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# JACK'S YARN

OR

## PERILS IN THE PACIFIC

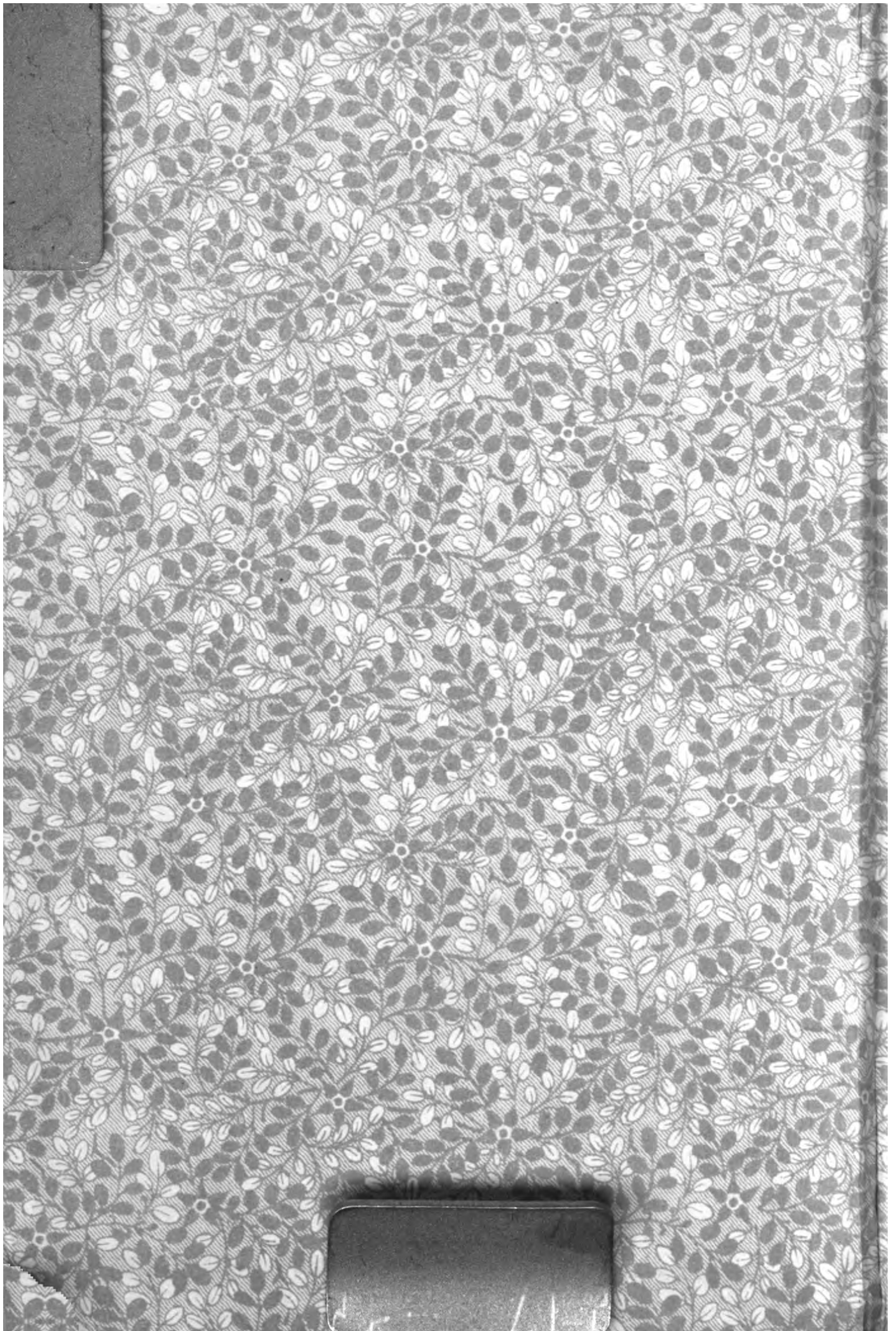
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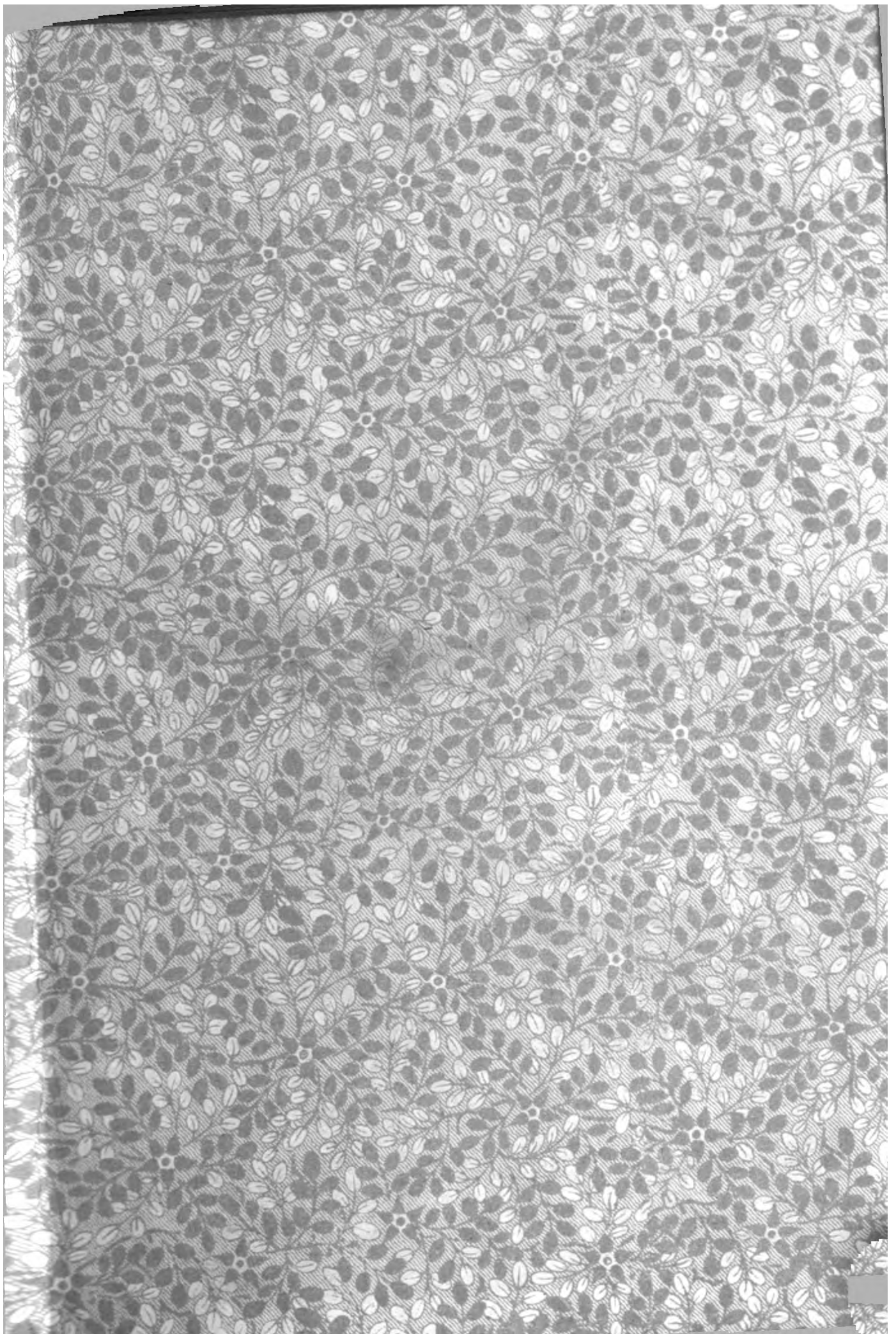
ROBERT BROWN A. B.



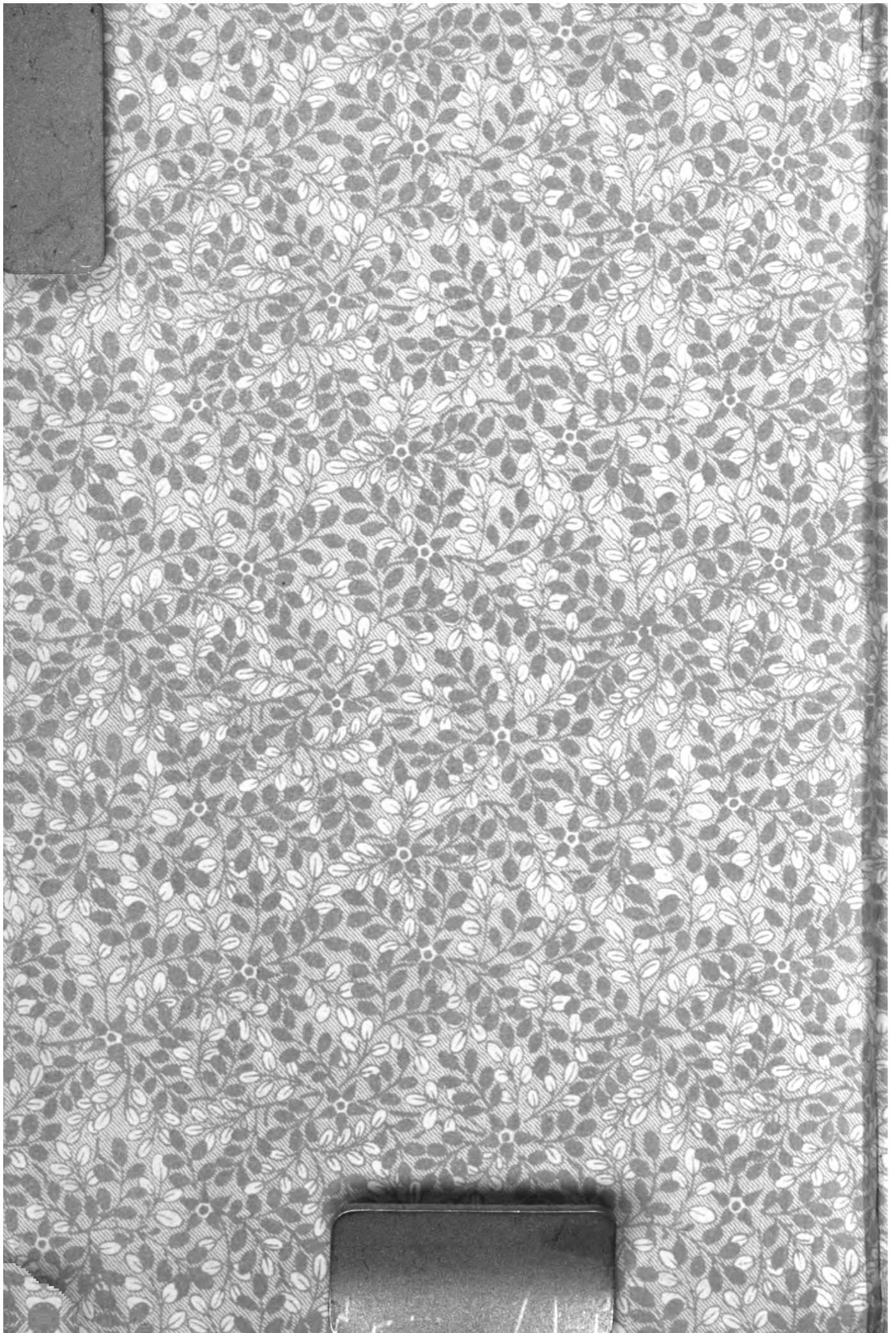
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R. T. PRITCHETT



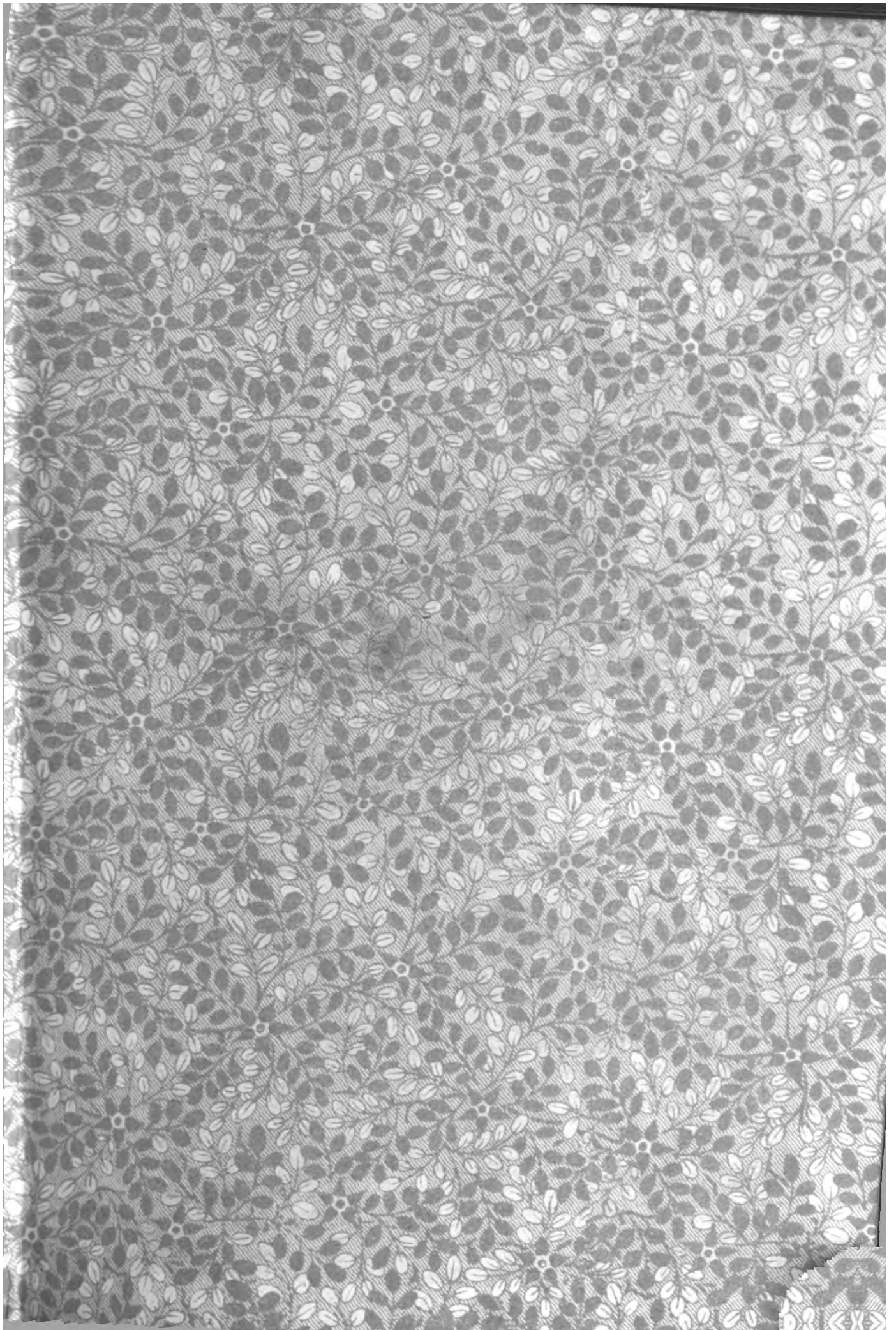


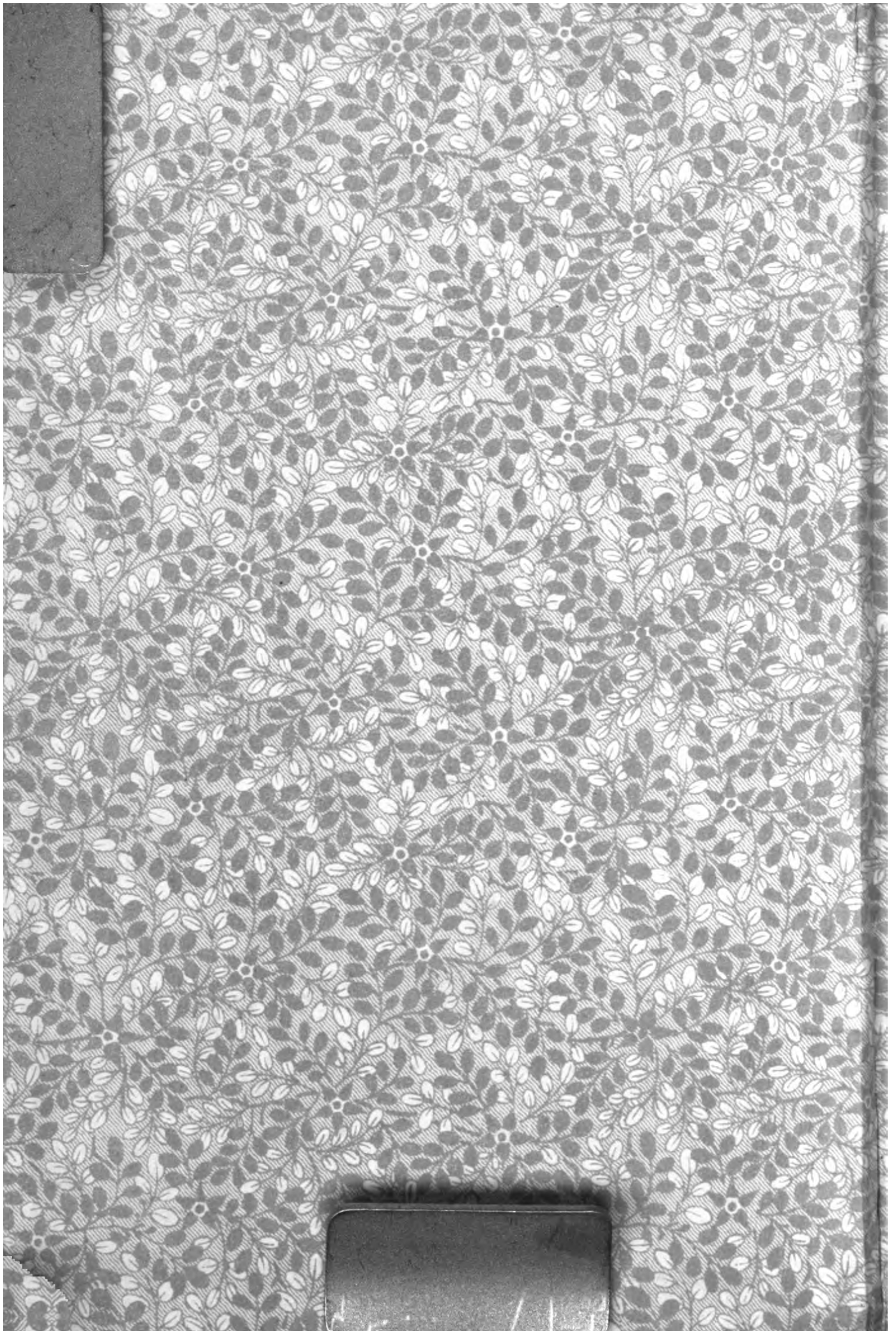




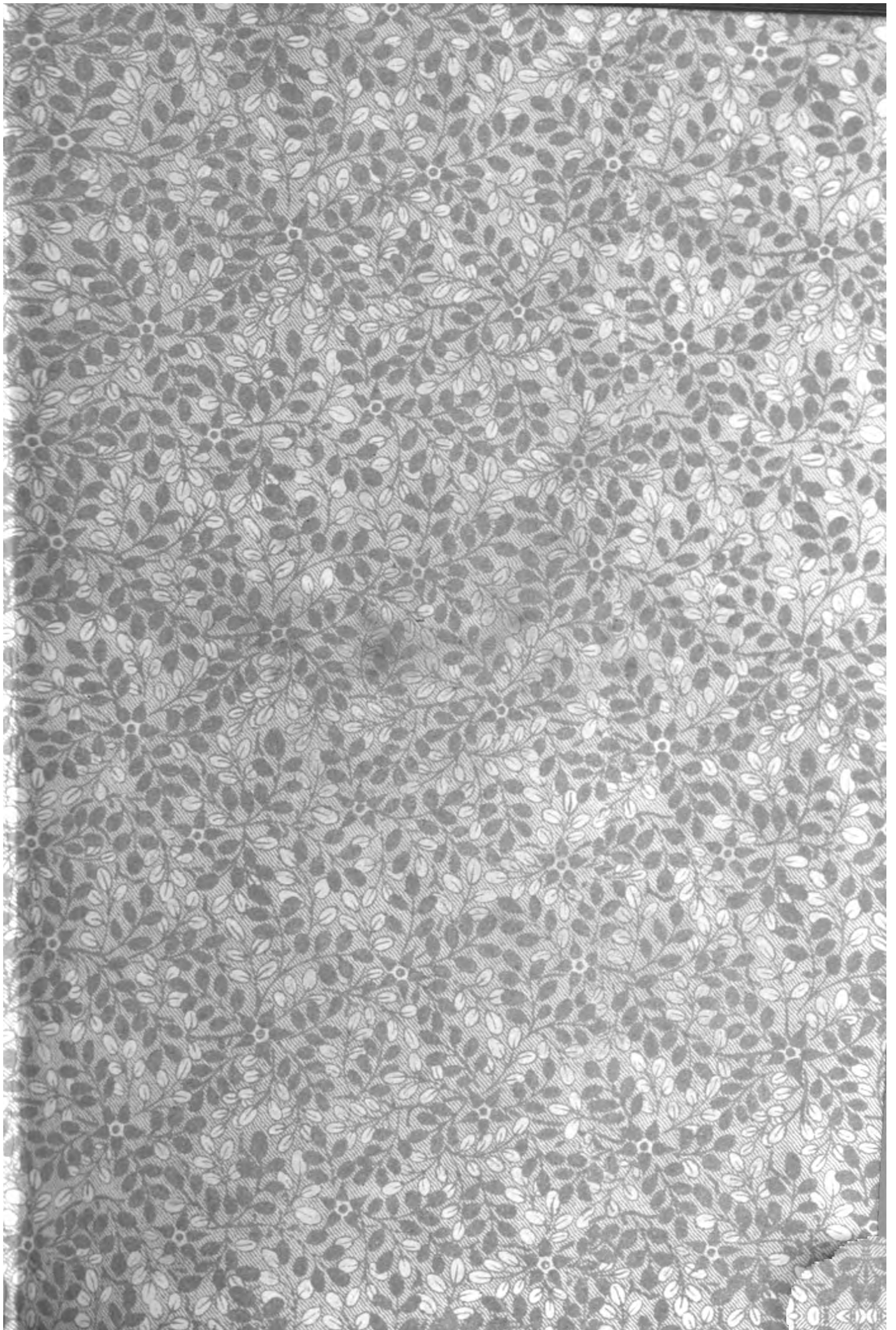




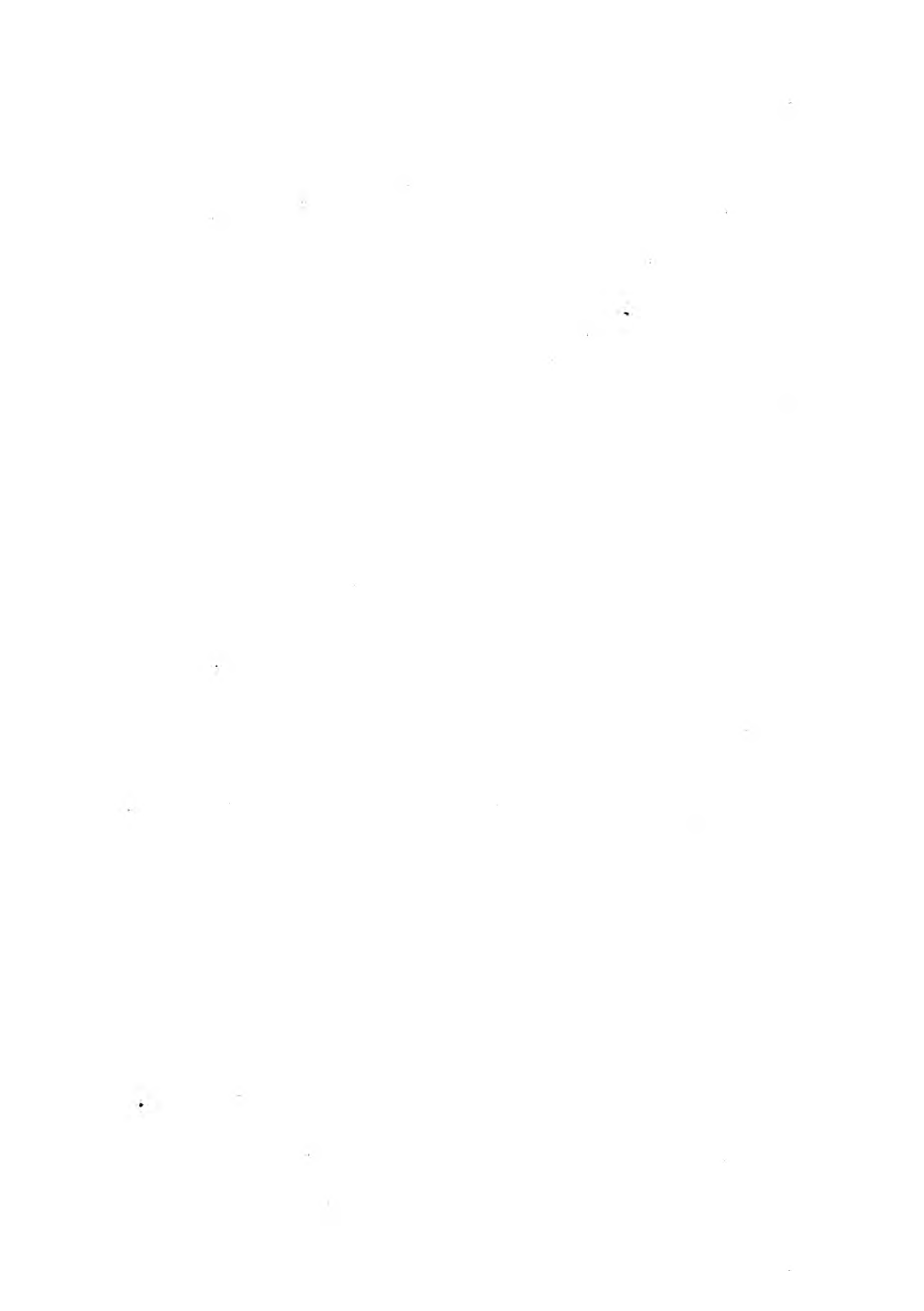












JACK'S YARN ;

OR,

PERILS IN THE PACIFIC.

**UNIFORM WITH THIS BOOK IN SIZE AND PRICE.**

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**From Cadet to Captain.** By J. PERCY GROVES.  
**The Cruise of the Theseus.** By ARTHUR KNIGHT.  
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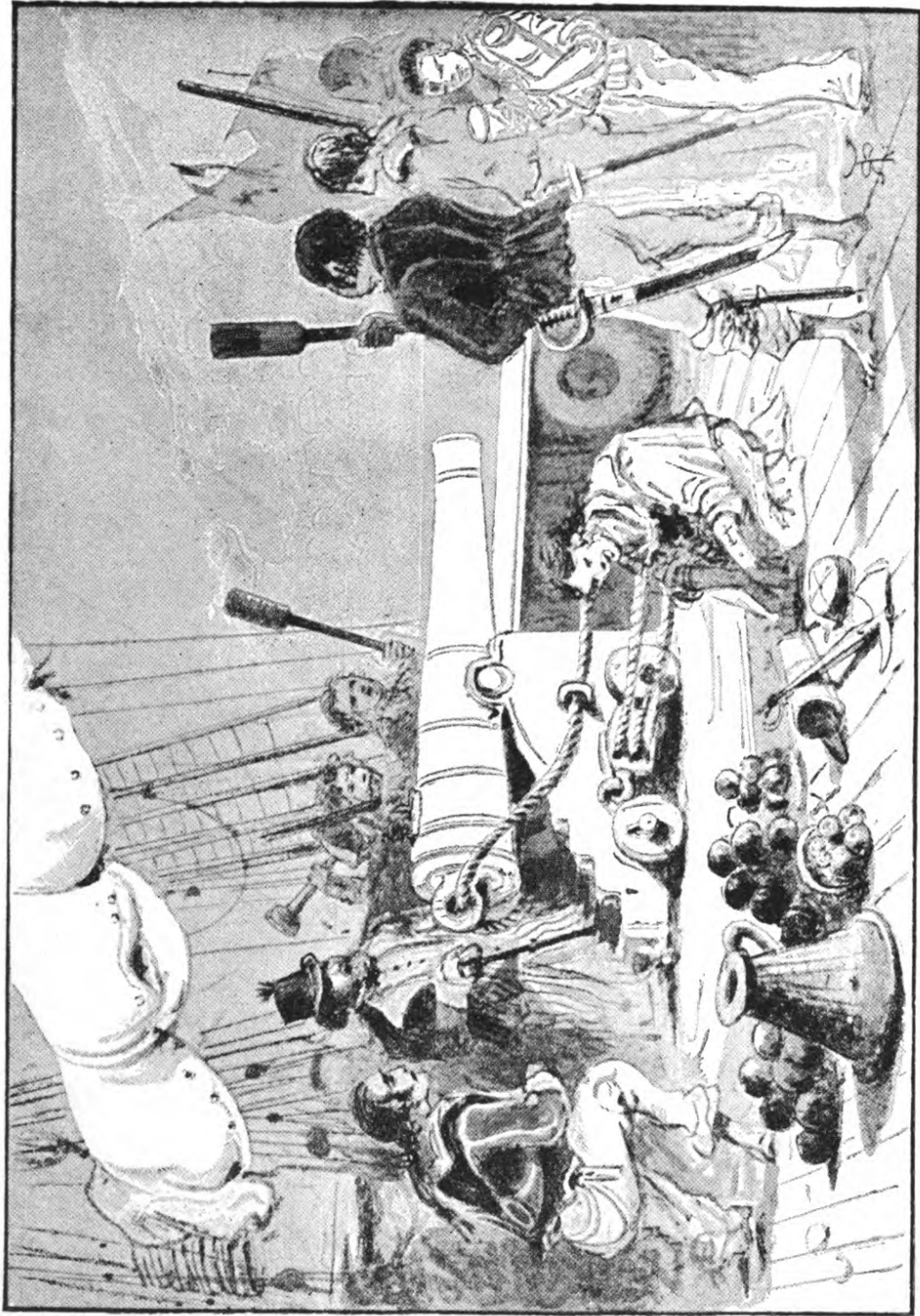
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GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN & WELSH,  
WEST CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.





*Frontispiece.*



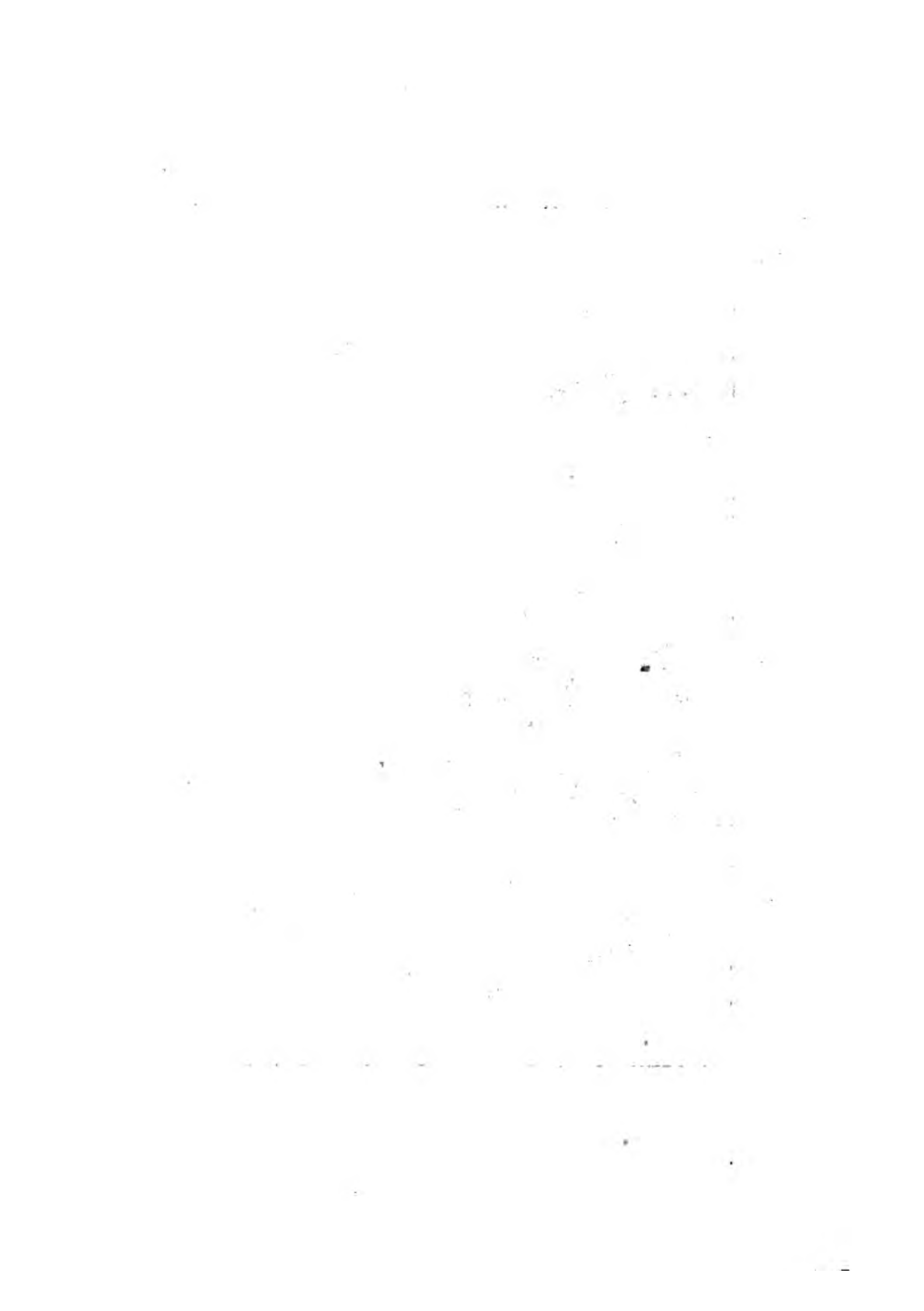
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JACK'S YARN;  
OR,  
PERILS IN THE PACIFIC.

BY  
ROBERT BROWN, A.B.  
AUTHOR OF "SPUNYARN AND SPINDRIFT," ETC.

*WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. T. PRITCHETT.*



LONDON:  
GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN & WELSH,  
SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERY AND HARRIS,  
WEST CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.  
E. P. DUTTON & CO., NEW YORK.  
1888.

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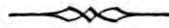
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# JACK'S YARN;

OR,

## PERILS IN THE PACIFIC.



### CHAPTER I.

#### PRELIMINARY.

IT is all very well for the governor to talk. He said, "That yarn of old Jack's seems to have been very entertaining; why don't you write it out? All you have to do is to make a beginning. Depend upon it, Fred, my boy, if you only once make a beginning, the rest will be as easy as possible. Besides," he continued, "there are all the books in the library at your disposal to crib bits from here and there—Hakluyt, 'Voyages of the Elizabethan Seamen,' 'Cook's Voyages,' and so on. I will look them out for you and put them on one side. Your own nautical experience, too, will be of great service to you when you have to write about the maintop-sheets, and so forth, on a ship, and if you require assistance in other matters you can



always come to me. So do it, my boy—set to work and do it !”

I again remark that it is all very well for the governor to talk.

It was not very polite of him to mention cribbing, either, for it is rather a delicate subject. He knows perfectly well that I was swished for that more than once when I was at Rugby (he always used to worry for details when a birch was charged for in the bill), therefore he need not have brought up unpleasant recollections in so indelicate a manner, to say the least of it. It strikes me though—mem. : so did the birch—that many things which were wrong at school are not looked upon as utterly heinous in after life—the science of cribbing being among them.

One great fault in old Jack's yarn is that it possesses neither hero nor heroine. How is that to be got over, I wonder, and how is it possible to write a book without having somebody that you can triumphantly marry in the last chapter ? I don't know. At any rate, it is not my fault. A heroine can, perhaps, be fairly well dispensed with ; she always appears to me to be dreadfully in the way in a story of the sea. Take the first sea-book that you come across, and consider the struggle that the poor author must have had in the producing of his heroine just when and where her presence was necessary—floating on a raft, on board a pirate ship, calmly waiting on the beach of a desert island, all sorts of dreadful shifts—because she must be got *somehow*, you know. Fancy the lady that, only a few pages before, was flirting with the curate, going to flower-shows, and

indulging in other feminine diversions, suddenly turning up on a raft in the middle of, say, the Indian Ocean!

Well, I must do the best I can, for I really do mean to write an account of what old Jack told me, or try to, so the sooner I get on with my task the better, or I shall never get to the little *Hornet* and her crew of gentlemen, and dear old Dodd, and the savages, and all the rest of it.

How to make a beginning is the worst. I could go on easily enough, of course, by starting right slick off with the yarn, but then it is not improbable that you may like to know how I came to find old Jack; and you may even like to know something about me; so I think, if you don't mind, that I will commence by telling you that my name is Fred Ainslie, that I am nearly eighteen, and that my before-mentioned knowledge of nautical matters was obtained during a voyage to the Colonies and back in a sailing-ship.

Such a voyage, too—it quite choked my luff, I can tell you. The ship I went in, as an apprentice, took nearly twelve months in going from London to Adelaide and back again, and the homeward passage especially was so long that we were all nearly starved. For the provisions ran short, and if it had not been for an outward-bound ship that we fell in with somewhere between the Western Islands and England, and whose captain supplied us with a cask of beef and some bread, we should have been in a fine mess.

That and other things quite disgusted me with a nautical life, and I accordingly made up my mind to go to sea no more. I am an only son, you see, and it

generally happens that I get my own way. My own way prevailed in this, at any rate, and, accordingly, the governor managed to get the indentures cancelled soon after the ship arrived home. I think that he had to forfeit the premium or something of the sort, which however, made but small odds, for he has lots of money, and I fancy he was not at all sorry that I did not wish to stick to the sea, for he received my statement to that effect with great composure.

After a few weeks' holiday I got a berth as junior clerk in a shipbroker's office—not the one I was apprenticed in—and now I go to town by the 9.30 train in the morning and come back by the 5.13 in the afternoon, which suits me much better than cleaning brass-work or hauling the lee-fore-brace on wet nights.

Having said this, I am afraid that I must explain a little farther, or else you will be sure to put me down as a milksop and a shirker of hard work, which is not really the case.

I shall never get to old Jack at this rate, that is the worst of it.

Let me tell you, then, that I love the sea, and like what the mate used to call "sailorizing," which means knotting, splicing, making and shortening sail, fitting and reeving rigging, and all the thousand and one things that a seaman is expected to have at his fingers' ends.

"Then why on earth did you give it up?" I think I hear you say. You wouldn't ask such a question if you knew anything about the sea; so, assuming that you *are* curious on the subject, I will try and enlighten you as briefly as I can. If, on the other hand, you

don't feel inquisitive enough to read what follows, all you have to do is to skip the rest of this chapter. I should if I were you—I wish I might.

The best way—because it is the quickest way that I can think of—will be to submit four scenes for your contemplation. Yes, that is a capital idea, so pray look at

#### SCENE THE FIRST.

A stout, elderly gentleman and a youth of sixteen or thereabouts, the latter dressed in a brand-new suit of blue cloth gaily sprinkled with brass buttons, and a cap ornamented in the front with a gorgeous badge of gold and red and blue silk, are being ushered through the series of offices that comprise the business premises of an eminent firm of shipowners and brokers. Arriving at last at the holy of holies, they are shown into the presence of a lordly Personage, tall and commanding, who, after the usual salutations, desires them to be seated, blows his nose with a sound like the blast of a fog-horn, and produces a stamped and sealed sheet of closely-written parchment, the contents of which he forthwith proceeds to read aloud in a way that suggests the idea that he is in the habit of addressing mobs of people during earthquakes.

On reaching the end he glances at his audience, as though expecting some applause, and rings a bell, whereupon a clerk enters the apartment, who regards the youth with a pitying smile, and winks at him surreptitiously while the Personage executes the document. It is then signed by the elderly gentleman and the



boy, the clerk appends his signature as a witness of the several acts and deeds, and departs.

Then, after agreeing that the weather is remarkably fine (as a matter of fact it is raining cats and dogs), and a courteous shaking of hands all round, the two first introduced to you retire gracefully from the Presence, leaving the indentures and a cheque for a good round sum lying on the paper-strewn office-table.

#### SCENE THE SECOND.

The East India Dock Basin. A fine, full-rigged ship, dragged along by a gang of men who have a rope—one end of which is made fast aboard—over their shoulders, is slowly moving towards the open gates, where a little double-funnelled tug is impatiently waiting for her. A new red ensign is blowing out from the ship's gaff-end, her yards are braced about, some one way, some another, and in each of her tops, lashed to the lower mast-heads, are huge carcasses of fresh meat sewn up in canvas, from out of which the end of a great red leg protrudes here and there, as though testifying to the contents of the odd-shaped bundles.

Her decks are lumbered with baskets of vegetables, coils of rope, lines that have been hurriedly hauled aboard, cargo-tackles that have been sent down from aloft, empty boxes, and so forth, while, grouped about her forecastle doors, is a crowd of noisy, dirty-looking men—the crew, as somebody remarks. Some of these are palpably drunk, and wander aimlessly about ; others are cursing and raving ; one, solemnly tipsy, is indulging

in a fitful step-dance all by himself, whistling and snapping his fingers as he gazes intently at his shuffling feet ; while another, with his arms hanging over the rail, is shedding maudlin tears and slowly shaking his head at a young girl on the quay. She wears no bonnet or anything of the sort, a thick fringe of yellow hair hangs almost to her eyebrows, her shoulders are closely wrapped in a gaudy red shawl, and she has to be forcibly held by two similarly-arrayed damsels, or she would jump towards her "fancy man," as she calls him, quite regardless of the fact that there are ten or twelve feet of water between them. Then, foiled in her efforts to break away from her companions, she storms forth a choice selection of "Billingsgate," which causes a knot of well-dressed people who are slowly walking along abreast of the ship, to stop and let her pass farther from them.

But what may strike you as being rather remarkable, so remarkable that you will probably turn round and gaze at the red ensign that floats overhead and then rub your eyes as though in doubt that such a flag can really be flying there, is the fact that these men—the crew—are not English. *Not English!* and again you look at the ship's peak. Yes, there is the old familiar flag with the Union Jack in one corner, and listen, the breeze that blows its flaunting folds across the murky sky brings to your ears the strange broken-English jargon of the seamen who will sail under it—Ah! haul down the flag—don't disgrace the splendid old colours! or stay, overhaul the signal halliards and let it go up again—the Jack *down*.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the ship's forecastle-head is a man dressed in a tall

hat and a long frock-coat ; he is the pilot, and the one he is talking to—that big, broad-shouldered man with the clean-shaven face—is the mate.

“Lay along here, some of you, and pay the hawser out !” shouts the pilot; but no one heeds him, and at last he, the mate, the second mate, and one of the elder apprentices have to do the work themselves. The other elder apprentice goes aft to the wheel and, proud of his position, waves his hand to those of his friends who have come to see him off, who smile and nod to him in return.

Then the big hawser is hauled aboard the tug and the bowline at its end is thrown over the iron hook. “All fast !” roars the mate ; the paddles revolve in the jerky way peculiar to tugs ; the hawser tautens, groans with the strain and eases as the vessel gathers way. Then one of the men who have been lugging the ship along, coils the line up and heaves it aboard, and now the people ashore have to quicken their footsteps. Handkerchiefs are waved, ladies are crying and smiling at the same time. “God bless you, my boy !” “A pleasant voyage !” “Good-bye, Harry !” “Good-bye, Fred !” are shouted across the rapidly widening gap.

A waterman's boat, the sculler hurriedly pulling her head round with one hand while he gropes for his oar with the other, puts quickly out from the pier-head. In the boat is another of the crew, drunk and lying like a sack with his head nodding over her stern. As the skiff sheers alongside, his head comes bump against the ship ; he staggers to his feet, gives a lurch, seizes a rope, and manages to clamber over the rail ; then, knowing he is

aboard all right, his senses desert him, and he falls all of a heap on the deck.

By this time the group of people ashore, their handkerchiefs fluttering like butterflies, have grown indistinct in the haze that lies on the surface of the river. "Starboard!"—"Starboard, sir!"—"Steady!"—"Steady it is!" The tug's engines are set at full speed ahead and away goes the ship against the slackening flood tide with her long jib-boom pointing seawards.

### SCENE THE THIRD.

The same ship, her yards nearly square, and with a far-reaching fringe of stun-sails at the fore, is sweeping steadily along on her outward passage before the north-east trades. It is morning and the decks have just been washed down as one may easily see, for where the masts and so on obstruct the hot sunshine are patches of partly dried moisture. Puddles of water, too, stand among the wrinkles of the tarpaulin that covers her main-hatch, and a couple of men are stowing away the brooms and scrubbers while the rest of the watch walk leisurely forward, knowing that the wished-for eight bells will soon strike and that then will come breakfast and the forenoon watch below.

"Doctor, I shoust want to see if dem muffins is doasted," says one, poking his head in at the galley door.

"Ach! I vill not haf muffins," says another; "gief to me saum chicken tart mit de craust on him all prawn und crisp."



“ Don't you pelieb a vort of vat Peter vas talk apout,” exclaims another of the watch, for by now they are all clustered by the open galley door ; “ I shall tell you better as good vat ve wants for our preakfast—eggs und pacon und greenbaize jam, tat is the stuff, my poy ! sent him into the forecastle vile I gets my knife und fork und blate retty.”

“ Is tere anydings for preakfast ? ” asks one, looking round at the rest.

“ Nudings put tea und piscuits,” replies a man who has not spoken before.

“ Vas tere none of the peef left after tinner yesterday ? ”

“ No, it vas all eden, und the pones trone overboard. Everybody vas hunkry I subbose. That Englishman in the udder watch zaies we toes not get our fair whack und wants to go aft to the gaptain apout it. Put what is the goot ? Anyhow, dere is eight pells und I gets my hook-pot.”

Presently a youngster comes quickly off the poop and races to the door of a house that is built on the deck a few paces abaft the main-mast ; he enters and almost instantly reappears carrying two tin pots. “ Don't make a row,” says he to some one inside. “ I can't help being late, the mate made me stop and finish the brasswork.” Then off he runs towards the galley.

But can it be possible that this dirty, barefooted boy, his hands black and greasy with dirt off the brasswork ; a smudge of the same all down one cheek ; dressed in a torn flannel shirt, which, open at the neck, discloses more grimy dirt ; trousers black at the knees and smeared with tar and paint—can it be that this unwashed,

untidy, and disreputable-looking thing is one and the same with the spruce youngster introduced to you in Scene the First? It is! See, he sets the two pots, which the cook has filled with tea, on the spars, and, taking a hasty glance at the berth where his watchmate is waiting, helps himself to a bit of slush from the cask standing by the galley door and cleans his filthy hands with it. He next draws a wad of oakum from the breast of his shirt, hastily rubs the grease from his paws, slings the wad overboard and hurries back, a steaming hook-pot in each hand, to breakfast. Let us follow him.

“ What a time you have been fetching the tea—it will soon be four bells!” growls a great hulking young fellow of about twenty—who is seated on a chest smoking a clay pipe—raising his eyes and looking angrily at the boy as he enters the berth.

“ I couldn't help it, Jack; I was all behind this morning. The mate sent me up to loose the main-skysail just as I was in the middle of cleaning out the fowls'-house, and when I got back the beastly ducks had upset the bucket of water, so—”

“ Ah, shut up! I don't want to hear any of your excuses. Keep me waiting for my breakfast only once more and you shall have another licking. Don't forget the day before yesterday. I was only playing with you then; if I have to strike you again you will think it was a horse kicked you! Get the mess-kid out.—*Do you hear!* ”

The mess-kid is a wooden dish evidently obtained by sawing the end off a small cask at about nine inches from the chimes. In it is a ragged-looking piece of

beef that has already been cut and hacked at most unmercifully. There is not much of it left, either, only about half a pound, probably less, and this with a few biscuits and the tea before referred to is the breakfast.

The two apprentices seat themselves on a chest with the "kid" between them, and so the meal progresses until the meat is finished, when the half-emptied hook-pots are hung to the edge of a bunk and the elder of the two boys lights his pipe and leans lazily back, while the other clears up by pushing the mess-kid and the bread-barge under a lower bunk among the odds and ends—boots and so on—that are already stowed there.

"Now then, get a bucket of water and scrub the place out, or else we shall soon have to wear our sea-boots in here; the deck is ankle-deep in muck—and how is it you can't manage to keep yourself a bit cleaner? you won't be able to see out of your eyes for filth, shortly."

"We can't afford fresh water for washing, Jack, and it hasn't rained for over a week; salt water is no good, it only hardens the dirt. I wish I might have a wash, but we can't do without water to drink, this hot weather. Besides, we owe the cook a quart—he must be paid to-day somehow or other—and there is scarcely enough in the breaker now for our pea-soup; we must make the cold tea last for drinking, until water is served out this evening."

Jack, who is evidently not in the best of tempers this fine morning, makes no reply, and, pulling off his boots, gets a book from under the pillow of his bunk and then turns in, while the youngster, who in the meantime

has fetched a bucket of salt water, commences to scrub the greasy floor.

While he is occupied in this delightful task the book drops from the hand of the elder apprentice, who has dozed off for a few seconds, and falls with a splash into the bucket of by now inky-looking water, which happens most unfortunately to be directly underneath. Then there is a torrent of curses and foul language directed at the evidently innocent boy, to which he makes no reply, but stands with the dripping book in his hand as though not knowing in the least what to do with it. His silence seems only to exasperate the elder of the two, for at last he leaps from the bunk, exclaiming, "Sulky, eh! Come here! *Come!* and hand me that chest-lashing!"

"I'm not sulky, Jack, but if I answered you it would be all the same. I can never please you whatever I do or say. Don't lick me, it's awfully cowardly."

"Cowardly, is it!" yells Jack, seizing the youngster by his arm and forcing him to the deck. "I'll teach you, you scum! I'll show you what I am! Curse you! I'll murder you!"

The whistling cuts are falling thick and heavy when—"Halloo! what's amiss?" exclaims some-one who has just looked in at the open doorway. Standing there is a powerful-looking man, dressed in a blue flannel suit and a soft felt hat. He is rather elderly, and his thick, square-cut beard is iron-grey, his face is bronzed and weather-beaten, and his eyes, brown as hazel-nuts, are flashing with anger at the scene he has interrupted.

"What's amiss?" he repeats, entering the berth and



raising the now sobbing boy from the deck. "What were you thrashing him for?" gazing sternly at the elder apprentice.

"For being cheeky, sir ; and dirty ; and—and for calling me a coward," replies he hesitatingly and with deference, for the new-comer is the second mate.

"Well, so you are, and a brutal coward too, whatever he may have done. Tell me all about it, boy.—Poor little wretch, he can't speak ! Go and sit down, my son, while I pay him out in his own coin, for that I will do, sure as my name's Jack Gudgeon !

"Now, you scoundrel, it is your turn !—what—a knife !—Take that then !" and the bully gets a blow between the eyes that sends him flying into a corner. The man springs on him, wrenches the chest-lashing from his grasp, and gives him a most well-deserved and tremendous rope's-ending, which performance you, dear reader, I hope, sincerely approve of.

#### SCENE THE FOURTH—AND LAST.

The ship's saloon. Two persons are seated at the table conversing. One of them is the second mate, the other is a tall, well-built man of about thirty, the captain of the ship, as something about his manner and appearance tells you at once. Let us listen.

"Well, Mr. Gudgeon, you know as well as I do that I should not have shipped foreigners if there had been English seamen to be got hold of. There weren't any, and I had to take these Dutchmen. They seem fairly

quiet and civil men, and we must make the best of them."

"Yes, Captain Edwards, sir ; that's true enough. As for being quiet, why they are more like sheep than men, and regular good seamen too, most of them, in regards of doing anything in the way of a job of work or the likes of that, though they take a precious long time over it, and that's a fact. Why, I reckon that I could haul off my coat and do as much work in a watch as the best four there is of them Dutchmen, though I'm getting nigh on to sixty years of age, as you might know, Captain Edwards."

"Well, yes, I suppose you must long since have completed your half-century, old friend," says the captain, shaking his second mate's hand. "It is many years ago now, since we were shipmates in the dear old *Albatross* with Captain Bowes, Harvey, Locke, and all the rest of them. Ah! these foreigners of ours would have been precious little use in a tea-clipper, Gudgeon—very little use indeed. Smart, active, daring men were required there ; men whom you could depend upon to carry out an order like lightning, and to know at times what to do without being told. These are the qualities that English seamen had and that foreigners certainly do not possess in the smallest degree. There is no life in them, they walk about the decks like men going to be shot. In fact, I can sum them up in a word : they are *wooden men*."

"Ay, so they are, sir ; and precious soft wood at that ; and, what is worse, you can call Jack Gudgeon no judge if they don't turn out paper men as well, if so be we get

caught in a breeze. I don't want to see any shortening sail in a hurry—we should be in a fine mess then, I'm thinking. A gale of wind need to give us three or four hours' notice, then we might stand a chance of getting the ship snugged down in time."

"I wonder what has become of all the English sailors," observes the captain after a pause. "Fifty years ago there were no foreigners in English ships ; now there are, to all intents and purposes, no Englishmen."

"Well, sir, do you see I might say as it ain't to be wondered at, leastways not to a man like me as has sailed before the mast for best part of his life, thereby knowing something about it, in a manner of speaking. I wish I knowed how to reel it off in a proper shipshape way ; howsomever, to begin at the beginning, there is no doubt that, as you say, fifty years ago English ships were manned by our own countrymen. Well, coming nearer to our own times, take a look back at, say, thirty years ago. There warn't so very many Dutchmen about then, though they was just getting a firm hold as I might say. Free Trade and foreign seamen came up about the same time.

"Very well, we've got so far. Now I don't suppose there's anybody as will deny—going back again to fifty years ago—that at that time, and for hundreds of years before, English sailors was out and out the best in the world at anything—fighting, standing hardships, seamanship, or what not ; if anybody does deny it let him look at the history-books, it is all logged down there plain enough. You don't find Hans Jansen going in the discovery ships to try and find the North Pole, nor yet

among the splendid ships' companies that was aboard them East Indiamen, when they engaged and beat off the French men-o'-war. No, no, that you don't!

"Next thing is, why is it? Is it because foreigners work for less pay? No, that's not the reason, though many people think it is. The Dutchmen in this ship are getting three pound a month, and me and the other able seamen in the *Albatross*, the first voyage that you and I were shipmates, Cap'n Edwards, were only getting two pound ten; and every one in that ship was English, as you will remember. When I was a boy the rate was about the same, and in them days a Dutchman for a shipmate was as rare as a pig in a parlour.

"So what I can make out of it is this—either Dutchmen are better sailors than Englishmen, and their being shipped in preference is the reason why our ships are overrunned with them, or else there's no English sailors to be had, and we must have foreigners or nobody. Now I know, sir—and so do you—that the first ain't true and that the second *is*. Where's all the scores and hundreds of men that I've been shipmates with in my time—able, good men, true as steel, brave as lions, worth a whole nation of foreigners—where are they? All ain't dead! thousands and thousands of English seamen that sailed on the blue water in my younger days have vanished! gone!

"So now all we have to study is where have they gone, and why aren't they sailing in English ships to-day? I can give you an answer to both them questions, and no living man is better able to do so. They are in the American navy—in American merchant-ships—in



the navies of all them little South American States,—ay, and in the navies of pretty nearly every nation, except their own, right throughout the world. They've been drove out of their own country's ships!—ay, sir, that they have—fairly *drove* out. If there'd been a proclamation on Tower Hill that every English seaman caught in the Port of London would be led out and shot, the business couldn't have been done more effectual, and that Free Trade business has been at the bottom of it all.

“With Free Trade came foreigners, they were encouraged to come, and when they appeared, away went our men by shoals. They wouldn't put up with it and left. Do you think a man as respects himself would sail longer than he could help with a lot of dirty, lumpish foreigners, with no more life in them than there is in millstones ; and, worse still, *be put on equal terms with them*, getting the same pay, living in the same fore-castle, and then, when it came to the pinch—the ship dismasted maybe—having to do half a dozen men's work to save his own life and the owner's property ? No, sir ; that didn't suit Jack, for one thing. Besides, you know that for English ships to be able to compete with foreign vessels in the matter of freight, their expenses have to be cut down to the last penny-piece ; the allowance of rum was stopped ; the food got screwed down, just to clear the law and that was all ; the least possible number of men were shipped, and all the likes of that, which also didn't suit Jack ; and so by twos and threes and half-dozens our good British tars left the country, and they'll never come back as long as the world turns round !



“ There, sir ; that’s the truth of it all, though perhaps it don’t matter as things have turned out, for, by-and-by, sailors of the sort I’ve been talking about won’t be wanted, seeing that steamboats are likely to be all the fashion before many years have gone by.”

\* \* \* \* \*

So much for my “scenes,” and now I think that I need not explain any farther why, what with one thing and another, one voyage to the southward at the present day was quite sufficient to cure me of my nautical ardour.





## CHAPTER II.

### OLD JACK.

ONE afternoon, after I had been in the office about a month, I was sent down to the West India Docks to get some papers signed by the captain of a large steamer whose business was being done by our firm.

She was lying in the basin, and when I went aboard there was nobody to be seen about the decks, except an old man who was sweeping down the bridge with a long-haired broom.

“No, the captain is not aboard,” said he in answer to my question. “He’s gone; and the mate is not aboard—he’s gone; and there’s nobody aboard, for they’ve all gone, except the steam-cooks below there (jerking his thumb contemptuously towards the hatchway leading to the engine-room), and poor old Jack Groves—that’s me—and I can’t go because I am the shipkeeper.”

The old fellow did not leave off his work while saying this, nor did he even look at me to see if I was listening, and just at the end of his sentence, he, having also got to the end of the bridge, swept his collection of dust over

the edge, and gave the broom a couple of knocks to shake any dirt from among the hairs.

