a few pleasant hours which were vouchsafed us from time to time. I had sometimes seen the angry sea from the windows of our little house at Dieppe; but watching the fury of the Ocean from the shore is quite different from tossing upon its waves. During three or four days we were close-reefed, as sailors say, our helm fastened down. The vessel was left to the will of the billows and the waves, which bore it at times upon mountains of water, then suddenly down into the depths of the sea. You would have said that the winds were unchained against us. Every moment [6] we feared lest they should snap our masts, or that the ship would spring a leak; and, in fact, there was a leak, which would, as I heard reported, have sunk us if it had been lower down. It is one thing to reflect upon death in one's cell, before the image on the Crucifix; but quite another to think of it in the midst of a tempest and in the presence of death itself. But I say to you honestly, that, although nature longs for its preservation, nevertheless, in the depths of my soul, I felt quite as much inclination to death as to life; I kept constantly before my eyes, that he who had brought me upon the sea had some good purpose, and that he must be allowed to do as he pleases. I dared not ask of him anything for myself, unless it were to offer up my life for all on the ship. When I realized that in a few hours I might see myself in the midst of the [7] waves, and perhaps in the depths of the blackest night, I found some consolation in the thought that there, where there would be less of the creature, there would be more of the Creator, and that it would be really dying by his hand. But my weakness makes me fear that perhaps, if that