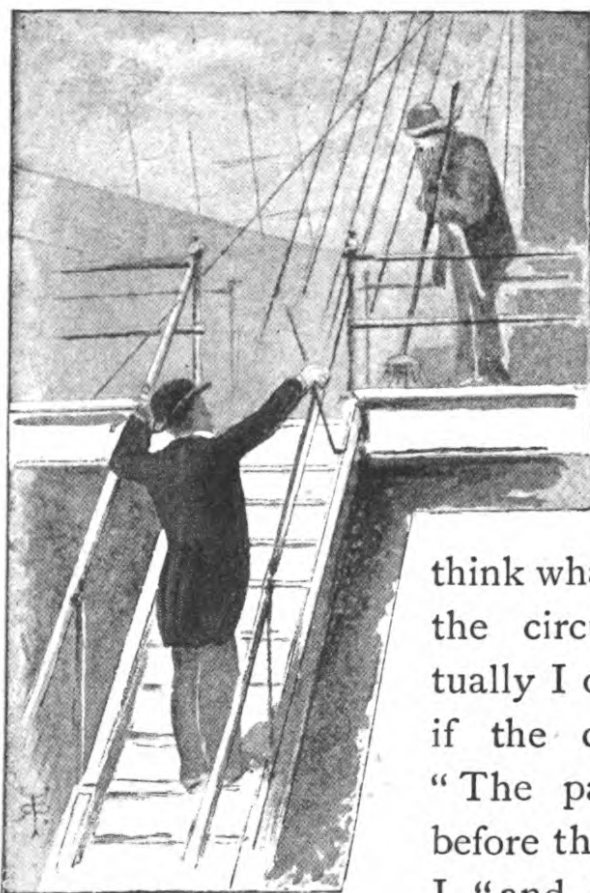
“Ugh!” muttered he, “nothing but sweep, sweep, sweep, all day long, and the blacks coming out of their chimney by shovelfuls. Why don’t they whitewash the coals?—should if *I* was the skipper, I’ll bet a guinea. I’ve worn out more brooms in these steamboats than e’er a lower-deck sweeper in her Majesty’s service—God bless her!” and so saying the old shipkeeper reverently doffed his battered hat.

“What do you want with the captain?” asked he after a pause, still not looking at me, but keeping his eyes fixed on the top of the steamer’s capacious funnel, from which a column of black smoke was curling and eddying upwards into the clear afternoon sky. “Want him to sign some papers, eh? Well, I don’t know for certain, but it’s likely enough that he won’t be back aboard to-day. She’s going to haul out at one o’clock to-morrow morning, that’s why the water-scorchers are firing up below there—making the steam, you understand—and it looks to me as though the captain has gone home to get what sleep he can in the meantime, so I don’t think he’ll be back much before the time the dock gates open. I shouldn’t if I was him.—*Mind!*”

“Mind” meant “Get out of the way!” so I stood aside while the old fellow went down the ladder, and watched him, as, having cautiously reached the deck, he walked slowly along it towards the fore end of the ship.

“What a rum fish!” thought I, “very old, though, for his hair is perfectly white!” It was splendid hair, too,

thick and silky, and brushed tidily back over his head, which wasn't a bit bald, as I had noticed when he took off his hat. So if you can imagine a massive old man with clear blue eyes, a face a perfect network of lines and wrinkles, but fresh and healthy-looking withal, a good-humoured, pleasant expression, and dressed in a



Old Jack.

clean jumper-suit of white canvas, his neat check shirt confined at the neck with a loosely-knotted black tie, you will have a good idea of Jack Groves as I first saw him.

When he got out of sight I began to think what I had better do under the circumstances, and eventually I decided to wait and see if the captain would return. "The papers must be signed before the ship leaves!" thought I, "and if he calls at the office they will be sure to tell him that I have gone on to the docks, and he will naturally follow me." That is the conclusion I came to, at all events, so I then went off the bridge, and, strolling along the main-deck towards the engines, watched the stokers hard at work in the depths of their furnace-room and listened to the fizzing, and snorting,

and clanking that was going on amongst the complicated machinery.

After a little while I happened to look for'ard, and there was the old shipkeeper beckoning to me, so I went along to where he was standing.

"Well, what is it to be—eggs or young 'uns?" asked he, as soon as I got close enough; "are you going to wait?"

"I think I'd better, because it is important that these papers should be signed, even if I have to stay here until the morning," replied I, with perhaps an exaggerated notion of my duty. "My orders were to get the captain's signature, so I don't see that there is anything for it but to wait."

"Well, that's a good boy, obey orders if you break owners was what I was taught; so, as you are going to stay, you'd better come into the galley and have a cup of tea—I'm going to have one myself—and it will help to while away the time."

"Thank you, that will be capital," said I, so off we went to the galley.

"There, sit yourself down on that stool while I boil the water, it will be ready in a brace of shakes," said my new-found acquaintance as he stirred up the fire and placed a small kettle on the stove, adding, "What was it I said my name was—up there on the bridge?"

"Jack Groves," replied I, fortunately remembering it.

"Ah, old Jack Groves, and how old do you think I am?" continued he, looking steadfastly at the galley door as though he expected it would answer him.

"About seventy, perhaps."



"Do you now—seventy, eh! Ah, I'm more than that, I'm ninety-four."

"Ninety-four!" exclaimed I. "Why I shouldn't have thought—"

"Ay, ninety-four last March," the old man went on.

"That's a lot, isn't it? Ah, a rare lot, sure enough. I'm not much use aboard a ship now, except to potter about and see after things, although in my time there weren't so many that could beat me at a weather-earring, or anywhere else aloft. Ay, for nearly seventy years I sailed over the blue water; I was fourteen years of age when I first went to sea, and eighty the last.

"There aren't many living men that have gone through what I have," he continued, "nor that have seen what I have in regards of the sea, I know; and what is more, I can remember every voyage I've made, and what happened—ah, better than what took place last week.

"I ran away from home to go to sea," continued the old man, for the first time looking straight at me, while a smile brightened his splendid face, and he winked and nodded as though it was the greatest fun in the world—"through reading a book called 'Robinson Crusoe,' mostly, and also by reason of my step-mother, who was a great deal too partial to dusting me down with a broom-handle. The old woman drove me from home, and 'Robinson Crusoe,' put me in the mind to go to sea, so one fine morning, just as the dawn was coming in, I bundled my few duds together, dropped out of my bedroom window, and was miles away before anybody knew I was gone.

"My father, I must tell you, was a small farmer at

a place near Exeter, and from there I made the best of my way towards Plymouth as being the likeliest port to go to, and, what with walking and getting a lift now and again in waggons that were going my way, I arrived at Plymouth in about three days."

"Of course I went straight down to where the ships were lying, and while I was looking at them and wondering what all the ropes were for, a cart came driving along and stopped close to where I happened to be standing.

"'Here, boy!' shouted the man who was driving, as he made fast the reins and jumped down. 'Lend us a hand to get this gear aboard the schooner; I daresay you don't mind earning a copper or two.'

"So I helped to carry the things that were in the cart—bread, meat, and so on—aboard a vessel that lay alongside the quay, and stowed them away where I was told to by a man who came up from below when the driver chap and I got down on her decks.

"When that was all done and the cart had gone off, I went up to this man and says I—innocent like—'Are you the captain, sir?'

"'Well, no, I ain't,' says he, laughing; 'nor yet the mate, though I'm the man that cooks the *mate*. What is it you want?'

"'I want to go to sea and be a sailor.'

"'What is that boy doing for'ard there?' sang out a sharp voice from aft, almost before the words were out of my mouth, and, turning about, I saw a short, sturdy little man with a red, weather-beaten face, just coming out of the companion-hatch that was on the quarter-deck.

“‘ He came aboard with the stores from Petter’s, sir—says he wants to go to sea.’

“‘ Wants to go to the divil!—Come here, boy!’

“‘ That is the captain ; run aft, my son,’ whispered the cook, so aft I went.

“‘ What’s your name?’ growled the captain, looking me up and down when I got close to him.

“‘ Johnny Groves, sir.’

“‘ Where do you belong?’

“‘ Westdown Farm, near Exeter, sir.’

“‘ How did’e get here then?’

“‘ Walked most of the way, sir.’

“‘ Run away from home?’

“‘ Yes, sir.’

“‘ Thought so—Tom!’

“‘ Hulloo!’ replied a voice from below.

“‘ Come up here for a minute.’

“‘ Presently a head appeared in the companion, and little by little a long bony man came up; he was so long that I wondered whenever the other end of him would heave in sight ; however, he got out at last, and looked, first aloft, then at the skipper, and lastly at me, without saying a word.

“‘ Run away from home, Tom ; says he wants to go to sea ; think he’ll do?’

“‘ The long man gave me another look over, turned to the captain, nodded, and went below again.

“‘ That’s the mate—Mr. Gibbs ; he don’t talk much, but when he does it is to the p’int,’ remarked the skipper, after peeping down the companion to see that the other was out of hearing. ‘ Well, boy, I like your looks, and

I'll take'e with me, so that's settled. Do what you're told, keep a civil tongue in your head, and you'll be well treated aboard here. Now go for'ard and lend the cook a hand.'

"There's our kettle boiling," exclaimed old Jack, when he had got so far with his yarn; "please to put your hand on that shelf and give me the tea—it's in the brown canister, the sugar is in that basin.

"Now, taste that and see if it is to your liking," continued he, after the usual operations had been concluded, adding, "There's no sign of the captain yet; goodness only knows when he'll be aboard."

"I hope he won't come now," said I; "I'd much rather he stayed away, at all events until you are tired of talking to me."

"Bless ye! I can talk for a month! I'm right glad to have somebody who will listen to me, and that's the truth. It is a terrible lonesome life I lead" (here the poor old fellow sighed), "for I can't open out to yarn with the steamboat men, and somehow or other—you'll excuse my saying so—it does my heart good to see you sitting there so friendly, looking like you took an interest in what a poor worn-out old seaman has got to say.

"Shall I make you another cup? Well, if you won't, you wont, but you're kindly welcome all the same."





### CHAPTER III.

“’T WAS IN TRAFALGAR’S BAY.”

“OH, ay ; the schooner. Well, she was the *Frolic*, of 140 tons or thereabouts, and the captain’s name was Dodd—Ned Dodd. She was one of the fruiterers and built for speed, like all the rest of the little clippers that used to bring home the oranges, currants, and so on, in those days.

“Ay, a pretty little schooner was the *Frolic* ; long sharp bows ; sides as round as an apple ; and a clean run aft that let her graceful hull glance along through the water with no more fuss than if she had been a fish slipping by.

“Aloft she was all that a seaman’s eye could wish to see ; faultless spars, as clean and bright as paint and scrapers could make them ; nothing slovenly, no ropes hanging in bights and sails stowed like a sojer’s kit—all was shipshape and Bristol fashion, for Captain Dodd was a man who took a pride in his ship, and would have everything in perfection.

“Well, we left Portsmouth the day after I joined her and made a smart passage out to the Mediterranean,



although we were hove to for a couple of days in the Bay of Biscay, in a raging gale of wind, under a reefed fore-trysail and storm-staysail. However, under that canvas the *Frolic* lay as snug as a little duck ; and as for shipping water, why I don't believe a bucketful came aboard during the whole time.

“ One of our frigates and a convoy of outward-bound East-Indiamen were also hove to away to windward of us when the gale came on—we were at war with France at that time, do you see—and they, or most of them anyhow, seemed to make terrible bad weather of it. I would sooner have been in our schooner than in either of the ships, big as they were.

“ Gales of wind are pretty common at sea, but that was the first one I had ever been in, and often enough before the weather broke, I wished that I had stayed at home feeding the pigs or minding the sheep. I felt as if I could even have put up with the old woman, my step-mother—broomstick and all—at the time ; and as for ‘Robinson Crusoe,’ why I hated the very name of the book.

“ Well, nothing of much account happened on the voyage until one fine morning soon after we got out clear of the Straits on the homeward passage, when, as soon as the sun rose, we made out a whole raft of ships away to the east'ard, miles off, perhaps ten, perhaps more.

“ ‘Jump down below and fetch the glass, Johnny,’ said the skipper to me, and after he had had a good look, ‘Men-of-war,’ observed he ; ‘French too, I think, by the hoist of their taupsels. Eh, Tom, what do you make of them?’ handing the glass to Mr. Gibbs.

“ ‘French,’ replied the mate, after he too had had a look.

“ ‘Keep her away a bit and let her go through the water,’ exclaimed the skipper, walking aft and looking into the binnacle. ‘I don’t want any of they “mossoos” to catch sight of us if I can help it, or else maybe some of the small fry will be for coming down our way.’

“ ‘No,’ replied the mate, with about as much expression on his face as there is in a dead-eye.

“We were close hauled on the starboard tack with the wind about north, when the light got strong enough for us to see the fleet of ships ; and, as they were standing in a south-easterly direction, the *Frolic* hadn’t been kept away for very long before they were out of sight astern, so then, of course, we hauled to the wind again.

“ ‘Nip up on the fore-topsail-yard, Johnny, take the glass, and see if there’s anything in sight,’ said the skipper, soon after the royals of the sternmost of the ships had vanished below the horizon. ‘There may be a straggler or two ; us must’n’ run foul of any of the frenches and perhaps get chased halfway to the West Indies, so keep a good look-out, my son, and don’t come down till I tell’e to.’

“Perched up there, I had a good view of the sea all around, so I kept spying about, first one way and then the other, until my eyes ached.

“After I had been there about a couple of hours, though, the white sail of a ship showed up far away to the west’ard and about a point on our weather bow. So I hailed the deck and reported the sail.

“Presently Mr. Gibbs came lumbering up the rigging

and sprawled his long body across the yard, though by the time he got there, instead of one, there was a whole bunch of ships in sight and fast rising their sails above the horizon. I thought, not knowing any better at the time, that it was the same fleet coming back after us, and even ventured to tell the mate so, whereupon he called me a 'guffey,' which I was without a doubt, and gave me a dig in the ribs as a hint to lay farther out on the yard and give him more room.

"'Glass!' said he, holding out his hand for it, without taking his eyes off the ships.

"'Can you make her out, Tom?' sang out Dodd, who was anxiously looking up at us from the weather side of the quarter-deck. '*Fore-topsail-yard there! Do you hear what I say!*' shouted he, not getting any answer to his first hail.

"'Hold on!' replied the mate, who by this time had got the glass focussed to his liking, and was taking a long look at the vessels.

"'Why can't'e spaik, then!' growled the skipper; 'I didn' holley to 'e for nort!'

"'On' deck! That's an English fleet on our weather bow!' sang out Mr. Gibbs almost directly afterwards.

"'Sure?'

"'Yes, certain!' replied he, going down the rigging three rattlins at a time and beckoning me to follow him.

"Well, there was a nice fresh breeze blowing that morning, and as we and the fleet were on opposite tacks, it wasn't long before the ships were in full view from our deck, and then there was no mistaking them; that they were English was plain as the day, about thirty sail of

line-of-battle ships, reaching in for the land under easy canvas.

“‘ Us have got good news that'll make they bustle, I know ! ’ said the skipper. ‘ Run our ensign up at the fore, or maybe they won't take no notice of us. ’ However, before the colours were hoisted, a frigate left the main body, and, cracking on sail, came flying down before the wind, so after a little while we went about and lay hove to, waiting for her.

“ When she was close enough, her stun-sails and light canvas were taken in, up went her main-sail, her helm was put down, and then, with her main-topsail aback, she came gliding along the water until she was within hailing distance on our weather quarter.

“ What a beautiful sight she was, with her sharp bows cutting through the heaving waves like a knife ; her white sails and the long rows of hammocks glistening in the hot sunshine, which threw the shadows of masts and rigging clear and sharp across the cloths ; her rounded, graceful hull, glossy as polished jet, looking like watered silk with the quivering reflections of the tossing water as it whirled by ; her main-topsail and topgallant-sail pressed tightly against the mast, and the great main-sail beneath hanging in swelling folds from its yard ; her square after canvas lifting and shivering ; her spanker and head-sails full and motionless as though they were solid rounded blocks of marble ; while the long tapering spars above, crossed by the slender royal-yards, reached high above our heads until each ended in a gilded truck, a long white pennant fluttering from the one at the main.

“ ‘ What schooner is that ! ’



“ ‘The *Frolic*, of Plymouth. I passed the enemy’s fleet at sunrise this morning, sir, steering about south-east by east.’

“ There was some excitement aboard the frigate at hearing this, I can tell you, and presently the same voice hailed us again. ‘ Did you count them ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, sir, about forty sail.’

“ ‘ South-east by east did you say ? ’

“ ‘ Well, that is as near as I could judge.’

“ ‘ Thank you, thank you ! ’ was the hurried reply, as the frigate, by this time on our weather bow, filled her sails and dashed off, her masts gay with signal flags.

“ Our message was soon known, for in a minute or so the whole fleet bore up, booms were rigged out, stunsails were quickly hoisted, and then with everything packed on them that would draw, they came ploughing grandly along on their new course, which was in a direction close to where we were lying.

“ Ay ! it was a splendid sight to see the great war-ships as they swept past our little schooner. The first that went by was the *Victory*, boy ;’ (and the old man’s voice sounded like a trumpet), ‘ she came along quite close to us, so close that as her towering hull went surging past, the wind was taken out of our sails, making the little *Frolic* curtsey as though she knew well enough in whose presence she lay, for there, standing on the high poop-deck, was the grandest seaman that ever lived—Admiral Lord NELSON.

“ When we caught sight of him, all hands of us jumped into the fore-rigging and gave three ringing cheers, and Nelson left the group of officers he was



talking with, and, looking over the rail, he smiled and took off his cocked hat to us in answer.

“After the *Victory* came the *Temeraire*, *Neptune*, *Conqueror*, *Ajax*, *Agamemnon*, *Britannia*, and others whose names were familiar enough to English people at the time—ay, and to the French as well. They had good reasons for remembering them, and we had good reasons for being proud of them.

“They *were* ships, too; noble ships, but not much use now-a-days, more's the pity. I never went aboard one of these ironclad affairs, but I saw one launched here in Blackwall a little while ago. Her name was the *Benbow*, and an uglier-looking brute of a thing I never clapped eyes on. Ugly as sin, and more like one of the things they stow away gas in than a ship. I wouldn't be seen dead in such a craft.

“Well, well; vessels *have* changed since I can mind, sure enough! I hope though that, if we should ever have to go to war, our fighting-ships will be able to give as good an account of themselves as they did in the old times. I believe they will, myself; but it was the men, do you see, that won the battles then, and now you've got to trust to machinery and the likes of that, more than to the bravery of the ships' companies—which makes a lot of difference.

“We lay there, hove to, while the fleet sailed past, and for some little time after the last ship had gone by, for somehow or other the skipper seemed a bit dubious, as though he hadn't made his mind up what to do next. First he'd look at the ships—then he'd take a few steps along the quarter-deck, with his mouth half

open and on the point of giving an order of some sort—then he'd stop all of a sudden and turn round again, but at last his face showed that he had decided upon what to do, and he shouted—'Shove the helm up!'—'Let draw the staysail sheet!'—'Starboard braces!' and went and eased away the main sheet with his own hands.

"'Where are ye going?' asked the mate.

"'Gwain!—why gwain to see the fun, to be sure!'—'Steady; keep her so!'—'Jump up there a couple of hands and rig the boom out!'—'Bend on the topmast-stunsail and hoist it up as soon as you can!'

"'The cargo,' remarked Mr. Gibbs in that solemn voice of his.

"'Oh, never you mind the cargo—go for'ard and lend a hand with that stunsail.'

"'All right,' replied the mate, with as much of a grin as his old figure-head face was capable of putting on, and off he went.

"The rearmost ships of the fleet were about three miles away by then, and we followed them at a respectful distance for the rest of the day, expecting every minute as the afternoon wore on that the enemy's fleet would heave in sight. However, the wind fell very light in the first dog-watch, and after a few variable puffs it died away altogether, so then there was nothing for it but to whistle for a breeze and wait as patiently as might be until one came.

"The sea, when the sun went down, was as smooth as oil, and the reflections of the men-of-war's masts and sails—reddened by the last of the sunlight—lay trembling on the surface of the shining water, while, as the

glare in the western sky softened and vanished, ships and sea grew less and less distinct, the darkness closed quickly in, and soon not a vestige of the fleet was to be seen.

“ Before midnight a light westerly breeze sprang up, just strong enough to keep the sails asleep and send the little *Frolic* rippling along about three knots through the water ; and though there wasn't so much wind when our watch came on deck again at four o'clock, not much more than enough to keep steerage way on her, what there was of it still blew from the west'ard.

“ When the dawn came in we made out the English fleet ahead of us, and, as the light strengthened, there, about ten miles off to the east'ard, were the enemy's ships as well, lying like ourselves almost becalmed, and showing up clear and distinct against the brightening sky.

“ ‘ There's up helm and out booms ! ’ shouted the skipper, as our fleet slowly fell off until their bowsprits pointed towards the long line of vessels to leeward.

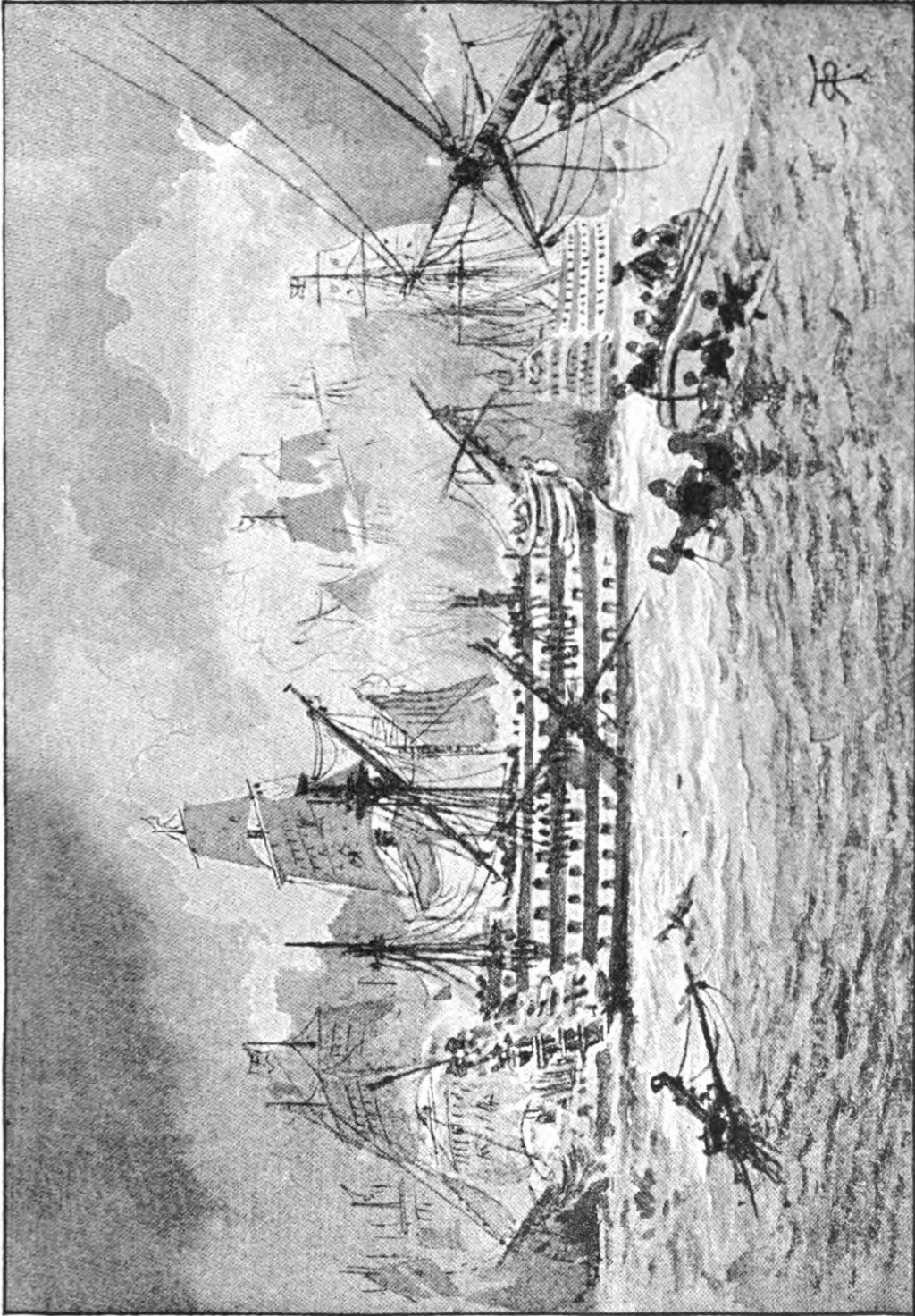
“ ‘ Ay ! ’ replied the man who was at the wheel. ‘ But with this wind they'll be some hours in getting up with them. Maybe, too, them Portugee—Spaniards, and Frencheys won't wait.’

“ ‘ Looks to me like they're becalmed and can't help waiting,’ observed Dodd.

“ Well, hour after hour went by, and closer and closer to the enemy drew the two lines of the English fleet, which, headed by the *Victory* and the *Royal Sovereign*, were steering straight for their centre.

“ ‘ Near enough, ain't we ? ’ asked the mate.

“ ‘ Yes—I think us be,'—‘ Down helm ! ’—‘ Haul aft the sheets ! ’—‘ Brace the yards aback ! ’ sang out the



TRAFALGAR.

*To face page 37.*





skipper, and then he, the mate, and I, hauled the main-boom in amidships and triced up the tack. 'There then ;' said Dodd, after this was done, 'now us can sit down nice and comfortable and watch our chaps while they wallop the French.'

" 'How do I know our ships is going to win ! why, bless the boy, what be thinking about ! *Of course they will !*'

" 'By Heaven there goes the *Sovereign !*' shouted the mate, as a hoarse roar of cheering came across the water, and bright spurts of flame and clouds of curling smoke burst from the sides of the leading ship of the line nearest to us. Then ship after ship opened fire, and before long they were all hidden from view by the rolling, eddying smoke, though sometimes when a puff of wind thinned the dense cloud we were able to catch a glimpse of torn hulls, and shattered spars, and falling masts, before it closed in again, when all we could do was to watch the wreathing shroud that hung over and around the battle, and listen with beating hearts to the wild cheering of the English and the ceaseless roar of the cannon.

" By-and-by, after the action had been going on for about two hours—by which time we could see that some, at any rate, of the enemy's ships had struck their colours—a polacre brig, flying the French ensign, came breasting her way out of the smoke and cracking on sail stood away to the south'ard. A few minutes passed and then the head-sails of another vessel appeared, and when she came out clear we made her out to be one of our frigates. She, too, was making sail with all haste,

and was evidently in chase of the polacre ; both ships, do you see, being on our lee quarter.

“Then they commenced to fire at each other, and before half a dozen shots had been exchanged the frigate's fore-topmast went over the side, carrying away her jibboom with it, so as a last resource, she rounded to at once and let drive her broadside, when down came the brig's fore-yard and main-topsail by the run. No more damage was done to the Frenchman as far as we could see, and promptly bearing up, she went off almost dead before the wind.

“‘What do you say, men?’ exclaimed our skipper, turning sharply round, ‘shall us try and stop Johnny Crapoo's brig?—the frigate will never caitch her now, and if us can't fight en, us may frighten en!’

“Lord! our chaps were in such a state of excitement that I believe they would have engaged a line-of-battle ship, much less a brig, so without saying a word they gave a cheer and, setting to work with a will, pretty soon got the little *Frolic* before the freshening wind, when off she dashed in chase.

“As soon as our sails were trimmed, we turned to and cast the guns adrift and loaded them (there were three in the schooner, two nine-pounders and a long twelve pivot-gun that was mounted in amidships, just the fore side of the mainmast), and got up all the muskets we had and loaded them too.

“You see, times were different then from what they are now, and all vessels—even coasters—were armed. England was pretty nearly always battling with France or Spain, or some other nation, in those days, and a gun

or two aboard a ship was apt to come in mighty handy now and again ; and though we in the *Frolic* trusted more to our heels than to our guns, we had them all the same so as to be on the safe side as much as possible in case a privateer or one of the Algerine pirates happened along—aye, or a pirate that wasn't an Algerine, for that matter, for the black flag hadn't been entirely swept off the high seas in the year 1805.

“ Well, there we were, going to quarters with our eight men and me, all of us as bold as brasswork, and thirsting for blood as I might say.

“ The brig, being disabled, wasn't going very fast, and we could see by the streams of clear water which spouted from her scuppers that her hull had been knocked about a bit by the frigate's broadside and that her crew were at the pumps.

“ On we dashed, overhauling her hand over fist, for I daresay even if the brig hadn't been a lame duck, we should have caught up with her before she had gone a couple of miles and as it was we were sailing three feet to her one—more very likely.

“ Presently a flash and a whirl of smoke streamed out from her quarter. *Whiz!* went the ball, close overhead, and then the report came booming up against the breeze.

“ ‘ Our turn now ! ’ shouted Dodd. ‘ Us can fire seeing as he's fired first. Stand by, Tom, while I put the helm down, and let go as soon as your gun'll bear ! ’

“ ‘ Ay, ay ! ’ replied the mate ; he was in charge of the long twelve-pounder.

“ In half a minute or so our pivot-gun rang out, and,

boy-like, jumping into the rigging to watch for the result, I saw the brig's foremast lurch from side to side, and then fall with a crash over her larboard bow. Perhaps the mast had been wounded before and our lucky shot had given it the finishing touch ; any way, there it was, so we ran down a bit closer, then gybed and luffed up on the other tack to cross her stern, when afraid of being raked and knowing that in any case they would be taken, the French hauled their colours down to show that they had struck.

“ By this time the wreck of the frigate's fore-topmast and jibboom had been cleared away, so as soon as we saw that she was before the wind and coming to take possession of the prize, we braced sharp up, hauled aft our sheets, and stood off on our homeward passage.

“ ‘ Time us was out of this, I know,’ said the skipper ; ‘ look at the clouds driving up from the sou'-west, there's a howling gale of wind coming, sure as my name's Ned Dodd.’

“ The battle, too, was very nearly over, and by this time there were precious few French or Spanish flags left flying ; for, though several of the enemy's ships had managed to escape to leeward and were crowding on sail for the land, the best part of that great fleet had surrendered to the English.

“ But what a sight of ruin and destruction ! Ships sinking—shattered hulls without a stick standing—others with a jumble of masts and spars hanging from aloft—wreckage floating about—some ships with one mast gone—others with two—yards acockbill—sails in tatters—not a single ship that wasn't more or less damaged.



“And over all the afternoon sun, whose face the hurrying storm-clouds had not yet reached, was throwing his quiet, peaceful light, tipping with gold the blue, frolicsome waves that were dancing merrily around, and brightening the rolling mass of grey battle-smoke which was floating off to leeward in one vast bank, and in which the dim shapes of the flying ships loomed like spectres, while away on our weather beam, black, angry clouds were streaming up from the horizon, their dense masses—torn and rent by the coming gale—darkening the heaving waters beneath with sweeping shadows.

“The wind drew round more southerly and blew in hard, savage gusts soon after we left the English fleet and their prizes astern, and by the time that our schooner was snugged down to close reefs there wasn’t a thing in sight except the rising seas and the wild scud flying close overhead.

“Ay, that was the battle of Trafalgar, young sir, as I daresay you’ve guessed long ago.”

Here the old man paused and lent forward with his forearms resting across his knees, evidently deep in thought, while the ruddy glow from the fire—for it was getting dusk by now—shone fitfully on his wrinkled face.

So he remained as the flickering shadows came and went, and the gloom of evening deepened, and I, unwilling to break his reverie, leant back and pondered over what I had heard.

Presently a tear fell glistening from his face and dropped on the back of one of his hands; there it lay, unheeded, and the fire, which had been burning low for a



few seconds, suddenly blazed up afresh, when the dancing lights caught the tear-drop and played round it, making it sparkle and flash like a diamond.

At last though the old man roused up—much to my relief, for I was just beginning to feel melancholy myself—and opened the stove door to see how his fire was getting on.

“You’ll excuse my sitting there studying for so long,” said he, slowly, “but the fact of it is that what I’ve been telling you has brought up memories of old shipmates dead and gone ; ay, dead and gone and forgotten scores of years ago. The thoughts of bygone times crowding round my poor old brain makes me feel desolate, and weary, and sad at heart—almost fit to pray for the day to come when the signal will be made for Jack Groves to slip his cable and proceed over the unknown sea to the haven where his worn-out, weather-beaten old hulk will be at rest.”

“Ay, it is very kind of you to try and cheer me up—very kind, and shows your good heart. I hope, if you are of the same mind, that we shall meet again, for somehow I feel another man after this bit of a yarn. I’ve got nobody to talk to—not a soul—and it is quite a treat to overhaul the log of my memory and talk about the happy, long ago days to one who shows by his face that he cares to listen.”

So of course I said I really was delighted with what I had heard—and all that sort of thing—which was not altogether an empty compliment, for it had interested me immensely ; far more, I am sadly afraid, than my account, written from memory, will interest you. Spin-

ning a yarn is one thing, but writing it is quite another matter, as I am just beginning to find out. For instance, you have no idea how some wretched words will persist in turning up where they ought not to—I mean that the same ones come too close to each other. They make me so mad at times. My mother, who is sitting at the other end of the table, looked across at me a few minutes ago while I was struggling with a most provoking sentence which sternly refused to be anything but a seething mass of “the’s” and “then’s,” and said, “My dear Freddy, what is the matter—have you got the toothache?”

So I told her my troubles and she laid hold of that sentence and took the turns out for me. It gave in immediately, too, in the most feeble manner, and becoming as pliant as a bit of well-stretched rope, graciously allowed itself to be coiled away in its place without farther trouble. I shall go to her at once for advice next time I get in a mess.

Well, old Jack and I became quite friendly and confidential, and we sat there in the steamer’s galley for a long time yarning about one thing and another. I asked if I might call him “Jack,” to which he gladly assented, and then I told him he could call me “Fred,” if he liked—“*Master* Fred,” said he; and all as pleasant as possible.

“Where are you going to-morrow, when this ship has gone?” asked I.

“Oh well, I don’t rightly know; perhaps I’ll get another one to look after, perhaps not. I must go up to the office in the morning to see, for I haven’t heard of another ship yet.”

“You needn't take the trouble to go to the City on that errand then,” said I ; “for there won't be another vessel up until Monday (this was Friday I must mention) ; so, as you will have nothing to do, suppose we take a trip down river in a Gravesend steamer to-morrow afternoon. I should like it very much ; what do you think of the idea ?”

Well, this pleased old Jack immensely, and, continuing our arrangements, we agreed, at my suggestion, to meet outside Fenchurch Street Station at half-past two ; though, to make a clean breast of it, I had thought of something else besides the excursion down to Gravesend, and that was—if I could get permission—to bring the old fellow down to our place to stay over Sunday, which accounts for my having mentioned Fenchurch Street Station. The Great Eastern Railway, you see, has the honour of carrying me to and from the City every weekday, and my people live near Snaresbrook. Of course, I didn't say anything of this project of mine to old Jack at the time, and at all events, thought I, even if I can't manage this, a trip on the river will be a change from the everlasting lawn-tennis.

The captain of the steamer came aboard shortly afterwards, and I went aft to him with my papers as soon as I knew of his arrival. “I'm very sorry you've been waiting so long,” said he, dabbing a scrubby-looking piece of blotting-paper—which didn't soak up the ink a bit, but only flattened it out—over his signatures ; “fact is I've been racing about the City all day, and this is the first time that I've been able to get a moment's rest”—(planting himself wearily on one of

the cabin seats).—"Have a glass of wine; there it is, help yourself.

"We used to call the sea a dog's life, but it is a donkey's life now, nothing but hurry and drive from one week's end to another. The ship is to haul out at one o'clock and it is past seven now"—glancing at a loud-ticking clock that hung over a sideboard at one end of the saloon—"and I've got quite half an hour's work to do with those infernal accounts and things" (there was quite a heap of papers on the table) "before I can take a run home to say good-bye to my wife. No, thank you, I don't think you can help me with them in any way, nobody understands the wretched things but me, though it is very kind of you to offer to lend me a hand. Have another glass of wine. No? well then—"

"Good-bye and a pleasant voyage," said I.

Old Jack was waiting for me at the gangway, so I wished him good-night, and as I was going ashore—"You won't forget about to-morrow, Master Fred?" said he, just loud enough for me to hear.





## CHAPTER IV.

### HOME.

I AM getting along famously ; there is no doubt about that. The governor says so, and he knows what is what. He wrote a play once, when he was young. It was acted, too, at a real theatre. There are piles of the books stowed away in the library—for the governor had his play printed, bless you—and sometimes he takes one down and reads a portion. He did just now, after he had waded through my manuscript—which he altered and added to in a most reckless manner<sup>1</sup>—and, of course, under those circumstances I couldn't help staying to listen.

“Hear this, Fred, my boy ;” said he ; “here is a beautiful bit that I poured my soul out upon ; and, would you believe it, the manager of the theatre—most senseless of men—actually ran his pen through the passage as superfluous ! Listen :—

“ ‘ I will not marry Count Leonato,  
Though you do chain me in some dungeon cell,  
Nor ever let me see the light of day ;

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<sup>1</sup> I altered it back again afterwards.—F.A.



For in the loathsome dark I'll make my moan—  
Yea ! for my murdered love I'll weep these eyes  
Until the oozy walls shall flood again,  
Nor would I cease, what tho' my life should stretch  
A century of sorrow.'

“ Then, again, there is the — ”

“ Oh yes, I know,” said I, interrupting him ; “ the part  
where they have a masque on the banks of the lake—

“ ‘ And to an end  
In dancing let all here disport themselves  
And each do as he will ; for, when the night  
Hath cast its sable mantle all around,  
Upon the water's edge some curious fires,  
Assuming different hues, will make it day.  
Nor ever let us think of going home  
Till golden clouds do fleck the rosy east ! ’

“ You see I remember, dad. I like that bit, too, and  
it seems strange that the manager rejected it. Perhaps  
he thought it sounded too much like

“ ‘ We won't go home till morning,  
Till daylight does appear ! ’

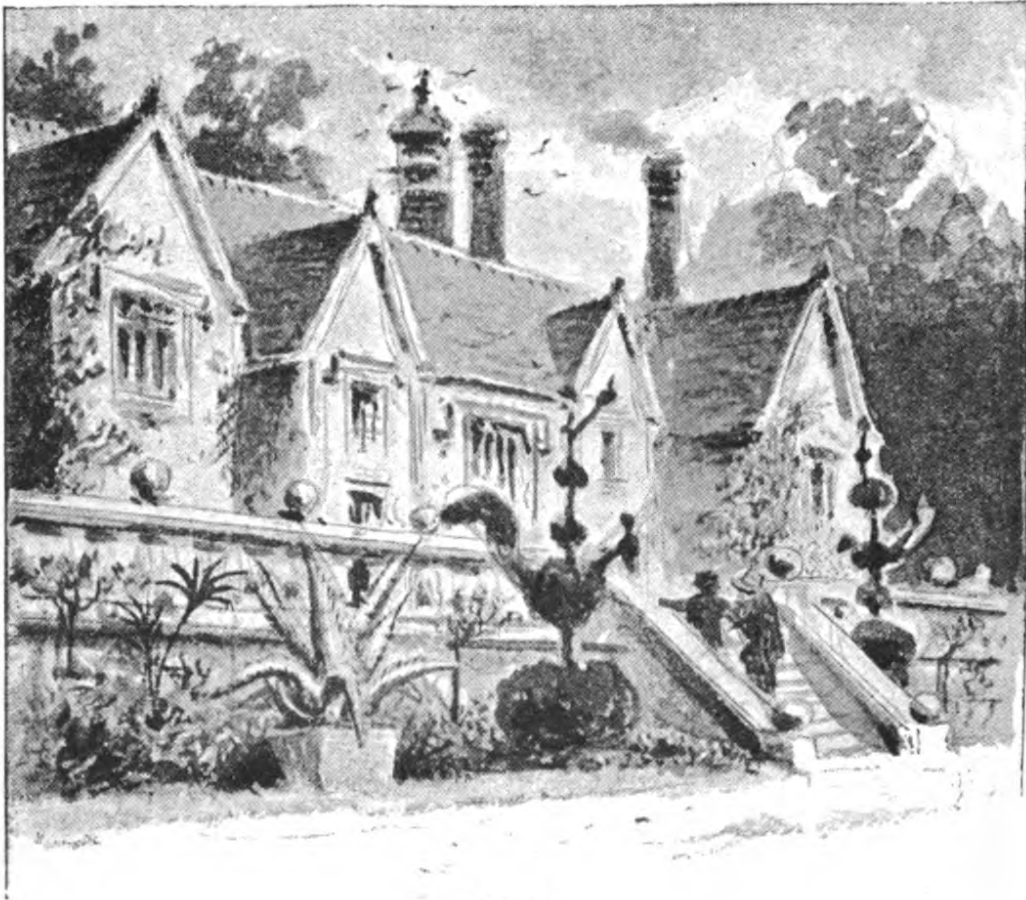
“ I must make a note of ‘ golden clouds flecking the  
rosy east ’ and ‘ night casting its sable mantle all around.’  
They will be sure to come in handy by-and-by ; perhaps  
I might stick them in somewhere with what I have  
already written. I'll just look through the sheets and  
see. And you might lend me one of the books, dad, so  
that I can crib some of your splendid descriptions and  
things. May I have the one you were reading from ?  
Thanks ; I'll take great care of it.”

That was a fairly artful stroke, thought I, on getting  
back to my own room. You see, I am obliged to nip

the governor in the bud at times. It was very different a few years ago, when listening to his play for half an hour or so and praising it judiciously meant a rattling good tip. Tips are abolished now.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ours is a jolly old house. It stands by itself, quite a



Home.

long way from the road, and you can only see one corner of it from the entrance-gates because there are such loads of trees standing about. It is built of red bricks, and is only two storeys high. The bedrooms are on the top floor, and the living-rooms are on the ground floor, and the kitchen and all those places are built out

at the back. The stables, and houses for the pigs and chickens, are right away at the end of the vegetable-garden, which is also at the back of the house ; and in front, reaching all the way to the boundary-wall, is a level lawn, with the carriage-drive winding along on one side and a quick-set hedge on the other. On the other side of the hedge is a flower-garden with hothouses stuck about in it here and there.

All round, and shutting the whole place in, is the Forest.

Some years ago the governor had a new wing built on at one end of the place because the dining-room was not quite big enough for us ; so the dining-room is in the new part now, and the old dining-room has been turned into a billiard-room, which is a much nicer plan.

Ivy grows all over one end of the house, and at the other—where the new wing was built—a huge jasmine twines its leafy branches. It was a long time, too, before the jasmine would fraternize with the staring brickwork of the new part ; but, after awhile, first one and then another little feeler crept cautiously out, as though they were spies from the main body, and now, having apparently overcome its suspicion, the old jasmine has twined and crawled along, pushing forward its invading masses so profusely and rapidly that it bids fair in a few years to cover the wall from top to bottom with its legions of pearly-green leaves and delicate white flowers.

My father and mother and Aunt Jane and I are the only people who live here, except servants, of course, and I don't think I need trouble you with any long-

winded description of either, for we are just the ordinary sort of people without being in the slightest degree remarkable. I think, though, that I had better explain that Aunt Jane is an old maid, albeit the dearest and most delightful one imaginable. She and my father are brother and sister, though she is much the elder of the two. She looks upon him and treats him as a wayward boy even now, and personally superintends him in a way that would make you smile. As for me, I am considered as of the least possible importance, so she always calls me "child"—rather a joke, isn't it, considering that I am nearly eighteen, and have been on a voyage to Australia and back! But I love the dear old lady, and so does everybody else, for, though a bit prim and precise, she is the kindest-hearted, sweetest-tempered creature in the whole world.

I was rather late, of course, that evening—the day that I first met old Jack—and dinner was half over by the time I reached home. That did not matter though, at least not very much, for I rushed upstairs, made myself presentable, hurried to the dining-room, and just managed to make up my lee-way and catch the others during dessert. Smart work, wasn't it?

"Well, Fred, now that you have a moment to spare, perhaps you will tell us what has kept you in the City so late," said the governor, sticking his fork into half a fine pear which he had been peeling, and giving it to me to pass to the *mater*..

"Yes, where have you been, child?" asked Aunt Jane.

So I told them most of what I have already told you,



and spun such a yarn, and managed so cleverly that the dear old dad fell head over heels into the trap at once.

“Gravesend in a steamer!” exclaimed he. “Nonsense! Why not bring the old fellow down here? It will do him good, and I should really like to see him. A man of his age and experience is not to be met with every day. You say he talks very nicely, too?”

“He does, indeed,” said I eagerly.

“Then bring him down to-morrow afternoon—eh, my dear?”

I just glanced at the mother then, and she was smiling—of course I knew all along that she knew what I was up to; it is no good trying to humbug *her*—so I got up and gave her a kiss; that settled the business.

“By all means,” said she, “since you are *both* so anxious that he should come.” Then, rising, she and Aunt Jane sailed off to the drawing-room, the latter, as she passed me at the door, expressing a hope that my old sailor friend would not chew tobacco during his visit.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Jack was waiting for me when I got to Fenchurch Street Station at the time we had appointed—such a swell, too, I scarcely knew him. He had been waiting there for about a quarter of an hour, as he afterwards told me.

“Well, I haven’t got another ship yet, Master Fred,” said he as we were shaking hands. “Where are you going to in such a hurry?”

“Only to get a ticket; read this while I am gone,” said I, giving him a note which I had got the governor



to write, so that the old fellow might see that everything was fair and square.

“Hold on!” exclaimed he, grabbing me by the shoulder. “What is it all about? If the letter is for me, you must read it, for without glasses my eyesight isn't good enough now to make out anything but print.”

So I opened the note and read it to him—a nicely worded invitation to Mr. John Groves, of whom the writer had heard from his son, to pay a visit to Epping Forest ; and when I had finished, I folded the letter up again and gave it back.

“Did your father write that?”

“Yes ; and I can tell you he is very anxious indeed that you should come down ; so you will, I know.”

Well, old Jack looked quite amazed, and without waiting to hear any more, I went off and got a ticket—I have a “season”—and came back and lugged him off to the platform, and bundled him into a first-class carriage before he seemed to have found his wits.

“I know whose doing this is,” said he at last, just as the train was starting ; “yours, Master Fred,” bending forward and whispering, though there was no one besides ourselves in the compartment. Then he nodded solemnly once or twice, and said no more for quite five minutes.

Well, the train soon rattled us down, and after a pleasant walk of a couple of miles or so, for the most part along a short cut through the woods, we arrived at the house, and found that there was nobody in but my mother, Aunt Jane having conveyed the governor off some time before to accompany her on a visit to the

gardener's wife (who being apparently on the point of producing one or more additions to her already well-filled household, was, of course, an object of great interest to my dear aunt); so, having requisitioned a few bottles of the best old port in the cellar—I'll back the gardener will know the taste of it before long—she and the dad had journeyed forth, much against the latter's will, without a doubt, if the truth could be known.

I introduced old Jack to my mother, and he spoke so nicely, and said "God bless you, ma'am, for your kindness," so simply and earnestly, that the *mater* took quite a fancy to the poor old fellow, and chatted to him with such tact that he, though a little nervous at first, soon became quite at his ease. So we sat in the drawing-room gossiping for ever so long, until at last the good Samaritans returned from their expedition.

"We hear that you were present at the battle of Trafalgar, Mr. Groves?" said my mother (after the newcomers had shaken hands with old Jack), looking up from her work—she was knitting me a pair of long stockings.

"Yes, ma'am, I was. Master Fred told you that, I suppose. Ay, we did have a long yarn yesterday while he was waiting for the captain of the steamer—she's not far off Beachy Head by now—." "Where is she bound, sir? Why to China, and they reckon on making a six weeks' passage out. Six weeks! ah, I was two hundred and forty days going to Shanghai one voyage; that was a long time ago, though, and when a man that had been to China was thought a good deal of."

"But surely two hundred and forty days was not the average length of a voyage to China, even then?"

“ Oh, no ; certainly not. I've been less than a hundred days on the passage several times ; that was what you might call an exception. In the first place, we made a bad start by sailing on a Friday. Next thing, our pilot stuck the ship ashore in Sea Reach through standing too far over towards the Blythe Sands on the ebb. The wind was easterly when she took the ground, but by the time the tide flowed again and fledged her off it had shifted round to sou'-west, and was blowing a living gale, so we ran into the Nore anchorage, and lay there for the best part of a week, for the wind never moderated once during the whole time, and it was as much as you could do to see the land for driving rain.

“ When the gale broke we hove up and got down as far as Dungeness, with a light breeze from the nor'ard and a clear sky overhead ; but that did not last long, for soon afterwards the wind flew away to the south'ard of west again, and we had to put back to the Downs.

“ A hurricane of wind was blowing by the time we got there, and the anchorage was full of ships, driven there, like ourselves, by stress of weather. Outward-bounders, homeward-bounders, coasters—all sorts of vessels, from great East-Indiamen to small hoys, and the like, that perhaps weren't bound farther than Dover. However, nobody dared venture round the Foreland, for a raging sea was heaving there, and at low water the surface of the Goodwins was like a boiling pot.

“ Well, there we lay, and weeks went by, nothing but gale of wind after gale of wind all the time.

“ One morning a vessel came driving in from the

west'ard with nothing but her fore-mast standing ; most likely the rest of her masts had been cut away to get her before the wind, and so she came tearing along, with her fore-sail flying in ribands from the yard, and her hull sometimes smothered from our sight in clouds of flying spray. She passed quite close to our ship, and I saw that her crew were getting the anchors ready for letting go : poor souls, they looked as though they had had a terrible time of it. Her decks were clean swept by the sea,—bulwarks gone, boats, everything was washed right out of her ; two men lashed at the wheel, and the pump-handles left shipped, which told their own tale plain enough.

“ Then she rounded to, and down went her anchor. It checked her, and she was just swinging round head to wind when the cable parted, so her other anchor was let go at once, and no doubt they surged away its cable right out to the clinch, in the hope that it would bring her up. The great rope tautened and grew out from the hawsepipe like a bar of iron, but, while we were looking and praying it would stand the strain, that cable, too, parted ; the ragged end flew up into the air like the lash of a whip ; the poor unfortunate ship's bows, rearing aloft at the same time, were whirled out of the wind, and away she flew, driven headlong towards the Goodwins.

“ In a few minutes, so it seemed, she was in the white water, and as she struck and lay over on her beam-ends, a sea rolled right over her. ‘ Look ! there goes her fore-mast ! Good God in heaven, have mercy on their souls ! ’



“ Ay, the raging, tumbling seas, mad and relentless, leapt over that poor helpless hull and trampled and stamped it to pieces, while we, standing there watching, saw the wild jumble of lashing foam that marked the spot where the ship had struck, gradually subside and then the roaring surges swept on again over the sands, with nothing of the wreck remaining to check their savage fury.

“ That was an awful sight, ay, it was ; while the fierce raving of the wind in our rigging, and the hollow thunder of the heavy seas driving against the bows as our ship plunged at her anchors, the gloom of the tempest and the whirling storm-clouds racing along overhead, made up a scene that I, old as I am, have never forgotten.

“ Well, it was over two months from the time we left the London Docks before our ship was clear of the Channel, and two more before we reached the line. Then we were dismasted off the Cape, and had to put in at Table Bay to refit ; so, altogether, the ship was two hundred and forty days in getting to Shanghai, which,” said old Jack in conclusion, “ was all through sailing on a Friday.”

After this we sat talking for ever so long, and I was glad to see that the old fellow had made a decidedly good impression, and that what he had to say was listened to with great interest. No wonder, either.

He was great fun at dinner, too, and kept us all amused, for he talked the whole time, and said such funny things that even Aunt Jane was obliged to laugh



now and again,—she is pretty grim as a rule. This is one little anecdote he told us; I think that it is worth repeating :—

“ There was once a ship that anchored off James’s Town, in St. Helena, whose captain then went ashore in his boat to arrange for fresh provisions, or something of the sort, but when he came back to the landing-place, to his great astonishment the ship was gone! So off he ran and having climbed up Ladder Hill, from there he saw her, miles to leeward, under canvas, and apparently beating up for the island against the strong south-east trades.

“ Well, hours went by, and as she did not appear to get any closer the captain made up his mind to go off to her in his boat and see what was amiss. So away he went, and getting aboard, found out what had happened. It appeared, in the first place, that directly he went ashore the mate had turned to and got drunk, and that while he was in that state the anchor, which had been let go too close to the edge of the bank, had rolled off into deep water, when, of course, off to sea went the ship. Seeing that she was driving, the second mate, who was young and knew no better, ran for’ard and let go the other anchor (in by that time about two thousand fathoms!) and veered all the cable on both before he found out that the ship was off soundings. So far, so good. Well, next thing they did was to bring to and heave away, so as to get the anchors up again; but before the first shackle came in the windlass got hopelessly disabled in some way or another, when, being at his wits’ end, the second mate had

decided to make sail at once and beat back, with the anchors and cables in tow !”

Another of his anecdotes was about a ship (they were all about ships) which had unfortunately run on a rock and stuck there. So all the passengers rushed up on deck in a great state of excitement, fidgetting and flustering, you know, like they always do, instead of staying below until they are told to come up ; and one old lady clutched the captain and screamed, “ Oh, what is the matter ! tell me, what is the matter !”

“ Nothing ; nothing, madam,” said he ; “ *only the top of the earth come through the bottom of the ship.*”

Altogether, old Jack was a great success, and, moreover, he behaved with perfect propriety, which astonished me rather at the time, I must say, for I was dreadfully afraid he would—well, put his knife in his mouth, and that sort of thing. His manners, though, were quite different to what I had expected, and the little awkwardness he showed at first soon wore off. As this may surprise you as much as it did me, I will tell you now that poor old Jack, shipkeeper though he was when I first met him, has in his time played many parts of high as well as low degree, with which slight explanation please be content for the present.

Dinner came to an end in due course, and after the ladies had cleared out—they stayed longer than usual owing to our visitor and his yarns—the governor produced some of his prime cigars, and we had a quiet smoke, to which I had been looking forward with an increasing longing for some time. I like a cigar after dinner, but at any other time I prefer a pipe—the governor does too.

So the evening passed pleasantly away, and at last old Jack looked at the clock and began to ask about the trains, because, as he said, he did not want to be late, or very likely the house he lodged at would be shut up, adding that, if so, the landlady would make a fuss at having to let him in.

“Oh, never mind about the trains,” said I. “You aren’t going back to-night—is he, dad?” to the governor, who had just re-entered the room.

“I hope not,” he replied with a smile. “In fact I—I have been thinking about you, Groves, and of your life, and so on. My wife has, too. We have been talking about you but just now; and, in short, I—that is, we—think, you know, that—Hang it all! you may stay here altogether if you like! A man who has served his country as you have shall not live friendless, and perhaps almost homeless, if I can help it. Stay here, and end your days in peace and quietness. You can make yourself very useful about the place in many ways, and—now pray don’t be agitated” (the dad himself was a bit flustered)—“Fred, give him some whisky—you’ve dropped your cigar, too. Talk it over between you, and let me know the result by-and-by.” Having said this, the dear old governor fairly bolted out of the room, leaving Jack and me staring at each other in blank amazement. I was just as much taken aback as he was at what my father had said.

“Master Fred, *is it true?* What, stop here in this beautiful place! I can’t believe it!”

“Of course it is true,” I replied; “the governor said so, and he never says a thing he doesn’t mean. But isn’t it jolly, though? I *am* so delighted, and—”

“ My blessing on you, boy ; my thankful blessing on you, and all in this house ! ” (and the poor old fellow gave me a hug, and wept for very joy). “ For years and years I have been clawing off a lee shore with the bitter winds of poverty and old age driving me broad-side-on towards the hard rocks of the workhouse ; all hope of weathering them gone ; nearer and nearer every tack ; and then, like a bright angel, the good Lord sent you to me, and—and—” Here he fairly broke down and cried like a child. So did I ; I couldn't help it.





## CHAPTER V.

### JACK'S GEOLOGY.

WELL, it was all arranged; old Jack took up his abode with us for good and all, and so quickly did he gain everybody's good opinion, that I don't think, after he had been a week in the house, that he would have been allowed to leave on any terms whatever, for not a soul under the roof but loves the simple, quaint old man. At his own request he was rated as boatswain—the servants call him "Mister Boatswain"—and he manages to occupy his time in various ways, but chiefly at carpentering work, at which he is very handy. For instance, the gate leading from the lawn to the flower-garden was rather dilapidated, so he turned to and made a new one, which was quite a work of art; and wasn't he just about proud when, it being finished and hung in its place, we all went to inspect it and admire the workmanship. And he opened and shut it, and showed how he had contrived so that in future the chickens couldn't get through to eat the geraniums—which was their wont—and simply beamed with pleasure.



But what pleases and delights us all more than anything else about old Jack is his great knowledge and wonderful memory. He has the whole of his life at his fingers' ends, and knows the names of all the ships he has ever sailed in—ay, and the names of most of his shipmates as well—from the very first day that he went to sea !

Besides that, he has perfectly wonderful powers of conversation, and, while spinning a yarn, he brings in the peculiarities of each of the persons he is talking about in a most marvellous way ; you almost fancy you hear the different voices. At descriptions he is equally splendid. His language, though generally homely, has a delightfully vigorous “go” and heartiness about it, and is at times almost grand, as, warming to his work, he brings the whole force of his imagination to bear. Hear him describe the approaching storm ; the ship struck by the raging blasts ; the wild turmoil of the ocean ; and the scene is brought before one's very eyes.

He knows something, at all events, of almost any subject you may happen to mention ; and as for science, he fairly revels in it. There is scarcely a notable book on astronomy, geology, and that sort of thing, that he hasn't read.

The governor dabbles a little in astronomy—he has a fine telescope mounted in one of the upper rooms—but he knows simply nothing about it compared to old Jack ! We happened to mention the subject one evening, when to our great surprise Jack commenced to talk astronomy, holding us quite spell-bound for a

long time by the masterly way in which he handled the phenomena of the heavens.

Afterwards he went on to geology, and told us, among many other things, how the rock of Gibraltar had at one time—probably hundreds of millions of years ago—been plucked from the coast of Africa, slung across the Straits, and slewed round, right about face, so that its original southernmost part was turned towards Spain, and *vice-versâ*.

“Then,” continued he, “look at the Isle of Portland! There it is, but it doesn’t belong there! The Isle of Portland was rooted out from the other side of the bay, slung sky-high, most likely, and pitched into its present position wrong side uppermost—upside down!

“At the top, where the prison is built, they find petrified crocodiles with ten legs a side; sharks’ teeth; whales’ teeth; oyster-shells as big as buckets; alligators; ay, and all sorts, stuck in the solid rock; while down by the sea-shore they dig out fossils of tropical trees with their branches downwards and their roots pointing to the sky; ostriches with necks twenty feet long; kangaroos; elephants’ tusks; bones of different sorts of birds and animals—all of which go to prove that Portland was capsized, like turning a turtle, with all that lived and grew upon it at the time.

“Why, I have seen something of the sort myself!” he went on. “It was when we were lying at anchor in the *London* off the town of La Guayra, in South America. Let me see, now; how long ago was that? Forty-seven years ago next May; yes, that’s right. Well, there was a Spaniard ashore at La Guayra—Don José de Mara-

villa, or some such name—who owned a coffee plantation away up in the country, the crop off which he was trying to sell to some of the merchants in the town. However, while the bargain was going on, a mountain parted company from the chain to which it belonged, and, coming roaming along through the land, ended by mooring itself right slap on the top of Don José de Maravilla's estate, burying his coffee, and his slaves, and his mules, and his waggons, and his own house. In fact, both ends and the bight of his worldly possessions lay under this mountain, which was over two thousand feet high and about four miles thick !

“But after all, what is that, or Portland, or Gibraltar either ! Why nothing at all when you come to think of the vast masses that were upended, and smashed, and whirled about when our earth was cooling, millions of millions of years ago !”

Then Jack proceeded to launch out in a long description of mighty convulsions and slow changes in what he called the earth's crust, all of which may or may not be true ; I don't know, of course. All I know is that his conversation was extremely interesting, and, studded as it was with ever-ready similes, graphic in the extreme.

When he ended his discourse the *mater* asked him how he had managed to find time to gather such stores of information ; to which old Jack replied by telling us that he had always been fond of reading scientific books, and that since leaving the sea he had spent all his leisure time at the Guildhall Library ; adding that, at one time or another, he had read most of the books on its shelves that relate to his favourite subjects.

Altogether he is, as the governor very aptly described him, a marvel.

Jack simply dotes on the mother and Aunt Jane, and reverences my father, but still "Master Fred" is *the* one, nobody in the whole world is like *him*. He is always on the look-out to render me any little service, and shows his love and gratitude in scores of ways.

But his chief delight is to yarn to me, by the hour, and pour out the treasures of his wonderful memory for my gratification; and as I am never tired of listening to him, many are the cozy evenings we have spent in my room, which is next to the governor's study on the ground floor.

Old Jack took my den into his own especial charge at the very first, and now no one else is permitted to have anything to do with it. He made racks for my guns and fishing-rods, and hung the cricket-bats, tennis-racquets, and so on, all round the walls, thus making the room twice as nice as it was before.

There we two generally sit in the evenings, and often enough the dad crawls in and joins us—it has got to be a regular custom with him lately—and oh! the clouds of smoke that are blown.

"Tell me more about the *Frolic*, Jack," said I, one evening, drawing my chair closer to the fire. It was a stormy night in the early autumn, and the "sough" of the wind in the tree-tops, and its hollow rumbling in the chimney, made the snug comfort of the cozy little room seem even more delightful than usual.

"The *Frolic*, Master Fred? ay, I can tell you a good

yarn about her—under another name, though—and of a voyage she made, the like of which I don't believe has ever been known—before or since. It wasn't another trip up the Mediterranean, but a real deep-water cruise to the South Seas and back."

Before old Jack goes any farther, I must tell you that what follows is the great Yarn which I referred to at the beginning, and which it has taken me as far as this to get to. However, the ground is all clear now, and I am rather glad that I did not start right off with it at once, omitting these explanations, and so on, which I have tried to make as little wearisome and uninteresting as possible—perhaps with only partial success.

At all events I hope that you haven't been bored.

Mr. Printer, please start a fresh chapter.







## CHAPTER VI.

### THE YARN.

“THE *Frolic* was put in dry-dock for repairs three voyages after my first trip in her—the one I told you about when we saw the great battle off Cape Trafalgar,” said old Jack, lighting his pipe, and placing his glass of grog well within reach—“and while she was lying there the owners sold her. Captain Dodd brought the news down one day, and told me (I was living aboard, you see, having no home to go to) that the vessel was sold to a gentleman who wanted her for a yacht or something of the sort. ‘Though,’ said he, ‘I can’t make out the rights of it, and they up to the office don’t know much except that she *is* sold. Any way, the new owner is coming aboard this afternoon, and then us shall be able to find out what the meaning of it all is. I shall try to stay in the ship, and I’ll put in a good word for you, Johnny, if so be I’m kept on.’

“Well, almost directly afterwards, three or four stylish-looking young men came down alongside and walked round the edge of the dock admiring the vessel. I heard one of them say what beautiful lines she had

got, and they seemed well pleased, pointing out this and that to one another, and taking stock as I might say. Presently they came aboard, and got in conversation with the skipper, who showed them all over the ship, and I daresay they stayed for the best part of an hour. When they were gone the captain came for'ard, laughing, and 'My corks!'<sup>1</sup> he exclaimed; 'this here is a rum game, warranted! What d'e think? There's about twenty young gents like they three—they're the head ones—has bought the *Frolic*, and I'm engaged to command her. I'm to ship the mate and you and a couple of able seamen, and a cook; that's the orders, and no more hands ain't wanted because the owners are going to work the vessel themselves, leastways that's what they tell about doing. It isn't for the sake of saving money, either, for they've raise my wages to half as much again as I used to git, and I am to give the rest of 'e whatever I think is fair. Besides, they're going to have the vessel turned inside out and altered below to suit their convenience, which will cost a pretty penny, sure 'nuff. They say they belong to a yacht club, here to Plymouth, and take a pride in working their own crafts, only this is a different one to handle to what they've been used to, so there must be somebody aboard to show them how things go. They be all tip-top folks too—not like us, got to airn our living. The eldest of them that was aboard just now is an admiral's son, and the one they call "Dick" is a lord, so us must mind our P's and Q's!

<sup>1</sup> This appears to have been a favourite expression with Captain Dodd.—F. A.

“ ‘ They’ve decided upon going for a long cruise when the schooner is ready for sea, but where to ain’t settled yet. Some are for going round the world ; others talk about China and Japan ; but, bimeby, they mean to hold a meeting and put it to the vote, and we shall go where the most wants to.

“ ‘ Then our decks are to be strengthened, and heavy guns are going to be mounted, and there’s to be proper navy routine when we get to sea, and all sorts of projicks. I’m sure I don’t know how it is going to act, but anyway, if the worst comes to the worst, there’ll be enough of us paid hands to manage her under the fore and aft canvas, and the wages is good, so I don’t care.’

“ Well, next morning down came shoals of carpenters and cleared away the bulk-heads fore and aft, and laid the ’tween decks all over. Then they erected new bulk-heads, dividing the space below into a nice large fore-castle and a saloon, and abaft that was a cabin for the skipper, and another for the mate, and the rest was spaced off for a sail-room and an armoury, and places for stowing gear—all being done in a sound, substantial way ; money was just going like dirt.

“ Besides all this the schooner was supplied with new sails, new gear, new spars, new boats—almost new everything in fact, for whatever the captain saw fit to condemn was sent ashore at once, and replaced with the best of its sort that could be got. The old pivot-gun was dis-rated and put below with the ballast, and in its place a fine, long, twenty-four brass gun was mounted. The two quarterdeck nine-pounders were kept, and two eighteens on each side of the main-deck, and a long nine-

pounder on the fore-castle-head were added to our armament.

“Getting these guns aboard was the last job we had before going out of dry-dock, everything else was finished then except finding a name for the schooner, and painting it on her stern ; for *Frolic* did not seem to suit our new owners—they wanted a name of their own—and though plenty had been thought of, not one had been decided upon. There were so many people to please, you see, that what one liked another didn't.

“However, a whole lot of them were aboard that afternoon, admiring the guns and frisking about all over the decks, and when the long twenty-four was mounted, and some of them were slewing it about to see how easy it worked, one suddenly exclaimed, ‘I'll tell you a good name ! Let us call her the *Hornet*, and this is her sting !’ pointing to the gun.

“Well, that was a capital idea, and as nobody had a word to say against it, *Hornet* was the name. They settled that at once, and sent ashore and got a painter there and then to come and write it in big gold letters across her stern. As for the gun, that went by the name of the ‘Sting’ for ever afterwards.

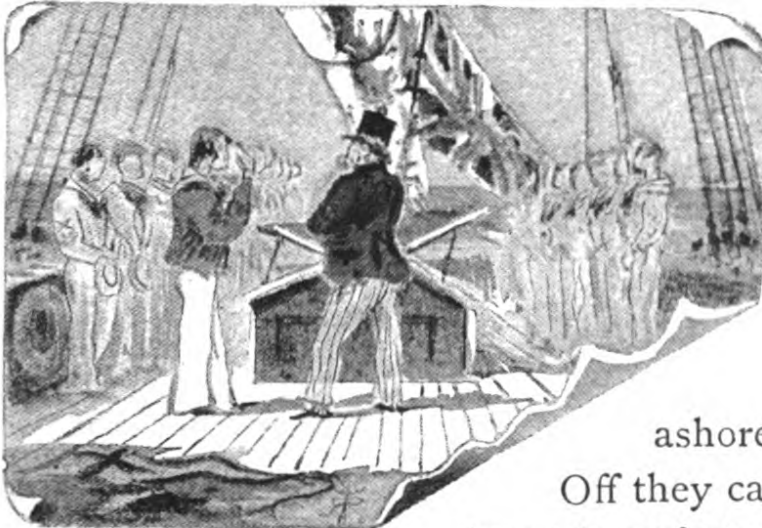
“Next morning the water was let into the dock, so we hauled out and made the schooner fast to a buoy in Stonehouse Pool. At that time only what I might call the regular crew was aboard—the skipper and the mate ; Bill Evans and Tom Jarvis, our two able seamen ; Dan Slocombe, the cook ; and me. Six of us. The other noble tars—our owners—were to join the next day, for



Dodd had persuaded them not to come before the vessel was tidied up a bit. She was, of course, in a sweet state after having been in the dry-dock for so long, and everything was at sixes and sevens.

“So, getting the dirt off the decks, washing the paint-work, putting things where they belonged, and giving her a good scrub out down below, kept us busy all the rest of the day.

“Next morning the ‘gents’—as Dodd always called



them—came down to the waterside and hailed; so Bill Evans and I took the cutter and rowed

ashore to fetch them.

Off they came aboard, in two trips what with their bags

Making a Beginning.

and belongings, and though they were all dressed in shore-going

clothes, they insisted upon pulling the boat themselves, and made her fairly smoke through the water, too!

“Then, after they had been below for a quarter of an hour or so, shifting their clothes and stowing away their gear, they came streaming up on deck, all dressed alike in white duck trousers, blue shirts, and straw hats, and going aft told the captain that they wanted to be set to work.



“‘Want to go to work, do'e, sirs,' replied Dodd with a smile. 'Very well then—'

“‘I have made out a watch-bill,' said Forrester (he was the admiral's son, and had played the leading part all along), walking towards the skipper. 'Here it is,' he continued, 'perhaps we had better begin by calling over the names.'

“‘Certainly, sir,' quoth Dodd.

“So each as his name, watch, and station were read out fell in in his place, until at last both watches were drawn up on the quarter-deck.

“‘Nothing like order, Captain Dodd,' said Forrester, when this was done, handing the watch-bill to the skipper, and then falling in himself.

“‘No, sir ; that is true—and the next order will be to get the sails out and bend them. Will'e do that first, if you please?'

“Now the bending of the sails had been left undone on purpose, for it was the work that our new owners had wished to make a beginning with, so they then set to, without farther delay and with a hearty good will, on the carrying out of their first duty on board the little *Hornet*. They were not altogether novices, you see. Sailing about in their yachts had taught them something at all events, and, besides that, one or two of their number had been to sea for a voyage or so—the skipper soon picked *them* out, you may depend—so those that knew showed the others how the work had to be done, and in the end they managed to get the sails bent all right.

“Dinner was ready by that time, so those that were aloft came down. Some came fast and some came slow,

and plenty came down the same as they went up—one rattlin at a time and gripping the shrouds as though they were in danger of being dragged out of the rigging.

“ There was plenty of shouting, laughing, and chattering on the lower-deck when they were below shifting into their uniform clothes, but at dinner there was more noise than ever. You never heard such a rumpus.—‘ Dick, sling over the loaf!’—‘ Look out! you are capsizing the gravy down my neck!’—‘ Who says spuds?’—‘ Here you are, Tommy!’—‘ Me too, please!’—‘ Cook, where’s the mustard?’ And voices clamouring for beer, which nobody heeded, until at last some one sang out, ‘ Silence! Take the time from me—now, all together. *We—are—thirsty,—and—we—want—some—BEER!*’ Then roars of laughter.

“ ‘ What do you think of them, Bill?’ asked Tom Jarvis. We three were sitting on the lockers at the far end of the fore-castle watching the performance.

“ ‘ Oh, I likes ’em!’ replied Evans; ‘ proper chaps I think they are. We shall have merry times this cruise, for sartin.’

“ ‘ Hard times for us if we get caught in a breeze!’

“ ‘ Oh, I dunno; they’ll soon larn. Besides some of them has been to sea and will come in handy—that one, the second from the end this side has, and so has the little one with the curly hair. I saw that as soon as he opened out a strand of yarns. Me and him bent the to’gan’sail, and he passed his earing all right, for I went and had a look.’

“ ‘ Did you take notice of the way the jib was bent at first?’ asked Jarvis, with a grin. ‘ They’d got it tack

uppermost, and the downhaul was made fast to the clew !'

" 'Yes ; but the fore-topsail was the worst ; one of the earings was rove twice through the jewel-block, with the end expended in about forty hitches round all parts, so I went and showed them how it ought to be passed. After I'd finished they cast the earing adrift, and then passed it afresh, so as not to forget. They thanked me for putting them in the right way of doing it, too, which shows they ain't above being told, and that's one comfort.'

" 'Yes, but the funniest part of all is to hear some of 'em trying to talk "sailor,"' said Tom. 'That big chap there came up to me just before we went to dinner, and said he really should be very much obliged if I would lend him a hand to *heave* up the fore-staysail. "Sartinly, sir," says I, though I couldn't help a bit of a laugh. "Are ye going to take the halliards to the capstan ?" —"Oh no," says he, "I think we can manage without doing that—besides, isn't the capstan only used for *hoisting* anchor ?' "





## CHAPTER VII.

### IN COMMISSION.

“ WELL, the hammocks and bedding were served out after dinner, and when they were slung and lashed up and stowed away in the nettings, we had a couple of hours’ sail drill, loosing, reefing, and stowing for practice, after which the guns were uncovered and polished up, and the brasswork as well. That kept all hands busy until about four o’clock, and then we set the fore-topsail and jib, slipped from the buoy, and, running out into the Sound, anchored about a mile off the Hoe. So, as soon as the sails were furled, yards squared, and ropes hauled taut, the club pennant was hoisted, and we fired a gun to let all whom it might concern know that the little *Hornet* was now in commission.

“ It wasn’t very long, you may depend, before we had visitors off from the shore ; fine ladies and gentlemen by the dozen, who had come to look at the schooner now that she was fit to be seen, and say good-bye to their friends, for we were to sail next morning, to cruise about

in the Channel for a month in the first place, by which time the skipper thought that his new ship's company would be knocked a bit into shape and, having learnt how to work the vessel, be then fit to start on the long voyage.

“Round the Horn to the South Sea Islands was what had been decided upon.

“It was long after dusk before the last of the visitors left the ship, and after the boats had been hoisted up, all hands went below for a jollification in the fore-castle. They kept it up, too, singing and drinking rum until close on midnight, when those who were not too lazy went and fetched their hammocks and turned in, and those who were, stretched themselves out on the lockers or on the deck under the mess-table, for it had been previously agreed that the proper routine of the ship was not to be commenced until the following day.

“I kept the anchor watch that night from twelve to one, and it was great fun to see the hardy mariners whose slings were in the saloon getting their hammocks ready and turning in, for I could look down through the skylight. One had got his hammock slung round a stancheon so that it was in the shape of a letter **L** ; however, he had managed to turn into it somehow, and was fast asleep, too, though he was curved up like a boomerang. Another, whose hammock was not hung level, had slipped down until his toes had got past the canvas and among the clews, where they were twisting and clawing about for all the world like a man's fingers playing on a harp. A third, who was the greatest fun of all, couldn't even get into his hammock, for as fast as



he went in one side he came out the other ; so after one or two attempts, each with the same ending, he stepped back a pace or two and stood still for a little while, looking thoughtful. Presently he laughed and nodded, as though he had hit on a good plan, and went and slacked away the foot lanyard of his hammock until it was low enough when he turned in, and hauled himself up as high as he could afterwards. How to make the lanyard fast again was the next difficulty, and while he lay holding the end in his hand and thinking the matter over, he went off to sleep, when of course away went the lanyard and out he came like a shot out of a shovel, landing on the deck with a bang that frightened him, so that his hair almost stood on end. That was enough hammock for one night, so he gave it up for a bad job, and saying something that sounded uncommonly like 'damson jam,' went off and stretched himself out on the lockers, leaving his hammock hanging straight up and down by the head lanyard.

"Just then the little curly-headed one came in from the forecastle ; he, spying the empty hammock, triced it up and turned in—straw hat, boots, and all on ; and there he lay, smoking and singing, 'Oh, let us be joyful !'

"It was anything but 'Oh, let us be joyful !' though, with some of them when 'Lash up and stow hammocks !' was piped at half-past five in the morning. Turning out was a very tame affair, and several—especially those who had been the noisiest overnight—had to be let down by the run before they could be induced to 'show a leg.'

“The sun was just rising above the hilltops when I got on deck, and beautiful Mount Edgcumbe lay in a haze of trembling mist that melted away and vanished at the first touch of his rosy light. A fresh easterly wind was sweeping across the blue water of the Sound, filling the sails of a few fishing-boats that were dancing along towards the harbour, while slowly standing out towards the open sea was a long straggling line of Brixham trawlers, their brown canvas showing clearly up against the green of the eastern shore.

“Several men-o'-war were lying at anchor between our schooner and the entrance to the Catwater, and one of them, a frigate, was on the point of getting under way, for I could hear the clear trill of the boatswain's pipe and the sharp words of command as plain as possible.

“‘Hands shorten in cable!’ Her blue-jackets scrambled on the forecastle head, and when the capstan-bars were shipped—‘Heave round!’

“‘Clink-clank, clink-clank, went the pauls with a merry ripple, and then the fiddler who was perched on the capstan-head commenced to play, ‘The wind that shakes the barley.’

“‘Short stay, sir!’

“‘Vast heaving—loose and make all plain sail!’

“‘Way aloft!’ and the sail-loosers scudded up her rigging.

“‘Trice up!’—‘*Lay out!*’ and in the twinkling of an eye the yards were studded with men quickly casting the gaskets adrift.

“‘Man the topsail sheets!’—‘Haul taut!’—‘*Let*

*fall!*' and the heavy folds of her canvas hung swelling and fluttering in the morning breeze.

"' Sheet home !'—' Haul taut the topsail halliards !'—' *Hoist away!*' and upwards stole her three topsail yards until, each sail being properly set, the twittering notes of the pipes sounded 'belay!' Her topgallant-sails and royals were next sheeted home and hoisted, and the head and after yards braced up for casting to starboard, when the capstan-bars were again manned.

"' Up and down, sir !'—' *Heave and aweigh!*'

"Then the anchor is broken out, and, as the frigate's bows fall off, her jibs are run up; round fly the head yards; her spanker is hauled out; the anchor, whose ring and stock have by now appeared above water, is quickly catted and fished; the gear of the courses is overhauled, fore and main tacks are boarded, sheets hauled aft, and then, bending to the breeze, the graceful vessel glides quietly along through the smooth water, with no sign of life about her now except the figures of a few officers on her quarter-deck, and the leadsman in her chains, swinging his lead in quickening circles, until away it shoots, and, followed by its snaky streak of flying line, falls with a splash into the white foam of the curling bow wave.

"' Quarter—less—seven !'

\* \* \* \* \*

"' Time us thought about getting under way, too; eh, Mr. Forrester ?'

"' Certainly, skipper, whenever you like; we are under your orders, you know.'

"' But I don't like to order you gents about.'

"' Nonsense! we came here to be ordered about.

We wish to be treated—within reasonable limits, of course—just as if we were your ordinary ship's company ; my friends and I desire it.'

“‘Very well, sir,’ laughed Dodd ; ‘so long as I understand that—’

“‘And pray don't “sir” and “mister” us,’ said somebody. ‘Call us by our names—you will know them by-and-by ; and anything you or Mr. Gibbs tell us to do we will do, or try to. We are all anxious to learn, and we want you and the others to teach us.’

“‘All right, my hearties,’ replied the skipper, ‘I understand, only if us offend 'e you must spaik. Bring to and heave away the cable !’

“We got under way—not very smart to be sure, but pretty well considering all things—and ran out towards the Eddystone to begin with, which, with the wind on the quarter and no sea to speak of at first, was very pleasant sailing. So everybody was in high glee. It was a different matter though when, having passed the rocks, we came to haul to the wind, for there was a bit of a lop on out in the Channel and the schooner had got a quick, lively way of shooting her bows through a head-sea with a sort of swinging motion that was very trying to the stomach, as well I knew, and therefore I wasn't surprised to see that several of our jolly tars began to look sad and gloomy before long and appeared to take no interest in what was going on. As for skylarking that had died a natural death as soon as the helm was put down.

“The skipper gave them a rough time of it, too. ‘'Bout ship !’ every ten minutes or so, and, though some

gave way to their sickness and wouldn't budge, most of them struggled about the decks and did what they could, managing, by being ill in the intervals, to show a bold front and go to their stations each time the *Hornet* was put about.

“ Well, we hammered away to wind'ard, past the Start and until we were to the east'ard of Berry Head, when, thinking very likely that most of us had had enough sailing for one day, Dodd made a fair wind of it and ran the schooner into Dartmouth Harbour.







## CHAPTER VIII.

### HIGH JINKS.

“NEXT day we went round to Torquay and anchored outside, off the pier, when nothing would do but we must make up a seining-party and see what fish we could catch. So the seine was passed down into the dingy, which was then taken in tow by the cutter, and off we went and shot the net over there by Paington, about half way across the bay. When it was hauled in we found half a bucketful of sand eels and two or three green crabs in the cod, nothing else; but that did not matter; as for fish, nobody cared much whether we caught any or not, and while a few of us went off in the dingy to shoot the net again, the rest scampered about bare-footed on the sands, chasing each other and skylarking to their hearts' content.

“For it was a lovely, hot July day, with scarcely a breath of wind, and so calm and clear was the water that, as our boat went slowly along, the sandy bottom, with here and there a bunch of trailing seaweed, seemed quite close under her keel.

“ And the blue lazy sea in the offing, sleeping in the golden sunlight ; the red cliffs stretching out on each side of the bay ; the shining, glistening sands, towards which, with much shouting and cheering the long row of corks, each leaving a little wake behind, is again being drawn until at last the net comes sneaking out of the water and crawls along up the beach in two long lines of glittering meshes. Then there is a rush to see the result—seaweed and stones—nothing else this time.

“ Presently—no one knows how it happens—somebody paddling about in the shallow water is tripped up and gets a wetting, so somebody immediately seizes somebody else, and after a short struggle, *souse* the pair of them go, head over heels among the tiny ripples. Then these catch others and drag them into the water, each as he gets a soaking lending a willing hand to chase, capture, and duck fresh victims. And so the fun goes on until all are drenched except a few who sneak off, and getting into the cutter strive with might and main to shove her off into deep water out of harm's way. But they are seen, and with loud shouts the others give chase, and, dashing into the water, sending the spray flying in all directions, seize the boat by her gunwale, and scramble aboard, and tumble the fugitives over the side in double quick time, and jump in after them, splashing and laughing and thoroughly enjoying the frolic.

“ When all are tired of skylarking, some one asks whether a little brandy is not considered necessary after a wetting, and as this suggestion is received with great

enthusiasm, we all troop off to the village, barefooted and dripping, in search of a public-house.

“ We haven't far to go either, for there is one just across the road and facing the sea, so we crowd into the little bar, the tiled floor of which is soon an inch deep in water, and have a wine-glassful of brandy apiece, perhaps two, I won't be certain. Then we, that is the paid hands, muster up enough money between us to buy another bottle—for sailors like to be independent, you know—and when the glasses are filled Bill Evans looks solemnly round and motions Tom Jarvis, and me to stand alongside him, So we three draw up into line, and being thus backed up, Bill proceeds to say, ‘ I hopes no offence, but me, and likewise Thomas Jarvis, able seaman, and likewise John Groves, boy, desires our dooty to you, gents all, and drinks towards your good health, and—to—to—’ Here he comes to a dead stop and glares at me, as though I could help it.

“ ‘ Happy times in the *Hornet*, and the lass that loves a sailor!’ says Jarvis, coming gallantly to the rescue, whereupon Bill nods gravely once or twice, coughs, and gazing straight up at the ceiling, begins to howl—‘ For they are jolly good fellows,’ and so on, in which melody Tom and I join, and manage pretty well considering.

“ Then Forrester speaks a few words in reply and calling upon his friends to return the compliment, we, in our turn “are jolly good fellows,’ too, which nobody can deny. With a hip, hip, hip—*hurrah!*

“ And afterwards, these performances having evidently let loose the spirit of harmony, one of the three or four

yokels who were dozing over their ale when we arrived on the scene and who have been nudging each other now and again and watching us intently ever since, suddenly lifts up his voice, and without giving the least warning commences a dismal song, of which the first line of each verse is—

“‘ Why should I sigh when Phœbe loves me?’

with

“‘ Why sho—ould I si—igh,—why should I sigh?’

for chorus.

“‘ Come, come ; belay that !’ says Bill, interrupting this woful ditty at the beginning of perhaps the tenth verse, and when for aught we know there may be ten more to follow. ‘Vast hauling and take a severe turn with Phœbe. Just you walk out here on the floor and dance ! Stand over there in front of me and do as I do. Now then, Jack’s the lad !’

“ So Bill sets to whistling and dancing, and the old countryman stands on one leg and cautiously waves the other in the air, which is as near as he can get to the sailor’s hornpipe, while everybody else roars with laughter and enjoys the fun, until—‘ Hark ! that is a gun from the *Hornet* ; it is getting dusk and we had better be going.’

“ Then the long row back, the phosphorescent water flashing in eddies of fire where our oars dip, while the dingy, towing astern with no one steering her, and her stem cocked up by the weight of nets and lines stowed in her stern-sheets, takes many a wild sheer and is some times on one quarter, sometimes on the other. Often



enough, too, her painter tautens with a jerk, when her bows are whirled round, churning up the water, and she comes flying towards us in a swirl of seething flame, looking for all the world as though she were in a devil of a rage at being plucked so violently by the nose and meant having satisfaction for the insult.

“And everybody is glad when the *Hornet's* long black hull looms dimly ahead, with some one waving a lanthorn to guide us.

“‘Where’s the fish to, then?’ asks Dodd, as, having arrived alongside, we are busy passing up the nets and gear.

“‘We haven’t any!’ replies Forrester, ‘but we have caught a lot of sport, skipper, for all that.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“Well, we cruised about in the channel for a month, by which time our ship’s company had got pretty smart at handling the vessel. They were always at it, you see—loosing, reefing, and furling, for practice ; exercising with the guns ; learning knotting and splicing, and the like, and being intelligent young fellows they soon picked up a lot of useful seamanship. What is more they took a pride in the work, and were not above asking to be shown the way to do anything, so that they learnt quickly is not to be wondered at.

“Forrester, who was nearly thirty, was the oldest ; then—let me see—there were Savary, Martin, Charley Wilson, and so on, down to little Tommy Buller, the youngest, who was only about a year older than me—I cannot remember every one of their names now, but those were the leading hands—all jovial, light-hearted



youngsters, full of skylarking and devilment, and as happy as the day was long.

“So, the month’s preliminary cruise being up, we went back to Plymouth to take in stores for the long voyage.

“It was blowing a pretty fresh breeze from the west’ard when we arrived off the Sound, and in we went flying, with leadsmen in the chains, hands at stations for shortening sail, and everybody anxious to show how smart we could bring the schooner to an anchor, for it was afternoon and the Hoe was crowded with folks promenading. Besides, there were several men-o’-war in the anchorage, and plenty of critical eyes were on the little *Hornet* as she dashed along through the rippling water. So we were on our mettle, you see.

“Everything went off without a single hitch though, and in a very few minutes after the time our anchor was let go, the sails were all stowed, yards squared by the lifts and braces, ropes hauled taut, lower booms swung out, boats lowered and made fast to the lizards, when— ‘Bravo, boys, you’ll do!’ exclaimed the skipper, rubbing his hands and fairly beaming with pleasure.

“Then along came Forrester and piped ‘Hands to clean; private clothes!’ and pretty soon afterwards our gentlemen-sailors had washed and shifted (I scarcely knew them in their shore-going rig). Next thing off they went in the boats and landed, how the people did stare to be sure!

“Well, we lay there three days getting stores and gear of all sorts aboard, and on the evening of the second day we paid hands were invited ashore to a grand dinner at the big hotel that stood just abreast of where the

*Hornet* lay at anchor. It was a sort of farewell dinner, you understand—Forrester and the rest of them got it up, and nobody but the ship's company was present. So, after tidying ourselves up and putting on our best clothes, we went ashore at the time appointed and found the others waiting for us at the hotel. They were all in evening dress and looked quite grand.

“‘Do gentry folks always dress up like this here when they'm having their grub?’ whispered Dodd to the mate, as we took our seats.

“‘Yes, I think so,’ replied Mr. Gibbs.

“‘Well, it ain't our fashion, is it, Tom? Instead of togging ourselves out we in general hauls off our coats, for freedom. Corks! I should like for haul mine off now.’

“‘Don't holler so, else they'll hear ye!’ said the mate.

“After the dinner was over and the tables were cleared, we had a little speech-making and a good deal of drinking of healths and singing, and in the course of the evening Forrester got up and proposed the health of the paid hands of the *Hornet*, coupled with the name of Captain Dodd, to which of course the skipper had to reply.

“‘Go on—stand up on your hind legs,’ said Mr. Gibbs, nudging him with his elbow. The mate's tongue was beginning to run a bit free by now—owing to the rum punch.

“‘I dunno what for say!’

“‘Oh yes you do! slack away! Say they're good men, and a little more drill won't hurt them!’

“‘You say it then!’

“‘Oh, I ain't the skipper—here, take a drink first, else

you won't be able to speak the truth. Now then, rise and shine !'

"So the skipper got up and commenced his reply.

"Gents and shipmates : I bain't much used to praitching'—(applause and shouts of 'Go it, old Doddy !')—'and not being used to praitching I hope you'll 'scuse what I say—*boy, stand up, where's your manners?* Us be all in one mind for thanking you kindly in regards of drinking our good healths and for what Mr. Forrester there has spauk about us that be your paid hands, which I for one am proud to be shipmates with you, gents all, and so us all be. As for what you've done aboard the little *Hornet*—there she lies—why I could never have believed 'twas paussible, me nor nobody else, and what I will say for sartin sure is that I'd soonder have you gents that's sot round these here tables aboard of her with me than the best two-and-twenty able seamen you could pick out of the Royal Navy. I wid so. Course, I don't mayn that you'm such good men as they, because you can't be—it ain't likely. What I do mayn is that I'd soonder have 'e for shipmates. You'm so happy, and so jovial, and so nice-spoken, and such pleasant company that I've agot terrible fond of 'e all—I have, sure 'nuff.

"Now, us am bound for a long voyage and I hope it will be a happy and comfor'able one so well, and that all hands of us will be spared to arrive back safe and sound, so us can have another dinner when 'tis all over in this here rume where us be now. I won't say no more 'cept that here's success to 'e all and a fair wind out of the Channel.'

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“ ‘ Likewise rum and tobacco and the lass that loves a sailor,’ muttered Jarvis.

“ Then Bill Evans was called upon for a song, he had a good voice, and without more ado he began to roar out,—

“ ‘Tis of a lofty Southerner that flew the stripes and stars,  
A rattling breeze from the west-nor'-west blew past her pitch-pine  
spars,  
And with her larboard tacks on board, she hung upon the gale.  
'Twas an autumn's night, as she rose the light, on the head of  
the old Kinsale.

No talk was there of shortening sail by the skipper who trod the  
poop ;  
Though by the weight of her flying-jib the boom bent like a  
hoop,  
Her groaning chess-trees told the strain she bore on her brave  
main-tack,  
And the skipper smiled as he looked astarn at her broad and her  
snow-white track.

“ What sail is that on the weather beam that hangs upon the  
breeze?

“ A sail ! a sail ! a sail ! ” they cry, “ abreast of the East  
Saltees ! ”

And by the snowy robes she wore, piled high on each lofty spar,  
They knew their morning visitor was a British man-o'-war.

“ Out booms aboard of your Southern ship, out booms, boys, and  
give her sheet,

For there's ne'er a faster keel cuts the waves in all the British  
fleet !

See how the foam past her counter flies—the surge leaps at her  
bow,

Out booms aboard of your Southern ship, spare not your canvas  
now ! ”

Up spoke the American captain, a frown all on his brow,

“ Cheer up, my lads, cheer up ! ” he cried. “ We've been harder  
chased ere now ;



Fly, fly aloft the American flag, against all England's boast!"—  
But a shot crashed through, that Yankee ship—and she sank off  
the Irish coast.'

"Well, after this there were more songs, and so the merry evening wore on until at last it was time for us to go; I daresay that the people staying at the hotel were anything but sorry when they heard us singing 'God save the King.'

"The moon was just rising when we got back aboard the schooner, and the mate—who was the least bit overcome, what with the rum punch and one thing and another—swore hard it was the sun, so nothing would do but he must stand on the capstan-head and wave his great long arms about and crow 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!' as loud as he could yell. Bill Evans, too, was a little down by the head, and we could not persuade him to turn in either. Said he, 'No white man's man-o'-war was ever known to lay at her anchor without a sentry being on deck!' so off he went and fetched up a musket and marched up and down the waist with nothing on but his shirt. I could hear his bare feet slip-slapping on the deck as I lay in my hammock, and now and again his voice,—'Steady, Sargeant! mind your starboard helm! luff, luff, and you'll weather it! Where are you running to, you lubberly son of a sea-cook? Oh—mainmast, is it? Stand still then, for two pins I'll *shot* you!'

"And then the mate's voice; he had left off crowing by now, and had got on to his great song, the only one he knew:—

"'Oh, why was I born a flow-er,  
To perish and to with-er?  
To—to die and—die and—

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“ ‘Dash the song! I forget it. Good stuff that, ashore there, but strong—too strong for them. They’re all drunk—’cept me—boy and all—young humbug—spank him in the morning—drunkenness should never be encouraged—’

“ ‘Oh, why was I born a with-er,  
To perish and to flow-er?—’

“ ‘Wish I’d got some of that what’s-a-name, fizzling wine now, I’m dry as a graven image.

“ ‘Oh, why was I born—’

“ That is the last I heard, for I went to sleep then.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE LUGGER.

“BY the forenoon of the next day we were all ready to sail, everybody was aboard, stores and gear were all stowed away, and, as soon as dinner was over, we loosed the sails, hove the anchor up and ran out into the Channel before a gentle northerly breeze.

“When night drew in we were off the Lizard, wind very light and paltry, and so we crept on until morning, when, just before sunrise, a fog came driving up from the southward and the wind dropped altogether, there wasn't a breath. We lay scarcely moving, the sea was so calm, as the thick fog, getting denser every moment, wound round the ship, drenching the sails and making each rope stream with moisture.

“Our watch—the starboard—came on deck at eight o'clock and found matters much the same as when we went below at four : thick as a hedge all round and not a ghost of a breeze anywhere. But before we had been on deck an hour, and while the skipper, and Forrester, and Charley Wilson, and one or two more were standing aft by the wheel, laughing and talking, Boom! the

report of a gun came, from what quarter of the compass nobody knew. That put a stopper on the talking and laughing, and we stood gazing into the fog in all directions for a few seconds, when the silence was broken again by a faint crashing sound, followed by a few distant shouts, and then all was still.

“‘Whatever is it, and wherever is it?’ asked Dodd, who was the first to speak. ‘I can’t tell where they sounds came from, might be outside of us, or inshore, ahead, or astarn, for all I know ; ’tis hard to say which in this here old fog. Anyway, forewarned is forearmed, so turn the hands up and go to quarters—don’t make no more noise than you can help.’

“So the guns were cast adrift and loaded, and when that was done we remained at our stations listening and wondering and peering into the wall of mist for the best part of an hour, until most of us, especially those who were below when the gun was heard, began to ask one another whether it wasn’t possible that we had been deceived after all.

“‘The gun may have been fired ashore,’ said Tommy Buller, ‘while as for the other sounds you say you heard, I dare say they proceeded from a couple of gulls fighting over a pilchard, or something of the sort ; I should laugh if, when this wretched fog does clear away, we find there isn’t a thing in sight—after all our warlike preparations too, what a joke it would be ! The worst of it is that we are being done out of our watch below, which—’

“‘Starboard braces, shift the head-sheets over !’ said the skipper in a low voice. ‘The wind will be southerly directly,’ he continued, wetting his finger and holding it up, ‘I

can feel a light draught now ; the fog is lifting, too, see how it goes rolling past—like steam out of a wash-house window.'

“ Before our yards were braced up the mist overhead had vanished, leaving the sunny sky quite clear, though all around was almost as thick as ever. Then the breeze freshened a little, the heavy folds that lay on the surface of the water grew less and less dense and disappeared, the sunlight streamed over the blue Channel waves, and ‘ Look ! ’ exclaimed the skipper, pointing towards our lee-quarter, where, about a couple of miles off, lay a big full-rigged ship with the long hull and three naked pole-masts of a lugger alongside her. ‘ Now us know what has happened, ’ he continued, ‘ that there’s a French privateer, she has fallen foul of the ship during the fog and took her ! ’

“ ‘ Yes, and she’s going to have a rub at us now, ’ said the mate, and sure enough the lugger, which when we first saw her was lying with her head to the eastward, quickly disengaged from her prize, and making a short board, tacked and stood close hauled in our direction.

“ ‘ Don’t let us run away, ’ shouted several. ‘ Why not wait for her and fight ? ’

“ ‘ No, no, ’ replied the skipper, ‘ us don’t want no fighting, let they fight that’s paid for it ; pleasuring is our biz’ns, not battling, so the best thing to do is to run away so fast as ever us can. If us was ’bliged to fight that would be another thing, but us ain’t, for the lugger will never caitch our schooner if he follows her right across to Sandy Hook, so he can chase us to his heart’s content, and welcome, the thieving divil. Besides, most likely

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there's a hundred men aboard of her, enough to eat us, schooner and all. The *Hornet* would look well tawing into Brest harbour with the French colours flying at her main-top mast head, wid'n she now ? there'd be no South Sea Islands for us then.

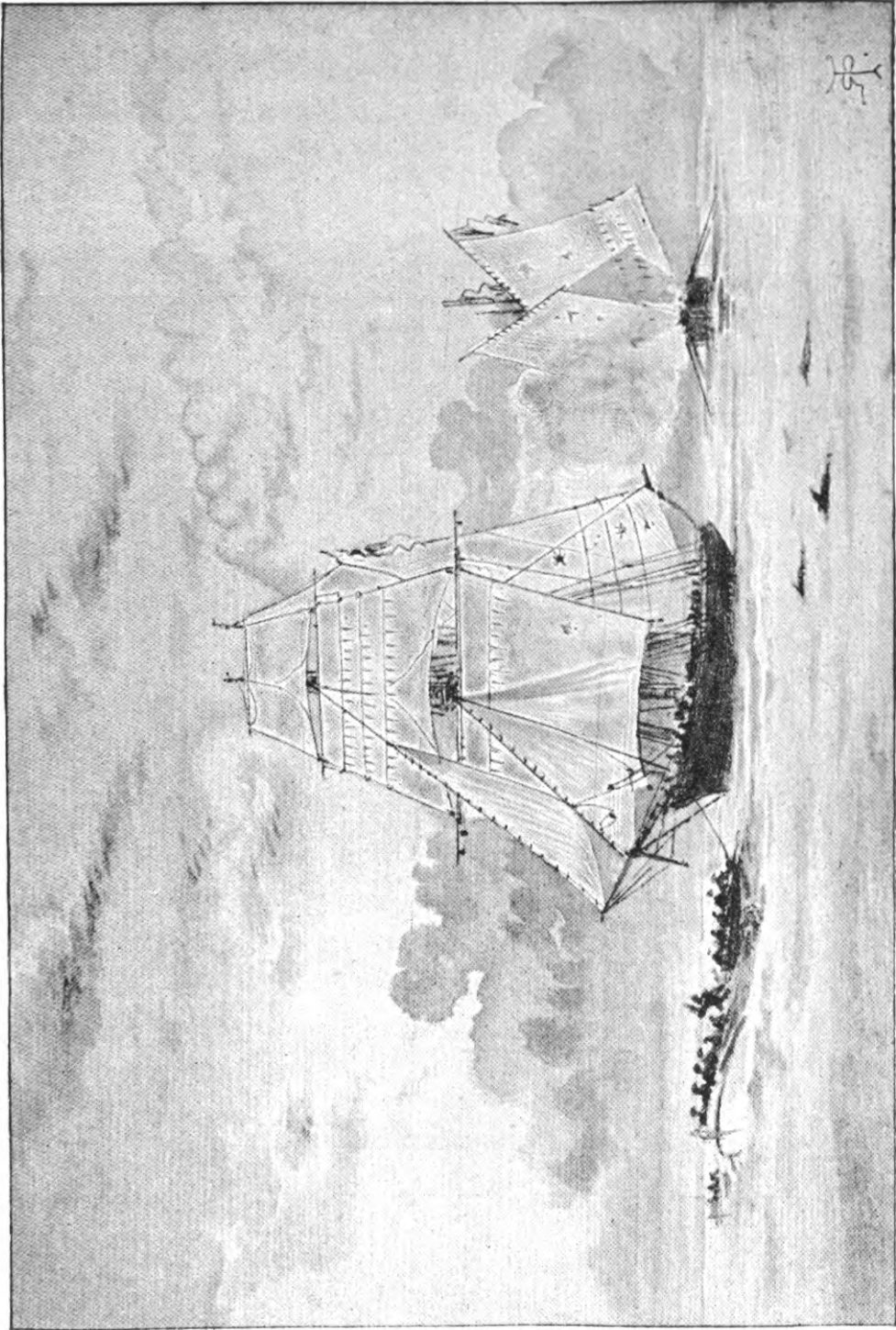
“ ‘ No, they hav'n' got such heavy guns as us carry, most likely nothing bigger'n nine-pounders, but if they bain't heavy they're stuck thick all round her, thick as wopses round a sugar-cask. Iss fy they be. There she goes, then ! I thought they'd soon find out that they might so well chase a mackerel as us.” As the skipper spoke we saw the lugger go about and head back for her prize, which by this time was standing away in a south-easterly direction, under a press of canvas, and evidently making the best of her way towards the coast of France.

“ Scarcely five minutes, though, had passed since the privateer hove about, when the wind, which all this time had been blowing a nice little breeze about south, faded right dead away, leaving the three vessels fairly becalmed, with their sails flapping and flouncing as each rose and fell on the heaving water.

“ ‘ Look, skipper, what are they doing in the lugger ? ’ asked Charley Wilson, pointing to the Frenchman, whose bows were slowly turning towards our schooner.

“ ‘ Doing ! why sweeping her head round, ’ growled Dodd, who had been looking in the same direction. ‘ They're going to have another try for us sure as there's chips in the dockyard. No sign of a breeze, either, and as them luggers will sweep three knots easy, why it looks to me like— Ay, here she comes, four sweeps a side, and each one stuck as thick with men as there's room for—





CHASED.

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that's granted. Forrester! call away the boats! Be smart, there's good lads; get a line over the bows and see how fast you can tow her along. 'Tisn' much good, I'm feared, any way that's the best thing us can do, and maybe there'll be a breeze in time to pull us away from that there soup-sucking parley-woo after all.'

"So the boats were quickly lowered and manned, and in a minute or so they were all ahead of the *Hornet* in a long string, the cutter, the two gigs, and even the little dingy, each crew rowing their hardest and making the tow-rope tauten now and again with a jerk that sent the water flying from it as from a trundled mop. But strain at our oars as we might, we could not move the schooner more than two knots through the water, so, as the lugger was doing a good three, in about half an hour after we commenced to tow, she was no more than a mile astern, and of course picking us up hand over fist.

"Then, as luck would have it, another fleecy mass of fog came rolling over the water and hid first the lugger's prize and then the lugger herself from our view. Before long, too, it hemmed the *Hornet* in, until from the cutter, where I was, even the other boats were scarcely visible, and the schooner's blurred and shadowy outline seemed but a darker patch in the thickening mist.

"Then the skipper's voice hailed us, 'Forrester! pull broad out on the starboard bow, us may give them the slip that way. Row as hard as you can for ten minutes—I'll call'e when the time's up—then bring the boats alongside and come aboard.'

"So we towed away in the new direction until

presently we were hailed again. 'That's far enough, hook on and hoist the boats up as quiet as you can!'

"When that was done the skipper called us all aft and said, 'They can't be far off now ; what shall us do if so be they fall in with us—fight or give in?'

"'Fight!' replied everybody.

"'Very well then, arm yourselves and stand to your guns, keep a good look-out, for perhaps they'll send a boat on ahead—and God bless and guard you all, my dear boys. I'd sooner have my head sawed off than harm should come to any of 'e.'

"I was stationed at the starboard nine-pounder on the quarter-deck, so we saw that our gun was all ready, and then there was nothing to do but to wait and listen. That was the worst part of all; standing there gazing into a fog that was so thick that there might have been a boat within half a dozen yards of the ship for all we knew or could see ; expecting every minute that the lugger would suddenly break through the mist and pour her broadside into us ; everybody wrought up to such a pitch of excitement that the perspiration stood on our faces in great drops.

"'Hist!' suddenly whispered the skipper, holding up his hand. 'Can't you hear anything?'

"'Yes, I can hear the dip of the sweeps,' muttered Forrester in reply.

"And so did all of us, for by then the measured rise and fall and groaning of the heavy oars came plainly over the water.

"Nearer and nearer, plainer and plainer, until they sounded quite close at hand. Seconds seemed minutes,

and my heart throbbed like it would burst with excitement.

“ Suddenly a voice came, sharp and distinct in the thick fog, giving some order in French, when the noise of the oars stopped for a few seconds ; another voice answered, and next the confused murmur of a lot of men all talking at once fell on our ears. Then the oars went to work again, but not nearing us this time, and the lugger had evidently been put on a new course, for farther and farther off they sounded until at last nothing was to be heard, strain our ears as we might.

“ ‘ What was it they said ? ’ asked the skipper of young Tommy Buller, who had come tiptoeing aft as though he was afraid that even his light step might be heard.

“ ‘ The first one said, “ Stop rowing. We are too far to the northward ; ” and the other replied, “ English beasts— they have given us the slip, let us try the other way. Steer south. ” ’ ”

“ ‘ Well done then ! ’ said the skipper, laughing, ‘ let them steer south to their heart’s content, us won’t grumble. ’ ”

“ The words were scarcely out of his mouth when once more the fog rolled rapidly away, and once more the lugger and the ship came, shadowy at first but soon plainly in view, the former about three-quarters of a mile distant.

“ We were seen, of course, and round came the lugger, but just as she was once again making straight for us, a light breath of air came up from the south-west, sufficient to give us steerage way and that was all.

“ At that time, do you see, we were heading west, or



thereabouts, and the lugger—pulling for us as hard as they could dash their sweeps into the water—was heading about north.

“‘Now’s our chance, Tom!’ shouted the skipper, ‘give’em the “sting”—the long gun will reach, easy. Quick’s the word and sharp’s the motion. Let go at her!’ So the mate, who was captain of the long pivot-gun, trained it on the weather-beam and presently he fired. Bang! the report rang out, and—crash—went the shot into the lugger’s hull, tearing the splinters out and ripping a white streak for yards along her black side.

“‘Again so!’ yelled the captain. “The eighteens will reach her now! aim straight and let drive at her. Fire the broadside—forecastle gun and all. Give them plenty of elevation!’

“‘Now—when you’re ready!’

“‘Stand by!—FIRE!’

“When the smoke of our five guns had drifted away to leeward before the freshening breeze, we saw that the Frenchman’s fore-lug was on deck with the yard shot in two, while, besides that, there was a gap knocked out of her bulwarks that you could have driven a waggon through—if there had been one handy.

“In came her sweeps then, and we saw that her crew were busy fishing the fore-yard. I’ll be bound that they wished we were forty miles away.

“Of course—being in that mess--we might have given them the slip easy enough if we had wished to do so, but no—Johnny Bull had got his fighting boots on then, so in went another broadside, and down came her main-lug this time, with the halliards shot away. That

damage they soon put to rights though, and hoisted the sail.

“By this time they had made some sort of a lash-up of their fore-yard, for up went that sail as well, and then they rounded to on the starboard tack, which being the opposite to the one that we were on, looked as though they had had enough of it.

“As the lugger came flying up in the wind (there was a fresh breeze by now) she fired her broadside at us, but the balls all fell short, not one reached us. They next hauled aft their sheets, and no doubt would have gone back to their prize—if we had let them. But we were not in the humour, then, to fall in with their views, so round we went and gave chase, firing the pivot-gun and the fore-castle carronade, as quick as hands could load them. The other guns would not bear, you see, now that we were both on the same tack.

“Well, we did pepper that lugger, almost every shot struck her somewhere or the other, and at last she tacked again and came reaching along straight for us.

“We did not want her too close, that was not our game, you understand, so down went *our* helm then, and as the *Hornet* came up head to wind we slapped another broadside into the Frenchman, and when the smoke cleared away we saw that her main-mast was over the side.

“Cheer! I should think we did cheer.

“‘Now we’ve got them!’—‘Steady the helm!’—‘Lay the yards square!’—‘Haul over the head-sheets!’—‘Up main-tack!’ shouted Dodd; and as the *Hornet* stopped and went astern, ‘Starboard braces!’—‘Ease off the main-sheet!’

“Round went our bows towards the lugger, which, with the wreck of the main-mast over her side, had stopped dead in her course.

“‘Lee braces!’—‘Haul aft the jib and staysail sheets! and then, with the wind on our starboard beam, we dashed off, straight for the privateer.

“‘Load with grape and fire into her waist so as to keep them from clearing away the wreck. Smart with that bow gun!’

“Bang! bang! and whiz! flew the grape, knocking off splinters in all directions. ‘Well done, my hearties! Now stand by to rake her while I put the helm up’—the skipper himself was at the wheel,—and as we flew across the lugger’s bows at pistol-shot distance, our five guns flashed out once more, when we heard by the shrieks and yells that terrible execution had been done.

“Down went our helm when we were well to leeward of the Frenchman, the *Hornet* shot up into the wind, stopped, and then, with her staysail-sheet to wind’ard and fore-topsail aback, she lay hove-to on the enemy’s lee-quarter, not more than fifty yards separating the two vessels.

There we remained, dashing the grape into her for I dare say a quarter of an hour; and, though they tried to get their after-guns to bear on us, and did manage to fire a few rounds, but without doing much damage, her crew soon had enough of it, and, hastening away for’ard, tumbled below out of harm’s way.

“There was only one that stayed on deck, an old white-haired man, the skipper as we found out afterwards. He stood there shaking his fist at us and stamping with rage.

“‘Sing out to him to haul down his colours!’ shouted the captain. So Tommy Buller hailed him in French, but that only made him worse; he tore his hair like a madman, and actually commenced to lever one of the weather after-guns round so as to get it to bear on us.

“‘Shoot him! Here, give me a musket!’ cried the mate.

“‘Don’t fire at the gallant old fellow,’ said Forrester. ‘Hail him again, and tell him that if he doesn’t knock off and haul down his flag, we will shoot him and sink his ship into the bargain.’ So we shouted again, when the old man jumped up on the rail and tore his shirt open, as much as to say ‘Fire then!’ But we did not, of course; so at last he got slowly down and let go the signal-halliards, when the tricolour ran down by its own weight and dropped fluttering into the sea to leeward.

“‘Man and arm the cutter!’ sang out the skipper. ‘Mr. Gibbs, do you go in the boat. Take some spikes and a hammer with you, and when you get aboard the prize, muster up all the arms and heave them overboard, and make the prisoners fast; then go round the decks and spike the guns, all but the two after ones, train them for’ard along the decks—you understand—and clear away the wreck of the mainmast; let it go overboard. Shove her round then; she will stay all right under her fore and mizen lugs. I’ll keep by you, and then we will go and have a look at the ship, so as to finish the job off proper.’

“For I must tell you that the ship hove about when the lugger’s mast went over the side, and was coming



back to her assistance until they saw that she had struck, when they promptly tacked, and stood off about south-east again.

“I went in the cutter, and a few strokes of the oars having brought us alongside the prize, we made the boat fast and scrambled aboard. A glance showed what havoc our guns had played. The decks fore and aft were torn up in furrows by the grape. Dead and wounded Frenchmen lay about in all directions, and where our round-shot had struck, everything was smashed and dashed to bits. Then the mate and Tommy Buller—he could speak the best French—went up to the captain of the lugger, who was sitting on the breech of a gun crying like a child, and spoke to him ; so presently he called his crew upon deck one at a time, each as he came out of the fore-scuttle placing his arms on the deck in front of us, not with a very good grace, it is true.

“‘Now heave that lot overboard,’ said the mate, when the last man had been disarmed. ‘Unbend the cable from the anchor and bend it on again over the rail. Tell them Frenchmen to lie down on the deck to leeward in a line, and range the cable along ; make each one well fast to it, and give them notice that on the first signs of trouble *the anchor will be let go!* Stand by the stopper one hand for that purpose. Maybe we shan’t be under the *Hornet’s* guns directly,’ continued he, ‘and it is best to be on the safe side, seeing that there’s over fifty prisoners.’

“That was soon done, and then we carried out our other orders—spiked the guns, cut away the gear and let the main-mast, yard, sail and all, go adrift—when, freed from the wreck, the lugger shot ahead. As soon as she



had way enough we tacked, and stood off in chase of the ship, with the little *Hornet* skimming along on our weather quarter under her main-sail and head canvas only.

“‘What do you think the old French skipper said when Mr. Gibbs and I first went up to him?’ laughed Tommy Buller (he and I and one or two more had been told off to mount guard over the prisoners directly after the lugger was full on the other tack). ‘Why he said, “The *Bon Dieu* preserve us! We have been captured by a toy ship manned by children! Ah! but these English are terrible! Their boys are men, and their men are fiends!’”’

“The wind had been increasing all this time, until by now there was a pretty smart breeze blowing, quite as much as we wanted without the main-lug; and though the mate talked at first of rigging a jury main-mast, he soon thought better of it,—indeed, as it was, we were coming up with the ship hand over hand, for she was but a dull sailer.

“Well, we had no trouble in retaking the ship, for as soon as her prize-crew found that they were getting within range of the *Hornet’s* guns as she came lumbering up in the wind, down came the French flag, the English ensign was hoisted in its stead immediately afterwards, and we heard by the cheer that came over the water that her own crew had been set at liberty.





## CHAPTER X.

### PRIZES.

“THE *Hornet* made more sail then, and quickly leaving us astern, passed close to leeward of the ship, hailing her as she went by. We could not hear the hail, but, seeing that the ship and the *Hornet* as well were being got before the wind, we too bore up, and in a few minutes the three vessels were heading in a northerly direction, when with her spread of square canvas the ship was able to keep up with us.

“‘Where are we going now?’ asked Forrester.

“‘Plymouth,’ replied the mate, with a grin.

“It was about three o’clock in the afternoon when we bore up, and with that breeze it was not long before the Eddystone was in sight ahead; and, in a couple of hours after passing the reef of rocks, the three vessels were tearing along up Plymouth Sound, the lugger and the ship with English flags over French ones at each mast-head, and the *Hornet* with all the ensigns and union-jacks that she possessed flying from her trucks and her gaff-end.

“‘Cast the prisoners adrift, they are safe enough

now,' exclaimed Mr. Gibbs. 'Take the cable through the hawse-pipe and bend it to the anchor again. Bill (to Evans), go you for'ard and see all clear for letting go, we shall bring up directly.'

"'Well, they can't call us "pinafore-sailors" now,' said Tommy Buller.

"'Is that what they called ye?' asked the mate, with a smile.

"'Yes, that or "butterfly blue-jackets," replied Tommy. 'You have no idea how the people ashore used to chaff us. They prophesied that we should get frightened as soon as we lost sight of the land and come back before long.'

"'Well, so we have,' observed the mate. 'I suppose they didn't think to mention that we was to bring a couple of prizes with us; eh now? Ah! I thought not, that's where the error crept in, you see.'

"'Are you all ready, for'ard there?'

"'All ready, sir,' replied Evans, turning over the coil of the fore-halliards, which he had just seen clear for running.

"By this time we had got well in towards the head of the Sound, where several men-o'-war were lying, and we could see their crews clustering on the fore-castle-heads or gazing at us over the hammocks, as we came flying along. While passing the first ship—a seventy-four—a pipe rang sharply out followed by the order, 'Hands, cheer ship!' and her crew, jumping into the rigging, burst into a hurricane of wild cheering, which was taken up by ship after ship as we drove by. Excited! I should think we were, and I know very well that Dodd

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would not have changed places, just then, with the King on his throne !

“ Well, we anchored at last under the lee of Drake's Island, when there was more cheering, and boats coming off from the shore by dozens, and boats from the men-o'-war. I was glad enough when a pinnace came alongside the lugger with a party of blue jackets to take charge of her and the prisoners, for then we got into our cutter and rowed back to the *Hornet*.

“ ‘ By Jove, I hope the old cook hasn't forgotten us ! ’ said Tommy, when we got aboard. ‘ We've had nothing to eat since breakfast, you know. ’

“ ‘ The divil a bite, ’ said the mate. ‘ Let the others hoist our boat up, they had their grub coming along, I'll bet. ’

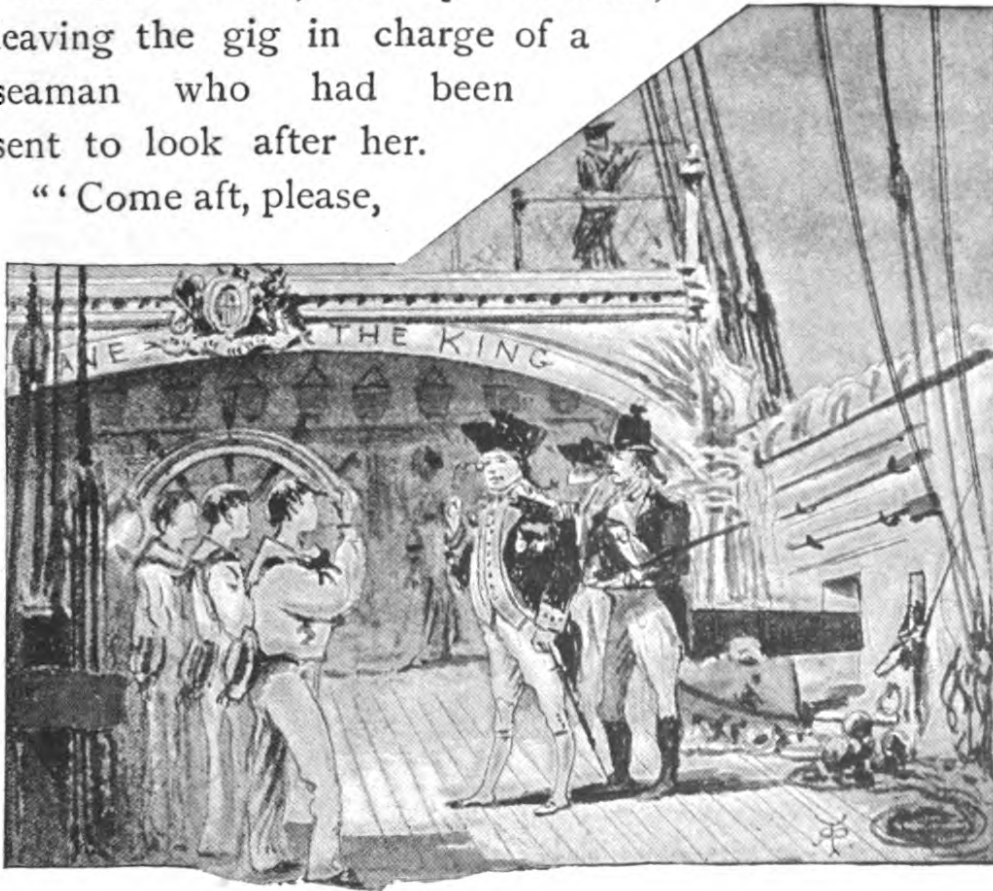
“ ‘ Couldn't 'e find nort to ait in the lugger then ? ’ asked Dodd. ‘ Well, us thought as much, so go down into the forecastle, your tay is all ready for 'e, and Dan Slocome has a-fried up enough ham for two or dree hunderd men '—we didn't wait to hear any more.

“ The meal over we went on deck again, when the skipper told Forrester that a note had just been brought by a boat from the flag-ship asking that details of the action might be sent to the port admiral as quickly as possible. So while Forrester went below to write an account of the affair, Dodd picked out a gig's crew and told us to clean ourselves. He picked the six youngest, too—there wasn't one over eighteen—however, we had all had a finger in the pie, and three of us had been in the prize-crew with Mr. Gibbs. When the dispatch was ready, we rowed off with it to the flag-ship,

which was the *Hibernia*, 104 guns, at that time the largest ship in the English navy, and, on getting alongside, Tommy Buller, who was our coxswain, climbed aboard with the paper in the breast of his white frock.

“He had not been gone more than a minute or two before a midshipman looked down over the side and beckoned to us; so up we went, leaving the gig in charge of a seaman who had been sent to look after her.

“Come aft, please,



The Admiral.

Admiral Young wants to see you,' said the same midshipman, when we lighted on the man-o'-war's deck. So we walked along towards the after part of the ship where, by the break of the poop, stood a group of officers, with Master Tommy in their midst. They



turned round when we approached and one—the admiral, as I found out afterwards—said, ‘Oh, these are more of your fire-eating crew, I suppose?’

“‘Yes, sir!’ replied Tommy, as bold as brass, and mentioning our names. ‘Those two were in the cutter when we boarded the lugger, he was one of the pivot-gun’s crew’—and so on.

“‘The day-vil!’ laughed the admiral, holding up his eye-glass and taking a look at us. ‘Gad! I nay-ver!—Daim it! it’s too rich—too rich by Gad! Come and shake hands with me, you midges!’

“‘However, when it came to my turn I explained that I was only the ship’s boy. ‘Well, well,’ said he kindly, ‘that’s a good lad, never sail under false colours; but we will shake hands all the same, though—day-vil take it if we don’t! Gallant little fellows, by Gad! Eh gentlemen? Gallant boys!—warms one’s blood to look at them. Would give a year’s pay to have seen the action—would by Gad!’ Then, turning to Tommy, ‘Pray go on with your story. How many Frenchmen did you say were in the lugger when you boarded her?’

“‘Fifty-two, sir, besides dead and wounded, so we tied them to the cable and told them if they didn’t behave that we would let go the anchor and—’

“‘Glorious!’ laughed the admiral; all the other officers were laughing too. ‘*Tied* them to the cable, did you? Ha! ha!—boy, you will be the death of me!—Ha! ha! ha! Day-vil take it! Well, go on!’

“‘Then we nailed up the touch-holes of all the guns and threw the broken main-mast overboard; and—well

that's all, sir, for the ship gave in when she saw us coming, so we sailed in here.'

" 'Gad! next thing they will be bringing the French fleet in—will, by Gad! Well, well, a gallant affair. I must come and inspect your smart little schooner and her crew of gentlemen-sailors to-morrow morning, and make the acquaintance of—what's his name?—Dodd, ah yes, your skipper, Dodd, who handled and fought his ship so skilfully.'

"Just then another officer, an old sea-dog as any one could see, came along from for'ard and stood with his cap in his hand waiting for the admiral to notice him.

" 'Well, what is it, Mr. Jones?'

" 'Ax your pardon, sir—the men—the men, sir—'

" 'Day-vil take it! what about the men?'

" 'Well, sir, the men, sir, wants—Bad luck to me! begging your honour's pardon—I thought I'd got it all coiled down clear for running. Anyway, it's them embroidered Nelsons (pointing to us), as the men wants to see and shake hands with before they leave the ship, and if your honour don't object, and me, being as I might say a delicate, has come to ax permission, sir.'

"Everybody roared with laughter at the name the boatswain had given us. 'Embroidered Nelsons!'—Good, by Gad!—Exquisite!' exclaimed Admiral Young. 'Yes, tell the men (raising his voice and looking along the deck to where a dozen or so of the ship's company were standing and watching their ambassador), tell them the boys shall come for'ard directly. "Embroidered Nelsons!" Delicious that, by Gad!'



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE VOYAGE.

“WELL, next day we left Plymouth again with a fresh nor'-westerly breeze that hardened as the day wore on, until by the time the English coast was sinking under the horizon astern, we had to clew up the gaff-topsail and topgallant-sail and haul down our flying-jib. Even then the little *Hornet* had as much canvas set as she could well stand up under, and was flying through the water like an arrow from the bow, shouldering the waves aside with her sharp bows and darkening the foot of her jib with the clouds of spray she flung in the air.

“This breeze lasted for days and carried us well to the south'ard of the Western Islands, when it gradually died away, and then, after being troubled with light variable winds and calms for the best part of a week, we picked up the north-east trades and sailed merrily away under all the canvas we could spread.

“Another fortnight brought us down to the line, when, according to the usual custom in those days, Neptune came aboard. The awkward part of it was though, that except Dodd and Bill Evans nobody in the

ship had been so far to the southward before; consequently Bill had to be Neptune and do the best he could by himself—for of course the skipper could not well take any part in the performance. However, what was going to happen was kept a secret from most of us, and on the evening of the day we crossed the line, when all those not in the plot had been sent below on one pretence or another, a sharp hail of—‘Ahoy! the schooner, ahoy!’ was suddenly heard, followed by—‘Heave your vessel to, I want to come aboard!’

“‘Tumble up there! Weather braces!’ shouted the skipper, and of course everybody was on deck in no time, wondering what was the matter and looking about to see where the hail had come from.

“Before we had time to get to the braces, though, Neptune—dressed up in the usual way—came scrambling aboard over the lee quarter, and—”

“What is the usual way?” asked I—Fred.

“Oh, well,’ replied old Jack, “he is generally rigged out as a sort of ornamental king, with a tin crown, and robes made of old canvas painted red and trimmed with seaweed. Then he wears a wig and a beard made of long manilla yarns teased out, and his face is rubbed all over with flour, so as to make him look a bit ancient.

“‘Didn’t you hear me hollering?’ asked our Neptune, walking across the deck to where the skipper was standing cap in hand to receive him. ‘I’ve been in chase of this schooner,’ continued he, ‘for the last four hours and a pretty fine dance you have led me. Ah! an old friend and subject of mine, Captain Dodd, I see. How do? The missus would be well pleased to see



you, Captain Dodd, but she and the rest of the court is miles astarn, for I had to dig out and come on by myself. Whew ! I'm that out of breath with racing arter ye, I'd like a drink of rum.

“ ‘ Thanky, never mind the water, 'tis good enough without water.

“ ‘ So this is your ship's company, sir. H'm ! I see there's plenty of novices aboard here as ain't been acrost my kingdom afore. Pity my barber is out of hail, he'd enjoy a rasp at some of them checks with his hoop iron razor. The missus, too—she is that fond of children—’

“ ‘ Look here, old cock ! ’ said Tommy Buller, walking up to Neptune and laughing in his very face—‘ *That* for you and your barber too ’ (snapping his fingers), ‘ and if your horrible old wife had come aboard with you we would have tarred and feathered her !

“ ‘ Oh, no ; I don't suppose you ever have been talked to like this before, but *we* have the whip hand now—go down on your knees, you frightful old scarecrow, and beg for mercy ! Seize him, boys—seize him ! ”

“ So we man-handled poor Neptune—all in fun, of course—and doused him with water, and lathered him with slush, and shaved him with a three-cornered scraper, and then chased him round the decks with buckets of water and swabs until at last Neptune, by managing to give us the slip, bundled below into the forecastle out of harm's way.

“ Well, we touched at Rio Janeiro for water and provisions, and it was, I think, the third day after leaving there that an adventure happened along, the first one of any importance since our action with the privateer.



“It was in the forenoon watch on that day, and we had the wind, a light breeze, from the north-east. Towards four bells a sail was reported on our weather quarter, and we soon made her out to be a brig, heading in a westerly direction. So, seeing which way she was steering, the skipper put her down as being bound in to one of the South American ports, though scarcely had he said so before we saw her square away and come running down towards us with stu’nsails set at the fore both sides. She was favoured by the wind, too, which with us had died away to the faintest of faint airs, and catching a breeze that darkened the water around and just ahead of her, while everywhere else the ocean lay like a sheet of polished steel, she managed to get within about three miles of us; then, having done that much for her, it faded away and left her fairly becalmed and heading all round the compass, though the *Hornet*, retaining the faintest of airs in her canvas, was just able to keep steerage way and that was all.

“‘Hoist up our ensign and see if he’ll show his colours,’ said Dodd, who was looking at the brig through the glass—she was lying nearly broadside on to us then.

“‘See! they are hoisting a flag, or something of the sort,’ exclaimed Tommy Buller directly afterwards, and while our ensign was being run up—‘There goes a gun, too, to call attention to the fact.’

“‘Ay,’ said the skipper, ‘tis a great black flag, ’most so big as her spanker, that’s hanging there to the gaff-end—like a man stringed up by the neck. Now they’ve belayed the halliards to the foot of the mast so us can have a good look, and I see there’s a zigzaggy streak

runs across it, meant for a flash of lightning most likely. My gracious! her's a pirate sure as us be born!

“Well, if there's no wind they can't catch us, and if we get a breeze the *Hornet* will soon show them a clean pair of heels,' said Tommy.

“Breeze! I wish us could get a breeze,' muttered Dodd, 'sha'n't though—or not in time, wus luck.'

“Not in time for what?' asked Forrester.

“Why, they'm lowering the boats,' replied the skipper slowly, and without taking his eyes off the brig—'and arming them, too, I see the cutlasses glinting in the sun—like Tom Allen the watchmaker's shop window home, when—ay, here they come! four boats, full of men, too. Well, there's nort for it, I suppose, and I'll war'n' they wid'n' be so anxious about coming if they knowed so much as us do.'

“Then shutting up his glass with a snap the skipper told us to go to quarters.

“So the guns were loaded and run out, which took but a few minutes, and then the helm being presently put hard down, the *Hornet* slowly brought her broadside to bear on the advancing boats, which by this time were not more than a mile and a half off and foaming through the glassy water with each coxswain standing up in the stern sheets and cheering on his men as they bent at the long oars.

“Fire, Tom, as soon as you think you can reach them with the “Sting.’”

“Ay, ay, sir,' replied the mate, squinting along his sights.

“A few more minutes passed, and then our long gun

thundered out, and its charge of grape whistled and dashed among the boats, tearing up the water in a long line in front and behind them.

“‘Bravo, Tom! that was a good shot!’ shouted Dodd; ‘I’ll bet a guinea you hit something else besides watter that time!’

“The boats, which up to now had been pulling along in a cluster, separated immediately after receiving our fire, and, though they still came on straight for us, a good deal of the dash seemed to have been taken out of them, while in one especially the oars were worked in a very limp fashion.

“‘Fire again, and let them have the whole broadside this time!’ sang out the skipper, ‘then they’ll know the sort of stuff us am made of.—Are you all ready? Stand by then!—*Fire!*’

“When the smoke from our guns cleared away—and owing to there being scarcely a breath of wind, it hung over the water for a long time—we saw that one of the boats was in distress and evidently sinking fast, and that the other three were pulling as hard as they could to her assistance. Before the nearest one reached her, though, she filled and went down.

“Quickly the first of the rescuing boats dashed up to the spot where their shipmates’ heads were bobbing about in the water, but for a little while we could not make out what her crew were about, for though some were lugging the men inboard with all haste, others appeared to be cutting and hacking at them with their cutlasses; while, listening, we heard piercing shrieks of agony clear and distinct in the breathless calm.

“‘What on earth are they doing!’ exclaimed Forrester. ‘Killing their own men?’

“‘No,’ replied the skipper, grimly; ‘other things is swimming there besides men; *there’s sharks!* That’s dog eat dog—ain’t it? So go it, pirate, go it, shark!’

“‘Fire again?’ asked the mate; ‘now’s our chance, while they are all of a heap!’

“‘No; hold on a minute!’ shouted Dodd, excitedly. ‘Look! by Heaven, they’ve capsized the other boat!’

“And as he spoke, we, gazing spellbound, saw that the half-dozen or so of men that, having reached the nearest boat, had been desperately struggling to climb into her, by their efforts had dragged her gunwale under, when, in the twinkling of an eye, she filled and turned bottom upwards, pitching her crew into the water, which all around was lashed and worried into foam as the ravenous sharks darted at and seized the helpless seamen, rending them, whirling them to and fro—a horrible sight.

“From the sinking of the first boat to the capsizing of the second was but a couple of minutes or so, and very soon afterwards the other two boats arrived on the spot, which they had scarcely reached when a light westerly breeze sprang up, and—‘Cease firing! unload and secure the guns!’ said the skipper, turning away with a shudder and looking over the other quarter, where the ruffled blue on the horizon told of a freshening wind—‘Haul the yards round and shift the head sheets over!’—then to the helmsman, ‘Let her come up to her course!’

“‘You don’t mean to have a rap at the pirate, then?’ asked Mr. Gibbs, walking aft.

“‘No, that I’m sure I don’t,’ replied Dodd; ‘and no more will they at us, I reckon. The sight of the sharks wolfing up them men has made me all over shivers, and I sha’n’t be sorry when us am fifty miles away.—Here, lend us a hand to haul in a bit of the main sheet.’

“The brig, when she took the breeze, stood on towards her boats, and by the time our schooner had been got on her course the two that remained afloat were pulling slowly back to meet her. On getting alongside they were hoisted aboard, when the brig immediately tacked and stood away close-hauled to the north-west.

“‘There she goes, then,’ observed the mate; ‘and joy go with her.’

“‘Ay,’ said Dodd, ‘and she makes the second one that’s caught a *Hornet*.’







## CHAPTER XII.

### THE VOYAGE CONTINUED.

“COLDER and colder got the weather, and higher and higher stood the four sentinel stars of the Southern Cross each night, as, with strong and favourable winds, we sailed away towards Cape Horn.

“Now that same cape is not to be trifled with, even in the summer months; so on reaching the latitude of the Falkland Islands, we set to work and sent the yards down on deck, struck both topmasts and the jib-boom, unbent the fore-sail and main-sail and bent a fore and a main trysail in their places, unshipped the booms and gaffs, and lashed all the spars in amidships.

“Still, day after day, the fair wind and fine weather lasted, until, being far enough south, we edged away to the westward to double the Cape.

“Naturally enough, I suppose, a good many of us thought that the preparations we had made for bad weather had better have been left undone; and Tommy Buller even went so far as to tell Dodd that it was a pity we hadn't kept our spars and big sails aloft so as to get along quicker.

“‘Aw, that’s what you think, is it?’ replied the skipper, screwing his face up until you could scarcely see his eyes. ‘Want to see our main-sail and fore-top-sail sot, do ’e? Pretty fine dido of a mess us should be in then if it comed on to blow, now shouldn’t us? This here’s a windy cornder,’ continued Dodd after a pause, ‘I can tell ’e that, and us bain’t round en yet.’



Off Cape Horn.

“Sure enough our friendly breeze dropped that very evening, and a heavy rolling swell came heaving up from the north-west, making the little *Hornet* lollop and stagger about—like a drunken man going over heaps of stones—and before the last of the daylight died away a

bank of inky clouds appeared in the same quarter of the compass, and, rapidly rising, drove across the sky towards us.

“ ‘ Here it comes, then ! ’ shouted the skipper. ‘ Haul down the jib and staysail—lower the main-trysail and make it fast ! Reef the fore-trysail—be smart, boys ! ’

“ This was quickly done, and then—whew ! the gale dashed down upon us, bearing the schooner over almost on her beam-ends with its first wild gust. Slowly she righted and, shaking herself free from the water that had rushed aboard over her lee-rail, then lay hove-to under her reefed fore-trysail, riding over the by now raging seas like a sea-gull, and making splendid weather of it ; and, although now and again a sheet of hissing spray would be flung from her weather-bow high over the lower mast-heads, she took no more heavy water aboard.

“ It was our watch on deck, and most of us were crouching under the weather bulwarks to shelter ourselves as best we might from the icy wind, and from the hail, and the driving snow that lashed down whenever, with a deeper roar in the wild voice of the storm, a squall whirled screeching by ; and presently Dodd came crawling along from aft and bawled to us that as everything was snug we could go below. ‘ Bill Evans and me is enough to stop on deck now,’ said he ; ‘ only you, Forrester, and Charlie Wilson, and one or two more of the biggest of ’e, be ready to come out in case anything should car’ away, or that. The rest can turn in.’

“ I could not go to sleep for a long time. I lay in my hammock listening to the thud of the seas and watching

the little swinging lamp as it danced about—now almost touching the beam behind it as the schooner toiled up the vast slope of one of the tremendous waves until the roar of its breaking crest seemed over, under, and all around—then flying forward with a jerk as her bows plunged down into the hollow, while the wild sweeping yell of the angry gale sounded fainter and fainter until climbing the next roller it burst forth again in all its fury.

“The wind came round more southerly, and moderated a little during the night, and at daybreak we shook out the reef in the fore-trysail and set the main-trysail and staysail. All that day and until the next noon we drove on, when, being far enough to the west’ard, according to the skipper’s calculation, we bore up and went flying away on a nor’-west course, wind and sea going down, and every appearance of fine weather.

“Next morning we sent up our topmasts, crossed the yards, rigged out the jib-boom, and got the *Hornet* under all her canvas again ; so, the fair wind standing, in a week or thereabouts we were up in the hot weather.

“‘Well, now, where do ’e want to go to?’ said the skipper one day to Forrester, who was at the wheel. ‘Us must soon be thinking about shaping a course. There’s the Society Islands and the Marquesas out yonder’ (pointing over the larboard bow), ‘and the Feejees and the Friendlys further on to the west’ard—which wid ’e like to go to?’

“‘Oh, never mind about any of those,’ said Forrester, ‘let’s try and find out some new ones for ourselves ; I daresay there are plenty.’

“‘Plenty ! ay my, more than us shall ever find, I’ll



war'n'. My old grand'fer was out here, whaling, for years and years, and I've heard en tell about these here islands, and how they used to come across new ones by dozens. Ay, and about the people that lives in them : pretty fine lot they be, too, by all accounts—ravageeing one 'nother's islands, and aiting all the folks they caitch. Corks! why, I'll bet a guinea they'd ait us, and glad of the chance !'

“ ‘ Well, we mustn't give them the chance to eat us,' said Forrester, with a laugh. ‘ Besides,' continued he, ‘ seeing that the devil isn't as black as he is painted, it is pretty certain that the reputation of these savages hasn't been improved upon in travellers' tales—the reverse, most likely.' ”

“ ‘ Well, I donnaw nort, one way or t'other,' remarked the skipper. ‘ If they'm bad, they'm bad, and if they'm good, they'm good—us can't alter 'em, so us must take 'em as they be, and trust to luck, I suppose. I'll tell 'e what I think is best to do, and that is—Johnny' (to me), ‘ run down below, and fetch up the big chart, he's on the table in my berth. ”

“ ‘ There now, spread en out on the deck. Look here, Forrester—boy, take hold of the wheel for a bit— “ here's where us was at twelve o'clock to-day. Now I think the best plan is to let her keep on like her's going now, so as to get up in the thick of the south-east trades, and then alter the course and steer due west. By sailing straight on, us shall fall in with whatever islands is there waiting to be found out, if so be there is any, and if not, why us must try somewhere else.' ”

“ Then Tommy Buller arrived on the quarter-deck,



and—‘What are you two old gossips prating about so seriously?’ asked he, squeezing himself in between the skipper and Forrester, who were still on their hands and knees over the chart. ‘Let’s look—where’s England? Oh, I see it—there.’

“‘You ass! that’s New Zealand!’ replied Forrester, giving him a shove with his elbow that sent Master Tommy flying.

“Well, Dodd’s advice was acted upon, and the course was altered when, in his judgment, we had got far enough to the nor’ard. Then, with her jibboom-end pointing due west, and her white sails filled by the cool, steadily-rushing trade-wind, the little *Hornet* sped quickly on over the dancing waters of the solitary Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

“Day after day passed by and nothing hove in sight, except now and again a frolicsome school of porpoises, or a few silently-skimming albatrosses, until one morning, as the pure green tints of early dawn fast changing into ruddy gold, and the purple of the western sky lightening to violet told of the sun’s approach to the eastern horizon, the cry of ‘Land, ho!’ from some one aloft brought all hands on deck in no time.

“‘Here it is, then; Hornet Island at last!’ exclaimed the skipper, as he dropped out of the fore-rigging (he had been up on the topsail-yard with his glass). ‘Not a very big one, ’tis true, but sizeable enough for a beginning.’

“Our helm was then altered a bit, for the land was

<sup>1</sup> Old Jack tells me that very few islands, except those belonging to the principal groups, were laid down in the charts in those days.—F. A.

well to leeward of our course, and in an hour or two we were pretty close to it, and could make out the ring of white foam that marked where a reef extended along its weather side, and the many-hued foliage of the trees that appeared to cover it from water's edge to summit—all very beautiful in the clear light of the early morning.

“ We squared away when within about half-a-mile of the reef, and rounded the north-east point of the island (Cape Dodd that was christened at once) to see what the other side was like ; and oh to describe the charming scenery that opened out as the north coast of the island came in view !

“ There was no reef there (it ended at Cape Dodd, and seemed to have been put round the weather side of the island as a breakwater) ; so we stood close in, and then sailed slowly along within about a couple of cables' lengths of the shore, keeping the lead going all the time with bottom at nine fathoms as regular as clockwork.

“ A beautiful white beach, a quarter of a mile or so long, stretched away from the cape, and behind it the land, thickly wooded, rose slowly and unevenly towards the middle of the island. At the end of the beach was a small creek that seemed to run inland, how far we could not see. Beyond the creek was a thick grove of lofty trees, and next came a broad, flat, grassy lawn, the surface of which was but a few feet above the water. At the back of it, and at the back of the thick grove of trees, was a high wall of reddish cliffs, fringed with trees along the top. These cliffs beyond the little level green came abruptly out to the water's edge, and, with

here and there a sandy beach between the jutting rocks at their base, trended away until they ended in a rugged point to the north-west.

“Well, we sailed right round the island (it was only about three miles long), and could not see the least sign of any natives. No canoes were hauled up on the beach, no smoke showed among the trees; so, when the *Hornet*, having rounded Cape Dodd for the second time, had got abreast of the little creek, we laid the fore-topsail to the mast, and hove her to at about half-a-mile from its entrance.

“The cutter was then hoisted out and manned, and the crew, well armed, of course, pulled off towards the shore to reconnoitre. A picked crew went in the boat, and the mate was in charge.

“The cutter came back in less than an hour, and when she got alongside Forrester jumped aboard in all haste, and went aft to the skipper: ‘It is a perfect fairy-land!’ exclaimed he; ‘you never saw such a delightful place in your life. We walked along the edge of the creek, in which the water is so clear that you can see the bottom everywhere, and oh, the coral and the shells, and the shoals of fish that are there!—all as plainly to be seen as if it were but a foot deep, though there are four solid fathoms by the lead-line all over it. Then, after about a hundred yards, it widens into a perfectly delicious lake, and at the far end a waterfall dashes from the cliffs above—sweet, fresh water, for we tried it. There are cocoanut-trees, bananas, and all sorts, growing everywhere—we have brought off a lot of the fruit as a sample—but we cannot find any trace

or sign of living creatures, except birds and monkeys—they are plentiful enough.'

“‘ Ay, ay !’ replied Dodd. ‘ Come ! that’s good news, and us appear to have hit upon just the right place ; do you think us can get the *Hornet* up the creek and into the lake place ?’

“‘ As easily as possible ; we can tow her in with the boats,’ replied Forrester.

“‘ Did ’e think to try what watter there is inside ?’

“‘ No, but we could see that it is deeper there than in the creek, so that’s all right, and we may as well go in at once.’

“‘ Better wait a bit, I think,’ said the skipper, looking dubiously towards the land, ‘ and be certain there’s raley and truly no savidges ashore before going right in ; us should be in a proper rat-trap, sure ’nuff, if any natives comed along and caitched us inside, and—’

“‘ No fear, there ain’t a soul in the island,’ said the mate, who had just sauntered aft with a great bunch of golden bananas in his hand, and his mouth full of the fruit. ‘ How do I know ? why we seed a bit of driftwood—wreckage—hove up on the beach—stuck full of iron—been there for years—have a banana ?’

“‘ Git home with ’e, Tom !’ laughed the skipper ; ‘ all you think about is your belly.—Well, if there is iron laying on the shore, it looks like enough the island ain’t inhabited, but we’ll make sure all the same, so take the cutter again and go back and ransack en all over, ’twant take ’e more’n a couple of hours. Don’t stop away longer than you can help,—and hand over that there bunch of bananas ; you can pick plenty more where they grawed.’

“ So the cutter went off again, and by and by—after a couple of hours or so—she came flying back. ‘ Well ! ’ shouted the skipper as soon as the boat got pretty close, ‘ Ha’n’t ’e seed nort ? ’

“ ‘ No, there’s no people in the island,’ replied Mr. Gibbs.

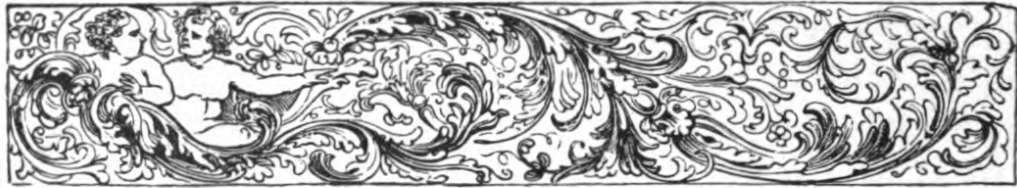
“ ‘ What’s on the other side of the cliffs ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Only woods, and places like fields with clumps of trees stuck here and there ; birds all manner of colours ; and monkeys, and pigs.’

“ ‘ Pegs ! ’ exclaimed Dodd, ‘ where there’s pegs there’s pork in general, so that’s the best of good news. Get under the bows and I’ll give ’e down the end of a line ; taw away for the creek, and the rest of us ’ll take in the canvas going along. Clew up and haul down, my hearties, now for Hornet Island ! ’







## CHAPTER XIII.

### HORNET ISLAND.

“SO, with the cutter towing, we went slowly in, and gliding through the narrow creek, emerged at last from the cool shade of the lofty trees that stood on its banks, into the bright sunshine of the little landlocked bay.

“On the right, as we entered, the high cliffs rose straight up from the water’s edge, with here and there great bunches and festoons of creeping plants hanging from the face of the rocks, and towards the far end the waterfall that Forrester had told us of leaped and tumbled from a cleft in the precipice, dashing from ledge to ledge until it reached a basin which it had scooped out at the foot of the cliffs, whence it stole quietly away in a glancing, eddying streamlet—all the nonsense seemed to have been knocked out of it by its headlong tumble—and so at last reached the bay, the surface of which was flaked for yards with the foam it had carried down.

“Beyond the waterfall the cliffs were lower and more uneven, and at the inner end of the sheet of water a

sloping valley, green as an emerald, stretched away inland until it met a thick wood which rose in the background, and shut in the view in that direction.

“On the other side was a narrow strip of white and glistening beach, and beyond it the trees rose again, tier upon tier, the branches of the topmost ones standing out clear and distinct against the beautiful blue sky.

“There the *Hornet* lay, motionless on the transparent water, and for a long time not a word was uttered by anybody aboard; all we did was to gaze first one way and then another at the quiet loveliness that surrounded us. At last, though, Tommy Buller broke the spell by jumping on a gun and calling for three cheers for our island. What a shout went up! making the rocks fairly ring with the echo and sending flocks of gaudy birds, scared by the noise, fluttering in haste from the nearest trees.

“As soon as the schooner had been made fast by running away a couple of lines, one ahead and one astern, we got one of the gigs over the side—some scrambled into her and others into the cutter, and off all hands of us went, shouting and cheering and nearly wild with excitement, and landed on the sandy beach.

“‘Us musn’t all go and laive the vessel with nobody aboard,’ said Dodd, as he stepped ashore.

“‘Well, there’s no danger,’ replied the mate; ‘but as I’ve had a good run ashore, enough for the present anyway, I’ll make one to stay by the ship.’

“‘ So do, Tom, and I daresay one or two more will keep 'e company. Forrester will, I know, and so will Charley Wilson—eh, Charley ?—and more besides if us ax 'em ; give your muskets and cutlashes to they that's gwain with me, and don't go to slaip ; keep a bright look-out, for I can't believe there's nobody living in such a lovely spot as this here,—if you do see any natives be sure you fire a gun to let us know.’

“‘ There's nobody here besides ourselves,’ replied the mate, ‘ that's sartin.’

“‘ Well, well, I hope not, but I sha'n't feel aisy in my mind till I've had a good rummage on my own account. Come on, Tommy, and all of 'e ; which way shall us go ? up along by the valley, I think.’

“ So we started off on our excursion in the highest of glee, and strolled along the valley until we reached the thick grove at its far end, which we found was composed of nothing but cocoanut-trees ; then, turning off to the right, we mounted by way of a convenient gulley between the cliffs, which were not very high just there, and so reached the table-land at their top. From there, after having made a short halt to take breath after our climb, we walked back towards the north coast of the island until we reached its highest part, which was over the entrance to the creek, where we halted again, and had a good look all round.

“ Right underneath was the basin—‘ Fairies' Pool,’ it had been christened—with the little *Hornet* lying placidly on its glistening bosom, ‘ as snug as a duck

in a ditch,' the skipper said, looking down at her from as near the edge of the precipice as he dared to go ; while as for the island, it seemed spread out like a map at our feet, for we could pretty nearly see all over it.

“ ‘ My gracious me ! now ain't this here a lovely, beauti-



Missed !

ful place !' exclaimed Dodd for about the twentieth time. ' 'Tis like a proper lordship's park, with trees standing about in en, and the soft green turf all over, and the woods beyond. It only wants a castle over yonder, and two or dree cows walking about there where 'tis level, then us should think us was trespassing—Corks !



there's a peg! stand a'oneside while I knock 'n over !'

"An old sow with a litter of young ones in her wake had just emerged from a clump of trees that stood but a few yards away, and Dodd, spreading his legs wide apart and levelling his musket, fired at her—and missed—whereupon she stopped and looked round at us for a moment as much as to say, 'Halloo ! what sort of pigs are these !' then, satisfied, I suppose, that we were after no good, she set off at a sling trot down the slope, giving forth long shrill squeals as she ran, and was out of range before we had finished laughing at the skipper's marksmanship.

" 'Ay, ay, you can laugh,' quoth he, 'but I titched her up—somewhere—else her wid'n' be squaiking so bitter.' Adding, after a pause, 'Minds me of th'ole Joe Huxtable, home to Dartmouth, when his house caitteded afire. All he did was to rin down the hill hollin' "*Murder!*" "*Thaives!*" Now, come along.'

"So we set off again on our exploring expedition, and keeping close to the edge of the cliffs, walked as far as the westernmost end of the island ; then, as it was time to return to the ship if we wanted to save the daylight, we struck down through the woods and proceeded back by way of the south coast, where the trees grew almost to the water's edge, with here and there a sunny glade between them, and, turning off to the left when we came abreast of the high cliffs which bounded Fairies' Pool on the west, and crossing the grove of cocoanut-trees, we arrived at last in the green valley.



There, to Dodd's great delight, was the *Hornet* lying in the basin just as we had left her, and before very long we were safely back aboard.

"Next day we started off in the other direction and, having then plenty of time, we had thoroughly searched the island long before evening, but without finding the slightest vestige of a native on it. So, after that, even the skipper was easy in his mind.

"We had a good day's sport, too, and returned to the ship with several full grown hogs and a dozen or two sucking pigs ; so, as those who remained in the schooner had employed their time in fishing, a fine mess was smoking on the table soon after our return.

"'We must find a bathing-place,' observed Forrester, as the ribs and trucks of the repast were being cleared away, 'I don't quite like going overboard, even here in the pool, for fear a shark might come along.'

"'A bathing-place,' said Savary, who had been wandering about by himself all day, making sketches and collecting specimens of shells and so on, 'I know of a splendid one. It is on the first beach beyond the level green, and there a ridge of rock shuts in quite a large pool. The water in it is almost as clear as air, and the bottom is very fine white sand. No sharks can get in, for the sea only comes over the ridge for about an hour at the top of each tide ; I had a delightful bathe there this afternoon.'

"'That is capital,' said Tommy ; 'we will have a dip there in the morning, only, instead of walking, let us take the cutter and a gig and row round. Then after our bathe, we can explore the north coast in the boats,

for there is no way down to any of the beaches from the cliffs.'

" 'Oh yes there is,' laughed the skipper. 'All you've got to do is to let go hands and feet, common sense'll soon bring 'e down.'

" 'Shut up, you old Dodd!' replied Tommy, who, being a privileged person, you see, used to say and do things that nobody else dared. 'I was about to say,' continued he, loftily, 'that a boating excursion will be just the thing now that we have had such a lot of running about ; those who agree with me will kindly signify the same in the usual manner—thank you, then that is decided upon.'

" 'It seems to me that we ought to name the various parts of our island,' remarked Martin. 'The first point that we rounded has been already dubbed "Cape Dodd," the other had better be called "Cape Forrester." "Fairies' Pool" is a capital name for the basin—what titles can you suggest for the other places?'

"So, after plenty of discussion, the stretch of sand between the creek and Cape Dodd was named 'Long Beach ;' the wood at the entrance to the creek, 'Mangoe Grove ;' the level green on the other side of it, 'Mermaids' Lawn ;' the valley at the inner end of the pool, 'Lovely Valley ;' and the whole south side of the island, 'Wilson's Land,' because he first sighted it.

" 'Pipe "Stand by hammicks," Forrester,' said Dodd, as soon as these names had been decided upon. 'Time to turn in now, you've all had a long day of it.'



## CHAPTER XIV.

### MYSTERIES.

“AFTER breakfast the next morning we set off in the cutter and a gig—all hands went except Dan Slocombe the cook—and going out through the creek, rowed along past Mermaids’ Lawn until we reached the cove in which was the bathing-pool that Savary had spoken about. It was just as he had described it, clear as crystal, pure as a spring, and the sunshine sparkled and glinted and quivered on the clean sandy bottom, even in the deepest part, as though there had been no water in it to obstruct the rays. So, before long, the whole lot of us—except Dodd and the mate who went off for a ramble among the rocks—were swimming and splashing and floundering about in the cool water, like a shoal of porpoises.

“‘Better bring our seine net one of these days,’ said the skipper, who had strolled back while we were dressing, ‘and shoot’n in the next cove. There’s loads of fish in it and lobsters crawling about all over the place by thousands. You’d stand a chance of haling something ashore there—something worth having, not

like they half-dozen little old sand-eels you caitted in Tor Bay that time. Get into the boats when you'm ready, and I'll show 'e the place.'

“ ‘There now, hold water—look over the gunwale. See 'em ? all shapes, and as for colours, why the clowns in a circus couldn't wish for more than some of they fish has got. Look at that long red one, with the big mouth and the streamers flying from the ends of his fins, that's chasing and gobbling up thuse small blue ones—well, perhaps us'll ait he one of these days, for a change. Now they'm all flying, what's amiss I wonder ? ’

“ ‘Shark ! ’ sang out some one, pointing seaward, where what looked like a long dark shadow was stealing slowly over the bottom, and presently a huge shark came sneaking into the cove, passing directly under our boat. He turned round when he got a few yards inshore, and lay quite still for a little while, staring straight up at us, and then, wanting a closer view, I suppose, he commenced to rise, but very slowly.

“ ‘Get the muskets loaded ! ’ sang out Dodd ; ‘and stand by to give him a volley ’—then, as the monster's head and shoulders emerged from the water, making rings of little hurrying ripples where its surface was broken—‘ Fire ! ’

“ The muskets rang out ; the bullets dashed into the shark's body ; he gave a tremendous bound right clean out of the water, falling into it again close alongside the boat and smothering us with spray ; smash came his powerful tail against the gunwale, making it crack again ; then, rolling over and over, he sank to the bottom and



lay there, with his great white belly uppermost, as dead as a hammer.

“‘So much for he,’ laughed the skipper. ‘Give way!’

“Putting the boat in motion, we rowed slowly on within pistol-shot of the beach, against which not so much as a wavelet flung its puny strength, such was the languor of the basking ocean; while the background of ruddy cliffs, flooded with the rich glow of the tropical sunlight, their creamy red varied here and there by the dark shadow of a projecting craig or by a mass of clinging verdure; the deep blue of a cloudless sky overhead; the faint rustling of the trade-wind in the trees that crowned the heights; and the subdued murmur of the surf on the far-distant reef to windward of the island, made altogether such a scene of drowsy loveliness that one by one we ceased rowing again, and, lolling over the looms of our oars, let the boat float motionless on the tranquil water.

“Presently we saw the cutter, which had gone on ahead while we were dawdling in this lazy fashion, coming tearing back as hard as her crew could row. On she came and dashing up to our boat, stopped with a whirl of foam from each oar—‘There’s a big canoe lying on the last beach before you come to the cape!’ shouted Mr. Gibbs.

“‘A canoe! Corks!—Did ’e see anybody?’

“‘No—didn’t stop to look. Caught sight of her when we rounded the rocks, and came back at once.’

“‘Whew! that’s bad news,’ said Dodd, gravely—‘anyway, whoever came in the canoe must be on the beach, for they couldn’t have climbed the cliffs; and they haven’t come this way, else us should have seed ’em; and they cannot have gone round the cape unless more



than one canoe has arrived, and then there's no reason why this one should have been left behind—far as I know. Load up your guns and we'll go and have a look.'

"So off we went and, reaching the ridge of jutting rocks that bounded the last beach, cautiously rounded the point.

"There was the canoe, plain enough, lying on the beach more than half-way between the water's edge and the base of the cliffs, but no natives were in sight, though we looked about in all directions.

"'Where can they be gone to?' exclaimed the skipper. 'Blessed if I know, and that's the—Why, Tom Gibbs! you bittle-head—where's your eyes? Her's a wrack, hove up 'pon top the beach by the say—one end of her is stove right in! Pull ashore; pull ashore!'

"'It is a war-canoe,' said Forrester, when, having landed, we got close up to the stranded boat. 'I know that from pictures that I have seen of them, and she has been here a very long time—see how the sun has scorched the paint off her.'

"'She must have come ashore in a hurricane of wind,' observed the skipper, "to have been washed so high up as this. Come, lend us a hand to turn her bottom up, to let the sand fall out.'

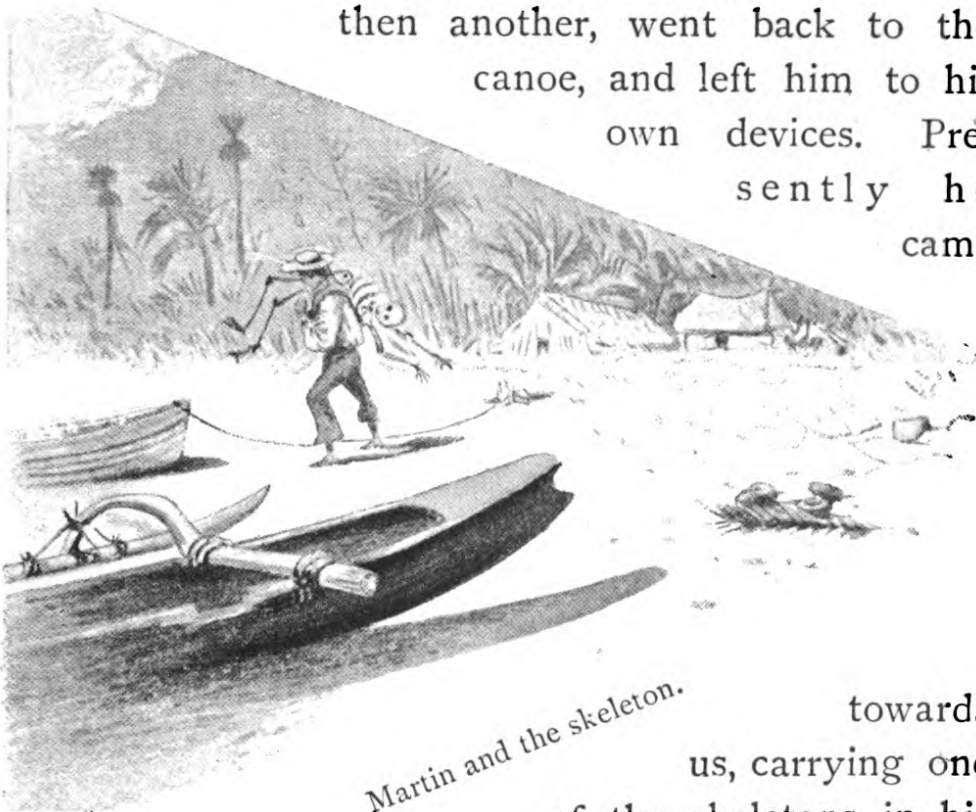
"Just then a hail came from Charlie Wilson, who had walked on towards the foot of the cliffs. 'I've found three skeletons!' shouted he. Of course we all went off to look, and there, half buried in the sand, were the remains of three, at all events, of the persons who had been cast away in the war-canoe.

“Martin, who was a doctor and had just passed his examination when we left England, was in his element with the skeletons, and soon had the sand cleared away from them. Then he sorted out the different bones, and began telling us their names until, tired of listening

to such outlandish gibberish, first one and then another, went back to the canoe, and left him to his

own devices. Presently he

came



Martin and the skeleton.

towards us, carrying one of the skeletons in his arms—he had shipped the legs and arms, and so on, in their proper places, and made them fast with twine.

“‘What be gwain to do with *that*?’ asked Dodd.

“‘Take it home to England, to be sure.’

“‘What’s the use of a passel of rubbaging old bones?’

“‘Well, they are the bones of a South Sea Islander, that makes them interesting.’ And so saying off he

trudged towards the cutter, the skeleton's head nodding over his shoulder and one of its long arms hanging down and dangling to and fro at every step he took—the ghastly thing looked as though it were nodding a good-bye to us and waving its hand.

“Mussy 'pon us ! that's a rum thing for a man to go shipmates with !” said the skipper, gazing after Martin. ‘I'll haive he overboard, first chance—see if I don't. Now, turn the canoe over again, and four of 'e take the gig and go back aboard for a hammer and some nails and a piece of canvas so that us can cover up this here hawl, just pro temperum, or what 'tis. Then we can launch her and take her back to the *Hornet*, where the repairs can be done properly and so that she will be as good as ever again.’

““The canoe ought to belong to me by good rights,” said Tommy, ‘I saw her first, you know.’

““So she shall then, and for a name us'll call her the “Tom-tit,” out of honour to 'e,’ laughed Dodd in reply. ‘Captain Tommy of the “Tom-tit,” and the boy Johnny shall be your crew.’

““What can you make of this, skipper ?” asked Savary just then ; ‘it is the canoe's painter—and see, it is a bit of *rope*.’

““Rope, eh ! why so it is,’ replied Dodd, ‘hemp, too, and the end there where 'tis made fast is whipped with a sailmaker's whipping. No savage put that on—and no seaman made the painter fast, I'll be sworn ; there's a knot for you, something like the ones you gents used to make when us first left Plymouth. 'Tis very strange, sure 'nuff,’ continued he, slowly, and looking from one

to the other of us, 'I wonder how the rope got there. Martin's skeleton knew once, but for certain he can't tell us now.'

"'No, he cannot tell us that,' observed Martin, who had just returned, 'but he has told me something.—He says that he has been dead for very many years, and that he died from the effects of this bullet (holding one up), which struck him full in the breast and lodged in his backbone.'

"'Then he was not drowned?'

"'Oh no, the bullet settled him.'

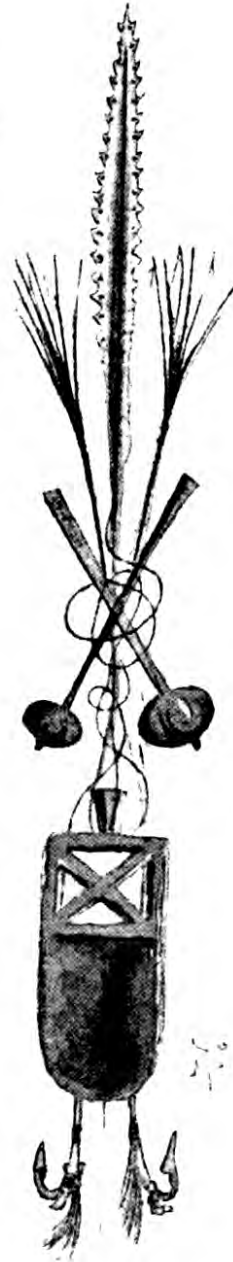
"'Well, well!' exclaimed the skipper, 'whatever can be the meaning of all this? The rope came out of a white man's ship, and the bullet came out of a white man's gun—warranted—but how they got mixed up with the canoe and the savages, why—'

"'There is no evidence before the court to show' interrupted Tommy, adding 'that being the case, and as the affair happened so long ago, I do not see why we should puzzle our brains any more over it.'

"'No, I suppose it ain't much use wondering,' said Dodd, 'though I, for one, should like to find out the rights of it all. Anyhow, better launch the canoe—now her's mended,—and do you, Tom (turning to the mate), take the gig and tow her back to Fairies' Pool. I'll go on in the cutter as far as the cape. Us sha'n't be very long gone; so tell the cook to be sure and have dinner ready by time us come back, for I'm middling hungry now.'

“I was one of those that went in the gig with Mr. Gibbs, and after the canoe was slung and hoisted aboard we sat in the forecastle waiting for the cutter to return. An hour went by, and still she remained absent. Dinner was spoiling, and the cook was grumbling and growling, saying he hated humbugging about with keeping things warm ; that it was a pity people did not know their own minds ; and that for two pins he would pack up his duds, go ashore, and live in a cave, or roost up a tree like a cockatoo, in which case they would have to cook their own grub in future, or go without. However, while he was going through this querulous speech for about the fourth time we heard the cutter come alongside, and presently Tommy tumbled below with his usual hurry-scurry.

“‘Oh!’ he exclaimed, ‘the mystery is no longer a mystery, for we have found out all about it! You know when we left you?—well, we rowed away almost to the end of the reef that sticks out from the foot of Cape Forrester, and there, while turning round to come back, somebody spied part of the hull of a ship perched up among the rocks. It had got in behind some of them, and we noticed it quite by chance.



Weapons.



There it was though, high out of the water; so we rowed in, and, after a lot of trouble, I and two more managed to climb aboard. It was the afterpart of a small ship, broken off just by the end of her main deck.

“Well, we went down into the cabin, and the first thing that we saw there was another skeleton, lying stretched out on the floor, with the top of its skull smashed in—Dodd has the thing that did the damage; a huge club with shark’s teeth stuck all over the heavy end, and that, too, was lying on the cabin floor. So we rummaged about until one of us found the ship’s log which explained everything. From it we learned that the wreck was once the good ship *Anne*, of Bristol, and the last entries—dated nearly ten years ago—relate that one afternoon, three days after leaving Otaheiti, where the *Anne* had touched for provisions, she was attacked by war-canoes, which, after a long tuzzle, were beaten off with heavy loss. That is how the statement runs in the log, written, no doubt, by the poor fellow—probably the captain—whose skeleton lay on the cabin floor, and who was evidently disturbed in the middle of his work, for the last sentence is incomplete and all across the paper are the blots made by his pen, as it rolled along after having been hurriedly laid down. Here is the book itself, and I will read what it says:—

““This afternoon we were attacked by sundry canoes, filled with savages, and by God’s mercy repulsed them with great loss after a bloody battle, wherein, of our crew, Robert Gore, boatswain, William Cater, and George

Burrett, A.B.'s, and John Pinkerton, boy, were slain ; James Marsh and Humphry Basse, A.B.'s, grievously wounded ; and John Brooke, second mate, slightly wounded of a broken arm.

“ “ 8 hrs. Sun set at 6 hrs. 32 m., bearing W.N.W. by compass. Canoes, when last visible, making off towards the S.E. Wind E., very light and variable. Barometer falling, so expect bad weather, probably from—”

“ “ And that is all.

“ “ So it is plain enough now that the savages came back after dark and surprised the ship, captured her, slaughtered the crew, were caught in the coming gale, and driven helter-skelter on our island. Oh, I forgot to tell you—hanging over her stern was the other part of the line we found in the canoe, which completes the chain of evidence, doesn't it?

“ “ Yes, it is all clear now,' said the skipper. 'I'll tell 'e what though,' continued he impressively, 'the sooner us am out of this place the better, for all your talk about battling and killing up of folks has made me feel shiversome. My corks ! if any of they warryers was for come along and caitch us in here—there'd be a pretty kittle of fish ! If they ain't got guns they've got baws and arraws, and clubs like this one to dap 'e on the head with, and ten to one us wid all be massacred like the poor dear chaps in the *Anne* was.'

“ “ I never saw the like of it !' exclaimed the cook, as he elbowed his way towards the mess table. 'Here's your grub nigh spoiled to death by waiting, and now,

scatter my rags! if you ain't all standing yarning, 'stead of giving a man a chance to dish up—Captain Dodd, do please go aft, sir, your dinner's there and getting as cold as Candlemas! Talk about savages,' growled he—after the skipper had gone—'I know where there's plenty, and close at hand, too. There can't be no wus savages, than folks that neglect their vittles!'





## CHAPTER XV.

### VISITORS.

“AFTER dinner, while we were all lounging about on deck under the shade of the fore-castle awning, Savary, who had been turning the capstan about and looking thoughtful for some little time, suddenly remarked, ‘What a splendid thing it would be if we could only contrive a machine that would send the *Hornet* along in a dead calm!’

“‘Would so,’ quoth the mate, drily; adding, ‘Can’t though.’

“‘Well, I am not so sure that we cannot,’ said Savary, ‘for, let me tell you, an ancestor of mine, a captain in the navy, who lived and flourished in the reign of Queen Anne’ (‘Who is dead,’ observed Tommy)—‘invented a rowing-machine that would send a vessel along much faster than either her boats would tow her, or than her crew could propel her with sweeps. His contrivance consisted of a long iron bar reaching across the deck and projecting some little distance beyond each side, and on the ends a lot of paddles were fixed, like the spokes of a wheel. This bar, being connected with the capstan

by means of cog-wheels, could be turned round very quickly, and without much exertion on the part of the crew.'

" 'There is nothing very novel about that,' said Forrester; 'it is as old as the hills, for the Romans had vessels with several of these water-wheels on each side; the only difference is that they were turned by oxen instead of by the men.'

" 'Well, it makes Captain Savary's invention none the less valuable after all,' remarked Martin, 'for oxen could not well be taken on long voyages just for the sake of employing them during calm weather.'

" 'Of course not,' said Savary. 'However, the question is—Cannot we contrive something of the sort? I think we can. Suppose, now, instead of cog-wheels, the making of which is of course beyond our skill, we had a long endless rope, and instead of the round iron bar a wooden one, which I propose to place across the deck in the waist there. That you may understand me better, I will liken the bar to a top, and, to carry out the simile, the rope to the string that spins it. Now, if one bight of the endless rope were taken to the capstan and the other bight were wound round and round the bar, with plenty of turns to keep it from slipping, we could certainly spin my top by heaving round the capstan, than which it would revolve as much faster as the diameter of one is to the diameter of the other—roughly speaking, and supposing the bar to be six inches in diameter, it would turn round three times for every revolution of the capstan.'

" 'Why, Savary, you are quite a genius!' said Forrester. 'Let us get the skipper's opinion on your project ;



so run aft, Johnny, and ask him to step for'ard for a minute or two.'

"'Ay, ay!' said Dodd, when he too had the working of the machine explained to him. 'Now that don't seem a bad notion. Better start to work and make en, and even if the whirligig of a concern don't answer, why 'twill be something for 'e to do while us lie here. My corks! shan't I have a nice job to give all hands suppose the paddles will work. No more lying about in the shade in the calm weather when us be to say, for if there's no wind I shall make 'e rig out Savary's sweeps and paddle until us get a breeze.'

"'Oh, will you though!' said Tommy. 'Don't make too cock-sure of that, Admiral Dodd. I propose that the paddles are not to be used except under circumstances of the very utmost gravity.'

"'What, mutiny!' laughed the skipper. 'Common sailors talking like that there! My gracious! Take the young monkey off and give him three dozen over the breech of a gun with a boat's stretcher.'

"'Well, but I don't quite see how we are to do all this carpenter's work,' observed Martin. 'I can handle a meat-saw, and could relieve either of you of a superfluous leg or arm in a highly scientific manner; but when it comes to hacking wood—'

"'I'll soon shaw e' how to do it,' said the skipper. 'My! you can make a lot of things with a hand-saw and an adze, and a bit of common sense. The paddling-wheels will be the hardest to make, but us shall get over they somehow or 'nother, see if us don't. People that go to say have got to know how to do 'most everything,

from mending boots to building hay-stacks. They'm like the donkey that was chasted by a lion and climbed up a tree out of his way—'twasn't so much whether he could climb en, or whether he couldn't climb en, he *had* to climb en. 'Tis just the same with us. 'Bill' (to Evans), 'go down below and drum up what tools there is ; Savary, you and me can take the measurements while the others get the things in the boat—we'll start this here job to once, up in the woods somewhere. I can't have 'e working aboard, messing up the decks with chips and that.'

"So we went ashore, and set up our workshop in a little glade that opened out on the left of Lovely Valley, where some tall, straight trees grew, one of which was selected for the shaft, and felled there and then ; and, to cut a long story short, in less than a week the whole apparatus was finished, taken aboard, and fitted in its place. To be sure, the workmanship was none of the best, but then everything was sound and strong, which was all we thought about or wanted.

"A couple of round holes were cut in the bulwarks for the shaft to go through, and it was supported by four bearings, two on the covering-boards and two on the deck, each bearing, and the parts of the shaft that lay in them, being covered with copper. The ends were left square, and the wheels, which could be fitted on after the shaft was in position, were made to take to pieces—each paddle having its proper socket in the centre—so that there should be nothing very weighty to lift about, and when the paddles were shipped a small line for a swifter was clove-hitched from one to the other all round

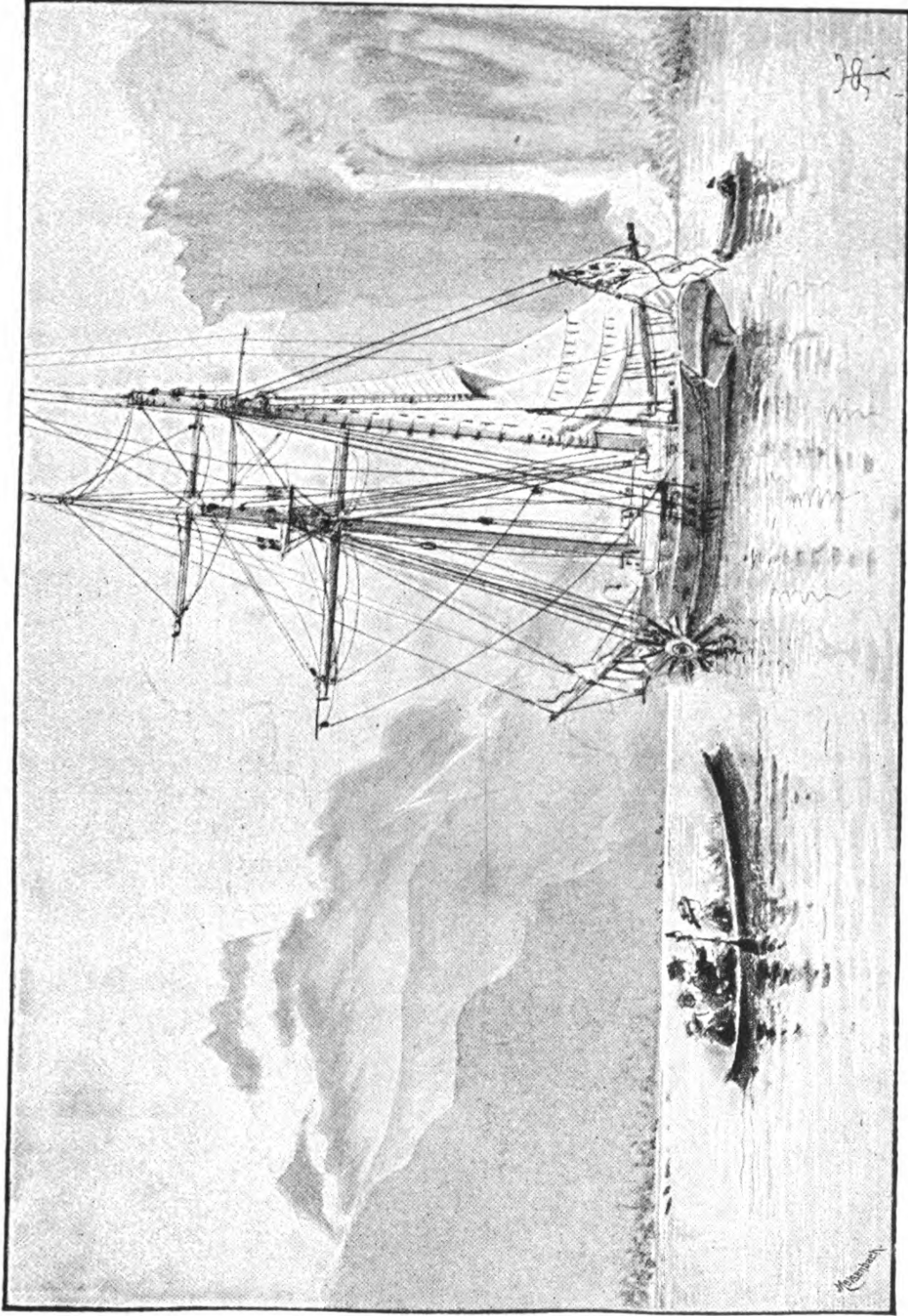
to equalize the strain. A piece of good, well-stretched rope, with a small eye spliced in each end, was next rove from the shaft to the capstan, with plenty of turns round the former, and leading through a snatch-block hooked to a pendant which was hitched to a ring-bolt in the waterways on each side of the foremast, so as to keep the chafe off the saloon skylight for one thing, and so that the line could always be kept taut for another. Then, the eyes being lashed together, with enough drift between them to allow for future stretching, nothing further remained to be done but to ship the bars and heave away.

“‘How’s it going to act, I wonder?’ said the mate, when we had got so far.

“‘Dunno till us try,’ replied Dodd ; then, raising his voice, ‘Slack away for’ard and haul in the starn rope!’ There, that’ll do’—glancing over the side—‘her keel’s close enough to the bottom. Now, heave round the capstan and see if you can move her across the pool.’

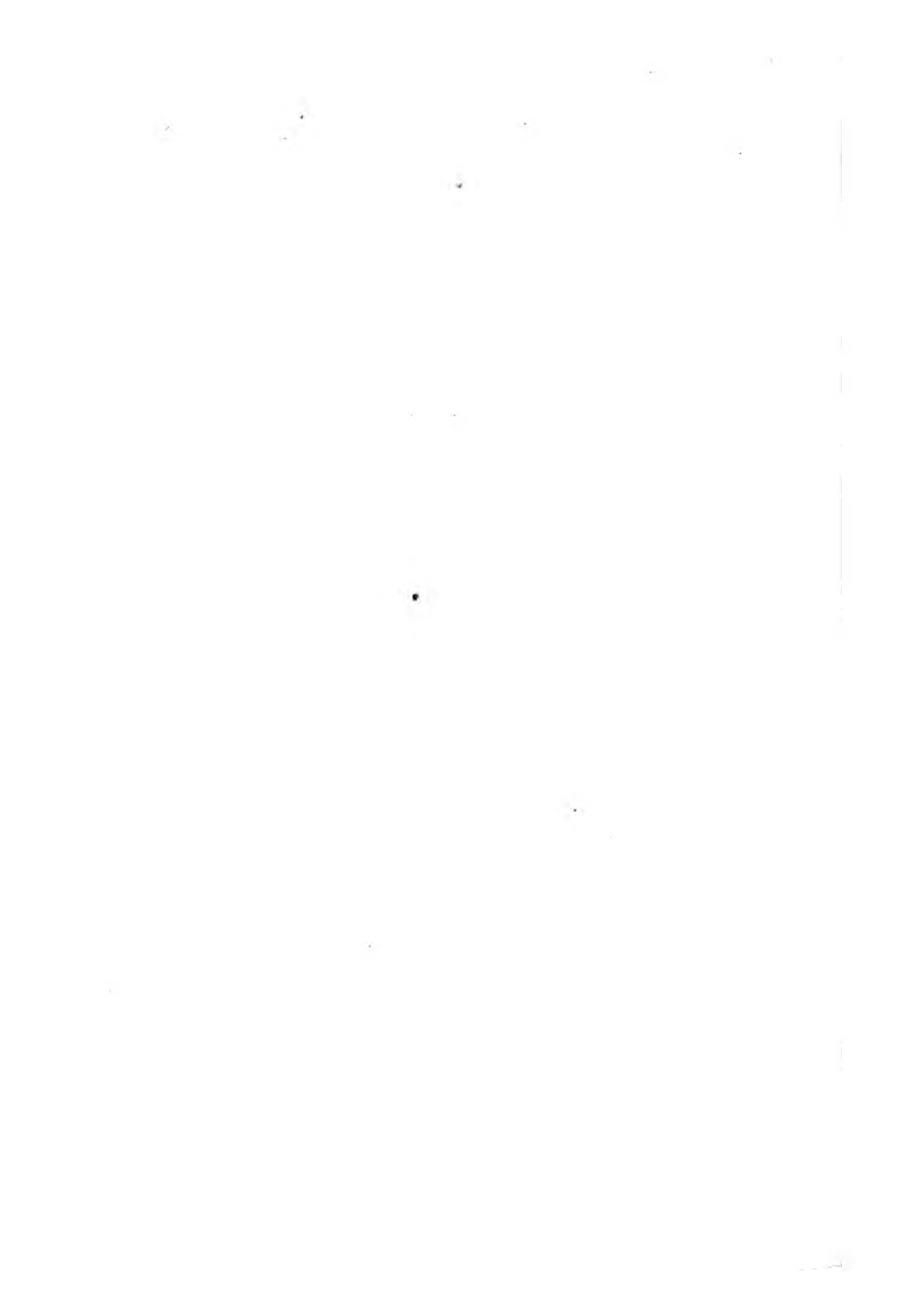
“Splash—splash—splash—went the paddles, slowly at first, as the *Hornet* gathered way, but faster and faster, until—‘Vast heaving,’ shouted Dodd, ‘else you’ll have her ashore! My corks! this is a proper patent, sure ’nuff. Here, some of ’e, buoy our lines and bundle them overboard ; us’ll go for a cruise outside!’

“So away we went into the open sea, and paddled about under the lee of the island for a couple of hours or more, and found that, with all hands at the capstan, when the paddles fairly spun round, we could send the *Hornet* along a good four knots through the water, for Tommy and I and another youngster, whose united



FARIES' POOL.

To face page 153.





strength could well be spared, hove the log and ascertained that that was her speed; while by taking it very easy, just walking round in fact, she slipped along nearly twice as fast as we could have towed her with the boats. So Savary's sweeps were a great success, and everybody was delighted.

"The schooner was then headed for the creek and paddled back into Fairies' Pool, when, having turned her round, picked up the lines, and made her fast, we unrigged the machine, made up the paddles and stowed them away, unshipped the shaft, and lashed it in among the spare spars.

"Well, what with picnics in the woods, fishing-parties in the boats or the 'Tom-tit,' and so on, the time passed quickly along, and at last we began to talk about leaving Hornet Island and shaping a course for Owyhee—a visit to which had been decided upon. Accordingly, we commenced making our preparations for the start, and while some set up the rigging, which had got very slack, others laid in a store of firewood, fruit, vegetables, and the like; and on the morning of our last day in Hornet Island a strong party landed on a pig-shooting excursion, taking the water-casks with us, which, having filled, we rolled down to the edge of the basin, where they could easily be lifted into the boat, and leaving Forrester, Tommy, Mr. Gibbs, and the two able seamen aboard to finish off the rigging, bring off the water-casks, and scrub the copper while we were away.

"Off we set, and crossing the island towards the low-lying woods on its weather side, where the pigs were most plentiful, by noon had shot as many as we could

well carry ; so, after a rest for dinner, followed by a leisurely smoke, for there was plenty of time, we commenced our return, picking up the game as we went along.

“ Martin and Savary were some distance in advance of the rest, carrying a big sow slung between them on a pole, and as we were making our way through the grove of cocoanut-trees at the head of Lovely Valley, we saw these two suddenly drop their burden and come tearing back towards us, their faces as pale as ashes.

“ ‘ Oh, Dodd ! ’ gasped Martin, ‘ *the “ Hornet ” is surrounded by canoes and her decks are full of savages !* ’

“ ‘ Where’s the boats to ? ’ yelled the skipper.

“ ‘ Alongside, ’ replied Savary, his eyes full of tears.

“ ‘ Then they’m all murdered ! ’ groaned Dodd. ‘ Poor little Tommy—and Forrester—and the mate—and all.

“ ‘ Come, us bain’t women, ’ continued he after a pause, and—aware that our lives depended upon him—speaking with firmness and decision, ‘ there’s twenty of us, all armed. Load your muskets with a couple of bullets in each, and follow me. ’

“ So, striking off to our right, we hurried down through the woods towards the little sandy beach, and, crossing the glade where our carpentering works had been, at a run, got at last to the thick undergrowth that extended beyond the trees to the water’s edge. Through this we crawled on our hands and knees, and, cautiously parting the branches, looked across the pool at the *Hornet*.

“ There she lay, with half-a-dozen canoes alongside and astern, and her decks alive with savages, who were shouting and yelling with joy at their capture.

“Silently we gazed, and after a few seconds the skipper drew his head back—‘Listen,’ said he. ‘Us have got to fight for our ship ; the question is, how is it to be done? I’ve thought of several plans, good and bad, but the best one is to entice they screeching divils ashore on the beach there. One of us has only got to walk out and hail, and they’ll be into the canoes fast enough. Then all us shall have to do is to fire into them while they’m paddling across—perhaps there won’t be so very many left by time they arrive at the beach. Anyhow, that is the best chance us shall have, and the ones that do land will find this a hard place to get into. ’Tis too thick for their clubs to be much use, and by keeping a step or two back from the edge of the bushes, us can pick them off without showing ourselves.’

“‘Now, I’ll go out in the open and hail ; fire a volley as soon as ever you see they’m taking to the canoes, load like lightning and then keep blazing away, but be sure and aim straight, for it all depends upon how many us can kill or disable before they get to the beach—I shall be back before you are ready to fire the second round.’

“Away went Dodd, and presently we saw him emerge from the trees and walk across the strip of sandy beach. Then he shouted, and the savages came rushing to the schooner’s side, some jumped on the rail, others peered from between the shrouds, but all were silent for a few moments, then, with loud yells they commenced to scramble into their canoes.

“‘Fire!’ sang out the skipper taking to his heels.

“So we let drive our volley, and while the muskets were being hurriedly loaded again he rejoined us, and

seizing his gun, sent its contents among the canoes, which had left the *Hornet* by now, and, paddling as hard as they could be driven through the water, were heading straight for the beach on our right.

“‘ Fire, boys!—Fire!—Don't wait for one another now!’ shouted Dodd.

“The muskets flashed and rattled, and on surged the canoes, while the horrible yelling and fiendish screeching of the savages sounded nearer and nearer, when, suddenly leaping to his feet—‘Look aboard the *Hornet!*’ raved Dodd—‘Great God be praised!—our shipmates!—See them!—They are training the pivot-gun!—Shout for the old country!—Hurrah!—Down goes her muzzle!—Now they are ready! Now——’

“FLASH—*Bang!*—*Boom!* The thunder of the heavy gun roared and rumbled among the cliffs, and its charge of grape coming with terrific force at that short range, struck the leading canoe and destroyed her in a smother of foam, which, subsiding, showed nothing beyond here and there a floating paddle to mark the spot where she had been overwhelmed.

“The other savages, awestruck and dismayed at her fate, instantly stopped paddling, and after a pause of but a few seconds, they whirled the bows of their canoes round and made for the creek, which they quickly reached, and entering it, disappeared from our sight.

“Then, rushing to the beach, we saw that Forrester and Bill Evans were just shoving off in the cutter, and presently they came rowing towards us. Without waiting until she got close in, we, dashing into the water—which was shallow for some distance from the shore—



to meet her, tumbled in, seized the oars and were soon back aboard the dear little *Hornet*.

“‘Let go the starnfast! overboard with it!’ shouted the skipper as soon as he landed on the deck. ‘Starboard watch clap on to the bow-rope! Walk away with her! Larboard watch make sail! Loose the fore-top-sail, jib, and main-sail! A hand to the wheel!’

“The fore-topsail was quickly sheeted home and hoisted, and with its help and with the headway obtained by hauling on the bow-rope, which was cut when it ceased to be of further use, the *Hornet* glided into the creek, and, shooting through it, came slowly out into the open sea. The main-sail and jib were then hoisted, and on gaining an offing we rounded to, laid the fore-topsail to the mast and sent a parting round of grape after the canoes, which by now were some distance off and scuttling away in a westerly direction.

“‘Now tell us all about it,’ said Savary, as soon as we had time to speak to each other.

“‘Well,’ replied Tommy, ‘Forrester and I had brought off and stowed away most of the water-casks; then, as it was warm work, we went below in the fore-castle for a smoke and a little rum and cocoanut milk. Somehow, the others came too. We were sitting there comfortably enough, when suddenly we heard a shout, and scurrying up the ladder I caught a glimpse of the canoes. Down I dropped and told the rest, but before we had time even to think of what was to be done, the canoes were alongside. “The forepeak!” cried Forrester; so we ran to it, opened the hatch, dropped down among the coils of rope, and shut our-



selves in, hoping that the savages would not discover the hatchway in the dark under the mess table. I don't know how long we lay there, but it seemed hours, and then we heard your firing and the bustle of the savages as they left the ship. We scrambled out at once—and you know the rest.'

“ ‘ Well, well ! ’ exclaimed the skipper. ‘ The *Hornets* ain't born to be took by privateers, nor boarded by pirates, nor tore to pieces by cannibals. I tell 'e what though—My corks ! us'll splice the mainbrace now if us never do again ! and after that do you, Tom, take the cutter and fetch off the pork—'tis laying all of a heap in the cocoanut wood—and the rest of the water-casks, and the two lines. There's nobody ashore to hurt 'e now, for they scandalous old red-painted scarecrows have all agoed. I didn't think they meant paddling off so tame as this, but as they have aleft, why 'tis all right, and when you come back us'll go too ! ’

“ ‘ What shall we do with this one ? ’ asked Bill Evans, coming along the deck to where we were standing.

“ ‘ Which one, who do 'e mean ? ’

“ ‘ Why this here savige, ’ replied Bill, jerking his head towards the fore part of the ship. ‘ He was underneath the bowsprit, wounded in the neck. Martin found him, and says he's a patient—no wonder either seeing that he's pretty near dead—so they've set to work and washed his wound, and now Martin's parcelling his neck with a bandage.

“ ‘ Hulloo ! what have 'e got here ? ’ said Dodd, walking for'ard and addressing the little group that had gathered round the heel of the bowsprit.

“‘Only a poor wretch that has been hurt,’ replied Martin, without looking up—‘gunshot wound, much hemorrhage—just shaved his jugular—scissors, please—thanks—with any luck will have him on his legs again in no time.’

“‘Well, but do us want en set right ; don’t you think he’s a good dail better left as he is ? *I* think so for one, though to be sure he might be improved upon, and that easy enough. Take and hay’ve en overboard, Jack Shark will doctor he up better’n us can.’

“‘Oh, no !’ exclaimed several ; ‘let us be merciful !’

“‘Mercy ! fat lot of mercy he and his tribe wid have shawed us !’ Then, getting no reply, and seeing that Martin kept on with his bandaging, the skipper turned on his heel and muttering—‘All right ; have your awn foolish way,’ walked off.

“Well, in a couple of hours’ time, we had fetched off all the things that were left behind when we made our hurried departure ; then, bearing up, we squared away, set the rest of the canvas, and ran out to sea, leaving the island so rapidly that long before sunset it was far astern, a mere dark patch on the hazy blue of the southern horizon. Fainter and fainter grew its outline, until—‘I can’t see it now,’ said Forrester to a few of us who were standing on the quarter-deck.

“‘No more can I,’ observed Dodd, shading his eyes with his hands. ‘That’s the last of Hornet Island then. Well I bain’t sorry us went there, though to be sure us have had a *narra* escape. I never thought I should tread these dear decks no more that time when us was crouched in the bushes firing at they hollin’, yallin’

toads. Then awnly fancy! when us seed you, and the boy Tommy, and the rest of 'e that us thought was brawk up and ait hours ago—when us seed 'e rishing to the gun (I'll have'n gilded all auver, inside and out, when the *Hornet* arrives home, see if I don't!), us went mazed with joy. Us ramped! us raged! us cussed! Dear heart, never shall I forget it to my dying day!





## CHAPTER XVI.

SAM.

“MR. GIBBS came into the forecastle while our watch was at breakfast the next morning, and said he to Forrester, ‘Cap’n’s just been talking to me about that there savage. Says he thinks the best plan is to put him in the “Tom-tit” when he’s well enough, and let him go. Martin has dogsnosed him, whatever that is, and reckons on having him ready for sea in a week or ten days. Get rid of both that way. Canoe is only fit for lumbering up the decks; savage is no good at all. Give him plenty of provisions, sure to make his way to one of the islands.’

“‘All right, we can think it over,’ replied Forrester; ‘at all events I don’t see why we should bother ourselves about it now. Only this I will say—the man shall not leave us under any circumstances unless there is land in sight at the time.’

“‘Might cut some of our throats when he gets well—or try to,’ suggested the mate.

“‘Nonsense!’ said Forrester, helping himself to another pork chop.

“Well, our savage quickly recovered under Martin’s

skilful treatment, though to be sure his youth (he was only about eighteen, as far as we could judge) and healthy constitution had a great deal to do with it ; so, within a week, he was able, with help, to leave his hammock and come out on deck in the fresh air, when those of the watch on deck who were for'ard came around and shook hands with him, and nodded and smiled to show as well as they could that they bore him no ill-will and meant to do him no hurt.

“ The poor fellow seemed quite touched by these signs of friendly feeling, and turning towards Martin, who was present, went down on his knees before him and stretching out his arms burst into a flood of words in his own language. No one understood what he said, of course, but if he had spoken English for an hour his meaning could not have been plainer.

“ Day by day he regained his strength, and at last, when one fine morning a group of small islands were in sight on the starboard beam, it was decided to see if he would like to take the canoe and make his way ashore. We made signs to him by placing provisions in the canoe, pointing first to him and then to the islands, and so forth ; but no fear ! for as soon as he understood what we meant, he rushed off to Martin and clung to him, showing such distress that presently we took the things out of the canoe and let him know, to his evident relief, that he might stay with us. I believe, too, that most of us would have been very sorry if he had gone, for—except Dodd, who hated the very sight of him—everybody aboard had taken a fancy to the bright, handsome youngster. His looks were not a bit savage, in fact his face was very open



and pleasant-looking—not much like his countrymen, who (though perhaps we saw them at a disadvantage) had seemed to be all as ugly as sin.

“Next thing, to show that in future he could consider himself as one of the ship’s company, Forrester fetched up a suit of uniform similar to that worn by the rest of us, and presently our man Friday was arrayed in white ducks, check shirt, and a straw hat, *Hornet* ribbon, and all complete, which pleased him to such an extent that he strutted up and down the deck as proud as a turkey-cock, though to be sure the clothes came mighty awkward to him, as anybody could see.

“‘All he wants now is a name and rating,’ said somebody.

“‘Oh yes, we must christen him,’ said Forrester. ‘Who can suggest a good name?’

“Well, lots were thought of, and at last it was decided that he should be called ‘Sam,’ because it was nice and short for one thing, and because nobody else in the *Hornet* could lay claim to it for another. So his name was entered there and then on the ship’s books as ‘Sam,’ with ‘Savage’ tacked on to it—Sam Savage. Rating : ordinary seaman ; joined, *Hornet* Island, January 21st, 1807 ; and, to commence with, he was stationed in the after-guard of the larboard watch.

“We lost the south-east trades a day or two after this, and got into the belt of calms round about the equator, when, as we did not want to remain in the broiling heat longer than necessary, we shipped the paddles, and arranged that each watch should work at them for two hours out of the four in their watch on deck in the day-

time ; by which means and by taking advantage of such light breezes as happened along, we made pretty good progress.

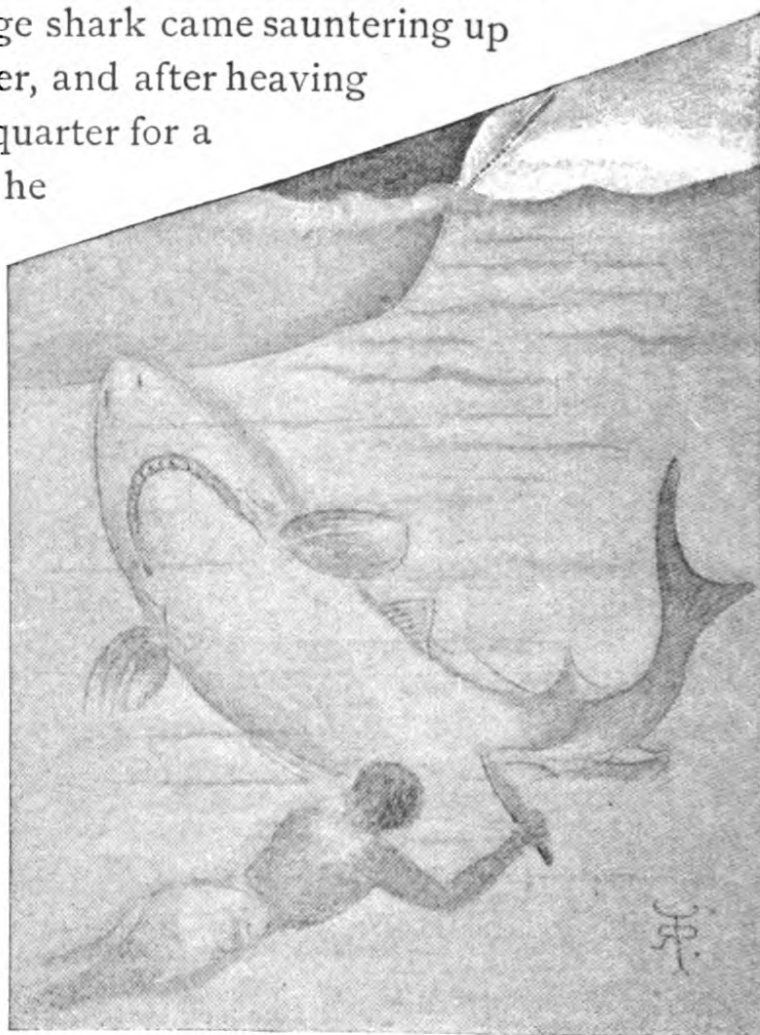
“ One breathless morning in the forenoon watch, just as we had finished our first hour's spell at the paddles, a huge shark came sauntering up to the schooner, and after heaving

to under her quarter for a minute or so, he

commenced to cruise round and round, keeping an eye on the rail the whole time with the kind of evil look that a cat has when she is creeping round a caged bird, and if any

one happened to look

over the side while he was passing, he would stop, face the ship, and say ‘ Do come ! ’ as plain as eyes could speak. Then, after waiting for a few moments, and finding that he was no nearer a dinner than ever, he



Sam and the Shark.

would lash out with his great tail, sending a rush of little foaming ripples liplapping against the hull, and set out on his travels again.

“ Presently Sam happened to come up from the fore-castle, and as soon as he caught sight of the shark off he flew to Martin, and made signs that he would jump over-board and kill it.

“ ‘ No, no ! ’ said Martin, shaking his head ; but the more he shook his head the more Sam nodded and laughed as though killing a shark was just about the simplest thing he could think of for the moment, and without more ado he ran back to the fore-castle, fetched up the cook’s knife, a long sharp-pointed affair with a buckhorn handle, stripped off his clothes, bounded on to the rail, where he poised himself for a few moments until the shark hove in sight again ; then in he went head-first, entering the water like an eel.

“ The shark stopped and went astern a bit, when he heard the plunge, and hung motionless, save the least quiver in his fins, for a moment or two, then slowly at first, but gradually gathering way, he glided ahead again—faster and faster, until like a flash of light speeding through the water, he dashed at the man, rolled over, opened his vast jaws, and snapped them—on nothing !

“ ‘ Did you see Sam ? ’ shouted Forrester ; ‘ he went right under the shark ! Look, he has stabbed it ! The water is tinged with blood ! ’

“ The lithe body of our savage then appeared beside the shark ; high out of water came his arm—once—twice—thrice—the glistening steel plunged into the monster’s

neck, and, at the third stroke, with a rapid movement, the knife glanced down its belly, ripping its body open almost to the tail, which, lashing in agony, was next stilled by a terrific sweeping-cut that severed the backbone. Again the knife gleamed in the air, and with a few dexterous slashes the shark's head—its jaws still vainly snapping—was hewn off his shoulders, when, driving the blade deep between the eyes and leaving it sticking there, to serve as a convenient handle, our man Friday swam back to the *Hornet* and climbed aboard, bringing his trophy of victory with him.

“ Now Sam knew quite as well as we did that Dodd disliked him (and indeed he had taken no pains to conceal his aversion), so what must the artful young hero do but run aft directly he arrived on deck, and, placing the shark's head at the skipper's feet, kneel beside it and look up in his face with a pleading expression, as much as to say, ‘ Please be kind to me.’

“ ‘ Well, well,’ said Dodd, ‘ you be a proper man, that there's no denying. I know what you mayn, though you've spoke never a word. Get up, there's a good lad, and shake hands ; us'll be the best of friends for evermore.’

“ There are two certain ways of gaining the goodwill of an old seaman ; one is to praise his ship, the other is to kill a shark.

“ So, after this daring exploit of Sam's—though, to be sure, he did not seem to think it was anything out of the common—the skipper and he became as thick as two thieves, in spite of the fact that a very few words had to go a very long way during their conversations.



But even this soon ceased to be a serious drawback, for Sam proved very quick and apt at learning our language, and as every one was anxious to teach him, that he made rapid progress is not to be wondered at. Tommy Buller, though, was the one who took the most pains with his education; he used to put our man Friday through his facings several times a day by asking him questions (in the way in which people do when they are teaching babies to speak), such as, ‘What is that, Sam?’—pointing to something aboard—or, ‘Who is that?’ and thus make him go through all he knew.

“And, besides this, Tommy used, for his own private amusement, to teach him sentences, which, having learnt by heart, he would repeat like a parrot, without in the least knowing their sense or meaning. For instance, one morning when we were in the middle of washing the decks, Sam, who with several others of his watch had been having their breakfasts in the fresh air under the fore-castle awning (which, as usual, had just been rigged to shade those who would presently be working at the paddles), came slowly aft to where we were at work, and, planting himself in front of the skipper, said, ‘Go’ mor’in’ Cap’n Dodd—the rose is red the violet’s blue, the pink is pretty and so are you—with Mr. Buller’s compliments.’ Having repeated this rigmarole, he wore short round and scudded away for’ard.

“‘Corks!’ exclaimed the skipper, as soon as he got over his amazement, and shaking his fist at Master Tommy and the others who—Sam and all—were in roars of laughter.



“ ‘Oh, it is quite appropriate, Dodd,’ said Forrester. ‘Don’t you know that this is Valentine’s day?’”

“ ‘What was it the daring young villain said? ‘The rose is blue, the pink is pretty, and so be I?’” Mussy ‘pon us! Here, that’s enough water; broom the thick of it off and get the swabs along. You boy—what are you triumphing at?—standing there grinning! Go and look at the time, for ‘tis close on eight bells, I can tell ‘e that. Pretty as a pink! well, I’m blest!’ growled the skipper, as he walked away.

“Now we were all very anxious to know how the savages had happened to light upon Hornet Island, and as soon as Sam could command enough English, eked out by signs, to make himself understood, he told us his story, the gist of which was that a war-party of ‘mans’ from his island had set out on an expedition against the people of an adjoining island, whose canoes and village they meant to sink, burn or destroy according to a time-honoured custom with both nations, who appeared to have been in the habit of paying each other these pleasant and neighbourly visits now and again. But this time the enemy carried too many guns for them, and, getting the worst of it, they were obliged to fly to their canoes, and—the retreat to their own island being cut off—paddle out to sea for dear life. They were closely chased all that day and for the best part of the next night, but managed at last to distance their pursuers, who, being left astern, eventually gave it up for a bad job and went back. Our island was in sight when the sun rose, and of course the rest was plain enough—to us, though Sam

did not know how we had contrived to retake the schooner, for he was knocked over by a bullet from the first volley, and lay senseless under the bowsprit until long after the fighting was all over.

“‘You kill every my mans?’ asked he, when he had told us all this.

“So we made shift to let him know what had happened, and at last he quite understood, and nodding his head approvingly, said, ‘Kill one ; good—kill all ; very good. Now kill Sam—he bad mans,’—taking a knife off the table and handing it to Forrester.

“‘Rubbish!’ exclaimed he, throwing it back. ‘Sam is one of us now ; we aren’t going to kill him!’

“‘Why for? One time Sam kill you’—meaning that he would have if he had had the chance.

“‘Very likely ; but you would not do so now.’

“‘No, no ; not kill now—lub too much to kill. Lub all—Dodd, Mar’in, Tommee, For’ster, Yonnee’ (me), and so on, mentioning each of our names.

“‘Very well,’ laughed Forrester, ‘and we all love Sam, so—’

“‘Land, ho!’ shouted somebody on deck.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### OWYHEE.

“‘WHAT land is it, Tommy—why, what do ’e suppose—where be us bound?’

“‘Owyhee, of course; but is that it?’

“‘Bless the boy, ’ot a fool ’tis! Didn’ I tell ’e only this very morning that us should make the land before dark, and now when ’tis staring of ’e right in the face, a half a point on our lee bow, all you can say is, “Dodd, is that Owyhee?” like one mazed. Where did ’e think to see it? on the quarter, or astarn?’

“‘Skipper, you are incorrigible,’ laughed Tommy.

“‘Ay, my; that I be. Now, why didn’t ’e come aft like a man and say out bold, “Dodd, there’s the island!” If you had, I should have said, “Right you are, my flower, like you always be!” Then us should have gone off and had a glass of beer on the strength of making such a good land-fall—and so us will now. I drewed a joug-full a bit ago, and ’tis waiting patiently to be drinked, down below there, this very instant moment. Come on.’

“We had nothing but light, variable airs all that

night, and when morning broke and the sun, having gilded and burnished first the lofty peaks and lastly the low-lying parts of the island, popped the edge of his disc over the horizon as though to take a peep at his handiwork, the *Hornet* was still some three miles from the shore, and lying almost becalmed, with her upper sails just flirting and fluttering with the last of the land breeze.

“ Presently a little cockle-shell of a canoe, with two men in her, came off from the shore, and having boarded us, one of them, who could talk pretty good English of the sort that the natives had picked up chiefly from the vessels that traded between the group of islands and the coast of America, offered to pilot us into a snug anchorage as soon as the sea-breeze set in. So his terms, whatever they were, were agreed to, and by and by, when the sea-breeze sprang up, we ran in past the coral reef, upon which the heavy rollers were dashing and heaving, and anchored at last in the smooth water of the lagoon, at the distance of about a mile from a village that stood at the head of the bay, and half-a-dozen cables’ lengths from an American brig—the only vessel besides our schooner that was in the roadstead—whose crew had been gaping over her rail at us since we hove in sight, as though they scarcely knew what to make of our smart little vessel with her numerous crew all dressed alike, and the shining muzzles of the guns peeping through her sides.

“ ‘ How shall we manage about going ashore ? ’ asked Forrester of the skipper, as soon as the sails were all stowed, yards squared, ropes hauled taut, and so on.

“‘Only one watch to a time, I think,’ replied Dodd ; ‘and all to be back aboard before dark—at first, anyway. Our watch can go to-day, and the other one to-morrow, and so on until you’ve all had enough of it.’

“‘Then you think it is necessary to keep half the ship’s company aboard?’

“‘Ay, I do. Not because of the natives—they’re harmless enough, and a good deal more civilized than the Irish—but because this here ain’t the safest place in the world to lie in, and if it comes on to blow hard with the beach there for a lee shore, us might have to slip and go to some other place. So I shall want enough hands to handle the vessel always aboard, and of course there must be anchor-watch kept at night.’

“Just then the American brig saluted us, according to the custom of the sea, by hoisting the English flag at the fore and firing all her guns. She carried four, and we could see the man who fired them running from one to the other with a red-hot poker. So we returned the compliment, of course, and, having first run up the Stars and Stripes, blazed away powder right and left, ending up with the pivot-gun, the ringing report from which went racketting along the shore in fine style.

“As soon as these courtesies were done with, a boat was lowered with a splash from the brig and, rowing towards us, was quickly alongside.

“‘Oh, yes, you can come aboard, and welcome,’ said our skipper. ‘Drop your boat astarn and make her fast.’

“So the man who had been steering—the mate, as



we found out later on—came up the accommodation-ladder, and, after the usual quick glance aloft that every seaman takes on boarding a strange vessel, walked aft towards Dodd, with whom he was soon yarning away, while the boat's crew, strolling for'ard along the deck in a little group, and pausing now and again to look at the guns or anything else that was noticeable, presently came up to those of our crew who were standing waiting to receive them ; when, having greeted us with a solemn nod all round, each of our visitors pulled a huge plug of tobacco from his pocket, and, having first bitten off a substantial mouthful, offered it to those of us who were nearest with a polite invitation to 'take a chaw and pass it on.' Then, being too good-mannered to watch how much each helped himself to, they went to the side, and, leaning over the rail, gazed at their brig as though they had not seen her for some months.

"See here, who are you, and what are you ?' asked one, suddenly facing inboard.

"Man-o'-war she ain't,' observed another, also turning round.

"Nor trading vessel, I guess,' remarked the third, following suit ; while as for the fourth and last man, he, having probably nothing to say, continued looking at the brig.

"Well, this here is a yacht,' said Bill Evans, 'and we are sailing about for pleasure ; these gents are the crew of her, and she belongs to them.'

"Can't hoist that yarn in,' said the man who had first spoken, slowly shaking his head. 'Elijah John Dubber, can you ?'

“‘No, Silas P. Thompson,’ replied one of the others, while the man who had not yet uttered a word jerked his thumb towards our ensign staff, from which the English flag was waving, and muttered, ‘Wrong bunting—ought to fly the “Jolly Roger.”’<sup>1</sup>

“‘Ah!’ assented the other three.

“‘Why you don’t mean to tell me that you put this packet down as being a pirate?’ exclaimed Bill.

“‘That’s so,’ calmly replied one of our visitors; adding, after a pause, ‘Been on the same lay myself—and so has Silas there. Our skipper says when you was coming in, says he, “I calculate that’s one of Johnny Bull’s little fighten’ canoes;” but Silas and me knowed better’n that, eh, Silas? Anyway,’ continued he, confidentially, ‘our brig ain’t wuth your while; there’s nothen’ aboard of *her*, ’cept water (for she leaks like a sieve), and rats, and sick men. Half our hands is down with fever and ague, and the rest ain’t got strength enough to raise the anchors, so—’

“Here a hearty burst of laughter interrupted the speaker. ‘The *Hornet* a pirate! Oh, it is too rich!’ shouted Tommy Buller. Then directly after, ‘Pray don’t be offended,’ said he to the Americans, who were getting restless at being laughed at. ‘We feel highly complimented, very highly complimented, indeed. And now, here comes the boatswain’s mate of this gore-stained craft; he is about to pipe to dinner, and we hope you will join us. We cannot pretend to offer you real pirates’ fare—blood on toast, or whatever it may be—

<sup>1</sup> The pirate flag.

but—' 'Come on down below,' said Bill Evans, putting a stop to Tommy's palaver. 'Grub's ready, and you're kindly welcome.'

"' Boy Johnny !' sang out the skipper just then, so I went aft. 'Here,' said he, 'this is the mate of the brig, and her's got several hands bad; you go and ax Martin if he'll go off and see what good he can do. I'll bet 'e a guinea that he can put 'em to rights in no time—see how he fetched our Sam round, and had'n so bright's a daisy in a week!'

"' It is very kind of you,' said the mate, 'and if your doctor—'

"' Well, he ain't our doctor, not particular, though to be sure he is a doctor, and a clever one too—'tis awnly one of the gents—like I been telling 'e 'bout.'

"' Je-hosaphat!' exclaimed the mate in blank astonishment. 'I suppose you haven't got a king or an emperor or two doing able seaman's duty in this hooker, because if you have, tell me so at once, to set my mind at ease.'

"' No, no,' laughed Dodd, 'us a'n't got none of they—there's a lord for'ard, or was a bit ago, but that's all, and he ain't much account—go on, boy; what be 'e waiting for?'

"So when our visitors had been entertained to their heart's content they got into their boat and went back to the brig, taking Martin with them.

"As soon as they were gone, we of the starboard watch got permission to clean and go ashore, and in less than half-an-hour we had shoved off in the cutter and were rowing across the sheltered water towards a con-

venient landing-place on the beach, where a group of natives stood watching us approach. They did not wait, either, until the boat was aground, but, wading into the water, laid hold of the gunwale and dragged her in with much laughter and shouting—'how-you-doing' and shaking of hands ; all as friendly as possible. So, escorted by these pleasant people, who very soon had us decked out, like themselves, in flowers from head to foot, we strolled on, and coming to a river, turned inland and walked along its bank until we arrived at a broad pool, into which a waterfall plunged from the rocks above. Here were scores of natives, swimming, diving, and darting about, like so many fish, and, as we were rather tired, we sat down on the grass and watched their antics.

"Presently the man who had piloted us in in the morning came up and said—'You come—swim—all Kanákas glad to see.'

"'No, thank you,' replied Forrester, 'no swim well enough ; only very little.'

"'I don't see why we shouldn't,' said Savary. 'The water looks very cool and inviting—I am going in for one.'

"'All right,' said Forrester, 'if you do, I will !' so the end of it was that, in a few minutes, the whole lot of us had undressed and were swimming about among the natives, who received us with loud shouts of applause and approval.

"Now, I was but a poor swimmer, and to slowly struggle from one side of the pool to the other was about as much as I could well manage ; however, I



paddled steadily to and fro, and took a good rest on the rocks after each trip, much to the amusement of a lot of youngsters, about my own age, who accompanied me on my expeditions ; coming out of the water when I did, perching themselves all round me while I took breath, and jumping in when I started again.

“I liked to see them play at touch best of all ; that was great fun. Perhaps, while I was sitting on the rocks and while they were chattering away to me and to each other, one would suddenly clap another on the back and then shoot, like the flash of a dagger, into the dark water beneath, followed instantly by all the rest, darting this way and that, and glancing along like so many minnows.

“I was given ‘touch’ once, and should have been there now if I had had to catch one of my play-fellows, I might as well have chased a shoal of mackerel, for they just kept at arms’ length wherever I went. As for me, I could scarcely swim for laughing. At last, though, by pretending to reach out at one in front and then slewing quickly round, I managed to touch another who was just going to shove my head under water, when in a second the whole flock had dived and scurried off in all directions. I had had enough of it by then, so I went back and put on my clothes.

“Tommy, who, though he was not in our watch, had been given permission to come ashore with us, quitted the water while I was dressing, and we two, leaving the others—who looked as though they meant staying in the pool for the rest of the day—walked back towards the seashore.



“Tommy and I had got to be very close friends, for we were about the same age, and, strangely enough—as we had found out by comparing notes—my father’s farm was quite close to Colonel Buller’s estate. We two, therefore, had always lots to talk about, and though he had been away at school most of his time for the last few years, he knew as well as I did where the primroses first showed in the spring, and where blackberries were most plentiful in autumn, and the best pools for trout in the stream that runs through Combe wood. Of these and other similar things we were never tired of yarning.

“Well, we two got down to the beach and strolled along under the shade of the thickly-growing cocoanut-trees that bounded it on the landward side, until we came to the place where our cutter had put in, where we found a boat from the brig with one man left in charge of her. So, for the want of something better to do, we walked down towards him, thinking at first that he was one of the men who had been aboard the *Hornet* in the morning. However, we were mistaken, though that did not matter very much.

“‘You belong to the brig, I suppose,’ said Tommy, by way of starting a conversation.

“‘Well, yes, I do for the present,’ replied the man, ‘at all events she doesn’t belong to me, and to tell you the truth, I don’t know that I should care to own such a mournful old craft. She leaks like a basket, and very near all the water round about Owyhee has been through her since we brought up in the bay a month ago.’

“‘It must be hard work to keep her free,’ said I, ‘it half your crew are on the sick-list.’

“ ‘Ay, it is so ; however, there appears to be some hope now that the men will be able to turn to again before long. Our skipper would never have cured them—not he ! The colours would have been flying at half mast in a day or two, I know, if you had not arrived.

“ ‘What is the good of giving *salts*,’ continued he, contemptuously, ‘to men that have scarcely got strength enough to crawl—and that is the only physic the poor wretches have had up to this blessed morning ! Salts, salts, salts ! why, I believe if one of us fell from aloft and carried away some of his floor timbers, that the old man would calmly ladle him out a pannikin of salts, and think nothing else was necessary !

“ ‘That is a smart-looking little schooner of yours,’ said he, after a pause, and glancing seaward at the *Hornet* ; ‘she sits on the quiet waters of the lagoon like a duck. Ay, it did my heart good to see the old red ensign streaming from her peak this morning when you hove in sight, which isn’t to be wondered at considering that I hadn’t clapped eyes on the bonny colours for over six years.

“ ‘I am an Englishman, you see,’ he went on, ‘as I daresay you have guessed—as English as roast beef and plum duff. My last ship was cast away on one of the coral islands down to the south’ard, and there I lived all by myself, like Robinson Crusoe, for five years and seven months. Then along came the Yankee brig and picked me up, and that is how I happen to be sailing under the Stars and Stripes just now.’

“ ‘Were you the only man saved from the wreck ?’ I asked.

“Well, I was the only man aboard the ship when she was lost, my son, so there was nobody else that could have been saved—oh ay, you want to know all about it, of course ; all right, wait a bit while I light my pipe and then I'll spin you the yarn.

“‘Seven years ago this very month,’ he began, after a few vigorous puffs to make sure that the tobacco in his pipe was well alight, ‘I left London in a full-rigged ship of 500 tons, or thereabouts, called the *Good Intent*, bound to Canton with a general cargo. I was second mate of her. We arrived out all safe and sound, discharged our cargo, and loaded with tea and silks for home.

“‘Now I must tell you that our skipper—who was also a part owner of the ship—had been yarning to the mate and me during the passage out, of a wonderful island in the South Pacific that he had heard about, or read about, or something, and where gold and diamonds were as plentiful as pebbles on the seashore ; so the night before we left Canton he called us both aft to his cabin and let out that he had made up his mind to take the ship home by the Cape Horn passage and look for this island—which, according to his account, lay somewhere to the nor'ard of the Fee-gees—on the way.

““At the worst it will only delay the voyage a month or two,” said he, “and what is that to the chance of filling the vessel with gold—say nothing of precious stones ! why, if we can only light on the island there isn't a man aboard here who won't be able to lay back for the rest of his days and ride about in a carriage and pair !”

““What do you think of it, Tom ?” asked the mate, when we got on deck.

“‘Oh,’ said I, ‘obey orders if you break owners ; what does it matter to us which way she goes home ?—more days more dollars, you know—but I think that the old man is a bit mad, all the same.

“‘Well, we came away out of Canton River, and in two or three weeks’ time the ship was close down to the Feegees, and then we cruised about in chase of what the crew called “the skipper’s Tom Tiddler’s land,” for days and days. We saw plenty of islands, of course, but none of them came up to the description of the right one, which according to the captain’s notion, wherever he got it from, was to have a high peak at one end and a round hill covered with trees at the other.

“‘However, one fine morning, after we had been at this game for about a week, land was reported on the lee bow, and as we drew near we made out that there certainly was a high peak at one end of it, though the wooded hill was not so plain—nothing of the sort was there, in fact. But, hill or no hill, the skipper had made up his mind that we were in sight of the wonderful island at last, and the mate too was just as certain about it. As for me, like the Dutchman’s parrot, I didn’t say much, but I thought a good deal.

“‘So under easy canvas, we sailed on, and getting close in with the island, found that there was a reef all round it as far as we could see, though here and there between the breakers were patches of smooth water ; and as some of them seemed wide enough for the ship to pass through, we sent a boat away to take soundings in the likeliest-looking gap, and stood off and on until we saw her coming back.



““ There was plenty of water for us, so we hoisted the boat up, squared away, and, passing safely through the reef, anchored in the smooth water beyond it at the distance of about a mile from the shore.

““ A canoe with five or six natives in her came paddling off from the beach as soon as our anchor was on the ground ; they did not seem the least afraid of us but, coming alongside at once, commenced to clamber aboard, bringing what was in the canoe—fruit and so on—with them.

““ Now while our boat was away taking soundings, we had opened the main hatch and cleared a small space in the 'tween-decks which was intended to be used as a store for displaying the gear—hatchets, beads, and the like—that the skipper had brought in the ship to traffic with the natives in case any came aboard, and to which not more than three or four were to be admitted at a time. This business was put in my charge, and when the captain saw that the natives in the first canoe were coming alongside, he sent me off in all haste to open the cases and get everything in order below, and told me to let him know when my stock-in-trade was ready for inspection. So I was below when the savages got aboard.

““ Presently a couple of our hands came down to get the quarter-deck awning out of the sail locker—the entrance to it was in the 'tween decks—and one of them told me that a dozen or more canoes were coming off from the land, loaded with fruit and green stuff, as far as he could make out.

““ “ Fine times these for sailors, sir,” said he. “ I suppose we shall be allowed liberty ashore there, if only



to make a mainsail-haul of some of them valu'bles as the skipper maintains is to be had for the gathering?"

"'Gather this awning up first,' said I pretty sharply, for somehow I wasn't in the best of tempers.

"'They took it up on deck through the main hatch, which, as it was open, was the easiest way, and directly afterwards, I heard the savages coming aboard in shoals and swarming about on the deck over my head ; but oh ! how can I describe what happened next ! I had put the finishing touches on my display of goods, and was just walking towards the ladder, when a loud yell rang sharply out on deck, followed by the sounds of rushing feet ; more hideous yells ; shouts ; groans ; curses ; the fearful din increasing until it seemed as though the ship were possessed by demons. Then footsteps tearing down the companion-way ; the poor old skipper's voice calling for help ; the sharp report of a pistol ; a sickening thud ; another ; and all was still for a few seconds, when the wild screeching of the savages burst out afresh, by which and by the dancing that was going on overhead, I knew that my poor shipmates had been overpowered and, in all probability, slaughtered to a man.

"'The struggle was all over in a few minutes and, though I had rushed towards the place where our arms were kept as soon as I realized what was going on, and had in fact reached it just as the captain was murdered, I quickly changed my plans and running back to the sail locker, jumped into it, turned back a few bights of the sails, crawled underneath, and covered myself over the best way I could ; all of which I had scarcely done when I heard first the bang of the door being thrown

open, and then the jabbering of some of the savages as they looked in, for by this time they were ransacking the ship from end to end.

“Presently I felt one of them crawling hands and



A Native.

knees on the sails that covered me, and looking up through the crevices I saw a horrible face peering about, and not more than a couple of feet away. I didn't move, not an inch, and there I lay, holding my breath tight

and watching. Then another came in, and between them they lifted the topmost bight of the sails that covered me ; but that was too much trouble, I suppose, for they did not attempt to start the next—if they had I should have been discovered for certain, and as it was, though they could not see me, I could see them plainly enough whenever they got over the crevice that was in a line with my eyes.

““ At last one of them raised his spear, its point all dripping with blood, and dug it down between the sails right straight for my face. As luck would have it, though, the point caught in a bit of canvas that was hanging loose, and so, when the savage found that his spear was foul, he gave it an angry thrust that changed the direction a little, and, tearing away the canvas, it went clean through my right ear—see, there is the mark. The point next struck the downhaul block of one of our topmast-stunsails, and hearing the rattle the savage pulled his spear out, whereupon, and satisfied, I suppose, that there was nothing under the sails worth looking for, he and the other went away.

““ I fainted as soon as they were gone, and so would most people I should think ; a man need have the nerve of an iron-bound block to keep his senses after going through what I had—plenty would have gone raving mad over it without a doubt.

““ Well, I don't know how long I lay there before I came to and recollected what had happened. There wasn't a sound in the ship then except the hum of the breeze in the rigging and the dash of the little waves against her bows, so, after waiting and listening for a

while, I slowly and carefully dragged myself from under the sails and looked out of the open doorway. Nobody was in sight, and, keeping a good look-out, as you may depend, I cautiously stepped into the 'tween-decks, reached the ladder, and went up the main-hatchway until my head was level with the combings. Not a savage was on deck anywhere, so I then went out and, peeping over the rail, saw to my relief that the fleet of canoes were paddling off for the shore, which they had nearly reached, and that none remained alongside.

“ ‘ But oh God, the state our decks were in ! Blood was trickling in sluggish streams into and along the water-ways and pouring down each scupper-hole. It stood in pools on the tarpaulin cover that had been thrown off the main-hatch, and, here and there, a broad crimson smudge on the deck showed where a body had been dragged along towards the ship's side, to be passed, as I quickly guessed, into the canoes—These wretches are cannibals ! thought I, with a shudder.

“ ‘ Taking another glance over the side, I saw that by this time the savages had landed and were pitching the dead bodies of my poor shipmates out of the canoes and lugging them up the beach, which horrible sight fairly unmanned me, and leaning my head on the pin-rail, I cried like a child.

“ ‘ Well, that wouldn't do, of course, though I suppose it was but natural, and starting up, I—having first armed myself with a brace of pistols—searched the ship from stem to stern, just taking a look now and then to see if any of the canoes were coming back. I soon found that no one but myself was aboard, and, having made sure of



that, I then sat down on the bucket-rack by the break of the poop to think of what I had better do, and, as I was pondering, a couple of land-birds came along and settled on the end of the spanker-boom—they were doves, and their soft cooing seemed to put hope into me ; so, having hit upon a plan, I jumped to my feet and went for'ard.

““ The wind had shifted since we anchored and now instead of blowing on the shore it was in the other direction—off the land—while the ship, having swung to the wind, now lay with her head towards the beach. A glance had shown me all this when I first came on deck. Quite a fresh, wholesome breeze was singing aloft, and I knew that so long as it lasted the savages would not attempt to get the ship ashore. They could not tow her against a head-wind with their light canoes, not if they had had five hundred, though I felt pretty sure that if it fell calm, or if the wind shifted again, they would turn to at once, get her on the beach, strip her, and then burn the hull for the sake of the metal fastenings. It was quite clear, though, that they were not going to attempt this just yet, for their canoes were hauled up on the beach and they had got a big fire alight in the middle of a green, open space that stood between the thick woods and came almost down to the water's edge ; so, to get to know what was going on, I went and fetched the glass, and, looking through it, saw plainly enough that the savages were mustered round about this fire, and that while some were piling wood upon it, others were starting the head of a cask that stood close by.—Good ! thought I, shutting the glass up ; they have taken one of our rum casks ashore, and mean to have a carouse.



“ ‘ Then I set to work, and, having first put on a canvas suit which I found in the fore-castle, I crawled out on the boom and cut the gaskets off the jib and flying-jib, and cut the downhauls too, keeping under cover all the time as well as I could, though at that distance, and as I was dressed in white, they would have had sharp eyes to have seen me.

“ ‘ After that was done I let go and overhauled the lar-board fore-braces and hauled in the starboard ones, until the yards were canted as much as I wanted—all done bit by bit you must understand—and then I climbed up the abaft side of the fore-mast into the fore-top, where I lay for a minute or so, watching the movements of the savages while I took breath.

“ ‘ The fire was blazing up high by now, and they were dancing round it, looking, as their dark bodies passed in front of the crimson glare, like a pack of devils let loose. The cask of rum stood but a short distance from the fire, and I was glad to see that it was not left alone for a moment, for every now and again some of them would break from the ring and run to it and then return to dance wilder than ever.

“ ‘ And, as I looked, by some means or other the cask got capsized and a flare of curling flame shot into the air as the spirit caught alight, scattering the savages in all directions. They soon got over their fright, though, for in a minute or so a dozen or more of them came racing down the beach and, launching a couple of canoes, paddled out towards the ship, for another cask of rum, as I quickly guessed. They soon reached her side and climbed aboard, and I, crouching in the top as flat as I

could lie, watched them through the chinks in the wood, dreading either that they would see that the yards had been braced about during their absence, or discover some sign which would show that some one had escaped from the massacre.

“ ‘ However, they never so much as looked aloft, all they seemed to think about was the rum, so I lay as close as a mouse while they dragged up another cask from below and rolled it across the deck towards where the canoes were made fast.

“ ‘ Most of the savages that had come off were the worse for liquor, even then, and the only one who appeared to be quite sober was a big man who, as he gave orders to the rest, seemed to be a chief. One, though, was much worse than the others, for he was fairly three sheets in the wind and reeled about the decks, flourishing his spear and yelling, instead of lending a hand with the cask, and although the chief sang out to him once in a few sharp words, he paid no attention, but carried on with his antics as before. After a bit he was spoken to again, and then, with drunken stupidity, he strutted up to the chief and shook his spear in his face and in so doing stumbled, but before he had time to recover his balance the chief stepped back a pace, swung his heavy club, and in the twinkling of an eye—*crash*—the man was stretched on the deck, a corpse. Then, so that there should be no mistake about it, I suppose, he raised his club again and pounded the dead man’s head to a jelly.

“ ‘ This sobered the rest to some extent, for they quickly lowered the cask of rum into one of the canoes,

and then paddled away for the shore, leaving the dead savage just where he had fallen.

“ I never stirred hand nor foot until I saw them all landed and the canoes hauled up again, and then I got up on the topgallant-yard and cut the yard-arm and quarter-gaskets adrift. Next thing I did was to haul the end of one of the buntlines up and pay it down again, but before-all ;<sup>1</sup> then I cut the other part, and first taking an overhand knot in it so that it should not unreeve, let it run up to the block. Afterwards I made the bunt-gasket fast with a single rope-yarn round the mast and round the buntline as well ; so you can see that by taking the end that was on deck towards the bows of the ship and hauling upon it, I could break the rope-yarn stop and then down would fall the sail. I next cut the clewlines and the other buntline, and, descending, got my topsail and foresail ready for setting in the same way, except that I did not cut the topsail clewlines nor the fore clew-garnets ; all I had to do was to unhook the blocks. So everything being then ready aloft, I went down on deck the same way that I came up.

“ The savages were in full swing again by now, for the other cask had been broached—it stood a bit farther from the fire this time—and the wild dance was being indulged in with greater fury than ever. I took another look at them through the glass, and to my great horror saw that the poor bodies of my murdered shipmates were being hacked to pieces and devoured by these fiends—each as he leapt madly by the fire bore a drip-

<sup>1</sup> In front ; not abaft. A sea-term.

ping piece of flesh.—Oh! a fearful sight, at which I could look no longer.

“Well, thought I, now is the time to slip, while the breeze lasts, for if it drops my chance is as good as gone; so, without more ado, I fetched the cook’s axe and severed the cable—dashed to my breaking-line—broke away the stops—sheeted home the fore-topsail—then the topgallant-sail, as much as I could get—gathered in the slack of the fore-tack and fore-sheet—sprang to the flying-jib halliards and hoisted the sail as high as I could—next the jib (by which time the ship’s head had paid right off, bringing the wind on her starboard beam)—flew to the braces, let go the weather ones and dragged away to leeward until I managed to lay the yards about square—I had the strength of six men, I verily believe—and then, rushing aft to the wheel, jammed it hard a-starboard just as she began to gather headway. She answered her helm; her bows fell slowly off; the square canvas fluttered and filled; and, with her fore-topsail bellying out like a balloon, away sped the *Good Intent*, dead before the wind, and heading for the smooth patch between the breakers which showed the position of the channel through which she had entered in the morning.

“I had time to take a glance astern then, and saw that four of the canoes had been launched and were digging out like mad in chase. They were gaining, and pretty fast, too, but as the breeze was freshening as the ship drew out from under the lee of the land, I knew that if they did not close before she got the full strength of it, that there would be wind enough presently to send



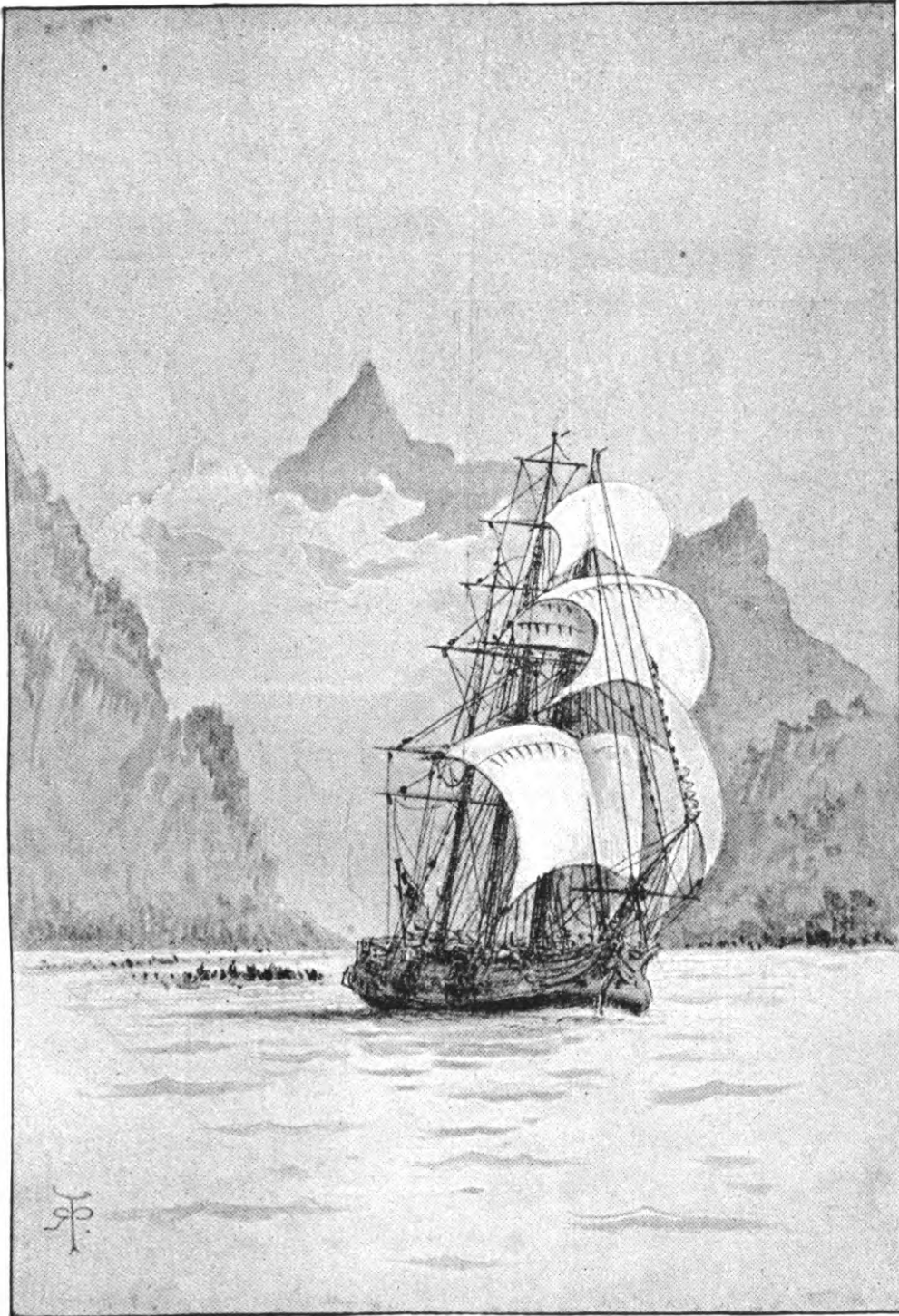
her along faster than they could paddle : at any rate, if the worst came to the worst, I determined, sooner than be taken, to run the ship right slap on the reef and die like a man among the breakers.

““ On came the canoes, and I saw that my chance of escape was getting less and less with each stroke of the paddles ; the yells of the angry savages, too, came plain to my ears down the breeze, though high above their clamour sounded the deep thunder of the surf on the reef, now not more than half a mile away.

““ Stronger blew the freshening wind, sending the ship faster through the water every minute, and along dashed the canoes, each leaving a flashing track of foam behind, with a string of little whirlpools on each side of it where the paddles had dipped. Closer and closer they drew, until at last the leading canoe shot up on the ship's star-board quarter, and was, in fact, just sheering alongside, when, leaving the wheel for a few seconds, I picked a round shot out of the rack and dashed it into her bows. It crashed through her, and instantly filling, she turned over, pitching the savages into the wake that the ship left behind, and for the life of me I couldn't help laughing to see their black heads bobbing about in the eddying foam.

““ I had scarcely returned to the wheel, though, before the second canoe ran up on the other quarter, and the savages in her, laying hold of the mizen-chains, came scrambling aboard, while I, without waiting to receive them, sprang into the rigging on the other side and was soon out of their reach. I never went aloft so smart before in all my life !





THE "GOOD INTENT."

*To face page 192.*



“ ‘ At this time the ship was just entering the passage ; and so close was the reef on the starboard hand that as a surf swelled and broke over it, the volume of water which immediately afterwards rushed into the opening struck her fair on the broadside, almost rolling her larboard gunwale under. As she heeled over, the canoe, caught by the channels, was instantly swamped, and so went adrift with those of her crew who had not made good their hold of the ship.

“ ‘ On plunged the *Good Intent* in the midst of the boiling foam and just skirting the edge of the reef, upon which I expected to feel her strike every moment, and along came another great heaving roller, breaking with a crash like thunder, and changing in a second from transparent blue to a whirling turmoil of lashing white. Again the rushing water struck the ship, and leaping headlong over her side, filled the decks halfway to the rail ; yet, staggering, plunging, wallowing in the midst of that mad sea, onward she still breasted her way, and passing through the channel without mishap, emerged at last into the open sea beyond the reef.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE GOOD INTENT.

“WELL, so far so good. There was the ship sailing merrily away before the wind ; and there was I, perched on her mizen-topgallant-yard ; and there on the poop below were the savages—eight in number—that had boarded her, wishing, without a doubt, by this time, that they had stayed ashore within hail of the rum cask ; and there, far enough astern, were the other two canoes, paddling slowly back towards the island. So I pulled off my cap and gave three cheers.

“The next move was made by the savages on deck, for after a good deal of jabbering among themselves, four or five of them started off and commenced to mount the mizen-rigging, and leading them was the same big chief who came aboard after the second cask of rum.

“Now I daresay that they were very good men at climbing trees, but going aloft is a different matter, especially if the ship happens to be rolling a little, so they made rather heavy weather of it. I laughed to see them, and that is the truth ; though take it all round,

there wasn't so very much to laugh at, as maybe you will allow.

“The chief, who evidently had the most pluck, managed, after a lot of struggling and exertion, to reach the top, and from there he crawled to the top-mast-rigging, and commenced to mount, one rattlin at a time; as for the others, they stood here and there among the lower shrouds, holding on tight, and looking at him, too dizzy or too much afraid to follow any higher. So the chief came on alone, and I, taking a pistol out of my pocket, made up my mind to shoot him when he got to the cross-trees.

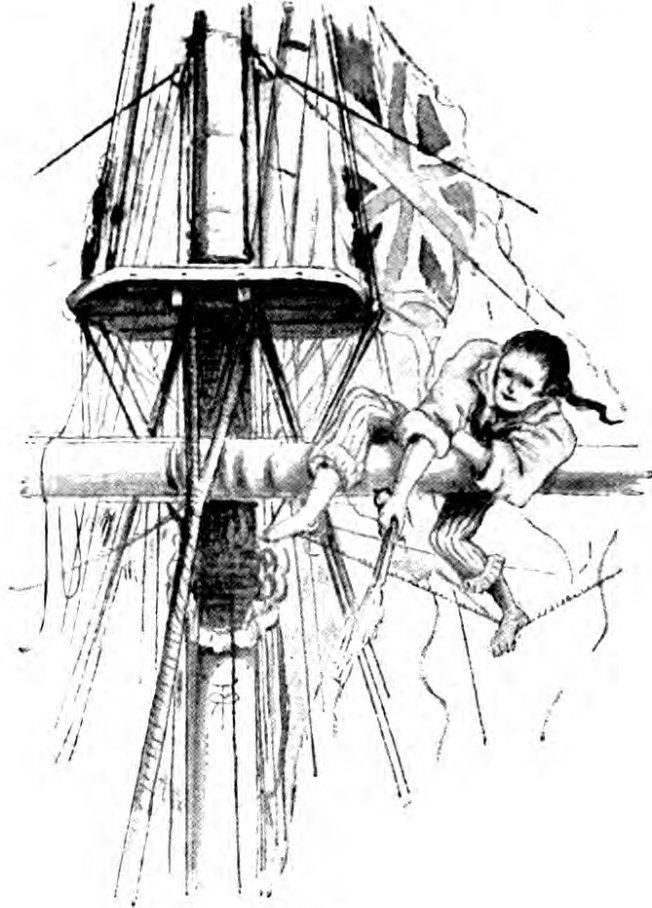
“He never reached them, though, and I will tell you why.

“With her head-canvas set (after a fashion) the ship kept pretty nearly before the wind; but, as there was nobody steering her, she naturally yawed about a good deal, and had the wind first on one quarter, then on the other,—though but young seamen, you will understand that?—Very good. Now the savages, when they went aloft, got into the then weather-rigging, but by the time that the chief had reached about midway between the mizen-top and the cross-trees, the ship's head had paid off again, and presently, too, she brought the wind on the other quarter, when, of course, what had been the weather side became, in its turn, the lee side, and the rigging, as she heeled over, slackened a bit—not much, but quite enough to make the chief knock off climbing and clutch the shrouds with both his hands.

“Then he did a very foolish thing, for he looked down, and I noticed, when he turned his face towards



me again, that its fierce expression had quite vanished,



Cause.

and that his dark olive complexion had changed to a sort of sickly grey colour, either from terror or giddiness, or maybe both. So, looking down at him from my perch, I commenced a long speech, hoping that my voice might frighten him a bit more, when perhaps he would fall, and so save me the trouble of shooting him, and, what was of more consequence, save the contents of one of my pistols as well.



Effect.

“I spoke in a grave and solemn voice, and told him, in the first place, how badly he and his countrymen had behaved ; and afterwards—as it made no great difference what I said—I described the method of putting a ship about, giving the various orders in a loud voice. There the poor wretch clung, gazing straight into my face, swaying from side to side as the vessel plunged along in the rising sea, and trembling with fright each time I shouted out an order, until, just as I had got to “Fore-bowline—let go and haul!” his grasp of the rigging slackened, his fingers straightened out, and then, with a sobbing groan, he fell backwards, and, turning a somersault or two in his descent, pitched, with a dull scranching *thud*, on the deck beneath.

“One from eight leaves seven, thought I, so with that I went down on the cro’jack yard, and fired one of my pistols into the midst of the other savages, who were then clustered round their dead chief. One fell, though I don’t think it was the one I aimed at ; however, that did not matter very much, and while the rest were looking up at me in amazement, I fired again, when another dropped with a bullet in his chest ; I saw it strike him, for the blood flew out like a tiny spurt of red smoke.

“Well, nothing but the want of more ammunition kept me from shooting the others in the same way, for they never attempted to leave the poop ; no doubt they hadn’t the slightest notion as to how I had managed to kill the two men, and so the idea of getting out of range or under cover never occurred to them. Anyhow, they stayed aft, stumbling and staggering about—for the

*Good Intent* was pretty lively in a sea-way—and, thought I, old Father Neptune will be for lending me a hand presently, so to pass away the time I pulled out my pipe and had a smoke.

“The motion of the ship soon began to tell, and, as I had expected, first one and then another of the savages was overcome by sea-sickness, until at length the whole five of them were paying landsmen's tribute, and lay here and there about the deck as helpless as logs of wood. A few minutes passed by, and then one—an elderly man, who had been the last to give in—slowly raised his head, and, sitting up, called to the others. Two came crawling towards him, but the other two, though they looked round at the old man's hail, didn't seem able or willing to move, and dropped their heads listlessly on the deck again. These three, who were not so helpless, then got together, and squatting down close to the companion-way, commenced a low wailing chant, its plaintive tones rising clear and distinct above the fitful moan of the breeze in the rigging, to which it bore some slight resemblance. Louder and louder rose their mournful song, until at last it suddenly ceased, when, starting to their feet and stretching out their arms towards the island, now becoming dim and hazy in the distance, with loud shouts of “*Aoi! Aoi!*” they rushed to the side and plunged overboard!

“I went down on deck then, and, having fetched the axe from where I had left it after cutting the cable, I stove in the heads of the other two savages with it, and also that of the man I had hit with my first shot, who was only badly wounded; and afterwards I lugged the

bodies to the side and bundled them over the rail. Ay, it was an unpleasant job, killing the poor devils, but what was I to do?

“Well, the wind had been freshening up all this time, so I then went aft to the wheel and steered the ship dead before it as hour after hour went by. At sunset quite half a gale of wind was blowing, and through the long night the *Good Intent* plunged madly along until the first glimpse of dawn, when the wind gradually moderated, and, falling very light, died away altogether by the time the sun had lifted clear of the horizon.

“I was fairly worn out, as you may guess, and after making sure that nothing was in sight, I went below and turned in for a few hours' rest. I had too much on my mind, though, to sleep for very long, and by ten o'clock, or thereabouts, I woke up and came on deck again, to find that the flat calm still continued, and that the sea raised by the breeze had quite subsided; so, after a hasty meal of cold beef, washed down with a glass or two of rum, I set to work and gave the decks a good rinse down, to wash the blood off them.

“I next commenced to get the ship under snug canvas, and, mounting to the fore-yard, cut the fore-sail adrift, letting it drop overboard by keeping one earing fast until everything else was gone, and then cutting that, and got rid of the topgallant-sail in the same way.

“Afterwards I went down, and, taking the topsail-reef-tackles to the capstan, managed to heave the sail to a fairly taut leech, and, jumping aloft again, passed the close reef-carings the best way I could; then, gathering



up the slack sail bit by bit, I knotted the points, all three reefs in one.

“‘I next loosed and reefed the main-topsail in the same manner ; got the jib and flying-jib down, and made them fast, and hoisted the fore-topmast-staysail ; so the ship being then under her storm-canvas only, I felt that as much as one man could do had been done to prepare for whatever weather might happen along.

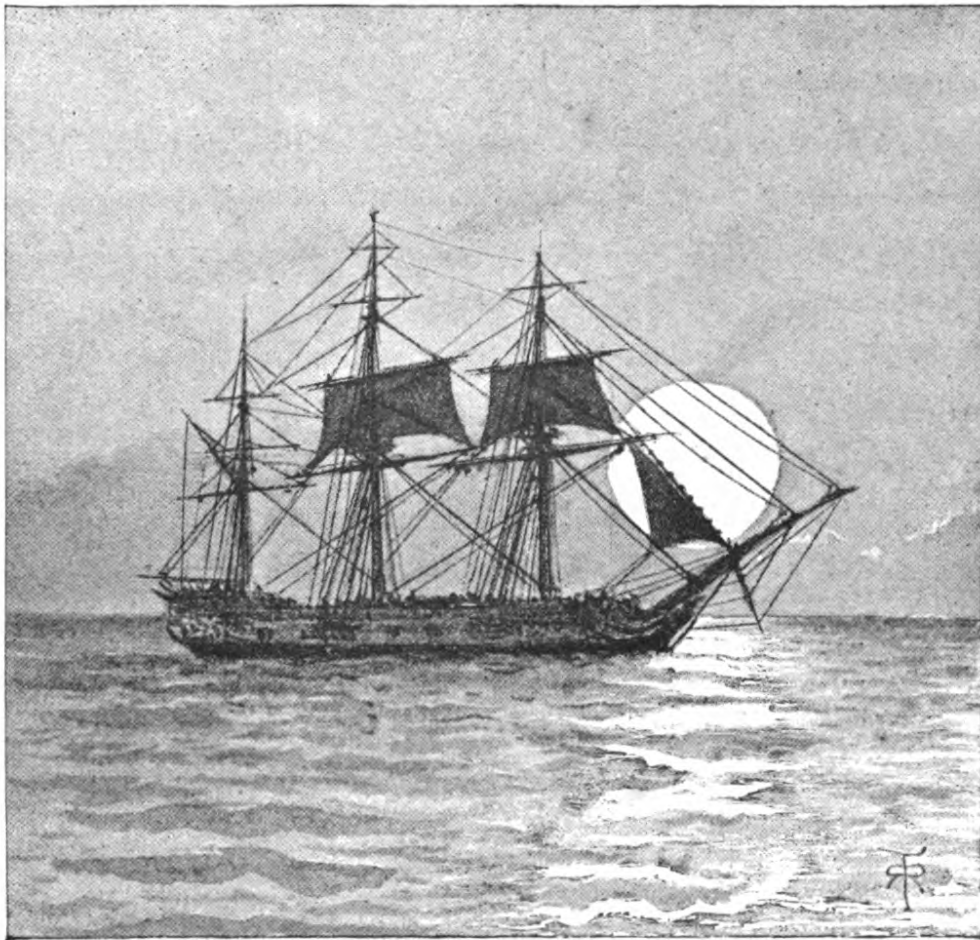
“‘The sun was far down in the west by the time I had finished all this work, and, wearied by the heavy labour, I seated myself on the cabin skylight and fell to pondering over all that had happened until I felt quite down-hearted and miserable. “Here,” I groaned, “am I, the only man left alive out of the whole ship’s company ; the poor old captain, the mate, all hands but me murdered !” The horror of it almost drove me distracted, and starting from my seat, I raced up and down the deck, fancying the while that I could hear the shrieks—the groans—the yells of the bloodthirsty savages, as plain as I had heard them at the time of the massacre. At last I went raving mad—or next door to it—and should very likely have ended up by jumping overboard, only that while tearing about from one end of the ship to the other, I happened to trip up over a ringbolt, and in falling struck my head against the covering-board, which was the best thing I could have done, for it stunned me.

“‘The moon had risen when I came to my senses again, and was shining so tenderly on the ship, edging the ropes and spars with silver and flooding the decks with her peaceful light. The least flutter of a breeze,



too, was blowing, so, staggering to my feet, I leaned against the mizen-rigging and gazing across the placid expanse of moon-lit ocean let the cool wind fan my throbbing temples.

“The light breeze that had sprung up had not weight



Moonlight.

enough in it as yet to fill the canvas, but it showed signs of increasing, and before very long the topsails began to lift and tremble, and the sea, which had hitherto looked like a sheet of quicksilver, showed here and there a delicate network of faint lines where its surface was

disturbed by a cat's paw. These expanded as the breeze freshened, until, meeting, the whole ocean as far as eye could see was all alive with the quivering ripples.

“Then the ship began to steal quietly along, and, coming gradually up to the wind until her square canvas shivered, was as slowly paid off again by the fore-topmast-staysail ; so, seeing that she could not come to much harm, and feeling rather drowsy, I fetched a bed and blanket from below and lay down on deck, knowing I should be sure to wake up if the wind increased to any extent.

“So I fell asleep and slept as sound as though I had been in my bed at home instead of all alone in a 500-ton ship away out on the bosom of the mighty Pacific. And as I slept I dreamt that my dear old mother came to me, and, kissing me, told me to cheer up and steer *north*. The vision was so vivid that I woke, her words still ringing in my ears, her kiss still wet on my cheek, though the next moment I got another “kiss” that quickly brought my wits back from wool-gathering—it was a sheet of spray that, driven over the rail, had slapped hissing on the deck close beside me.

“The moon was still shining, though she was nearing the western horizon by now, and the sky, which had been quite clear when I went to sleep, was thickly strewn with small fleecy clouds streaming merrily along from the south-east. A fine breeze, too, was piping aloft, so, after bracing the yards up a bit, I took hold of the wheel and steered the ship due north—for that I had made up my mind to do according to the

words of my dream, which, of course, I wasn't going to disregard.

“Daylight came welling up from the east at last, and when I had had enough of the wheel I put the helm down, ran and braced the fore-topsail up, laid the main-topsail to the mast, and hove her to for breakfast.

“Well, day after day slipped by without anything of importance happening, and the *Good Intent* kept getting farther and farther to the nor'ard—not very fast you know, seeing that she was hove to for quite half the time and was not travelling at any wild rate of speed even when she was on her course—and so it went on until just a week had elapsed, counting from the day of the massacre.

“I had been asleep since midnight, and turned out just as the eastern sky was changing from deep blue to radiant green with a glimmer of gold towards the horizon. There was not a breath of air stirring, and I stood and watched the unfolding of what was the most beautiful dawn I ever saw in my life.

“Have you ever noticed the sun shining in through one of those big windows in a cathedral, made of thousands of bits of different coloured glass? Well, it was something like that away to the east'ard when the sun rose clear of the sleeping ocean, only hundreds of times more gorgeous in its dazzling grandeur. The sea, too, in that direction did not look as if it was only ordinary salt water, it was more like one sheet of brilliant heaving gold, with here and there the long dark shadow of a swell as it came undulating along.—Ay, a lovely sight.

““ But, even as I gazed, the scene slowly changed, the vivid colours faded away and vanished, the face of the ocean gradually darkened, and the sun, which but a few minutes before had been sending his streaming light in a river of molten glory across the deep, grew dim and blood-red, until at last his disc was hidden altogether, and then all that marked his position was a daub of brightness in the thickening haze, that spreading quickly around, had blotted out his radiance.

““ Well, I did not like the look of the weather at all ; the barometer, too, had fallen nearly an inch since I set it at midnight, and that spelt “hurricane ” as clear as print—there is going to be a blow before long, thought I, so here goes to prepare for it as well as I can.

““ First I took my axe, and, going aloft, wounded each of the topgallant-masts, close above the caps, and cut away the standing and running rigging and the parrals of the topgallant-yards, so that, if all went well, the whole of the top-hamper would go clear over the side at the first lurch. I next got the mizen-staysail ready for setting, in case I should need it, and bowsed the sheet aft by clapping a tackle on the hauling part. After that was done I went and braced the yards as sharp up on the starboard tack as I could get them ; for, having a pretty good notion that whatever was coming was to be expected from the north-east, I had determined, if my judgment turned out to be correct, upon laying the ship to on that tack as soon as the wind came and while the water remained smooth. What I dreaded most of all, though, was that she might be taken aback—well, if she is, she is, and there's an end



of it, thought I ; one man can't do the work of a ship's company, I'll try to keep her heading about nor'-west and let her take her chance.

“ With that, and as there was nothing else to be done, though to be sure, I had a good mind to get the fore-top-sail off her, I went aft again and sat on the taffrail, listening to the clank of the rudder-chains as the wheel was jerked to and fro, watching the sea-birds as they flew screaming past, and wondering what was going to be the end of it all, for by this time the haze had thickened in all around the ship, and so deep had the gloom become that I could scarcely see the flying jib-boom end, while the surface of the sea, reflecting the blackness above it, looked like so much pitch.

“ I had not very long to wait, for presently a faint murmuring sound, something like the rumble of a distant waggon, filled the air, and, gradually deepening, grew in volume until it became a mighty roar ; the mist on the starboard quarter next turned from black to bluish-grey and drove in whirling wreaths past the ship—then, with a wild shriek, the tempest dashed upon her, hurling her over on her beam ends and driving her bodily to leeward with each lower yard-arm buried deep in the boiling foam, and a wall of water, banked up by the pressure of the hull, lashing against her decks from stem to stern. *Crash*—high above the mad howling of the wind, and away went the three topgallant-masts, falling headlong into the sea fathoms clear of the side. Then she righted, the topsails filled with a bang like a volley of musketry, and shaking herself free of the water on her decks, away bounded the ship, while I, who had been clinging to the



wheel since the first gust struck her, hove it round with all my might to bring her head towards the gale.

“The pressure of the rushing wind as she brought it a point or so before the beam, was tremendous, and, as I was gazing aloft and praying that everything would stand, my weather main-topsail-sheet parted, and the sail was blown to ribands in an instant. So as a last resource, I scrambled to the mizen-staysail-downhaul and cast the turns off, when, as if I had released a spring, the sail whizzed up the stay and set itself. The next moment, though, and—*creech*—a seam gaped open from the foot, and, as I looked, the heavy canvas seemed to wither away, as though it had been so much tissue-paper, and in a few seconds there wasn't enough left to parcel a strop with. Just then, too, the mizen-topsail blew adrift from its gaskets, and shaking the mast like a reed, bellied up and was caught by the rigging, where the force of the wind held it for a moment or so ; then the lanyards of the shrouds and stays snapped like threads under the strain, the lower mast-head broke short off, just above the top, and down came the spars from aloft, falling overboard all of a heap.

“I had the axe handy, and crawling down to leeward, for there was no standing on the deck now, managed to chop the wreckage adrift, and as soon as it was clear I struggled back to the wheel, steadied the helm, and let the ship drive away dead before the wind, which had been brought right aft long since, owing to the jumble of the mizen-topmast dragging over her quarter, and the weight of the gale in her head canvas.

“So the ship tore along with the speed of an arrow on

her wild flight over the raging seas, which reared and broke in grandly rushing masses of stately surges, while the fierce hymn of the raving hurricane overpowered even their roaring turmoil and its lashing fury, rending their crests, filled the air with clouds of scurrying foam.

“Well, hours went by, and at noon, as near as I could



On the reef.

judge, I made out, to my horror, that there was a reef right ahead and extending far on each bow, while beyond it, showing faint in the driving spray, but getting plainer and plainer every moment as the ship flew onwards, was a long line of lofty trees, their tops bent by the tempest.

““ On she dashed, and in a few minutes the reef was so close that after a roller had flung its force against it, I caught a glimpse of the white, jagged points of the coral, looking like hungry jaws eagerly waiting to receive my poor little doomed vessel.—Another minute and it was under her jib-boom ; a mighty wall of water, its roaring crest high above the rail, gathered her in its heaving bosom and bearing her aloft like a chip, crashed her headlong on the top of the reef!

““ How did I escape ? you may well ask—God only knows, for I don't, except that it was by His great goodness and mercy. All I can tell you is that the masts instantly went by the board ; that the hull was whirled over, and up-ended, and flung about, and buffeted to pieces ; that for one awful second the wreckage was left high and dry on the reef ; that the next surf swept up what was left of it and tossed it disdainfully into the comparatively smooth water in the lagoon beyond ; and that some time afterwards (how long I cannot say) I found myself floating there on the after-part of the poop deck and upon which the wheel, to which I had had to lash myself hours before, was still standing.

““ Well, that is about all ; my raft drifted ashore and I landed on the island safe and sound. It was uninhabited, and I lived there for over five years, until the brig arrived, in fact—as I told you before.

““ There, now that my yarn is finished, perhaps you will not mind keeping an eye on our boat while I walk up to the village to see what is keeping the men for such a time.—Thank you ; so long then.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“Our cutter came ashore for the liberty men just as it began to get dusk, but as none of them had turned up when she arrived at the beach, except Tommy and I, there was nothing for it but to wait. Presently, though, they came straggling along in twos and threes, and with them were the boat’s crew from the brig.

“‘Halloo! where have you two been? we have hunted for you everywhere!’ said Forrester, adding—‘Ah, you should have stayed with us, we have had grand fun!’

“‘And pray, what does our worshipful boatswain’s mate call *fun*?’ asked Tommy.

“‘Oh, dancing—playing at a rather highly developed form of kiss-in-the-ring—and I don’t know what all! The natives are a lively lot, I can tell you; I vote we stay here for six months!’

“‘We have invited pretty nearly the whole population of the village to visit the *Hornet* to-morrow,’ observed Savary, as he got into the cutter and tossed an oar. ‘They are coming, too; old and young; males and females—but principally young and principally females—with

“Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,  
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles.”

That is about the sort of thing, eh?’

“‘I know one thing,’ said Bill Evans, ‘here’s a little man that is never going back to England no more. What! England!’ he went on, with a snort of derision. ‘No blazing fear! If anybody wants to know what my name is after now, that’s “Wom-Jom,” and I’ve shipped for a full due in the island of Owyhee.’



“‘What about your wife, Bill ; at 22, Duff-bag Street, Portsmouth?’ asked Tom Jarvis, who had helped to bring the cutter ashore.

“‘Oh, she ——.’

“‘Are we all present?’ exclaimed Forrester just then. ‘I think so.—Jump in, everybody, and let us get aboard.’

“‘How ethereal and beautiful the island looks in the pale moonlight.’ whispered Tommy to me while the boat was going along—he and I were rowing the bow oars, and, taking advantage of our secluded position, were shirking in a most barefaced manner ; just keeping time with the rest and that was all.

“Then, not getting a satisfactory reply from me, he nudged Savary (who was rowing on the second thwart) in the back, and made the same remark to him.

“‘Well, yes, it is very lovely,’ said Savary ; adding with a laugh, ‘Scene : instructions to prepare :—

“‘Hang the ceiling and walls of a room with deep blue velvet (rounding the corners, of course), and cut a round hole at one side, in which place a bull’s-eye lamp. Next cover the floor with a piece of blue satin, and on the satin place an elaborate bridecake, made in the shape of the island. Then blow out the candles, light the lamp, scatter a host of glow-worms over the velvet sky, and you will have the whole thing—’

“‘Come! wake up there in the bows!’ shouted Forrester.







## CHAPTER XIX.

### KEOWA.

“THE first thing that Martin did with the sick men belonging to the brig was to get them taken ashore to a hut which he had caused to be made ready to receive them, where, what with proper diet, pure air, and skilled treatment, they soon recovered of their illness and were able to return to their duty. The captain of the brig, who was very anxious to proceed to sea, then got his vessel under weigh without further loss of time, and sailed off on his homeward passage.

“But Martin’s fame as a doctor had spread far and wide throughout the island by the time these first patients of his were discharged cured, and, even before they had taken their departure, others had arrived from among the natives, each with some ailment or hurt of which he or she earnestly implored to be relieved. So the end of it was that the hospital hut was kept in commission, and, while the rest of the ship’s company kicked up their heels ashore, went off on excursion parties to visit the volcano that lay a few miles inland, picnicked among the woods, and enjoyed themselves generally,

Martin cheerfully devoted the whole of his time to the work he had set his hand to, and laboured from morning to night among his patients. These, too, soon became so numerous that, by and by, our good Samaritan was obliged to ask for some one to help him, and, as I had been a sort of nurse to Sam while he was recovering from his wound, and had got to be pretty handy, Martin selected me, and thus it came to pass that the skipper packed me off ashore one morning with the new rating of doctor's mate.

“ Now there was an Orono, or chief, in Owyhee, whose name was Keowa, and he, poor man, had been stone blind for many years. So, when the news of the great white doctor reached the village where he lived, he sent his brother and one of his sons on a journey round the coast to inquire if anything could be done to bring back his eye-sight ; and, one afternoon, these two arrived at our hospital.

“ ‘ Has Keowa always been blind ? ’ asked Martin, when he had made out the sense of their message.

“ ‘ No, not always can't see, ’ said the elder of the two ; ‘ one, two, ten year ago plenty can see ; then burn face with fire. By an' by, little dark—more dark—all dark, all 'e same eye shut when eye not shut. ’

“ ‘ Put Keowa in canoe and bring him here, ’ said Martin.

“ Accordingly, next day the chief himself arrived, a fine, powerful, heavily-built man, with a head as grand as a lion's, and who put me in mind of poor, blind Samson, as he was pictured in our Bible at home, directly I looked at him. So Martin got him to sit

down, and talked to him in his kind, pleasant way—which always seemed to soothe people and put them at their ease—and presently the chief was yarning away in his broken English as unconcerned as possible. Among other things he told us that he was present when Captain Cook was murdered, though, being but a boy at the time, he himself had had no hand in the bloody deed, and this is the account he gave us of the affair :—

“ ‘One day,’ said he, ‘Kanáka<sup>1</sup> go board ship, steal iron. That bad. Den sailor-man come with gun, and shoot ; kill one, two, and take away canoe. That very bad. Night-time, our mans go, paddle softly out to ship and steal away him boat. All bad, all angry, and sharpen spear. Nex’ day Cap’n Cook come, say he want king. Kanáka say—“No catch him ”—but king come all ’e same, Keowa see dat for him stand close by ; plenty frightened, too. Den chief come all round, talk plenty much, shake club and put on mat, say—“King not go ’board ship! *Kill! Kill!*” and throw stones. Sailor-man fire gun. Cap’n Cook go towards boat, but chief give great blow with club, other one with knife ; by an’ by he dead and boat go away. Great bad and all sorry when too late. Keowa plenty cry.

“ ‘You see dis?’—holding up a common clasp-knife which he wore suspended from his neck by a lanyard— ‘Well one time, not den, Cap’n Cook come ashore, ask for cocoa-nut ; so Keowa climb tree and pick some. He say—“Good boy, take knife for present.” See—got name, Jame’ Cook, on handle. Me can’t see now, but know him dere all ’e same. Keowa tink more of knife

<sup>1</sup> The islanders are “Kanákas” in their own language.

den of all him pig, and all him breadfruit-tree, and all him wife and piccaninni !'

"'You have been a long time not able to see,' said Martin, just then—he had been intently peering into and examining the chief's blank eyes while the latter had been talking.

"'Ah yes,' sighed Keowa, 'long time ; plenty years now since me see banana leaf waving in 'e wind ; blue sea sparkle in 'e bright sunshine ; mountain top pointing up to God. Nothing now for Keowa but listen—hear 'e little waves come "plap, plap, plap," on 'e beach ; wind rustle in 'e woods—feel him too. All dark to Keowa, though ; eye like nose, can't see with him—No good, eh ; you not able to make light come ?'

"'I will try,' said Martin, gravely.

"Well, I cannot tell you exactly what operation was performed upon the chief. All I know is that Martin had a thick screen of native cloth rigged up at one end of the hut, which was made so that it could be quickly drawn to ; and that after whatever it was—a sort of film, I think—that had grown over the eyeballs had been cut away, the screen was closed to shut out the light from the bed behind it upon which Keowa was lying. Cool bandages were next put on to keep back the inflammation, and then, after having had a sleeping-draught given him, the patient was left for the present, though, during the next fortnight, one of us was constantly at his bedside or within hail, night and day.

"Meantime the rest of the Hornets, who had got tired of remaining so long in one spot, weighed the anchor and went off for a cruise round the island,



leaving Martin and me to shift for ourselves as best we might.

“So we lived in a small hut next door to the hospital, and were very comfortable, considering all things, and outside our abode was a notice-board on which Martin, who was a bit of a wag, had painted with a shaving-brush and some zinc ointment:—

## GUY'S HOSPITAL

(OWYHEE BRANCH).



HENRY GARROD MARTIN, M.D., M.R.C.S.

JOHN GROVES, M.S.

“‘M.S.’ stood for ‘Medical Student,’ so I was given to understand. But to return to Keowa.

“At last the day came when Martin considered that the success of his operation might safely be put to the test, and in the evening, as the mellow light after sundown was fast fading away, leaving objects inside the hospital hut just dimly visible and that was all, we drew aside the screen.

“‘Look, Keowa, can you see me?’ asked Martin, with the least tremble in his voice, and, as he spoke, he softly shifted his position from where he had been standing to the other side of the bed, while I, watching the chief’s face in a state of breathless excitement, *saw that his eyes turned in the same direction.*

“‘Yes, Keowa see,’ said he gently; then raising his



voice in a transport of wild joy—'Keowa got light!—Keowa got light!'

"'Thank God!' exclaimed Martin, with a sigh of relief, adding—'Keep cool—don't be excited—Johnny, lay hold of him!' for the chief had leapt from his bed, and was dancing about in a way that threatened to capsize the whole establishment; varying these antics by rushing first at one and then at the other of us and almost hugging the very breath out of our bodies.

"'He'll undo it all as sure as fate!' gasped Martin. 'I wish to Heaven I had a poker, or something to knock him over the head with!'

"However, he quieted down after a bit, by which time it had got quite dark inside the building, so then he was in deeper despair than ever, thinking that his sight had been restored only to be taken away again. 'No, no—eye all gone; head all black like bottom of pit,' groaned Keowa—though Martin and I tried all we knew to convince him that the darkness was simply that of night—and this he kept repeating until at last, to pacify him, and having first made him promise to come back directly he was told to, Martin led him to the door of the hut, and opening it, let him cross the threshold.

"There was still a slight flush of soft, peach-coloured light in the west, and above it hung the slender crescent of the young moon—a thread of silver on the darkening sky. On either hand the thick woods extended away, gloomy and indistinct towards the rayless east, but with here and there a slight sheen on the prominent parts of their outline in the other direction, where the landscape ended in a jutting headland, its rugged extremity stand-

ing out in bold relief against the background of still lustrous sky. Facing us, and reaching to within but a few yards of our feet, was the lagoon, its glossy surface unruffled as yet by the faint land-breeze which had just commenced to sigh among the trees, and beyond the trembling ribbon of white that showed where the surf was breaking on the distant reef, the deeper-hued waters of the vast Pacific stretched their boundless expanse towards the horizon.

“Quickly the tropical twilight died away until the fading scene became blended into one sombre tint of murky obscurity, when nothing of it remained visible save the dim, looming shapes of the inland mountain peaks, and the subdued glare which, radiating upwards from the far-distant volcano, was caught and reflected in crimson from the bottom of the clouds of smoke that overhung its fiery summit.<sup>2</sup>

“‘Come, Keowa,’ said Martin, taking the chief by the arm, ‘you have seen.’

“Well, after this, daylight was gradually let into the corner of the hut, and so, in another week, our patient was able to leave the hospital and depart to his home with his eyesight restored to him.

“Next morning the *Hornet* came paddling into the bay, for there was no wind, and presently she anchored in her old berth, when the cutter was immediately lowered and in a few minutes Tommy bounced in upon us, followed by one or two of the others—‘Oh, how are you poor hermits getting on?’ exclaimed he. ‘What a shame it was of us to leave you here! I tried all I

<sup>2</sup> Don’t you think this is rather nice? I do.—F. A.

could to get the skipper to send an armed boat's-crew to bring you off by force, but it was no good, for he wouldn't listen—What a stink of physic! Phew!—We have been to Honolulu and all round about among the islands, such a lovely cruise! The king came aboard at Honolulu, and he had on his full state dress, a cocked hat and a sword—nothing else, upon my honour. We gave him a bottle of rum, which he and his chiefs drank, and when the rum was gone, he hung the empty bottle round his neck by a string. It was rare fun, and the Home Secretary stole the cook's poker!'

“‘Babble-babble-babble!’ laughed Martin, ‘no one has stolen your tongue, that is evident.’

“‘Of course not; and a good job, too, or I should not be able to repeat a message that I have brought from the skipper. Listen, then, oh Sage of the Lancet, for thus spake the worthy Dodd—“Tell that there old Martin that us can't keep the *Hornet* poking about here much longer, and, what's more, us bain't gwain to, not for he nor nobody else. Tell en that, only nicer, you understand, for us musn' offend en, and don't want to neither. Then hear what he's got to say about it, and let me know soon's you come back.” There, that is all. What manner of answer is thy servant to return with?’

“‘Why,’ replied Martin, ‘give my compliments to the skipper, and tell him first of all that his ambassador is a worthless little humbug. Then you can say that, for a wonder, I have only two in-patients here just now, and they will be leaving to-morrow morning. As soon as they have gone, I and my trusty squire and right-hand man, Johnny Groves, will come straight off to the *Hornet*, and

then the sooner the fore-topsail is loosed the better I shall be pleased.'

" 'All right, old boy ; mind that is a promise,' said Tommy, as he hastened away.

" 'Send a boat for us when we haul down the flag!' shouted Martin after him. (The flag was an old ensign belonging to the *Hornet*, and it was hoisted on a staff stuck up in front of our dwelling.)

" Well, somehow or other, the news that we were going away spread among the natives, for in the morning when I looked out of doors the beach in front of the hospital was crowded with people ; and when Martin appeared—I called him at once—the whole concourse went down on their knees, and, to tell the plain, honest truth, there was not a man, woman, or child there whose eyes were not swimming in tears.

" 'Here, hang it all ! I can't stand this, you know,' exclaimed Martin, beating a hasty retreat. 'Haul down the flag, and be quick about it, while I bundle our few things together.'

" The signal was seen, and in a very few minutes a gig from the *Hornet* was bounding along towards the beach, when, as our belongings were packed and ready, we left the little hut that had been our home for so many weeks and walked down to the water's edge through the crowd of weeping natives, who made way for us in silence. However, just as we had stepped into the boat, there was a loud shout from among the trees, and the next moment Keowa came tearing towards us, looking, by the state he was in, as if he had run every step of the way from his home—and very likely he had.



On he dashed, and, reaching the boat, seized Martin by both his hands, and stood gazing in his face, speechless for want of breath, while the rest of the people, following in his wake, crowded around in a wild state of excitement.

“‘Shove off! shove off!’ shouted Martin. ‘Good-bye, everybody! Good-bye, Keowa!’

“Then the boat began to move, those of the natives who had been standing in the water opened out to let her pass clear, the oars were shipped, and away we went, while the farewell shouts from the beach became less and less distinct, and—‘In bow! way enough!’

“‘Couple of hands hook the boat on,’ said Dodd, looking over the side. ‘Jump aboard the rest.’

“‘Up and down, sir!’ came from the mate, who was for’ard, looking over the bows at the cable as it was being hove in.

“‘Ay, ay: vast heaving! Sheet home the fore-top-sail! Hoist away the jib! Starboard watch, up main-sail!’

“The canvas was set and the anchor was weighed; then, with a fair wind, we ran slowly out to sea, and, taking the full force of the breeze, had lost sight of Owyhee long before nightfall.







## CHAPTER XX.

### AT SEA.

“THE *Hornet* was now bound to the Marquesas Islands, and, with the steady trade-wind on her larboard beam, she sailed pleasantly on towards the south-east as day by day went by, each bringing the same dainty weather—a sky of melting blue, with here and there a white fleecy cloud sailing quietly along; a crisp, frolicsome sea, leaping and gamboling in the bright sunshine; the sun rising every morning in a golden haze on the weather bow, and setting, clear and ruddy, over the lee quarter in the evening, his heat tempered during the long sea-day by the cool, refreshing breeze—all very charming and delightful, though, by and by, when we got down among the small degrees of north latitude, it was not quite so pleasant.

“However, matters were taken very easily in the *Hornet*, and when the trades fell light and the heat of the sun became oppressive, we got into the habit every morning, after the decks had been washed down, brass-work polished, and guns cleaned, of hauling down the fore-staysail, stretching the fore-castle awning, and lolling

about under its shade for the rest of the day. And though on the first morning that this was done the skipper, Bill Evans, and I (for it was our watch on deck) carried on for awhile with the work we had in hand, before very long each of us had sneaked for'ard on one pretence or the other, and had joined the rest of the watch, who—except the man at the wheel, who was sheltered from the sun by a boat's sail spread on three capstan-bars—were clustered under the cool shade of the forecastle awning.

“‘No use in killing ourselves working out there in the blazing sun, far as I know,’ said Dodd, taking off his cap and mopping his face with a coloured handkerchief about a yard square.

“‘Course not ; don't want no sunstrokes,’ replied Bill Evans, winking at me.

“‘We were just wondering how much longer you were going to stay,’ remarked Forrester, with a laugh. ‘Charlie Wilson gave you five minutes, I said three ; so we were both pretty near the mark.’

“‘You'm good judges, then, the pair of 'e,’ said Dodd. ‘Corks ! how frizzled I be !’

“So after this no unnecessary work was done by any one during the heat of the day, and ‘Watch spread awning !’ was as welcome an order in the *Hornet* as ‘Hands to dance and skylark !’ is aboard a man-o'-war.

“Lighter and lighter fell the dwindling trade-wind, and fiercer and fiercer became the glare of the sun, as our schooner toiled along on her course, her sails fluttering and flouncing, and the blocks and spars aloft clattering and groaning, as she lazily rose and fell, or rolled first

one and then the other of her graceful sides in the water. The sea, too, becoming overpowered by the broiling heat, had lost all its vigour, and was listlessly heaving in long, rounded swells, their summits slightly roughened and darkened by the faint breeze, though now and again, in sharp contrast to the prevailing languor, a shoal of flying fish would burst from the crystal blue of one of the rollers, and, glistening in the bright sunshine, scud like a cluster of silver arrows across the hollow between it and the next, until, one by one, they fell splashing into the sea again, while, following their flight, the swiftly glancing albacore or bonita dashed through the sparkling water in hot pursuit.

“‘We weren’t so fond of sticking about in the shade when the *Hornet* left England,’ said Tommy, one forenoon, when, having gladly obeyed the order to ‘Return rags!’ after the usual performance of ‘Hands to quarters, clean guns!’ we had mustered as usual under the forecastle awning. ‘We all wanted to be as much in the sun as possible then,’ continued he, ‘so as to get our faces tanned.’

“‘More sense now,’ observed the mate.

“‘Well, you *be* browned up to rights,’ said Dodd; ‘your looks has altered a good dail since us started, that way. My! what fine folks you was, with your white faces and deliket hands! Do ’e mind how sore your fingers got at the first go off with haling wet ropes? Sam was just the same, was’n’ ’e, Sam?’

“‘Yes, poor hands ache plenty one time; all right now, though,’ replied our man Friday.

“‘Ay, you was but a poor tool first along,’ said the

skipper; 'but you and us soon altered that. Why, I don't believe your awn mother wid knaw 'e if her could see 'e now.'

"'Never can see me any more,' said Sam softly, while his eyes glistened. Then, slowly nodding his head, 'All done now—all gone!' murmured he.

"'Look here!' exclaimed Tommy in his impetuous manner, 'what are we going to do with Sam? We cannot surely be so cruel as to take him back to England with us, and we ought not to put him ashore at any of the islands, for, if we do, ten to one, as soon as the *Hornet* is out of sight, the natives will turn round and kill him as an interloper.'

"'Well, I suggest that we take him back to his own home,' said Martin, 'that seems—'

"'My corks alive! have mussy 'pon us!' almost shouted Dodd on hearing this. 'Now, did ever anybody hear tell of such wilful nonsense! What! Take the *Hornet* back among they wild divils? I'd sooner see her hove up 'pon top of the Wolf Rock in the worst sou'-west gale that ever blawed!'

"'I don't think we should come to any harm,' said Martin. 'On the contrary, my impression is that if we were to pay a visit to Naitu-loa—for that is the name of Sam's island—we should be just as safe as we were at Owyhee. You see,' he continued, 'the party that came aboard in Fairies' Pool had just been given a good beating by their enemies, and, consequently, were in anything but a pacific mood, to start with. We certainly ought not to judge the whole nation by *their* actions; in fact, by what I have learned from Sam,



I think that they are fairly quiet and respectable people, though, to be sure, in their wars with the inhabitants of a neighbouring island they appear to behave in a ferocious manner, from our point of view.'

"'Yes, you come ; bring *Hornet* to Naitu-loa!' exclaimed Sam as soon as Martin had finished talking. 'My mans all glad to see. Say "How you do?" and shake hands. Sam tell 'em all about. All glad to see Sam—glad to see everybody ; not fight this time. No, no. Not fight las' time, only couldn't help ; all wrong then, all right now. When we first see *Hornet* my mans say, "Oho ! now we catch fine big canoe." All glad and dance. Then you come out of wood and shout, "Whoo ! whoo !" We say, "White debbil !"—never see white man before you understand—"kill him !" Make mistake, though ; you kill instead. Good job. Forget all about that now. Sam's father great chief—cap'n all 'e same Dodd. He make all safe. Sam take care of *Hornet* too.'

"'What do you think of it ?' asked Forrester, looking from one to the other, adding, 'I should rather like to go myself.'

"'Oh yes ! do let us take the *Hornet* to Naitu-loa !' cried Tommy ; 'and why not go there at once instead of to the Marquesas ? Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,' continued he, standing up and bowing to Forrester, who was perched on the capstan-head, 'I beg to propose, in as few words as possible, that the course be immediately altered, and that we do forthwith make the best of our way to Sam's Island.'

"'I second the motion,' said Martin.



“‘Carried unanimously ! Carried unanimously !’ shouted Tommy, seeing that his proposal was received with general applause. ‘Now then, you old skipper ! don’t look so dismal ; which way are we to go ?’

“To this question Dodd made no immediate reply, but walked away growling and grumbling, until on reaching the main-rigging, he turned short round, and raising his voice, said, ‘You’m a proper passel of mazed fules, that you be ! However, the *Hornet* belongs to ’e, and if you say her’s to go to this here darned stinking old island, why, go her must, I suppose, only don’t turn round and say I didn’t warn ’e when us be all tied up and going off to be toasted, like the geoses us be, for that’ll be the end of it, now you mark my words !’ Then to the man at the wheel :—‘How’s her head ?’

“‘South-east half-east.’

“‘Keep her south then. Weather fore-brace ; ease off the main-sheet, and haul in the boom-guy. Get the square fore-sail up and set en. Out boom and hoist away your fore-topmast-stunsail.’

“‘There, now I hope you’m satisfied,’ said the skipper, looking as cross as two sticks and bundling off below, leaving the mate to carry out the orders he had given.

\* \* \* \* \*

“That afternoon as we were rolling along on our altered course, Savary, who was aloft covering the foot of the topgallant-sail with a piece of leather, to keep it from chafing against the flying-jib-stay, suddenly hailed the deck, and shouted that there was a boat in sight on the lee bow.

“‘A boat !’ replied the mate ; ‘are you sure ?’

“‘Yes, certain. I can see her quite plainly now and again when she rises on one of the swells.’

“‘I can see her, too!’ sang out Mr. Gibbs a few seconds after, jumping down from the fore-rigging into which he had mounted to get a better view. ‘Keep her away a point! Two hands get the starboard gig ready for lowering; furl this awning, the rest, and see all clear to haul down the stun-sail and fore-sail.’

“All hands were on deck by this time, anxiously watching the boat, to which we were rapidly drawing near, and presently we saw a man’s head gradually rise above her gunwale, upon which he feebly rested his chin and then glared at our approaching vessel, but without the slightest expression either of joy or anything else on his wan, pinched face. After staring thus for about a minute, his head dropped towards the water, and in that position it remained, swinging helplessly to and fro.

“When we were close enough, the *Hornet* was brought to the wind, and the gig, being then hastily lowered, dashed off, and on getting alongside the strange boat, the man was lifted out,—oh so easily!—and carefully placed in the stern-sheets.

“‘What shall we do with the boat?’ shouted Forrester, who had been steering our gig, standing up and hailing us. ‘There are four dead men under the thwarts!’

“‘Sink her, after you have made sure that they be dead!’ replied Dodd.

“So, by the time the gig had returned, the boat, an oar having been dashed through the side, had sunk with her ghastly freight to the gloomy depths of the Pacific.

“‘I say, Dodd, aren’t you glad we altered the course

this morning ?' said Tommy, when the *Hornet* was once more slipping away before the wind. 'We should have missed seeing the boat if we had kept steering south-east.'

"That's true,' replied the skipper. 'Well, yes, I be glad, now us have picked the poor man up, and I hope Martin will be able to save his life. Says he thinks he can. But for all that, let me tell 'e, I bain't satisfied about this here prancing off to Sam's Island. Corks! if the folks be cannibals, the sight of you, Tommy, will make their mouths water, for you'm so plump as a little partridge! As for me, well, I might make good mait if I was soaked for a month and boiled for two or three days, and even then I should awnly be fit to put in a pudden, with plenty of pepper for saysoning, and maybe a onion or two—'

"Do shut up, you horrible old croaker!' exclaimed Tommy, seizing Dodd by the arm, and marching him up and down the quarter-deck.

"Suddenly, though, the skipper stopped, and turning towards several of the others who were standing close by, said, 'I be a fule, that I knaw, but don't laugh at me, there's good boys, I hope I may 'most call 'e friends by now. 'Tis all on account of your awn sakes that I am so timoursome of venturing anywhere, for I feel just like an old hen with a lot of small dabs of chickens to look after, and very likely I see danger when there is none. Well, I can't help it, as I be so I be.

"Now, please to listen. For five minutes us won't be cap'n and crew, us'll go back to what you and me really am, you gentlemen all, and me your paid servant.

“ ‘ Mr. Forrester, Mr. Buller, my Lord, and all of ’e. Here us be, then, out on the Pacific ocean in your top-sail schooner, the *Hornet*. Boy Johnny, come here and stand beside of me ; take off your cap and hold en in your hand like I’m holding mine. *Young monkey, how dare you to laugh!* As I was saying, sirs, here us be in the *Hornet*, after nigh twelve months of cruising, and all sorts, as perhaps you might remember. In the battlin’ part us have managed to come off victoor-yus, so far, and in regards of the cruising, why I hope you have enjoyed yourselves so much as I have, for, if so, your money has not have been spent in vain. It is a pleasure to me to sail with folks like you gents, all (or pretty nearly all) willing to work at whatever you’m told, without shirking, and without no nonsense, each one doing his best. Then look at the kind way you treat us that be your paid hands ; me, the mate, this here boy, and they men for’ard. I daresay us be a good deal to familyus at times, but there, ’tis certainly your awn fault, and us can’t help it.

“ ‘ What I wanted to say to ’e most particular, though, is this : maybe you don’t think much about it, but I do.—Look at the responsibility I’ve got in regards of having charge (you’ll ’scuse the word, I can’t think of no better one) charge of all you gentry, and I want to ax ’e a question : Whatever should I do if only so much as one is missing when us arrive home ? Take even the littlest, Mr. Buller there—I can’t spare he ! and I can’t spare none of ’e ! Why, my heart would break into as many bits as there is reef-points in our main-sail !

“ ‘ You will think of that, won’t ’e ? ’ pleaded Dodd, ‘ and don’t be too venturesome, for your own sakes, and



for mine, too, if I may make so bold as to say so. Boy, put on your cap and go about your biz'ns. That is all so—'

“‘Wait a bit, Captain Dodd, the five minutes you bargained for are not up yet,’ said Forrester. ‘I wish to tell you, on behalf of the rest of us, how much we appreciate your goodness, and the interest you take in our welfare, which has prompted you to speak as you have. Well, all I can say is that whether your fears are or are not groundless, your wishes shall be respected all the same, and I therefore propose that instead of putting ourselves in the power of Sam’s countrymen, we heave-to at some little distance from their island, send him off in the canoe, and then proceed on our voyage.’

“‘Well done!’ cried the skipper. ‘That *is* a good plan, do ’e all agree to it? You do!—all right and thank you, sirs. Now us know what us be ’bout.’

“‘Is the five minutes up yet?’

“‘Oh yes,’ said Forrester.

“‘Very well, then I’m cap’n again, so make up the square fore-sail and put en below, and the stun-sail too. Us shan’t want they for some time to come. A couple of hands jump up on the fore-yard and rig in the boom, stop the gear all along, same as ’tis done on the other side, then unreeve the halliards and put them down in the fore-peak.’







## CHAPTER XXI.

### CAPTAIN HARVST.

“ WE had picked up the south-east trades, and were well down to the line before the man we rescued had recovered sufficient strength to be able to leave his hammock. Martin, who was not particularly strong, had found no great difficulty in carrying him below when he was passed on board from the boat, but now, to our great surprise, we saw a man full six feet high, deep-chested and broad-shouldered, stalk into the fore-castle, beside whom most of us seemed, well, rather insignificant; indeed, the new comer was far and away the biggest man in the *Hornet*. He was a Dane, and from the little information that we had picked up while he was regaining his strength, his story, when he would be able to tell us the whole of it, promised to be an interesting one.

“ We were at dinner when he made his first appearance in the fore-castle, and Martin, who came in at the same time, introduced him to Forrester, and one or two of the leading hands, as ‘Captain Harvst,’ so, room having

been made for him at the table, he sat down and shared in whatever was going.

“‘I daresay you would like to know how I came to be floating about in that boat,’ ‘said he, when the meal was over, and speaking excellent English, though with just a touch of foreign accent.

“‘Yes, pray tell us, if it will not weary you too much,’ said Forrester.

“‘Well, I must go a long way back, to over thirty years ago, which would be before any of you were born,’ said he, with a faint smile, ‘to tell you the whole chain of disastrous adventures that I have gone through, and they are so closely interwoven that I don’t think I can well avoid beginning at that remote date.’

“‘Don’t try to, please don’t skip anything,’ observed Tommy.

“‘Very good. Then I will commence by telling you that my name is Michael Christian Harvst, that my father, whose only son I am, was a wealthy merchant and shipowner at Copenhagen, and that at the age of twenty-two years, six of which I had already spent at sea, I was put in command of one of his ships, the *Maglagar*, bound from Copenhagen to Gottenborg, and thence to Bristol, with a cargo of timber. I was selected to take charge of this vessel principally because I had a thorough knowledge of your language, gained during a three year’s residence as a boy at a school near London, where my father had placed me more for the purpose of learning English than for anything else.

“‘All went well until the morning we sighted Lundy Island, when a violent storm sprang up from the south-

west, before which we ran for several hours until the raging seas, pursuing our little ship and threatening to overwhelm her, made it necessary for us to lie to and wait for the gale to abate its fury. Scarcely, though, had we got our vessel to the wind, when for a few seconds it lulled, and then a terrific blast came roaring upon us from the north-west, which, taking the ship flat aback, dashed her over on her beam-ends, and with resistless fury swept masts and yards helter-skelter over the side.

“ ‘ Helplessly wallowing in the trough of that mad sea my little vessel lay, as hour after hour passed by, each angry wave, as it reared and thundered over her, driving her closer and closer to the rock-bound coast of North Devon ; the bulwarks, boats, everything above deck, shattered and wrenched from the poor water-logged hull, which was only kept from foundering outright by the buoyancy of the cargo of timber.

“ ‘ Daylight waned, and the shadows of night closed round our ship and the figures of those who still clung or were lashed to her, our ears deafened by the frantic shrieking of the gale, our limbs numbed by the constant wash of the sea, and thus the dreadful hours of darkness crept slowly on until at length the clouds broke up into flying masses from which the waning moon leapt at intervals, shedding her fitful light on the wild scene, and disclosing, plain and distinct on our lee, the grim outline of the land, towards which we were rapidly drifting.

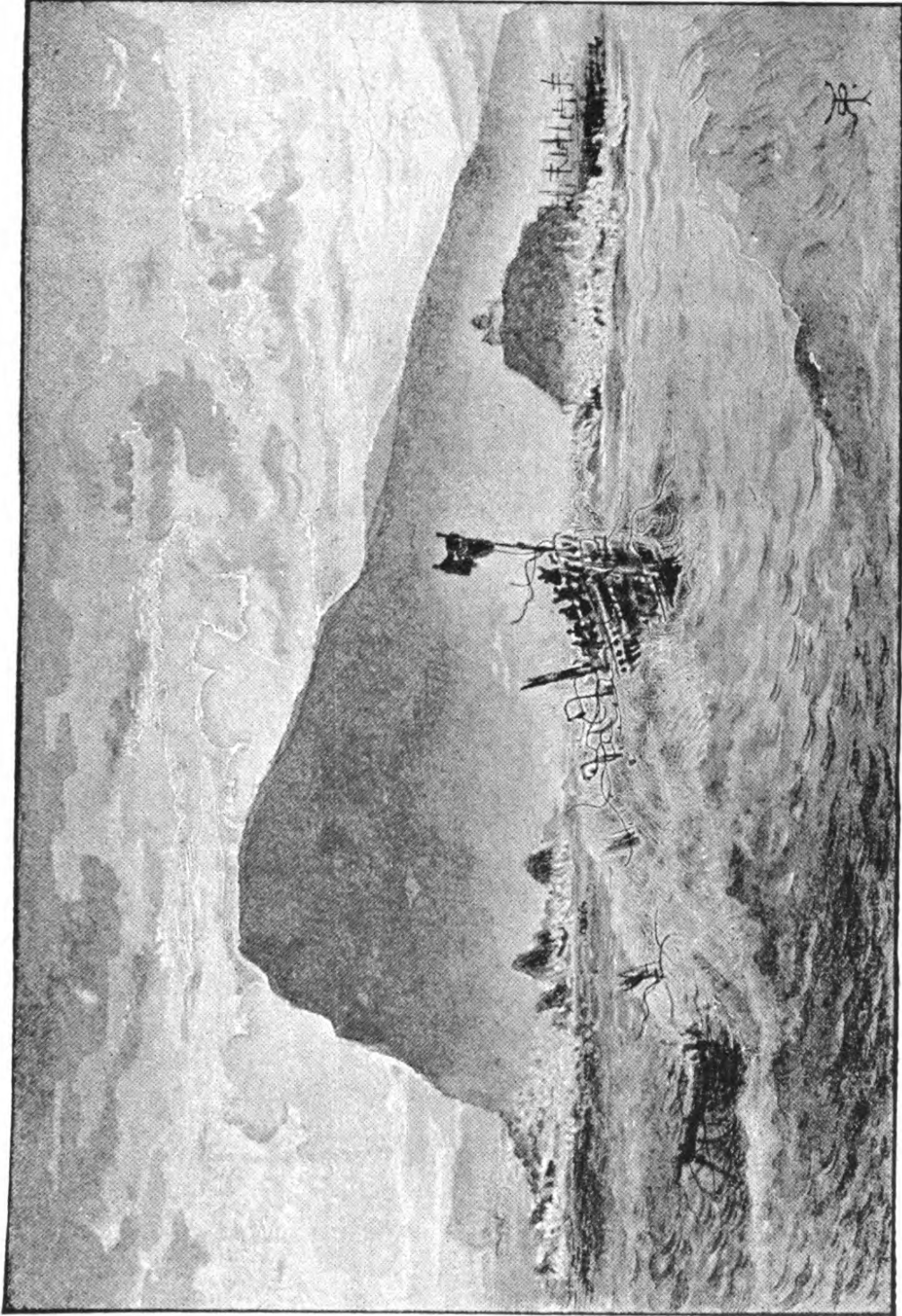
“ ‘ Nearer and nearer we approached the jagged rocks, over which clouds of spray flew in mighty sheets, and every minute the fierce roar of the breakers sounded plainer and plainer above the howling dirge of the tempest,

while, watching our sad plight, the figures of a few men appeared on the top of a small hill at the west extremity of the bay into which the set of the tide and the send of the seas were bearing our doomed ship. Lights, too, flashed from the windows of a village that nestled in the valley at the back of the breastwork of cliffs from whose bases the charging billows were being scornfully hurled, and, as we looked, a boat which had put out from the shore came breasting her way towards us in the very teeth of the lashing gale.

“With straining eyes we watched those gallant men as, bending at their oars, they urged their little craft onwards—now lost to sight—now borne aloft with half her keel showing out of water—but ever drawing nearer until, after tremendous efforts, they at last managed to fetch alongside our tempest-tossed barque. By this time we had drifted to within a stone's throw of the rocks at the east of the bay, and—as not an instant was to be lost—one by one those of us who had survived that awful night, dropped hurriedly into the boat, which, immediately quitting the wreck, was by God's providence enabled to reach the haven in safety, entering it just as the grey light of early dawn had begun to brighten the eastern sky.

“Crowds of people had lined the little time-worn pier-head to see the boat return, and having greeted us with a wild cheer as she drove past into the smooth water beyond its sturdy stonework, they hurried off to the landing-place to meet us, where we poor castaways, by many willing hands, were assisted out of the boat and at once taken to the welcome shelter of the nearest houses.





WATERLOGGED.

To face page 234.





“That to which I was conveyed (for I was quite unable to walk) was the residence of a widow lady of independent means, and here I lay, prostrate with fever—the result of that terrible night of exposure—for many weeks, tenderly nursed the while by this benevolent lady and her sweet daughter, a lovely creature of some eighteen summers, whom, with returning health, I quickly learned to love.

“‘How shall I describe my darling? She ——’

[Mem. to Publisher.—Please let your people leave a space here which I will fill in by and by. From what I can make out this lady appears to have been a remarkably handsome person, and a description of her charms will take me some time to prepare. I must turn over some of my books—there is certain to be a descriptive list of the various parts of a lovely girl somewhere or other in each of them—and crib the mouth out of one, hair out of another, and so on. I have a beautiful nose in my eye, only for the life of me I can't remember just at present which book it is in—one of Bulwer Lytton's I fancy. However, I can easily find it when I have time to search. Leave as much space as you think all this will take—my idea is that it should occupy about half a page, to do the thing properly. Can you recommend a complexion? Must match blue eyes.—F. A.]

“Such was my own sweet Mary, and taking, with the frank impetuosity of a seaman, the first opportunity to reveal my love, she sent a thrill of joy through my heart by blushing confessing that she loved me in return, and when, being long since thoroughly restored to health, I was obliged to take leave of my hospitable friends, it was as my promised bride that I pressed her darling form to my heart, vowing that I would quickly return to claim the fulfilment of her promise.

“Thirty long weary years have gone by since then, and never yet has that happy day arrived ; heaven knows from no fault of mine.

“Well, I journeyed to London by the stage-coach, thence taking passage to Copenhagen in an English brig that was on the point of sailing, and after a tedious passage of about three weeks we arrived at my native town. Hastening at once to my father's office, I, after giving him a brief account of the loss of the *Maglagar*, told him of that which was uppermost in my mind, when, to my great dismay, he angrily bade me give up all hopes of my union with Mary, adding that he had already selected a wife for me in the person of a daughter of one of the leading merchants of Copenhagen, and threatening, if I refused to obey, that he would erase my name from his will and leave all his property to my cousin, his nephew. To this, knowing his disposition, I made no reply, and the subject was dropped. Neither did he allude to it again, and, after conversing on various matters, he ended our interview by telling me that I was next to take the command of a large ship, also one of his fleet, which was then loading for China.

“Accordingly I left Denmark in this vessel, though, before she sailed, I wrote a long letter to my darling, hinting at the difficulty that had arisen, but assuring her of my undying love.

“I was away about eighteen months on this voyage, and on returning to Copenhagen found that my father was still implacable on the subject of my marriage. Indeed he at first insisted that his own arrangement should be carried out forthwith, and I had great difficulty in persuading him to, at least, put it off until the termination of another voyage. This I entreated, not that I had the slightest intention of complying with his wishes, but merely to gain time. So, having written my dear love another letter, gently upbraiding her for her silence—for no letter from her had reached me as yet—and protesting my unalterable affection as before, I sailed again, bound this time to the Molucca Islands. I was enabled to obtain but a small cargo of valuable spices at these islands, my ship being fired at and chased from their shores by the avaricious Dutch ; so, to complete her lading, I next proceeded to revisit Canton, where, to my unbounded delight, I found a letter from my darling, which had arrived soon after I sailed for home on the previous voyage. It breathed sweet vows of constancy, referred to her mother’s failing health, and prayed me to return to—so the letter concluded—“your loving Mary.”

“With renewed hope, I set sail for Europe, and, on once more arriving at Copenhagen, was informed of my father’s death, which had taken place but a few weeks before. It appeared, too, from a careful investigation, which was not completed until after my return, that led

into ruinous speculations, his estate was heavily involved, and in the end, after paying the outstanding debts and liabilities, I found that instead of the vast wealth which I had expected to inherit, but a small sum remained at my disposal.

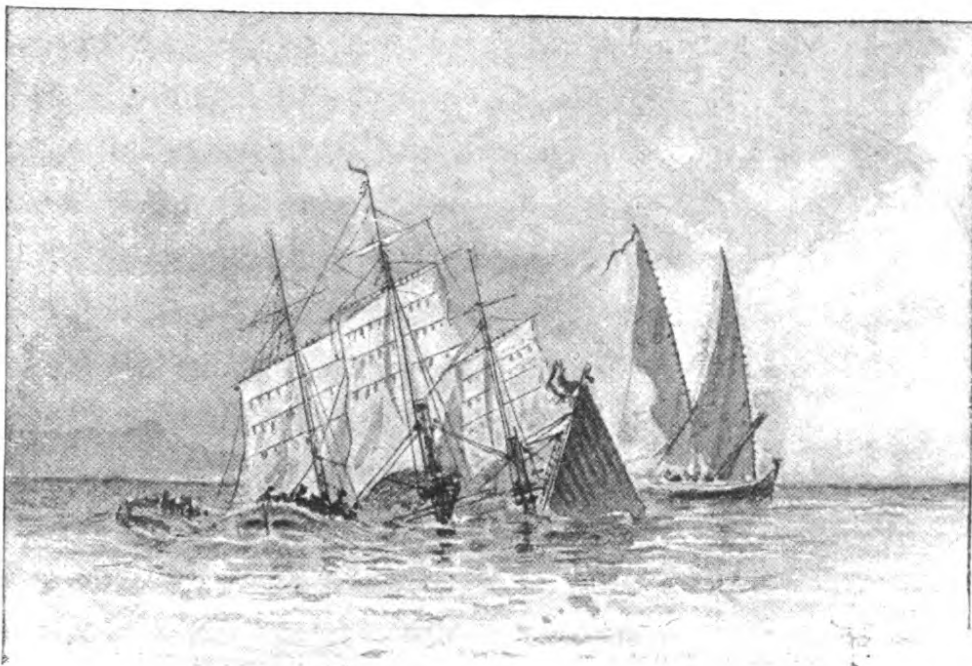
““ There was at this time a favourable opportunity for trading with Turkey, so, investing the whole of my small capital, I, with the generous assistance of an old friend of my father's, chartered a small ship and set sail for Constantinople, after again writing to my darling Mary, frankly telling her of my altered circumstances and promising with the results of this voyage (which, if all went well, would return fourfold the money I had ventured) to hasten to her dear side and, if her affections were unchanged, to forthwith make her my wife.

““ Well, my goods found a ready and lucrative market at Constantinople, and when they were all disposed of, I loaded my ship again with such commodities as I thought it would be profitable to carry home, and in due course set out on my return.

““ One morning when we had progressed to within about twenty leagues of Gibraltar, a sail was reported at day-break on the weather bow. There was but a very light southerly wind at the time, and the stranger on nearing my ship was made out to be a small felucca-rigged vessel, an Algerine in the opinion of my mate, who had sailed these seas before, and if so a pirate without the shadow of a doubt. Our helm was at once put up and packing on every sail that it was possible to set, we endeavoured to make off towards the coast of Spain, closely pursued by the felucca, whose evil designs were



thus plainly revealed. But scarcely had we commenced our flight when the wind died rapidly away, leaving us becalmed and therefore at the pirate's mercy, for she, having by means of her sweeps approached to within range of the long brass gun that she carried amidships, then coolly proceeded to blaze away at us, nearly every shot taking effect, while we, armed only with six-pounders



Sinking.

were unable at that distance to do her the slightest injury ; and though we kept up our fire, it was but for the purpose of raising a smoke which, as we hoped, would have the effect of disturbing the pirate's aim.

“ So the unequal fight went on, until several round-shot having struck my ship between wind and water, I determined as a last resource to leave her, with those of the crew who were not already killed, and take to the

boats. They were therefore got into the water, hastily provisioned, and, after firing a last broadside to conceal our movements, we rowed away, keeping the sinking ship between us and the pirate, and hoping that if the weather remained calm, we might yet be enabled to escape from our ruthless foes.

“We had been labouring at the oars but a few minutes before the ship, settling gradually down in the water, slowly sank beneath its surface, her broad sails screening us to the last as though she knew our peril, and, when the friendly curtain had been sucked into the deep, the pirate came again into view, her sweeps manned and rowing towards the spot where the ship had foundered. By this time, though, we were far beyond the reach of her guns, and should in all probability have made good our escape, only that, as ill-luck would have it, the breeze next sprang up again from its old quarter, the south, and so brought the felucca bounding along in our wake. Flight or resistance were now equally hopeless, and, a shot having been flung far ahead of the boats as a hint that we had better surrender, we ceased rowing, thinking that the less trouble we gave, the better it might be for our future prospects.

“The pirate soon closed with us, and rounding to the wind, lay hove to within a cable's length of our boats, when we slowly rowed towards her, and, reaching the side, were immediately passed aboard and put in irons—her captain and crew inspecting each man as he arrived on the deck, with a critical expression on their swarthy countenances as though we had been so many bales of merchandize whose worth they were assessing.

The last to appear was my mate, who, poor man, had been badly wounded during our one-sided action, too badly, I suppose, to be of much value to these wretches, for, after a very brief examination, three of them, obeying a careless nod from their captain, took him by the shoulders and heels and threw him overboard! But he was a powerful swimmer, and managed, wounded though he was, to reach the nearest of our boats, both of which, having been sent adrift as soon as they were empty, had by now drifted a few yards astern of the felucca. Into this boat he next proceeded to climb, though with great difficulty, and while he was so occupied, the pirate captain, lounging on the rail, lazily watched him, softly smiling now and again as though the poor fellow's struggles afforded him great amusement. At length, by tremendous efforts he contrived to drag himself half into the boat—his legs only being in the water—then, while he was resting and taking breath, the captain drew a long pistol from his belt, and, having removed the pipe from his mouth and puffed a cloud of smoke leisurely into the air, shouted. The doomed man looked up, and the next second fell back a corpse, shot through the head!

“ ‘The felucca's sails were then filled, and with a freshening breeze she stood off towards the east, skimming along over the rising seas like a bird, and so by noon the next day she had arrived off the town of Algiers. As soon as the anchor was on the ground, our irons were taken off, when, after a good meal had been served out to us, we were taken ashore, marched to the market-place, stripped and forthwith put up for public auction.

“ ‘There were plenty of buyers, and after a lot of chaffering and putting us through our paces, feeling our muscles, and the like indignities, the recollection of which makes my blood boil even now, one by one we were disposed of, I finding a purchaser in an old Moor, who immediately the bargain was concluded, threw me



The Moor.

a shawl with which to cover my naked body, and stalking off, beckoned me to follow him.

“ ‘We walked along the quay, and at last arrived at a large house where I was delivered into the custody of a man who was evidently the old Moor's servant. By him I was taken to a room in which several persons, slaves like



myself, were congregated, and there I passed the night.

“‘We left Algiers early the next morning, and travelling by easy stages into the interior of the country, at length reached our destination, which was the country house and farm of the old Moor, my master. There I toiled, tending camels, horses, sheep, digging in the fields, and such-like work from sunrise to sunset, while months, years passed slowly by. Escape, as I soon found out, was impossible, for all chances of flight were carefully guarded against, and so perfect was the system employed, that no single slave in the whole establishment could by any possibility have absented himself for an hour without being missed. So, though escape was always uppermost in my thoughts, there was nothing for it but to bide my time and wait, as patiently as might be, for the chance which I felt sure would turn up some day or another. Meanwhile I set myself to learn the language, manners, and customs of the people amongst whom I was thrown, and succeeded so well, that by the time I had been three years in captivity I could have passed myself off for as faithful a follower of the Prophet as ever wore a turban.

“‘Thus the long, dreary years passed away, the only change being that from my energy, and perhaps aptitude, I had become promoted to be an overlooker of the other slaves with, therefore, less arduous duties to perform than at first. My master, too, was pleased to express his satisfaction with my behaviour, and tried often enough to induce me to turn Mussulman. I always declined the honour, but it is very likely that he thought none



the less highly of me for refusing to renounce the Christian faith ; at any rate I advanced, step by step, until I became one of the heads of the household.

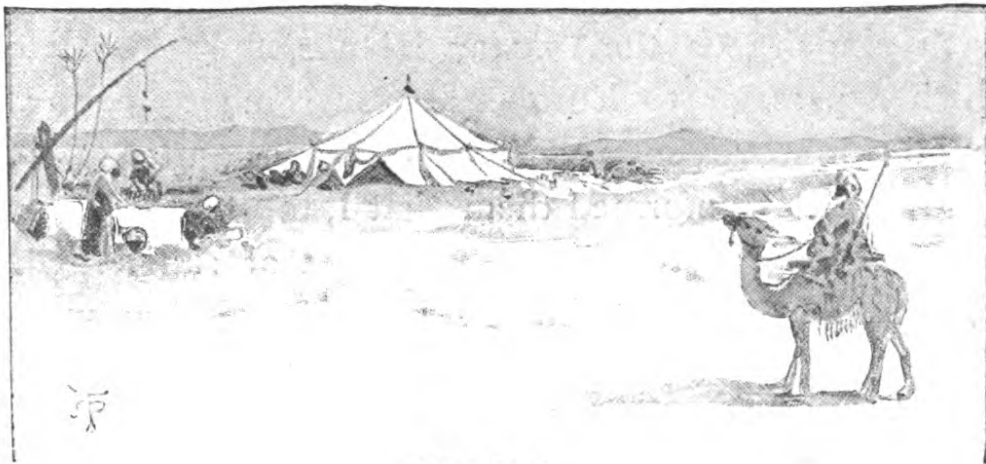
““At length the fifteenth anniversary of my capture came round, and, strangely enough, on that very day the old Moor was thrown from his horse and died from the effects of the fall in less than two hours. Here, then, was the chance for which I had been waiting so long, and, taking advantage of the confusion in the household to provide myself with clothes, arms, jewels, and money, I at night led out one of the fleetest of the camels, which I had beforehand made to fill itself with water, and having loaded the animal with a couple of water-skins, a travelling-tent, and such food as the Arabs take with them during their long journeys over the desert, I set out at once on my flight, and, guided by the bright stars of the southern heavens, rode off on a south-westerly course, in which direction I had decided to make in preference to going northward, where recapture would have been almost certain.

““By the time that the first streaks of dawn had appeared in the east, I was, as near as I could judge, some forty miles from the scene of my long weary slavery. My spirits rose with the sun, and, beginning to taste the blessed sweets of freedom, for the first time these fifteen years I knew what it was to be happy.

““So I journeyed on until by and by the vegetation becoming thinner and thinner, gradually emerged into the desert, when not daring to trust myself on the vast expanse of sand, which, far as eye could see, stretched unbroken away to the horizon, I altered my course a

point or two to the west and journeyed on for the rest of the day in a line with the chain of distant mountains which rose from the green and fertile plain on my right hand.

“ ‘Towards evening a few trees appeared ahead, and on drawing near to them, I found that they were growing round a well, one of the many that a merciful Providence has planted in these sterile regions. Some half-dozen men—Moors as I saw at a glance—had already arrived at the oasis, and were lounging under



The Oasis.

the trees, so, on dismounting, I saluted them with the usual “Salam Aliekoum,” which was as courteously returned; then, setting to work, I unloaded and tethered my camel and pitched my tent in a convenient spot beside the well.

“ ‘I next entered into conversation with the Moors, and managed to find out that they were merchants bound to Tatta, at which town they intended to join the great caravan which would shortly arrive there on its way from Fez to Timbuctoo.

“ ‘ Now I had hitherto had no particular object in view beyond that of putting as many miles as possible between myself and my late place of bondage, but, on hearing the name of the town towards which these merchants were journeying, and which as I knew lay to the south of the empire of Morocco, the thought immediately occurred to me that my best plan would be to make my way to it, and afterwards push on to the sea-coast which could not be any great distance beyond. Once on the borders of the Atlantic, and I made no doubt that by some means or other I should be able to reach Madeira or the Canary Islands, from either of which a passage to Europe aboard some homeward-bound ship would soon offer itself. So, instantly making up my mind, I informed them that I, too, was going to Tatta to meet my brother, a merchant of Tangier, who was travelling to Timbuctoo in the same caravan—adding, that as our roads lay the same way, I should be glad if I might be permitted to make one of their party. To this, after a short whispered consultation among themselves, they gladly assented, telling me that my company was none the less welcome from the fact that I was well armed, and would therefore be a valuable ally in case we were attacked by any of the wandering Arabs.

“ ‘ So this being arranged to our mutual satisfaction, and having partaken of a frugal meal, our little band retired to rest, intending to resume the journey soon after midnight in order to reach the next oasis before the glaring heat of noon on the following day.

“ ‘ In this way we travelled on towards the south-west, the stars our guide by night and the long range of the

Atlas Mountains, to which our route lay parallel, directing our course by day. These worthy merchants never suspected that I was not what I represented myself to be, for during the time we were together I quoted often from the Koran, prayed at the stated hours, and was considered by all to be a most pious Mussulman ; and when we at length reached Tatta, a town standing on the banks of a river whose waters fertilize the region round about, they invited me to continue with their party during the long desert march to Timbuctoo, adding that my brother also would be welcome. This offer I pretended to accept with great pleasure, and then, telling them that I would seek my brother among the swarms of people that were in the town during the presence of the caravan and acquaint him of the arrangement, we parted company and I saw them no more.

““ I spent the greater part of the rest of the day in wandering about from one place of resort to the other, mixing with the merchants and their followers, and cautiously picking up the information I required. In the end I found out that the “great water” was but some twenty leagues off, and that the nearest way to it was by a road across the hills which was pointed out to me. This was sufficient for my purpose, so without further delay I again mounted my camel, and telling those who asked the reason of my departure (for several people were inquisitive enough to inquire) that I wished to spend an hour in solitude and prayer, I rode slowly off, and striking the road, was soon clear of the town.

““ All night long I urged my faithful beast onward, quickening his steps now and again by singing a Moorish



song, and so, resting during the heat of the next day and pushing on in the cool of the evening, before midnight the sea, dark and boundless, was in sight ahead, and soon the murmuring dash of its waves came like heavenly music to my ears.

““ The scattered huts of a small village appeared on my left hand as I descended the sloping ground towards the beach, and, in the bay beyond, a half-dozen or so little vessels lay at their anchors, looking dim and ghostly in the feeble light of the setting moon. Not a single inhabitant was in sight, so with a fervent prayer that my good fortune would not desert me at this critical moment, I rode quickly on, and dismounting at the water's edge, transferred my water-bags, provisions, and valuables from the back of my camel to one of a few tiny row-boats that were hauled up above high-water mark, and hastily launching her, paddled off to the vessel that was farthest out in the bay, which turned out to be a small half-decked craft, about thirty feet long, fitted with a single mast and sail.

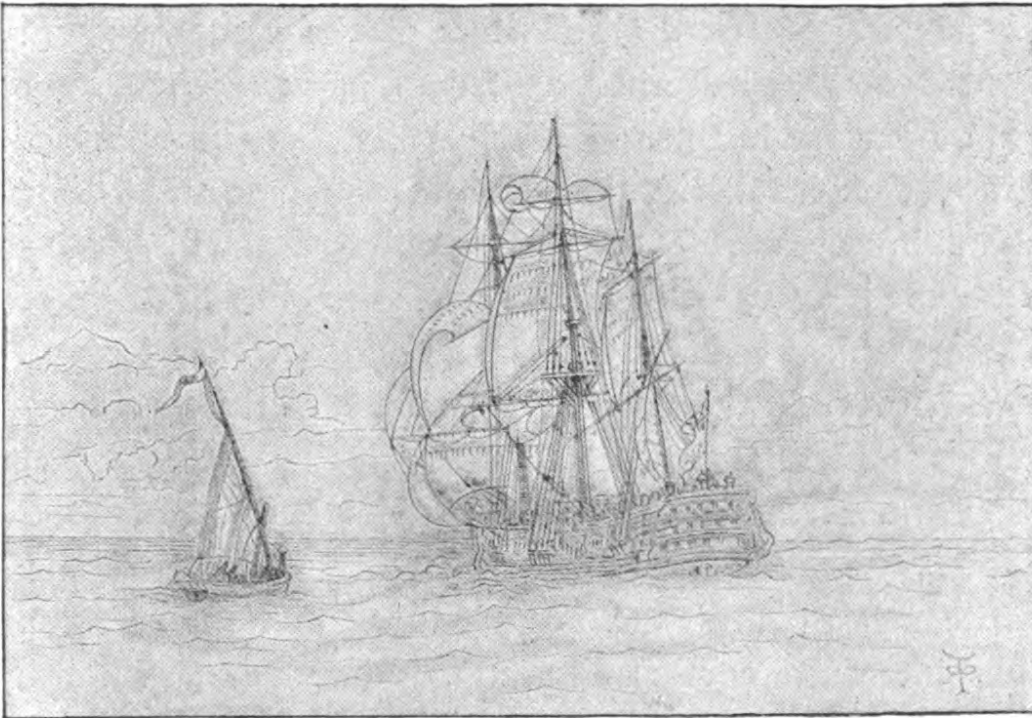
““ Pitching my belongings into her I leapt aboard, let go her moorings in a trice, made fast the little boat (in which I had thrown a handful of gold pieces) to the log of wood that served as a buoy, and hoisting the sail, stood out to sea before the brisk land-breeze. How my heart bounded with joy as, gathering way, my little craft frisked over the swelling waves, while the bubbling foam, hissing past her lee quarter, stretched out astern in a long line of glimmering brightness towards the hateful coast of Africa.

“ Thus hour after hour of the night wore on, until



the brightness of the glowing stars faded and paled before the approaching dawn, and when the sun rose, not a vestige of the land I had escaped from was to be seen.

“According to my calculations, the Canary Islands lay at no great distance, though I was by no means certain as to their whereabouts. But feeling pretty sure



The "Ganges."

that if anything they were to the south of my present position, I determined on keeping a course as near west as possible for a day or two, and then, if no land was in sight, to edge away to the south-west and try my luck in that direction. So denying myself more than an hour's sleep at a time, and that but twice in the twenty-four hours, I steered my little bark away to the west,

and on the morning of the third day, while the surface of the ocean was still wrapped in the shadows of night, the lofty apex of the Peak of Teneriffe, catching the first rays of the yet invisible sun, stood out against the sky like a cone of gleaming gold, far away on my larboard bow.

“I made but little progress during the early part of the day, for the wind fell lighter and lighter, with occasional puffs from all quarters of the compass ; and indeed the land seemed as far off as ever when, hour after hour having passed slowly away, the climbing sun had reached his highest point in the molten heavens. The fickle breeze, crushed by his intense heat, had by this time died away altogether ; so taking advantage of the breathless calm to snatch the rest of which I stood in such need, I lowered my sail, crept into the little fore-cabin, and was soon fast asleep.

“The afternoon was well advanced when I turned out again, when the first thing that met my gaze was the white sail of a distant ship, a tiny speck hovering on the blue of the northern horizon. She was nearing me, and rapidly too, for her canvas rose steadily above the intervening water, and before long I made her out to be a large full-rigged ship, running to the southward with squared yards and bringing her own breeze with her—for where I was the flat calm still continued.

“Along she came until at last I could see the figures of men on her fore-castle, the gleam of white foam at her bows, the ensign of England floating from her peak. Then, as the breeze had by this time reached me, I stood off towards the line of her course, and as she swept past,

hailed, in English, the group of people who were standing on the poop-deck gazing down on my little craft in astonishment. My shout of 'Ship ahoy!' was immediately answered, and the next minute I saw that her light sails were being hurriedly taken in; presently, too, she rounded to the wind and lay with her main-topsail aback to wait for me. So before very long I had boarded her, and was telling the tale of my sufferings to her captain.'





## CHAPTER XXII.

### DISAPPOINTMENTS.

“THE ship was an East-Indiaman, her name the *Ganges*, bound from London to Madras, and two days out of Funchal, in the island of Madeira, where she had touched to fill up her water-casks. She had been, the captain told me, in action with a French privateer before getting clear of the English Channel, and, in the fight, had lost her second mate and some half-dozen seamen. On hearing this, and not wishing to eat the bread of idleness, I immediately volunteered either to take the second mate's place or to do my duty before the mast as an able seaman—whichever the captain pleased. The former suited his convenience best, for since the action he had had to take charge of his own watch, and consequently I was duly installed as second mate of the *Ganges*, with, as the captain kindly suggested, the option of leaving the ship at the Cape of Good Hope if I wanted to return to Europe instead of going on to India.

“But I had no great wish to return to Europe. The money and jewels that I had taken from the old Moor—

or, rather, from his heir—and which I considered I had earned over and over again by my long years of labour, amounted by now to but a few hundred pounds in value, far from sufficient to enable me to embark in any business ; while as for my darling, though never for a single day had she been absent from my thoughts, I had long since abandoned all hope of seeing her again, thinking that she had either given me up for dead and had married, or was herself dead—for over eighteen years had elapsed since I took my last look at her sweet blue eyes, and pressing her to my heart, vowed that I would soon return and make her my bride.

“ So what cared I for the future ? Nothing. I had escaped from slavery, and that was enough. Now, instead of being looked upon as something a little higher than a sheep but not so high as a horse or a camel, I was once more a MAN—once more among men of my own glorious profession. With that I was satisfied. Still, there were times when thoughts of what might have been—thoughts of my shattered hopes—of my shipwrecked life—came surging round my brain, almost driving me frantic with impotent rage when I considered how my destiny had been warped and bent by causes so utterly beyond my control.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Well, the *Ganges* arrived at Madras, when, as my services were no longer required, I left her and made my way to our Danish settlement of Tranquebar—which is but a few leagues farther to the south—in one of the little native coasting-vessels.

<sup>1</sup> Avast heaving. Quite enough of this.—F. A.



“ ‘ I called at the Resident’s house immediately after I had landed, and sending in my name, was at once admitted. Him I found to be an old friend and one time shipmate of mine, and great was our mutual joy at this happy meeting ; greater, perhaps, on his part than on mine, for to him I was as one returned from beyond the grave.

“ ‘ I related my adventures, and when I had finished he told me that the two boats belonging to my last ship had been picked up in the Mediterranean by a homeward-bound English vessel, whose captain had reported the circumstance. From their state, and from the fact that a fez cap was found in one of them, something like the truth had been arrived at ; but though inquiries were made at Algiers, Sallee, and the other towns along the Barbary coast, no tidings of me or of my ship had ever been received, and I had long ago been given up for dead by all in Copenhagen who were interested in my fate.

“ ‘ The Resident, whose name was Thorwalsden, next asked me what my plans were for the future, and on my telling him that I had none, he offered to give me a letter of introduction to the Raja of Travancore, the ruler of the adjacent territory, with whom he was on friendly terms, and who, being very partial to Europeans, would, as he believed, give me lucrative employment on the royal estates, when the knowledge of husbandry which I had gained during my slavery in Algiers would stand me in good stead.

“ ‘ Accordingly, and armed with the letter of introduction, I set out the very next day for the Raja’s court,

and being by him most graciously received, was at once appointed to superintend some irrigation works which were on the point of being commenced. This undertaking having been carried out in a satisfactory manner, I was next raised to the post of assistant comptroller of the royal flocks and herds, and, continuing to advance in the Raja's favour, by the time I had been in his service for four years I had become his right-hand man and trusted adviser on all matters connected with the agriculture of his dominions.

“ ‘These years, too, had brought me riches, for the Raja was a liberal and generous paymaster, and, having been for some time possessed with a violent desire to return to my native country, there to live in peace for the rest of my days, I, at the end of the fifth year, asked and obtained the necessary permission to depart—which, though, was given with great reluctance. My affairs were quickly put in order, and then, having taken leave of my kind patron, the Raja, I set out for Tranquebar, accompanied by a strong escort of horse and foot, an honour that had hitherto been reserved for princes of the Blood.

“ ‘At Tranquebar I found that there was a Danish ship on the point of sailing for Kiel, while another was being loaded for Copenhagen ; so, as a measure of precaution, I placed half my wealth in the first ship, and the other half in the second, and taking passage in the latter, in due course found myself once more at sea.

“ ‘We enjoyed a rapid and favourable passage and had proceeded in safety as far as the English Channel, up

which we were steering with a fair wind from the north, when one forenoon a fleet of about six English men-o'-war sailing to the west, hove in sight on the weather bow. Approaching them without fear, our ship, having hoisted her Danish colours, saluted in the customary manner, whereupon, a frigate bore up, and running down before the wind fired a shot across our bows as a signal for us to heave to.

“ ‘ This we did, though wondering what could be the reason.

“ ‘ However, the reason was soon forthcoming, for a boat's crew in charge of an officer having quickly boarded our vessel, we were politely informed, that war had broken out between England and Denmark, and that our ship was a prize !

“ ‘ All on board except myself and the captain were at once secured, and, a prize-crew having been put in charge of the ship with as little delay as possible (for the frigate was in a hurry to rejoin her consorts which had continued on their course) the capture was then fully completed—almost before we had realized the extent of our disaster.

“ ‘ “ Now, sir ! ” said the lieutenant to me as he prepared to leave the ship, “ be good enough to get into the boat. ” — “ Why ? ” — “ Why, because you are a seaman and an Englishman, and therefore a fit and proper person to serve in the navy of his Majesty the King. Don't talk to me, sir ! No Dane speaks English like you do. ” — (I had been interpreting.) — “ Besides, we are rather short-handed in the frigate, which would be a sufficient reason for pressing the Pope of Rome ; so, will

you go quietly, or must I have you passed into the boat?"

"Almost dazed with despair at this fresh misfortune, I, seeing that resistance would be worse than useless, complied with the lieutenant's orders, and in a very few minutes was on board the frigate, which, as soon as her boats had been hoisted in, was at once got on her course. As she dashed off, I caught a glimpse of the prize, with her sails braced sharp up on the other tack, and heading in a north-east direction towards the English coast.

"Presently an officer (the first lieutenant, as I afterwards learned) came bustling along the deck, and stopping, favoured me with a quick searching look. "Halloo! who the devil are you?" asked he. So I told him. "Dane? Dane be dashed!" he replied. "As much a Dane as I am a Dutchman. Are you a seaman?—Very well; what is your name?" "Michael Christian Harvst, sir." "Ah, no doubt. Nice name too, and long enough for a post-captain. John Smith will be nearer the mark. Master-at-arms! This man (pointing at me) is John Smith; able seaman; starboard watch. For'ard with you, sir!—and mind your p's and q's, my fine fellow, for I shall keep my eye on you!" With that he walked away, and, as he had directed, I was forthwith entered on the ship's books as "John Smith, A.B," and set at work (for the starboard watch happened to be on deck at the time) as soon as I had been provided with the usual clothing and so on.

"Now comes the strangest part of the whole business. I have a good memory for faces, and the first time I set eyes on the doctor of the frigate, I knew that he and I



had met at some time or the other, but when or where I could not for the life of me remember. At length, though, having seized a favourable opportunity, I ventured to speak to him, and, as turning towards me he asked what I wanted, my mind instantly bridged over the long, long years of my weary life, and recognizing him, I earnestly exclaimed, "Sir, do you not remember the Danish captain whose ship, the *Maglagar*, was wrecked on the coast of North Devon nearly twenty-five years ago, and who, by your skill, was afterwards restored to health? Sir, I am——" "Great Heavens!" interrupted he, "you are Captain Harvst!"

"At his request I then followed him to his cabin, when he hastened to tell me—and judge what my feelings were—that my own sweet darling (whom he had seen and conversed with but a few weeks before) still lived, and remained unmarried, though several wealthy suitors had striven for her hand. Each of them had been rejected, inasmuch as she had never abandoned the hope that her first and only love would even yet return to her side!

"The doctor next sought out the captain of the frigate, and placed a full statement of my case before him, the result of which, after I had corroborated the story by entering into a detailed account of my adventures, was that the name under which I had been entered in the ship's books, and my rating as an able seaman of her crew, were at once cancelled. I then, by courteous invitation from the officers, took up my abode in the ward-room, being, when my story became generally known, treated with great kindness by all on board from the captain downwards; moreover, when the fleet



arrived at Funchal I was graciously allowed to depart ashore and generously furnished with sufficient money to pay my passage to England in one of the small trading-vessels. There was at the time every appearance of an approaching southerly gale, so, after a stay of but a few hours, the fleet weighed, and, leaving the dangerous anchorage, put to sea and resumed their voyage.

“ More misfortunes were, however, in store for me, for, scarcely had their sails sunk beneath the horizon, than I was arrested as a deserter, and being unable to furnish proofs to the contrary, my liberty was taken from me, and I was thrown into prison, there to lie until the arrival of another English man-o'-war.

“ For three months I remained in this horrible dungeon, and then a fleet of outward bound East Indiamen, convoyed by a line-of-battle ship, came into the roadstead. To her I was immediately handed over, and, my story being treated as a mere fabrication, in spite of my prayers and protests I was again rated as an able seaman and told to consider myself extremely fortunate that I was not seized up and treated to five dozen at the gangway.

“ This ship, the *Polyphemus*, and most of her convoy, were bound to Canton, where we arrived after a long and tedious passage, and, as she was to remain on the station for the rest of the commission, I determined to take the first opportunity that offered itself to desert in earnest, hoping that by some means or another I should then be able to make my way back to England.

“ Quite close to where we had anchored in Canton River was a small brig flying the Dutch colours, and one day when the liberty men of the watch to which I

belonged were ashore, I met three or four of her crew, one of whom was, as it happened, a countryman of mine. To him I frankly confided my designs and was at once assured of a welcome if I could get aboard his vessel. She was, as he told me, to sail at daybreak the next morning, and I thereupon arranged to swim off to her during the night—he, and the men who were with him faithfully promising to look out for me.

“So, as soon as the ebb-tide slackened, and screened by the darkness, I noiselessly lowered myself into the water, and floating unobserved past the ship, managed to reach the brig, when a rope was thrown to me, and I scrambled on board. At half-flood the anchor was hove up, and, leaving the river with a fair wind, long before my absence could have been discovered I was miles away and safe from pursuit.

“The *Zuyder Zee*, for that was the brig's name, was bound on a trading expedition to the Sandwich Islands, and thence home by way of Batavia, where she intended to complete her cargo. However, the voyage came to an untimely end, for, about a month after we had left Canton, a tremendous hurricane came on, driving our brig hundreds of leagues out of her course, and, as its fury subsided, we found to our dismay that the vessel had sprung a dreadful leak, and was in a sinking condition. Fortunate was it for us that the wind and sea were rapidly going down, for if we had been unable to use the pumps, our ship would certainly have foundered in a very short time ; even as it was, and in spite of our labour, we found that the leak steadily gained upon us. Hour by hour the water in the hold deepened, and,

wearied by the incessant toil, we were about to abandon the ship and take to the boats, when suddenly the mid-day sun broke through the clouds, and, lighting up the face of the ocean which for days and days had been obscured by the gloom of the tempest, revealed a small island at some distance to the south, standing sharply out in the clear sunshine against the background of lowering clouds that marked the course of the retreating storm. Towards it we steered, and by dint of ceaseless pumping, managed to keep the ship above water until she had sailed to within three miles of the land, when as she began to give unmistakable signs of sinking, we got the long-boat over the side, barely having time to tumble in and shove hastily off, before the poor *Zuyder Zee*, suddenly throwing her bows up in the air, went down stern first.

“‘ As soon as she had disappeared we rowed towards the island, and though our boat was dashed by a wave against a sunken rock when close to the beach and hopelessly wrecked, each of us succeeded in scrambling through the surf and reaching the shore in safety.

“‘ Well, our life on this barren rock (for it was little else) was as dreary and monotonous as can well be imagined. No passing sail appeared to cheer us with expectations of release, and as time went by, our numbers decreased—first one and then another dying through sheer despair and hopeless misery—until at the end of the fourth year of our desolate sojourning but six of us remained alive. Thus our miserable existence dragged slowly on until one morning I, walking at an early hour on the beach, saw in the offing a boat drifting towards

the island, and, carried along by a current that set round the north-west extremity, promising to pass within a short distance of the shore.

“No time was to be lost, and running to the end of a jutting ridge of rocks which I imagined to be the nearest point to which she would approach, I, though well aware that the water was infested with sharks, made up my mind to attempt to swim out to the boat as soon as she drew nigh. I had not long to wait, and at the right moment, to the best of my judgment, I quietly slipped into the water and swam out.

“I had traversed about two-thirds of the distance, and was just persuading myself that no sharks were about, when, happening to glance behind, I saw to my agony and horror the black dorsal fin of one of the fiendish monsters stealing slowly along in my wake!

“I immediately commenced to kick and splash, knowing that these hell-hounds are arrant cowards in spite of their ferocity, and so, occasionally dashing the water with my arms and legs, I swam desperately on, without daring to take another look behind me at the shark's whereabouts, and fully expecting to be mangled and torn by its savage teeth as each second went by.

“Still the fatal swoop was not made, and I had progressed to within a dozen yards of the boat—so close that even in my deadly peril I noticed the marks where her gunwale had chafed against the davits, the painter hanging idly over the stem—when a trembling ripple skimming along the water on my right hand showed the track of another shark hastening towards me from that direction. Without a moment's hesitation I turned



to meet it, shouting and splashing as I went, and presently saw the fish itself, its hideous shape clearly defined in the limpid water, though when we were almost face to face it suddenly swerved aside and glided between me and the boat, passing so close that, as its lithe body glanced by, the rush of water from its tail swelled and eddied all round me. Again pursuing the same tactics, I dashed on in a flurry of foam, and again the shark left my path, though this time it made but a short, curved dart towards my rear.

“ ‘ The next instant I had grasped the boat’s gunwale with both hands, and then, drawing my body up as quick as lightning, with a tremendous effort I flung myself neck and crop inside, followed in the twinkling of an eye by a huge shark, which having made a spring at me as I rolled over the gunwale was by its impetus carried into the boat, where, falling with a clatter on the oars that lay along the thwarts, it lashed and flounced for a few moments, until its head getting over the opposite gunwale, with a rapid twist of its body it toppled overboard.

“ ‘ For a few minutes I remained quite still where I had fallen in the bottom of the boat, in case another shark might see me and take it into his head to dash in, for I could feel by the way in which the boat quivered now and again that the surrounding water was alive with them. However, after a while the commotion subsided, and to my great relief, when I had mustered up enough courage to look, the ravenous brutes had all disappeared.

“ ‘ By this time the boat had drifted to a considerable



distance from the island, so seeing that her mast and sail were on the thwarts among the oars, I then got her under canvas and presently steered her into a small creek that ran between the rocks from which I had started on my perilous excursion.

“ ‘ Well, we quickly decided to leave our island home in this boat, and attempt to reach the Sandwich Islands, thinking that even if we happened to miss the land, we should stand a good chance of being picked up by one of the small trading-vessels that collect pearl-shells, cocoa-nut oil, and so forth from the natives. At any rate we determined to stay in our present joyless abode no longer than could be helped now that the means to leave it were at hand ; so in another day, having first provided for the voyage to the best of our ability and commended ourselves to the care of the Almighty, we rowed out from the beach, and hoisting the sail when the boat was well to windward, stood off close-hauled to the north-east trades, making good an east-south-east course, as near as I could judge.

“ ‘ We sailed bravely along on this tack for the best part of a week, when, as the trades showed signs of failing and having by our calculations got far enough to the east, we put the boat about and steered as near to the north as she would lie. This, however, had scarcely been done when the wind dropped and left us becalmed.

“ ‘ This dreadful calm continued for a week, a fortnight—Heaven knows how long—while worn out with fruitless rowing ; dazed with the fiery heat ; our water and provisions long since consumed ; one by one my

poor comrades expired, until at last I, of a stronger constitution than the rest, alone remained alive. Then came the blessed breeze, and feebly raising my head to catch its refreshing breath, I saw your schooner and fainted.' ”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Now, Jack,” said I decisively, “before you tell me another word of your yarn I *must* know more about Captain Harvst. Did you take him to England ? ”

“I was just going to tell you,” he rejoined. “Yes, he went back to Plymouth with us in the *Hornet*, and from there he travelled across to North Devon. His old sweetheart was alive and well, and they were married after all! I was there, and so were all the rest of the *Hornets*, for we went over on purpose to dance at his wedding.”





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### INTERRUPTED.

“IT was our middle watch on deck that night, and soon after four bells, Forrester, who was on the look-out, suddenly yelled, ‘Breakers ahead! Hard up!’

“‘No, no!’ shouted the skipper, after a quick glance to leeward, ‘Hard *down*!—Let fly the head-sheets!—Lay aft and haul the main-boom in amidships!’

“Round came the little *Hornet* like a top, although the wind was, if anything, abaft the beam when the helm was put down, and carrying plenty of way, she was full on the other tack and stretching off from the danger in almost no time, though as we hauled the yards round, the white line of the breakers seemed to be quite close under her stern.

“Just then, too, the light from the newly-risen moon streamed out from the upper edge of a bank of clouds (the night had been as dark as the grave before), showing us the extent of the reef and also disclosing the dark mass of an island some three or four miles off on the weather-quarter.

“‘I know him!’ sang out Sam, jumping into the

main-rigging (all hands had tumbled up on deck when the schooner was put about). 'That Taola ; enemy live there !'

" ' Be sure ? ' asked the skipper ; ' whereabouts is your island, then ? '

" ' Naitu-loa out there, four—five points on weather-bow. By-an'-by, when sun rise, time to tack, then breakfis'-time, see him. '

" ' Is there any more reefs in the say round about here besides that one ? ' asked Dodd, with a glance at the white water astern.

" ' No ; no more reef, ' replied Sam. ' Plenty water now, all 'e way. Big reef close to Naitu-loa, but not afraid of him. Sam know all about—as well as know his hammock—catch plenty fis' there with spear. By-an'-by show you one, two place where *Hornet* can go through all safe. '

" ' Ah, well, the *Hornet* ain't gwain in through en', remarked Dodd, walking off and taking the bearing of the island, which by now was getting indistinct in the haze.

" Sam's statement turned out to be correct, for soon after breakfast ' Land ho ! ' was shouted by somebody aloft, and in half an hour's time, though still a long way off, it was in view from the deck, its rugged outline softened by the distance, resting like a glowing cloud of sunlit purple on the glistening blue of the ocean.

" ' Naitu-loa ! Naitu-loa ! ' shouted Sam, dancing about the decks in a wild state of joy when he first caught sight of the island.

" ' Are you sure ? ' asked several eagerly.

“ ‘ Yes, yes ; certain. Know him too well for mistake. Wait a bit, presently you see house between trees—canoe on beach. Plenty mans walk about, too. Sam know 'em all. By-an'-by you know, too—good fren's now—’

“ ‘ We aren't going to take the *Hornet* inside the reef, Sam,’ said Forrester.

“ ‘ Why not ? what you do then ? ’

“ ‘ Heave to and launch the canoe when we get within a couple of miles from the island ; you must say good-bye to us then and make the best of your way ashore.’

“ ‘ *Hornet* sail away, never see again ? ’ asked poor Sam plaintively, his joyful tone changing to one of utter misery at being told that he was to part from us so soon.

“ ‘ Yes, we are going back to our own country—you to yours,’ replied Forrester.

“ Master Fred ! ” said old Jack, after suddenly pausing in the middle of his story to listen to the chime of a distant clock, “ do you know what time it is ? ”

“ One o'clock,” replied I, glancing at my watch.

“ One o'clock ! I didn't think it was anything like so late as that, we must pipe ‘ belay ’ with the yarn and turn in now.”

“ Oh, carry on for a little longer,” exclaimed I, eagerly, “ or at all events until you have done with Sam. I suppose you sent him ashore at Naitu-loa and then sailed off ? ”

“ No, no ; better clew it up now,” said Jack, rising from his seat, “ or very likely I shall have to toe a line down in the hall after breakfast, and maybe have my grog stopped for breaking the rules. Routine is routine,



whether you are aboard a ship or in a house. 'Lights out at midnight' is the order which finishes up the day's work according to the list that you drew up yourself and hung up abreast of the gong; so good-night, my boy. I shall just go the rounds to see that the doors and windows are fastened up, in case any piratical burglars should take it into their heads to try to board us when no one is on the look-out, and then be off to my bed."

"Good-night, Jack," said I, shaking hands with the old fellow. "I shall sleep like a top and dream of the *Hornet* and beautiful islands in the South Sea until the governor digs me out at eight o'clock."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Fred, I had very hard work to wake you this morning," said my father, turning his *Morning Post* inside out and glancing across the breakfast-table at me; "what time did you go to bed last night?"

"Well, it was about one o'clock, sir, replied I; "Old Jack was spinning such an interesting yarn that we forgot all about the time."

"I shall have to speak to John Groves about this," remarked Aunt Jane<sup>1</sup> in her decisive way. "John Groves must not keep the child up until such late hours—eh James?" to the dad, who promptly answered "certainly not," and then—would you believe it?—winked at me from behind his newspaper.

"It shall not happen again," said I, with due humility; "I will get my little clock mended and stick it up on the mantle-shelf again, so that we may see the time—"

<sup>1</sup> I hope you have not forgotten the existence of these good people.—F. A.

“John Groves,” interrupted my aunt, without in the least heeding what I was saying, “is a man whom I respect very much—which is, perhaps, only natural considering his great age and many good qualities—but—” (and here my dear aunt began to soar)—“I must and do object to his turning this house into a line-of-battle ship !”

“Of course,” observed the governor with amazing solemnity. “But does he want to ?”

“He does ; or, at all events into something of the sort.”

“My dear Jane, what do you mean ?” asked my mother, pushing across the table a letter addressed to me, which had been sorted by accident among the batch that lay beside her own plate.

“I will tell you,” she replied, “and give you an instance to show my meaning. I was almost terrified out of my wits yesterday afternoon, while you were both out, for suddenly, as I was comfortably dozing in my easy chair, I heard a most frightful jangling of bells, which, as I afterwards learned, was caused by that wretched gardener’s boy sweeping them backwards and forwards with a broom. Rushing to see what was the matter, I met the coachman and Henry toiling upstairs with the garden-pump ! ‘Idiots—what are you doing !’ I exclaimed. ‘Going to fire-quarters, mum—boatswain’s orders, mum !’ replied the coachman, panting for breath and mopping the perspiration from his great red face—for the pump is rather a load, you know. Questioning him farther, he informed me that he and the boy were about to fill the bath, get the pump in

position, and then take the long hose down the passage towards the servants' bed-rooms, where a fire was supposed to have broken out, and, while we were talking,



Fire-Quarters.

the rest of the household came trooping upstairs with pails of water. Waddling along in the rear was cook, puffing and blowing in her attempts to keep up with the others, carrying a small saucepan in one hand and a

ladle in the other. I was so angry ! I sent them back with fleas in their ears ! I told them—”

“My dearest Jane !” laughed the governor—as for me I was bursting—“I gave Groves leave to station, as he calls it, the servants and show them what they each would have to do in the event of a fire breaking out. Really, now, I think it is a wise precaution, for we might have the place burnt down about our ears long enough before an engine would arrive on the scene. A few gallons of water applied in time would probably put out a fire, which, if left alone, might do no one knows what damage, and the only way to have those few gallons when and where they are wanted is to drill—‘drill’ is, I think, the proper word—the servants so that they may know their duties, and act accordingly.”

“Well, I never looked at it in that light,” said my aunt, somewhat mollified. “It certainly struck me as an extremely odd performance.”

“Odd !” said the mater with a smile, “why everything Groves does is odd ; I think him most delightfully whimsical in all his sayings and doings.”

I opened my letter then, and here it is :—

“DEAR DUNCE,—Come for a cruise next Saturday, it will be the last this season, and bring old Sinbad with you. Usual train, 2.15 from Cannon Street. Bob is coming, so bring the wind-jammer. My love to your people. Olive oil.

“Yours truly,

“BRIGHAM YOUNG.”



This letter requires some explanation. In the first place I am "Dunce." It is a nickname that I got at Rugby because I was so utterly hopeless at Latin and Greek. I used to fag for old Brigham, who was also at Rugby, though he left long before I did, and of course, that too is a nickname—Charles Lumley Young is his right one. He is a yachtsman and a great authority on sail areas, load water-lines, and all the rest of it, and, moreover, is the owner of a beautiful little twenty-five-ton cutter, the *Patience*, which accounts for the first part of the letter. Then "Sinbad" refers to Old Jack; "Bob" is another chum, who plays the banjo in style; and the "wind-jammer" means my concertina, an English one, upon which I can perform—well, rather nicely, if the truth must be told. Brigham's skipper—Webb—calls it a "constant-screamer," not by way of a joke, you know—seriously.

Bob and I play together a great deal, and, let me tell you, a concertina and a banjo sound uncommonly well if they are played properly. We were asked up to Henley this year, and had great fun. We stayed in a house-boat and everybody was delighted to hear us play—at least they said so. One evening last winter we went to a smoking concert in town, and when it was nearly over we two, with another fellow who could play the tin whistle, blacked our faces with burnt corks, put our overcoats on inside out, and sallied forth into the street, like that. We went into Drury Lane, which was close at hand, and there we played and sang outside a public-house, until at last a dreadful old lady came out of the "bottle and jug department," whatever that may



be, and made us play a jig tune while she danced on the cellar flap. When she had finished we collected about eighteen-pence from the crowd and gave it to her, with more added from our own money, and then she wanted to treat us to "twos of gin." We told her that we were teetotallers, but all she said to that was "Garn!" and rushing up to me, clawed me round the neck, exclaiming, "Come, my little Dickey! Eliza's going to lush yer—yos she is! Oh, yos she is!" and dragged me off. I had a job to get away from her, for Bob and the other fellow never lent me a hand, but simply stood there shrieking with laughter—the stupid asses!

After that we went farther on to a secluded street, in which was a very respectable-looking public-house, outside which we commenced again, only with music of a higher class, and after a few minutes our tin whistler began to sing "Old Timber-toes."

"'Twas off Sebastopol, my boys, I got this timber-toe,"

and so on, a beastly tune to play; do you know it? I had never heard it before, and no more had Bob, so our accompaniment was simply heart-breaking and wicked, especially in the minor part.

In the middle of it the landlord, or some one, came to the door and looked at us, and, as we left off timber-toeing and looked at him, there we were, gazing at each other.

"Come, come!" said he at last, in a reproachful sort of voice; then he shook his head and pointed down the street: so we slunk off.

If you don't mind, we will go back to my letter now.

"May I go for a cruise with Young on Saturday? he has written to ask me," said I, speaking to the governor, you know, for form's sake.

"H'm!" came from my aunt.

"Isn't it rather late in the year for yachting, Fred?" asked my mother. "The nights are getting very chilly, and you might take cold!"

"Oh, I sha'n't catch a cold—and I sha'n't catch my train either unless I hurry off, it is five past nine now!" With that, and glad of the excuse, I left the room and was out of the house in no time. It will be all right when I get back this evening, thought I.

"Jack," said I, after dinner that day (it was all right, I had had permission to go for the cruise), "do you know that you are going to sea on Saturday?"

"Going to sea, Master Fred!" exclaimed he in amazement.

"Oh yes, you and I are to be shipmates for once; we are going for a cruise in the *Patience*, Young's yacht. You remember Young, the fellow that always calls you 'Sinbad.' Yachting is lovely fun, and I think you will enjoy a sail. Why, it will be like old times."

"Ay, old times—old times!" sighed Jack. Then, brightening up again, "I am very glad we are going to be shipmates!" said he, heartily.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE PATIENCE.

SATURDAY came at last ; so, in the morning, we two went up to town together. I had to leave Jack at Fenchurch Street and hasten away to the office, because the train was rather late, promising as I went off to call for him at his old resort, the Guildhall Library, at one o'clock.

I found the old fellow up to his eyes in books when I walked into the library—it is a splendid place, too. I had never been there before ; any one can go and read in it, and there are people to bring you the books you ask for, all for nothing. He was so deeply immersed in one about two feet square that he did not notice me, though I sat right opposite to him for quite a minute. At last I took a slip of paper and wrote—

“ Mr. Frederick Ainslie presents his compliments to Mr. John Groves, and begs to call his attention to the following :—

Item—The time as shown by the clock opposite.

Item—Lunch.

Item—The 2.15 train from Cannon Street,”  
and poked it under his nose.

“ Bless my heart, Master Fred ; I never saw you ! ” said he out loud, making the neighbouring readers start and glance round with surprise. “ Time to go, I suppose, ” he continued in a whisper, and reluctantly shutting his book.

“ Yes, come on, old boy, ” said I.

So he returned the book which he had been studying to the librarian, and we went off, lunched at the Bay Tree, then walked on to Cannon Street, and waited inside the station for the others to arrive.

Presently Brigham came rushing in—he is a plump little man with a round face and an eye-glass—carrying a huge bag and two wickerwork baskets, fastened up with skewers, in his hands, a small coil of white manilla rope under one arm and an oilskin coat under the other. “ Ah, here you are then ! ” he exclaimed, depositing his burden at our feet. “ How are you, Dunce ? Glad to see you, Sinbad. Hasn’t Bob turned up yet ? Confound him, he is always late. There he is. Bob ! Dash it, he doesn’t hear me. You’ve got tickets, I suppose ? All right, then we will go on the platform, for this train is always crowded. Pick up some of my parcels, and don’t squash the grapes.

“ Lift them up tenderly,  
Treat them with care ;  
Fashioned so slenderly,  
Ripe and so rare.

“ English hothouse—half-a crown a pound. Come along ! ”

Well, we got to Greenhithe in due course, and found Webb, the skipper of the *Patience*, waiting for us.

Webb is an oddity in his way. He belongs to Wyvenhoe, or somewhere about there, and is a stumpy little man with a huge black beard that spreads very nearly all over his face ; such of his face as is visible is the colour of well-done toast. He is very talkative, and has a habit of shutting up his left eye when he looks at anything, and of course he calls waves "wyves," sails "syles," &c., like the other Essex men. Old Webb is a good man in a yacht.

"Fine dye for a syle, sir. That's blaowing a nice breeze," said he, loading himself with as much of our baggage as he could well stagger under.

"So I see ; do you think it will stand ?" quoth Brigham.

"Stand, sir ! That it will. As I was a-sying to Garge this morning" ("Garge" is the crew of the *Patience*), "'Garge,' I says. 'What ?' says he. 'Why,' says I, "that'll be blaowing a handsome breeze about west, time high water comes, to a sartinty. Going to get under wye at once, sir ?'"

"Oh yes, as soon as you are ready."

"All ready, sir ; I got the things you wrote about—the beef and that. Our minesel is hoisted too, so there's nauthen to wait for, far as I knaow."

So with that we trudged down to the causeway, where the yacht's boat was waiting for us, and were rowed off.

Brigham took Old Jack off to show him the arrangements below when we had finished stowing away our various belongings, and I, going up on deck, was just in time to hear the rattle and splash of the riding-chain as



it went over the bow, when, freed from her moorings, the little *Patience*, her sails full, and leaning gracefully over to the breeze, slid rapidly out into the centre of the, by now, ebbing stream. When she was far enough across, and well clear of the buoys, the helm was put up, the main sheet was eased away, and off we went down the river at a famous pace.

“Like to steer, sir?”

“Yes, Webb,” I replied, taking the tiller from him.

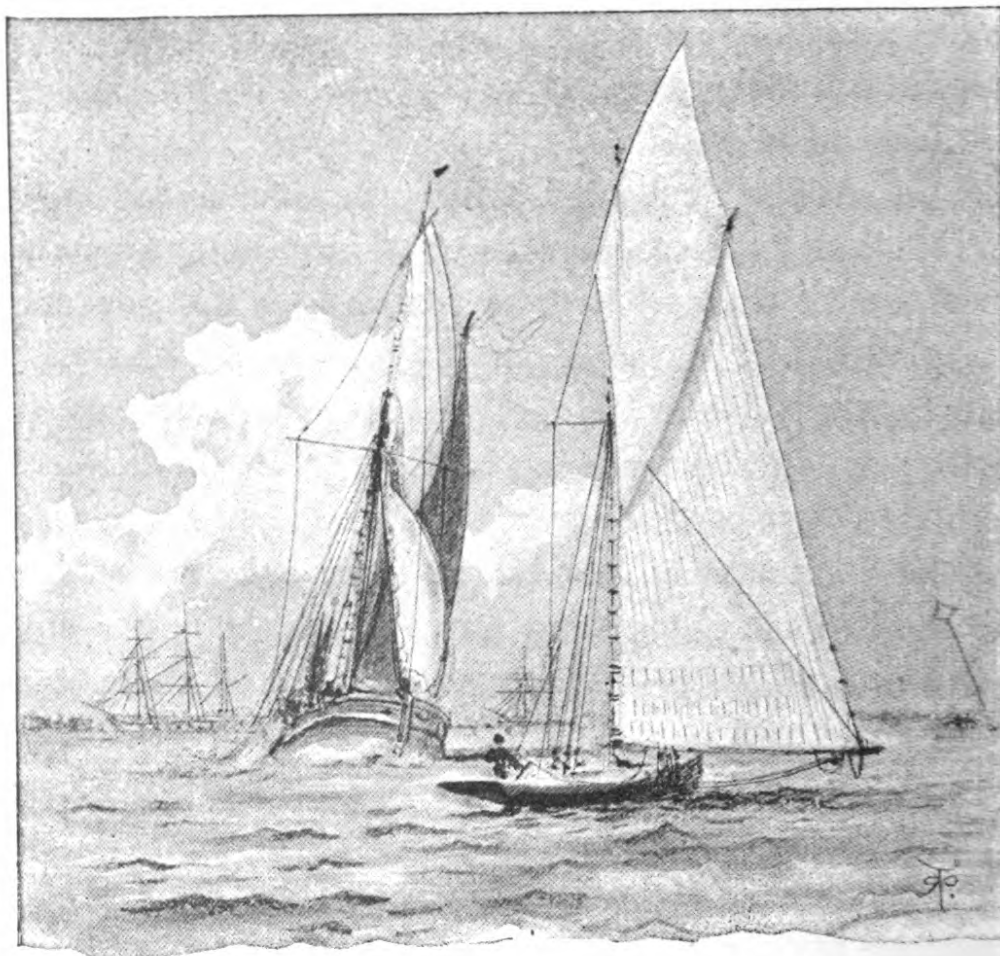
“Well, I can trust her to you,” said he; “you ain’t like most of them that comes down with our governor. Keep her just clear of the point. That steamboat coming up Northfleet Hope, will cross over before we get there; she will be for going up in the slack on the Essex shore. I’ll go for’ard now and lend my mate a hand to set the gaff-taupsel—then he can jump below to see how his fire is looking up, and get the dinner under wye. Then in a whisper—“Who’s the elderly gentleman as came down with you, sir?”

“Oh, an old seaman,” said I; “he lives at our place; he and I are great friends.”

“I thought he was a seaman when I first clapped eyes on him,” observed Webb. “Looks to me more like an old ancient admiral than anything else. No, don’t alter your course for that barge. She’ll be about directly and leave plenty of room for us to clear her stern. *She* won’t get much farther this tide, I know, the ebb will be coming down strong directly, and then she will have to bring up.”

The barge in question was ahead, standing directly across our course, and, as the skipper spoke, her bluff,

sturdy bows came foaming up towards the wind, the man at her tiller getting it down by leaning his back against it, and shoving against the deck with his feet. Her great sails then flapped heavily once or twice, the fore-sail



Beauty and the Beast.

took aback, her spritsail filled with a bang, the fore-sheet was let draw, flying to leeward along its iron traveller with a rasp and a jar, and she was full and away on the other tack.

“Fine day for your business, sir!” shouted the helms-

man as we shot by under the barge's stern, just shaving her dingy. I like going close to things. "Plenty of wind down below, I don't doubt," he continued, lolling over the long tiller and taking a supercilious glance at our spars and canvas.

I yelled something civil in return, though I don't suppose he heard what I said; then, waving his hand, he turned away and looked up and down the weather leach of his main-sail, which, gently fluttering, showed that the barge was as close to the wind as she should be.

"Look out, sir; mind your hellum!" shouted Webb from for'ard, pointing as he spoke over the lee-quarter, where, on turning about, I saw the great towering bows of a steam collier not more than ten yards off, and heard the dull pounding of her screw.

"Where are you driving to? Want to come aboard, don't ye?" raved he. Then to me, seeing that the steamer was porting to round the point, "Starboard, sir! starboard! or else she'll hit us with her quarter!"

"You ain't fit to drive a dunkey-cart—that you ain't!" resumed he to the people on the steamer's bridge (which was ever so much higher than our mast-head). "Maybe you've lost your way! What do ye call yourselves? Tramcar sailors, I reckon!" To which someone on the bridge replied with,—

"Is that Pa's yacht? Take it home and tear it up! Go and put your head in a bag!" and so on, making old Webb furious with passion.

Presently "Are you the captain?" was shouted back from the steamer, which by now had got some distance ahead.

"Yes, I am!" replied he,—rather injudiciously, I must say.

"Well, then, go down below and paint your hairy old face with tinned milk!"

Poor Webb!

"Halloo skipper, what is the matter?" asked Brigham, who with the others had just appeared on deck. (They've been sampling the whisky, thought I.) "Oh! another of your friends, I see!" he continued, after looking under the main-boom. "Close shave, wasn't it?"

"Close, sir! them people would as lief run a person down as look at him, and then slew round and laugh!"

"Quite so; insult to injury, you know—er, have a drop of whisky, Webb, there is a bottle open" (I thought so!) "and drink confusion to all—all—what was it you called steamers the other day?"

"'Fish-frighteners,' sir; well, thanky, I don't mind if I do, sir."

"Bring up the bottle and a glass, Bob; you are nearest to the companion," said Brigham.

"Bring *two* glasses, Bob," said I, "and a bottle of soda."

"Do you think the boy should be allowed to bowse up his jib at this time o' day?" queried the former of Old Jack, who was seated on the weather-rail smoking a cigar, and looking supremely happy.

"I don't know, I'm sure," he replied; "perhaps a little will not hurt him; but it must not be a second mate's nip."

"Oh, don't be afraid of that; I'll mix it for him myself," observed Bob as he returned from below, "and not too strong either, or the young humbug will be steering



us against the bank, or running foul of the buoys in Gravesend Reach, or something equally disastrous.”

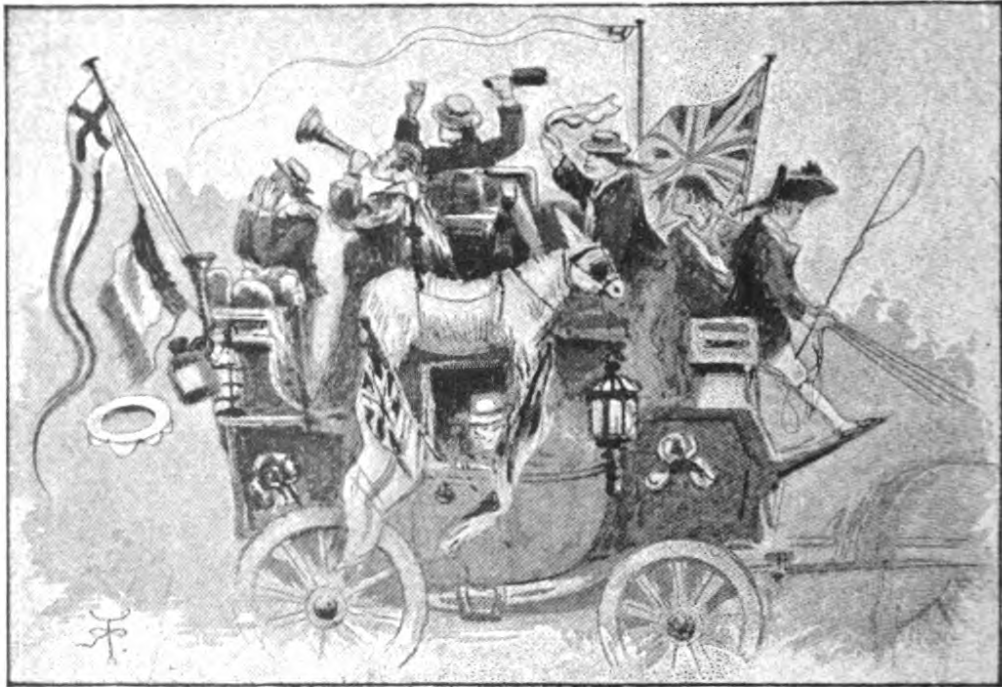
“A small drop in a bucket, about three hoops up, if you please,” said I, with a grin, whereupon Old Jack wagged his head and laughingly remarked that I had not been a voyage to sea for nothing.

\* \* \* \* \*

And so away down the grimy Thames, by smoky Northfleet and quaint, straggling Gravesend, the sight of which brings many memories to Old Jack, and he gives us an interesting and entertaining account of the long-ago days when stately Indiamen lay at anchor off the town; and of the scenes of revelry when their crews were ashore in the evenings. And he points out the once noted public-houses—poor things, they look sad and dreary enough now—telling us how he was captured by the press-gang at this, and of a jollification when his ship was paid off at that, and how on the day after the said jollification he and about a dozen other seamen had started off for London in a coach with nine or ten horses harnessed to it, escorted until they were clear of the town by most of the seamen who happened to be in the port at the time; some on horseback; others in carriages or any sort of conveyances that they could get hold of, down to Sedan chairs. Fancy a sailor in a Sedan chair! The coach must have looked funny, too, for they had rigged a mast on it for the occasion, and of course flags were flying from the mast to their heart's content. Over one side of the coach they had contrived davits, to which a donkey was hoisted with tackles hooked to bands passing under its belly; so when one of the Jack



Tars fell off the roof, the coach was hove to ; “ Away life-boat ! ” was piped, and down went the donkey. A couple of hands then slid down the davit-falls, unhooked the blocks, trotted off, and brought the man back to the coach, which was waiting for them, with the church-pennant flying, and its wheels on one side rammed against the hedge. Then, the donkey being



Man overboard.

hoisted up again, they proceeded onwards as before. By and by they came to a little road-side public-house, and found the poor widow who kept it in a great state of grief because a creditor, or some one, had levied a distress upon her belongings for the sum of fifty pounds. All the beer-taps had therefore been sealed up, so that none should be drawn. So she told

them they could not have any beer, and explained why. Then out leapt the boatswain, who, because of his rank, had been riding inside the coach, and, swearing a tremendous oath, called all hands round him, and said: "Shipmates! here is this poor soul as has struck her colours and been boarded by a rascally pirate, far as I can make out, and fifty pounds will get her clear of him. I don't know how much fifty pounds may happen to be, but there is twelve of us, all told, and ten guineas apiece ought to pay the score. There's my hat, and there's my ten guineas; pass it round for a tarpaulin muster!" So when each had contributed his ten guineas, the boatswain took the money, and, pouring it into the poor widow's lap, bade her cheer up, for better times were coming. Then, after they had had as much beer as they wanted, they took the woman off in the coach, and drove her to the sheriff's office, where she paid her debt. I expect that the sheriff felt rather flustered when those great hairy seamen came trooping in, for they all went into the office to see fair play. However, he was very civil when he saw that the money was forthcoming, and treated the whole affair as a good joke, which was about the best thing he could have done; as it was, several of the men wanted the boatswain to pipe "Hands down house!" as soon as the receipt was signed, and very likely he would have given the order only the woman begged and prayed him not to. "If he had," said Old Jack in conclusion, "we should have pulled the place down as sure as fate."

Then he went on yarning away about something else, to which I was not able to pay attention, being rather

bothered at the time by some difficulties that had suddenly cropped up in the way of my navigation. Right ahead, and at some distance from the north shore, a long string of barges were anchored, and close outside them was a wretched brig, under her lower topsails and fore-topmast-staysail, dropping down with the tide, while beyond her a great green steamboat was ploughing up river against the ebb, and giving out a series of unearthly hoots with her steam whistle, to let whoever was interested know that she was coming. I scarcely knew which way to go to avoid these vessels, and was just about to ask Webb, when his warning voice came from for'ard : " Keep to loo'ard of them barges, sir ; don't you try to cross their bows ; the tide is running like a sloosh here ! " With that he walked aft, and stood behind me, with one leg on each side of the tiller.

We fairly whizzed by the barges, what with our speed through the water and the rushing current, which, divided by their ponderous stems, swept roaring and foaming past each clumsy-looking hull in a stream of muddy ripples and discoloured froth ; and went all clear of the brig too, for there was a great deal more room than I thought for. Still, we were pretty close to her, for all that, and a little dingey-white dog that was aboard considered it his duty to mount on the rail, and " Wap ! wap ! wap ! " at us as we passed, when, having thus protested against our presence, he yawned and jumped down on deck.

" Well, sir," said Webb, " have you decided upon where our wessel is bound to ? That ain't going to

blaow nauthen much, time of low water, I don't think. That'll fall calmish afore very long, I reckon," continued he, gazing up at the clouds to windward, with one eye shut, as usual.

"How far do you think we shall carry this ebb?" asked Brigham.

"Depends, sir, on the wind. That won't flow at the Nore much afore ten o'clock. Might get down so far, and might not. If we do, says you, we can run across and let go on the Cant Edge, where we sha'n't be in no person's way. Or else, says you, there's Queenbro' Swale lies nice and handy with the tide of flood. Likewise, says you, there's a snug place to bring up in between Yantlet Creek and the east Blyth buoy."

"Look here, you fellows," said Brigham, "dinner will be ready at seven, or half-past, and I daresay we shall be down somewhere near the Yantlet by then. Don't you think that we had better decide to anchor there, and have our dinner in peace and quietness? We don't pretend to be enthusiastic yachtsmen, and I know very well what it will be if we go below the Nore—the wind will die away, and we shall have to bring up in some diabolical place where it will be necessary to keep anchor watch. There is no poetry in that."

"All right, 'Barkis is willin','" observed Bob.

"'I say ditto to Mr. Burke,'" said I; while, as for Old Jack, he said nothing at all, and I don't suppose he cared three pins where we went.

"Then that is settled," said Brigham to Webb, much to the latter's relief, for I fancy he had had an idea that we meant to sail on all night, a proceeding which is



strongly objected to by skippers of yachts. I don't blame them either.

Webb's forecast turned out to be correct, for the breeze gradually dwindled to the merest breath, and, by the time we had got to Sea Reach, the yacht was simply drifting down with the tide, her way through the water being almost imperceptible. The ebb, though, was running with a good strength (these were spring tides), therefore we made good way over the ground, passing the Mucking Light, Thames Haven, and quaint little Holy-haven (where the Dutch eel-boats lie), which with its line of protecting dykes and the low-lying country behind them is Holland itself in miniature.

The little *Patience* reached her appointed haven some time after the sun had sunk behind the distant hills, and her anchor having been let go, in a few minutes she lay, with her white wings folded, almost motionless on the bosom of the tranquil river. "Dinner's all ready, sir," quoth George, popping his head up through the fore-scuttle, and wiping the perspiration off his forehead with his sleeve.







## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE RIVER.

“WHO is coming on deck for a smoke?” said I, as the table was being cleared after our meal.

“Too lazy,” yawned Brigham.

“Too cold,” said Bob.

“Too comfortable here,” said Old Jack, leaning back on the sofa and smiling placidly.

“Go on, young’ un ;” exclaimed Bob, as he lighted a cigar ; “don’t stand there with the door open. Go on deck, by all means, if you want to : we are all too old and valuable to defy the night air. You will find it precious chilly up there, and be only too glad to crawl back in a few minutes.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I like the river by night, especially when the weather is calm, and, though the air certainly did feel rather cold when I first emerged from the yacht’s little companion, I have a thick monkey-jacket on, and a turn or two up and down the deck has made me as warm as toast in no time. I am just going to light my pipe, and then, if you don’t mind, I will tell you what is going on all

around. It is nice to have some one to talk to. How still everything is! There is scarcely a sound except the low gurgle of the, by now, sluggish ebb-tide, as it steals past; the tapping of a loose rope against the mast somewhere aloft; the subdued murmur of voices from the cabin; the faint rumble of a train over on the Essex shore, which, gradually increasing to a hollow growl, as gradually dwindles again, and finally dies out in the far distance.

Away at the head of the Reach the Mucking Light is winking and blinking from among a cluster of other lights—those of barges and vessels at anchor on the edge of the Blyth Sands, waiting for the next tide—while right opposite where we are lying, that shown by the Chapman flashes bravely out, and then suddenly disappears, repeating the performance at the proper intervals. Far off, towards the open sea, is the one borne by the Nore lightship, now slowly blazing up to its full power, sending quite a beam of shimmering brightness along the water, and then as slowly fading until it is again but a faint luminous speck in the darkness, not to be distinguished for a moment or two from the few flickering riding-lights that are dotted here and there like so many glow-worms.

Here come the green and mast-head lights of an outward-bound steamer, gliding into view from out of the thick blackness that seems to lie on the surface of the river. Listen.—Now you can hear the measured beat of her screw, and the rippling *whish* of the water, as she cleaves her way along. Quickly she steals by, the rays from her cabin windows grow dim and vanish, and

then all that remains in view is the indistinct mass of her hull, which, becoming less and less palpable, finally melts into the gloomy shadow of the night. Presently comes her wash in a few swelling waves, which make our little craft roll and plunge heavily once or twice, and, passing rapidly by, they eventually swash over the sands inshore of our berth in a succession of fussy breakers.

Next the red and green lights of some as yet invisible craft appear on the starboard bow, and a voice, ringing sharply out from the darkness calls upon "Jim" to see that the anchor is ready for letting go, followed by a confused sound of clanking and thumping, as the chain is ranged on deck, and a shout of "All clear!"

Then the vessel, a small topsail schooner, comes slowly floating along, her sails showing at first like a black smudge against the sky, and slips quietly past, for there is scarcely a breath of wind. Presently her anchor drops with a splash and a rattle; she swings lazily round; blocks creek and clatter as her head-sails are leisurely hauled down and the fore and main tacks are triced up; her fore-topsail slowly settles down on the cap; the side-lights are taken in and a riding-light is made fast to the fore-stay by a man who mounts on one of the bitt-heads, which apparently completes the business of bringing the schooner to an anchor, for directly afterwards, a concertina—a German one—commences to wheeze out the inevitable "Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny!"

"*Squank, squank, ker, squank, squank, squank—squerank.*"

Beastly things ; how I loathe those German affairs.

The performer next strikes up "The Village Blacksmith," and evidently considers himself no end of a swell at the rendering of that melody, though, to be sure, he is rather dubious as to the incidental flats and sharps, for whenever one turns up he hurriedly plays a wrong note and so scrambles over the difficulty.

I can't stand this, you know, and besides, I heard the pop of a cork a minute ago, which suggests that Brigham is making a bowl of his celebrated punch. Something tells me that I ought to grace the ceremony with my presence, and really it *is* rather cold up here after all, so good night, dear madam or sir, and many thanks to you for keeping me company.

"Come along, Dunce ; I was just going to sing out to you !" said Brigham as I entered the cabin. "Taste some of this and tell me if it is all right : then get out your instrument of torture, and let us have some music. Bob, tune up your warming-pan and give me my bones, there they are in the netting behind your head."

So, a tumbler of punch having been ladled out to each of us, Brigham clapped with his bones, and announced that the band would now play its great overture. Off we started with "When I first put this uniform on," from "Patience" (this first in honour of the yacht), the "Lost Chord," "So early in the morning," the "Hallelujah Chorus," and "Oh ! dem golden slippers !" following each other, you know, and all as near as possible in the same time ; while in the middle of the performance, Old Jack, spying a tambourine, promptly seized it and joined in, playing it like a drum with the handle of the punch



ladle. However, he kept good time, so the tambourine was quite an acquisition.

There was loud applause from the forecastle when the overture came to an end—we played the series through four or five times—so, as generally happens, Brigham then called the skipper and Garge into the cabin, and we made room for them on the sofas. Some of the punch was also passed to each of them, and, after staring steadfastly at his glass for a few moments, Webb gave Garge a nudge, whereupon they both rose, and the former, cautiously waving his tumbler towards us, said, “My best respex to this honourable company, and may the paths of life be strewn with the flowers of health, wealth, and happiness. Gentlemen all !”

“Same here,” observed Garge, and, each having taken a good swig at the punch, they then sat down, evidently greatly relieved at having performed this formality in so satisfactory a manner.

“Now for a song !” exclaimed Brigham. I’ll start one if you like, to save time.

“Go ahead !” said Bob ; “what is it to be ?”

“Oh, the old one—‘John Peel.’”

“Pong—tong—ping—tong—ponk-a-tink—pong-tong” went the banjo, and

“Do you ken John Peel,” etc.

Then Bob sang “The villain still pursued her ;” and “Massa’s gone away for the day ;” playing a pretty and very effective little breakdown accompaniment all the while. There is a jolly chorus to the latter song of—

“Drop your work, you niggers, don’t you hear the banjo tinkling?

Now’s the time to knock off work, and play.

Clar the kitchen for a dance, let me see your feet a twinkling,

Massa’s gone away for the day.”



The banjo is splendid for that kind of song. I think, though, that I like "The villain" the better of the two. There is one verse in which it is related that, "She was blown from a gun weighing eighty-one ton!" Bob sings this rather slowly, and pausing, plays a bit of the "Dead March," smiting the head of his banjo occasionally, to imitate the big drum. "Bong—bong—tilley bong—bang!" and so on, for about a dozen bars; then comes in double-quick time, "But the villain still pursued her!"

"Now Webb, it is your turn next!" said Brigham. "Farewell and adieu."

So the skipper, gazing sternly up at the swinging lamp the while, gave us his contribution to the harmony.

"Farewell and adoo, to you Spanish ladies,  
Farewell and adoo, to you ladies of Spain,  
For we have had orders to sail to Old England;  
We hope, very shortly, to see you again."

*Chorus.*—"We'll rant and we'll roar, like true British sailors,  
We'll rant and we'll roar, across the salt sea;  
And we will take soundings in the channel of Old  
England,  
From Ushant to Scilly is forty-five leagues."

There are eight or nine verses to this song with just a rhyme here and there among them. The author did not go out of his way to make rhymes, that is certain. The last verse is about the best.

"Now let every tar take up a full bumper,  
Now let every tar take up a full bowl.  
For we will be jolly, and drown melancholy!  
Drink jolly good fortune to each jovial soul."

Then the chorus, as before.

After this Garge obliged the company with a doleful ditty touching one "Rosomon the true" (he must mean Rosalind, for it is about a lady)—oh such a dreadful song, and such a ghastly tune! The only reason why it is tolerated for a moment is that the sight of Garge while he is singing it is alone worth crawling ten miles through mud to see. He shuts his eyes, and screws his face up in all sorts of remarkable ways, and wags his head slowly from side to side, and at one rather pathetic part of the song, nearly at the end, which we always look forward to, he throws his head back and simply howls!

It is *too* lovely. Webb, though, really likes 'Rosomon the true.' He thinks it is very fine, and Garge often has to sing it to him in the weekday evenings when those two are aboard by themselves.

Then, the band having played another selection, the merry evening closes with "God save the Queen."

"What about the morning sir? asked Webb, as he got up to leave.

"Oh, we are all going to turn out soon after high-water, and get under way," replied Brigham. (No doubt, thought I; I had heard the same thing said before.)

"Ye—s, sir, am I to give you a call then?"

"Certainly—that is, if there is any wind. Shall you be sure to wake though?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" laughed the skipper. "That's to a sartinty I shall. She is bound to rouse me out when she swings—seems like she lets a person know when her hellum wants shifting."

We all turned in directly after this. I was the last,

because I waited to make sure that Old Jack was comfortable and had plenty of warm rugs to cover him ; then, bidding him good-night, I went off to my own bunk, and was soon fast asleep, though as I dozed off, I heard the introductory notes of the great snoring contest which always takes place between Brigham and Bob when they sleep within sound of each other. Those fellows do snore most brilliantly.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“ Master Fred ! Fred ! Come, show a leg there ! ’

“ What is it, Jack ? ” I yawned, raising my head off the pillow.

“ What is it ! why, past high-water, a lovely morning, a fine northerly breeze, and the sun just rising. Rouse out, my son, and lend a hand to get the main-sail up. Oh no, it is neither too early nor too cold, and, what is more, you aren't to be allowed to lie there any longer. Out of that bed or I'll strip the blankets off you ! ”

“ Oh, bother you, Jack ! What a horrid old nuisance you are ! I'll be revenged for this, see if I don't. All right, I'll turn out, but it is a vile shame to disturb a fellow at this ungodly hour. ”

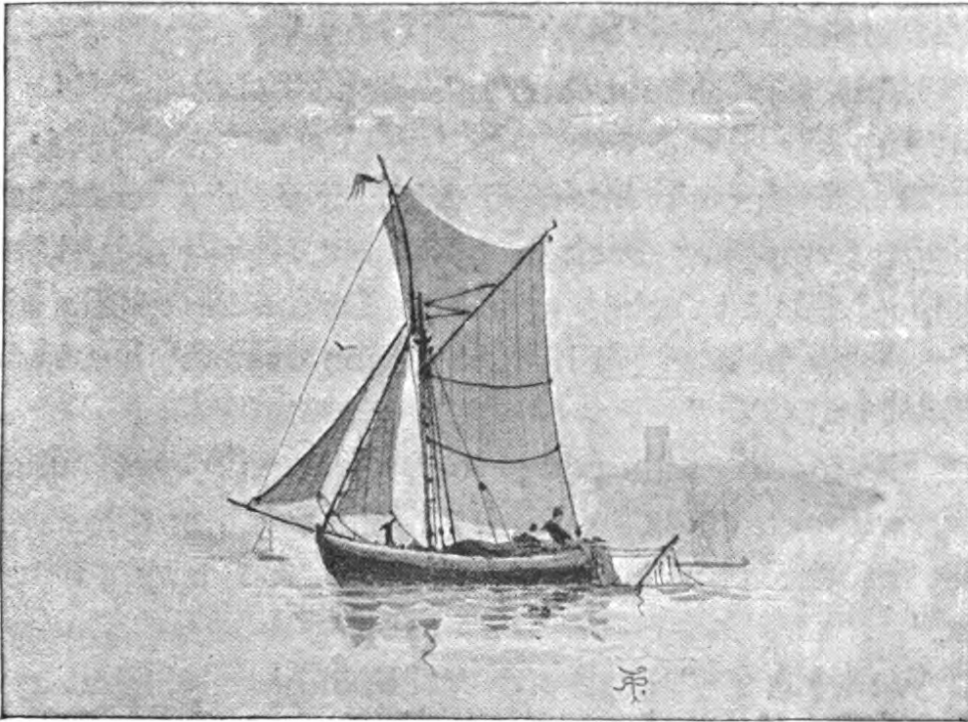
“ Nonsense, you will be glad I called you when you see what a beautiful morning it is. Why the river is all alive with little sprightly waves, the sky to the east-ward is the colour of a field of ripe corn and there is a fine crisp breeze blowing that will whisk the cobwebs off your brain and make you as fresh as a daisy in no time. ’

“Is the skipper on deck?”

“Yes, and George has got the fire alight. He will have some hot tea ready for us in a few minutes. Don't go to sleep again, there's a good boy.”

Just then I heard Webb's voice, hailing—“Got any shrimps?”

“Yes, plenty. Want some?” came faintly across the water.



A Bawley.

“That is a bawley-boat—a shrimper!” I exclaimed, turning out in a hurry. “Tell the skipper that I will go off to her—I sha'n't be a second.”

So I hurried up on deck, and jumping into the dingy paddled off to one of the Leigh fishing-boats that happened to be passing by, and bought nearly a bucketful of freshly boiled shrimps, for which I paid a shilling.



"Have you called Mr. Young yet?" said I to Webb, as I handed him the result of my trip.

"That I have, sir," he replied with a broad grin, "according to orders which you might remember. 'Mr. Young, sir,' I says, shaking of him by the shoulder, 'That's daylight,' says I, 'and a wholesome breeze a-blaowing.' 'Webb,' says he, 'go to the devil,' says he. 'I ain't going to turn out this side of nine o'clock not for no mortal man!' and with that he rowled over, and went to sleep again."

"Well, what about Mr. Johnstone" (Bob), "did you call him?"

"Oh, I dursn't interfere with *him*, sir," cried the skipper, stepping back a pace. "He's a sight too tempestuous at being woke up for me to meddle with *him*. Why, he'd as lief bang a person over the head with a boot as look!"

"Then I'll tell you what, we will get under way without them," said I. "We must not lose the best of the ebb because they are too lazy to turn out."

"Well, no, sir," observed Webb, dubiously, "but perhaps our governor won't like—"

"Oh, a fig for him! I'll take the responsibility. Besides, didn't he say that we were to leave here as early as possible in the morning? Of course he did. And so we will, in exactly ten minutes from now. An important ceremony has first to be performed, which will just take up those ten minutes. George!"

"Sir," replied that worthy, bending forward and looking up through the open fore-scuttle.



“Is there any fresh milk aboard?”

“That there is, sir; plenty.”

“Well then, pour some into a jug—*I’ll bring the rum.*”

So, when the ten minutes were up, away we went, slashing along Sea Reach on the racing ebb, under the whole main-sail, fore-sail, and second jib; and, heeling over to the strong breeze, getting the lee side of the deck swept every now and again from end to end with scurrying foam.

Well, we had a grand sail, and went right out to the Girdler light-ship, but, though we turned round then to make our way back, the wind on the return passage fell so light that it was as much as ever we could do to crawl into the anchorage in the Lower Hope, where the floating powder-magazine lies, with the very last drain of the flood.

So there was nothing for it but to let go the anchor and wait for the next tide.

“What a pity it was that the breeze failed us,” said I, throwing my end of a tyer over the gaff to Webb, who was on the other side. We were stowing the main-sail.

“Yes, sir; no mistake about that,” growled he. “I wish we was up at our moorings, ’stead of—pull up, sir!—’stead of being here. Going to be a dirty night, I know, westerly wind and rain—that’ll do, make fast, sir!—yes, and plenty of both. Look at the sun, and them clouds. Why, if a person was to take a tar-brush and dab out “RAIN-WIND” in big letters all across that sky, it wouldn’t be not one mortal particle plainer!”

We were all too tired to do anything after dinner but loll about on the sofas and smoke, and the end of it was

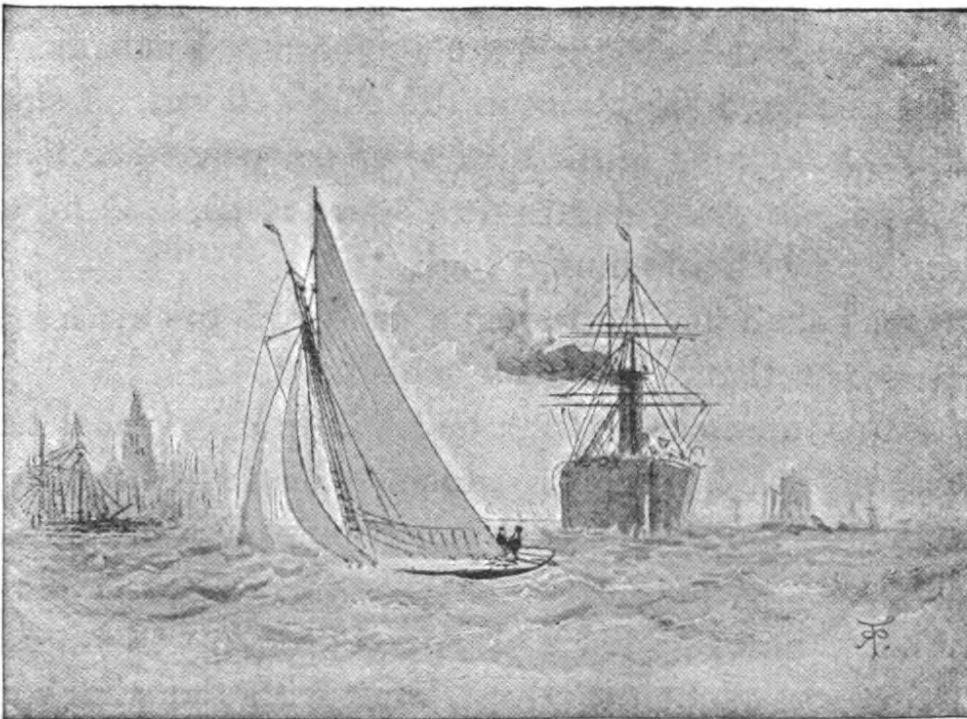
that in a very few minutes we were all fast asleep. I dreamt while lying there that I was at sea again, and that a dreadful storm was coming on. How the wind howled ! I imagined that I was sitting on my chest in the apprentices' berth, listening to the wild scream of the rising wind and wondering why the watch on deck were not shortening sail. "They are all asleep," thought I, in an agony. Then I tried to get up, but, as generally happens in a dream, I was not able to budge an inch, so there I sat, in a state of abject terror, while the ship plunged furiously along, almost on her beam ends. Over and over she heeled—farther and farther yet, until—*crash* ! I awoke to find myself sitting bolt upright in the yacht's snug little cabin.

The reason for my dream was not far to seek, for, at the same moment, a heavy blast rushed shrieking by, and went rumbling and roaring down the river, followed, as the sound of its fury died away in the distance, by the patter-patter of rain-drops on the deck overhead. Then, listening, I heard footsteps on deck, and presently the skipper's voice—"Reeve your pennant for the second reef, Garge, mate ; we shall want to haul down a pair of them this old-fashioned night, I know. Now hook on and come and give us a pull. Much as we shall get, ain't it ? Belay then ! Tie up the points, and put a reef in the fore-sail while I fetch the spitfire jib and tell them below to go to their beds—there ain't no call for any person to be on deck to-night besides our two selves."

"Wake up, you sleepy owls !" shouted I, hammering on the table.

“Don’t kick up that infernal racket!” exclaimed Brigham, sitting up and gaping. “Bob, throw something at him, the rowdy little beggar. By Jove! here’s weather,” he continued, as another gust flew screaming by. “Raining, too, like—like fits. This is pleasant, I must say!”

Just then the door opened, and Webb, arrayed in wet,



The Thames.

shiny oilskins from top to toe, looked in and said,—  
“We’re agoing to heave up now, sir; that’s blaowing something hard, and maybe you’d best tarn in. She’ll knock about, I doubt, with wind agin tide, and there won’t be no comfort in lying on the sofas while the wessel is making short boards up Gravesend Reach. That’ll be like persons playing at see-saws.”

"What time is it?" asked Bob, proceeding to take off his shoes, a sure sign that he at all events did not intend to brave the stormy weather on deck.

"Past eleven o'clock, sir."

"Now, Jack," said I, decisively, seeing that my ancient friend did not appear inclined to follow the other two, who had promptly shuffled off to their bunks, "I insist upon your turning in at once. No nonsense now! I know very well what you are aiming at. You want to go on deck and flap about in the cold and wet. I shall not allow anything of the sort, so go off to bed directly!"

"What are *you* going to do?" queried he, looking up in my face with an amused smile.

"Oh, I shall just lend them a hand with the main-sail, so pass over that mackintosh behind you."

At this moment—"Cink-link-link-link," rippled the pawls of the little gipsy-winch.—"Listen! they are heaving in the chain," said I, buttoning up the waterproof, and hastening off.

Whew! how it blew and rained at first. There was quite a sea on in the Hope, what with the wind and the weather-going tide, and the little *Patience* standing out from the anchorage under her reefed canvas, was soon bounding and floundering along in the thick of it.

"Wild night, sir, this one, and black as the ace of spades, ain't it?" observed Webb. "A person has got to keep his eyelids up," he continued, taking a quick glance to leeward, "a-travellin' about the London river in such weather as what this is. Garge! how does our side-lights look?"

At this hail a vague, queer-shaped bulge which had



been stuck against the foot of the mast, suddenly disappeared from view. In a few seconds, it came in sight again and floated up to windward, when the face of Garge became visible, lit up by the green glare of our starboard light. "All right," came the answer, and then the bulge, having once more attached itself to the mast, emitted a stream of whirling sparks from its upper end. "How the dickens he can manage to smoke is a mystery," thought I.

"'Bout ship!" shouted Webb, almost directly after, and, as he eased the helm down, the handy little craft shot headlong up in the wind, shook her canvas, filled, and was stretching away on the other tack in no time.

"See that steamboat?"

"Ay, ay," replied the skipper.

The red and mast-head lights of a steamer, also bound up river, were rapidly approaching us, and bearing at the time about a couple of points before our lee beam. "I hope they see *us*," said Webb, as he gazed earnestly under the foot of the main-sail. On came the huge vessel, and when—as it seemed to me—she was very nearly on top of us, the voice of her steam whistle rang deeply out—once—twice—the helm was put to starboard; her bows swung round; her green light opened out; the red one disappeared—and she thundered past our stern like an avalanche.

"Ought to fetch the Ovens on this tack," said the skipper soon after the steamer had gone by. "Keep your eye on the light—the Mucking, sir—and tell me when that shows red. Sha'n't be far off the buoy then—I know."



Gravesend Reach was full of vessels, beating up the river against the strong head-wind—barges, schooners, billyboys, and the like ; their red and green lights flitting from side to side “like 'pothecaries' shops flying about,” as Webb said. I thought we were going to be run down lots of times. However, he always knew exactly what to do, and, cleverly worming his way through the fleet, managed to sail the little *Patience* past them all, without mishap.

As we neared our destination, the wind calmed down and the rain left off ; then, as the twinkling lights of the yachts lying off Greenhithe came into view, a few stars appeared overhead, the moon stepped out from behind a cloud, and everything was pleasant again.

A few short tacks brought us up to the point and—“'Bout ship !—for the last time, sir, we will run back to our buoy under the head-sails,” said the skipper ; then, raising his voice again, “Haul taut the weather topping-lift and lower away the main-sail in stays !”

I went to lend a hand to get the sail down, and when the gaff was on the boom who do you think I saw calmly making fast the peak-halliards ? Why, John Groves !—and he had been on deck with Garge the whole time.





## CHAPTER XXVI.

### NAITU-LOA.

“JACK, what a long time it is since we had a quiet evening together,” said I one day, about a week after our cruise in the *Patience*.

“Well, you havn’t been at home, that is the reason I suppose,” he rejoined ; adding “Are you going out anywhere to-night?”

“No, thank goodness, so will you get my fire alight? I shall be with you in about half an hour. The governor wants to see me about some business that I had to do for him in town to-day. He won’t keep me long, and I will come in directly afterwards. Make up a nice fire for ‘that’s something cold’—as Webb would say—and we will have a jolly comfortable evening. I want you to tell me more about the *Hornet*, and dear old Dodd, and Tommy Buller, and all the rest of them. You left off just as you were going to land Sam at Naitu-loa—don’t forget, and I shall expect to find you all ready to continue the yarn by the time I come back.”

The governor did not keep me many minutes, and though Aunt Jane waylaid me at the drawing-room door and made me come in to hold a skein of her wool on

my thumbs while she balled it off, I managed to get away from her at last and hurried off to my room, where I found a blazing fire, my slippers standing in the fender to warm, and Old Jack waiting for me.

So, after we had lighted our pipes, he went on with his yarn.

“The south-east trades were blowing pretty fresh that morning, and in a couple of hours after the island was first sighted, we had approached within three miles of it. The *Hornet* was then hove-to, the canoe was launched over the side, her mast stepped, and the sail hoisted in readiness for Sam to take his departure.

“‘Now Sam,’ said Dodd, ‘Hop in and shove off. I’m very sorry to part with ’e, and so us all be, but ’tis no use making a fuss, growl you may but go you mus’—that’s poetry and truth too. There, shake hands and say good-bye.’

“So poor Sam took leave of us all, and, looking as pitiful as might be, slowly got into the *Tomtit* and sailed off, while we, clustered in the waist, watched the canoe as she danced off over the curling waves, until at last we saw her white sail shoot between the surf that rolled and tumbled on the reef.

“‘He’s all right, then,’ said Dodd, with a sigh of relief. ‘Now us’ll be off. Slack away the main-sheet—larboard braces—’

“‘Hold on a minute, skipper!’ shouted Tommy Buller, who was still looking shorewards through the spy-glass. ‘The canoe met another one just inside the reef, and now she is coming back!’

“‘Well I’m blessed!’ exclaimed Dodd. ‘Give me

the glass Tommy. Yes, here her comes out through the reef again, and two hands in her instead of one. I don't think us need to wait—why should us?' (turning to Forrester) 'Better by half go.'

"'Oh we may as well see what is up,' replied Forrester.

"Presently the canoe dashed up alongside, when Sam scrambled aboard. 'Where's Mar'in?' he cried, as soon as he had reached the deck. Then spying Martin among the rest, he rushed up to him, flung himself at his feet, and, trembling with emotion, exclaimed: 'You please come ashore! Sam's father die suppose you not come. He plenty bad. Las' week take war-canoe, go to find enemy—find him, too—then great battle—club break Sam's father here (touching his own thigh). No mans know how to do.' Then, piteously, 'You come, Mar'in?'

"'H'm, case of fracture of the thigh. I suppose I had better go, skipper, eh?'

"'Don't ax me,' replied Dodd. 'I donnaw. You'm risking your life, mind that.'

"'Well, one has to do that occasionally, you know,' laughed Martin. 'Soldiers, sailors, and doctors, are very much alike in that respect—I think I *ought* to go; that is the great point after all. Besides,' continued he, 'I don't think there is so much danger as you imagine. I will just get my instruments and so on, and go off in the *Tomtit* with Sam. You can sail away and come back for me when it suits you. Fire two guns, and if I am alive I will come off, or—'

"'Martin,' interrupted the skipper, 'You'm a noble, good man! more I can't say. What! go away and leave'e! No, I'll be condemned if us do! The *Hornet* shall

take'e in through the reef and I'll anchor her by the kedge where the guns will command the village—you Sam, mind what I'm saying!—then you can go ashore ; but, mark my words, as sure as any harm comes to *you*, us'll blow the place to bits—us'll *raze* it down and shoot every man, woman, and child within reach of the guns !'

“‘Mar'in all safe—everybody all safe,’ said Sam, flushing up. ‘If me not think so—not ask to come.’

“‘Very well then. Tell that man to come aboard ; you boy, drop the canoe astern ; trice the main-tack up ! Hands wear ship !’

“Round went the little *Hornet*, and was soon heading for the island on the other tack. On getting close enough to the reef, she was hove up in the wind again, when the cutter, in charge of Mr. Gibbs, was sent away to sound the passage. There was plenty of water, for an oar was tossed four times to tell us the number of fathoms in the shallowest part, and then, steering towards our boat, which lay on her oars for a mark, we ran safely past the danger into the sheltered water of the lagoon.

“The village, now plainly in sight, stood at the head of a small bay, the entrance to which was in a direct line with our course as we sailed in. Keeping the lead going, we stood on to within musket-shot of the inlet, when the helm was put down, sail was shortened, and the kedge anchor, with a spring on the cable, was let go.

“‘Don't make the canvas fast !’ shouted Dodd. ‘Haul your gear well taut and see the ropes clear for running. Let the main-sail bide where he is, only trice the tack right up and lower away the peak-halliards a bit. Be smart ; and then clear for action !’



“So, in a very few minutes the guns were loaded, run out, and laid for the clustering huts of the native village, when there was nothing else to do but stand by and watch the canoe, which, with Martin and Sam in her, was by this time skimming off in the same direction. As to the savage who had come aboard with Sam we kept him as a hostage. Dodd had insisted upon that—‘Arrah—begorra! you stop aboard!’ shouted he, as the man was preparing to accompany the other two. ‘Them wild things all understand Irish,’ he explained. However, a word from Sam, who immediately guessed the skipper’s meaning, had caused the savage to stalk back along the deck, and since then he had been squatting beside the wheel, watching our work of clearing away the guns and so on, with close attention. He was a fine, muscular man, about six feet high, with nothing on but a plaited mat, made fast round his waist with a sort of girdle, and his body was covered—face and all—with a perfect maze of dark blue tattoo-lines.

“‘They’m ashore all right, then,’ observed the skipper, who had, like the rest of us, been anxiously watching the course of the canoe.

“‘Yes, and there they go up the beach with swarms of people round them,’ said Savary. ‘I think Martin is all safe, Dodd;’ he continued; ‘the people seem friendly enough—besides, what would they gain by doing him an injury?’

“‘Don’t know, I’m sure,’ replied the skipper, walking off.

“Presently we saw Martin and Sam disappear inside one of the huts, when, after a little while, the crowd of

people that had accompanied them to the entrance, slowly dispersed and went off, most of them strolling back to the water's edge, where they sat down in rows and looked at the schooner.

“The little bay, in shape something like a horse-shoe, was not more than three-quarters of a mile across in any direction, and the entrance, from point to point, was about half a cable's length in width. The village was built on a beautiful green at the head of the bay, and the huts that composed it were scattered about at random under the shade of the trees which stood, singly or in clumps of two or three together, upon the emerald turf. Beyond, the rapidly-rising ground was thickly wooded, the forest extending far back towards the interior of the island, where steep craigs and rugged precipices of rock suddenly reared from the mass of foliage, with here a waterfall flashing out into the sunlight, and there a patch of verdure nestling in a valley between the cliffs, while high above the surrounding eminences towered the crest of one solitary peak, a lazy cloud of bluish smoke, floating off from its apex into the brilliant sky, telling of the subterranean fires beneath. So much for a description of Naitu-loa as we then saw it from the deck of the *Hornet*.

“Well, we had been lounging round the guns for about half an hour when our hostage, who had scarcely moved hand or foot since he first seated himself by the wheel, suddenly leapt to his feet and running to the starboard side, stood there anxiously gazing over the quarter ; while we, looking in the same direction, saw a small canoe, with four men in her, which had just

rounded the point astern of us, and which—paddling along close to the shore, as fast as the light craft could be driven through the water—was evidently making for the entrance to the little bay.

“Our savage yelled to them when their canoe was nearly abreast of where we were lying, and the reply that was hurriedly shouted back put him in a great state of excitement, for he rushed to the skipper, and tried all he knew to make him understand something or the other that it was quite clear we ought to know—first pointing astern—then to the village—becoming in a perfect agony at finding that his words and signs were not understood.

“‘No, no, ’tis no use, I can’t make it out a bit,’ said Dodd, bewildered by the clatter, and pushing him aside. “‘Magawoo” or “bagawoo,” or whatever else you’m saying, is all Greek to me. If Martin was here he’d be able to tell what you’m jabbering of; but he ain’t, and nobody else don’t know nort about your lingo. I tell’e what, though!’ he suddenly exclaimed, turning to Forrester and one or two more who were looking on, ‘there’s one word he keeps saying that I’ve heard before—“Taola”—who can mind what that means?’

“‘Taola!’ replied Tommy Buller, starting forward. ‘I know—*It is the name of the island where these peoples’ enemies live.*’

“‘That’s it!’ shouted the skipper, taking off his cap and dashing it on the deck. ‘I know what is amiss now. A fleet of war-canoes is coming here from that cursed island, sure as us am born. That little canoe has sighted

them and is taking the news ashore, and—look! My gracious! here they be!’

“Two or three large double canoes, full of savages, had, as the skipper spoke, dashed round the grassy, tree-covered point that stretched out into the lagoon astern. Others, too, closely following them, came tearing into view, and, though each stopped as if in amazement at the sight of the *Hornet*, it was but for a moment or two, and then, plunging their paddles furiously into the water, they came speeding along towards us.

“‘Larboard watch, man and haul away the spring!’—‘Steady! steady! keep cool!’—‘For’ard there!’—‘Slack away the cable and help her broadside round!’—‘Stand to your guns the rest!’

“Thus Dodd, who, taking in the state of affairs at a glance, had rapidly given these orders in his usual calm, clear voice.

“Now, to make it all clear, Master Fred, I will just show you here on the table the position that we were in. This is the island, you see (drawing back the table-cloth and arranging it). The bare table is the water. Here is the little bay, running inland, so, and that is the *Hornet* lying outside. This is the point that the canoes came round, and here are the canoes themselves.<sup>1</sup>

“That is all plain enough, isn’t it? Very well, then; you take charge of the canoes, and push them along, while I get the *Hornet’s* broadside to bear. Hold on!

<sup>1</sup> The *Hornet* was a wooden matchbox with two matches stuck in the top for masts, and another partly pulled out of one end for a bowsprit. A dozen or so of the contents of the box represented canoes.



don't be in too much of a hurry. They are canoes, please to remember, not torpedo-boats—and keep the tips in front. Why, half of your fleet are coming along stern first! That is much better. Now, see, by hauling away at the spring that I am supposed to have here on my larboard quarter, I gradually bring my starboard guns to bear upon you, when bang goes my long gun, followed by the rest of the broadside as the sights come on, and *smash* come their contents among your canoes. Pick up some of them and throw them on one side; the guns did not roar for nothing, I can tell you.”

“Well, I am not going to be so foolish as to attack the *Hornet* with my canoes and be blown to bits for my pains,” said I; “so I shall just turn tail, and paddle off before you have time to load again.”

“Ah, but you mustn't do that, because you didn't, you know—or the savages didn't, which is the same thing. They came bravely on, in spite of the spluttering fire of the muskets and the thunder of the guns; and, what is more, they would have boarded us only that, in the nick of time, help came to us in the shape of a fleet of canoes from the shore. As soon as they appeared, darting out of the thick cloud of smoke from our guns that was driving away to leeward, ‘Cease firing!’ shouted Dodd. ‘Cut the cable!’—‘Let go the spring!’—‘Hoist away the jibs!’—‘Sheet home the fore-topsail!’—all of which was done like lightning, when off glided the little *Hornet* with her bowsprit pointing towards the entrance to the bay.

“Well, we stood in,” continued Old Jack, after having lighted his pipe with one of my canoes, “and anchored



in four fathoms of water, just abreast of the village. Not a soul was in sight anywhere ashore ; and, except now and again a shout softened by the distance, not a sound broke the placid quiet of the little land-locked sheet of water. But a few minutes ago we had been in all the heat and excitement of an action ; now, here was our schooner peacefully resting in the midst of apparent solitude, and, but for the little group of figures surrounding each gun, showing no sign that anything out of the common was or had been happening.

“ ‘Where is that native man us had aboard?’ suddenly exclaimed the skipper, his voice breaking the solemn silence so abruptly that everybody started.

“ ‘He jumped into the water and swam ashore when our first gun was fired,’ replied Forrester.

“ ‘Seems as if it was all a dream, don’t it?’ observed the mate in a half-whisper.

“ ‘I wonder what has become of poor Martin,’ said Dodd, his voice again disturbing the surrounding stillness.

“ ‘I saw him, and Sam too, in one of the canoes,’ replied Tommy. ‘Martin was brandishing a huge club nearly as long as himself. They must have won, I should think,’ he continued, ‘for see what a lot we killed before they arrived on the scene.’

“ ‘Soon know,’ said the mate, pointing towards the entrance ; adding, ‘Here come the canoes, but whether they belong to our friends or our enemies is more than I can say.’

“ ‘Tommy’s sharp eyes soon solved the question, for— ‘They are the Naitu-loan canoes,’ he shouted. ‘Martin

and Sam are in the second one ; the blue and white of their uniforms is quite plain. Look ! they are waving their caps to us. Can't you *see* ?' he went on, excitedly. ' Why you must all be as blind as bats !'

" ' Ay, ay ; I can make them out now,' exclaimed Dodd. ' So 'tis all right, and they've a-gained the day. But there, who's to know that these ain't so bad as the others ? May be for all us can tell. Keep your guns at the ready in case of accidents.'

" Slowly the little fleet came paddling on, and presently the canoe that Martin and Sam were in shot out from among the rest, and, gliding quickly towards us, stopped when she had approached within a short distance of the schooner's starboard beam.

" Thank God you've been spared, Martin !' said the skipper, walking to the side, ' and thank God that us have all been spared so far ! Tell me, they you'm with—do they come as friends or foes ?'

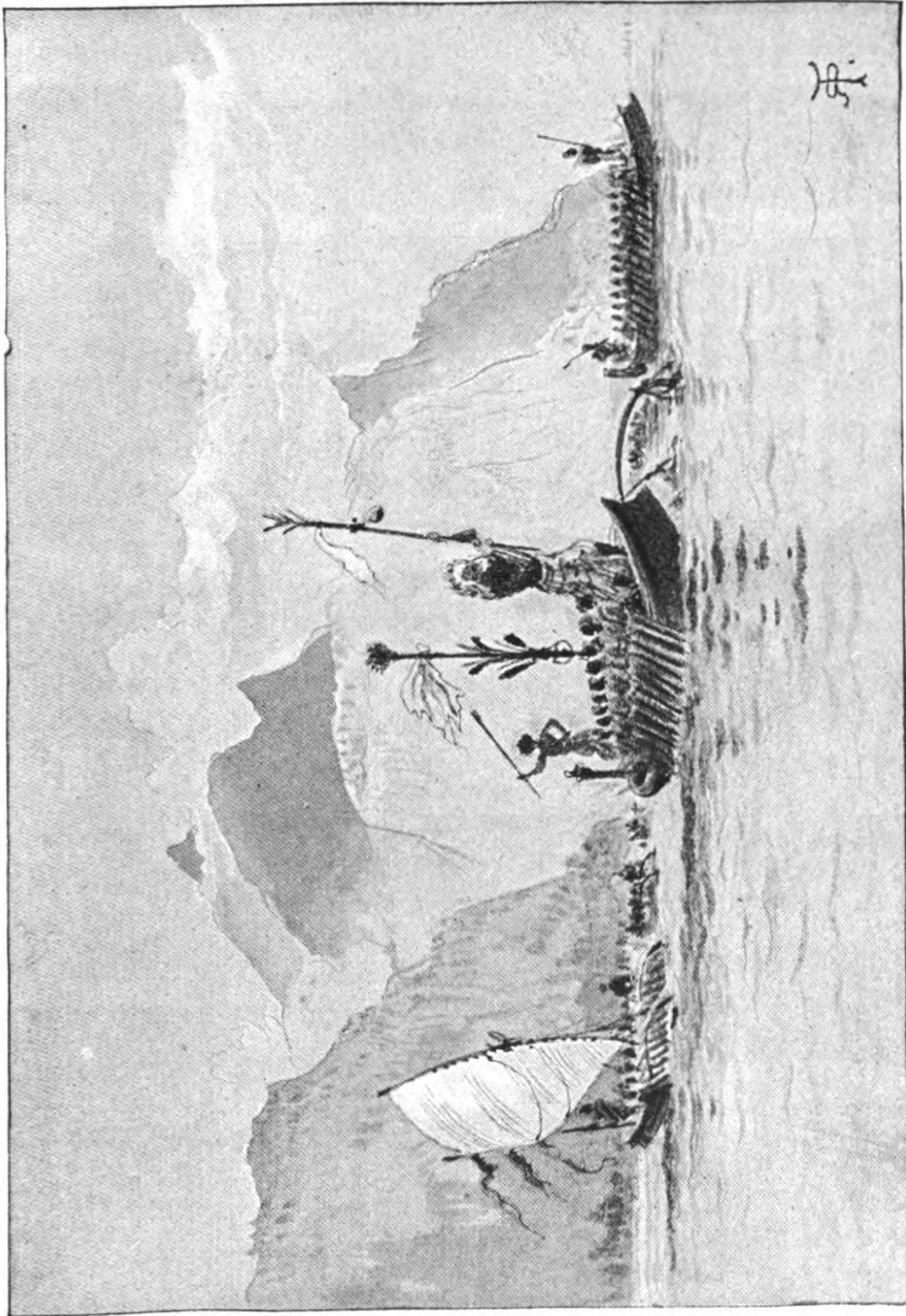
" ' Friends, of course,' replied Martin. ' You have been of tremendous service to these people, and have most likely saved them from utter defeat and its consequences. The enemy had never attacked in such strength before, and but for the *Hornet* they would have taken the Naitu-loans almost by surprise. Your guns played frightful havoc, and the lagoon is covered with wreckage, amongst which the sharks were swarming when we returned from our pursuit, for it was little else. Only two canoes have escaped to tell the tale, for we overpowered the nearest ones at once. The massacre that followed was dreadful. No quarter or mercy was shown or expected.'

“Well, the rest of the canoes had by this time arranged themselves in a line just beyond the one from which Martin had been speaking, and, as he concluded, Sam leapt to his feet and commenced an excited harangue in his own language which lasted a minute or two. At its close he, swinging his club round and round his head, shouted, ‘*Te kane! Te kane!*’ which meant three cheers, or something of the sort, for in an instant the whole assemblage had risen, and, waving their paddles or the weapons that they held, “*TE KANE!*” burst in a mighty roar from their lips, waking the echoes all around.

“Then an old, white haired chief, who was standing in the bow of one of the canoes, began a wild, measured song, in which all the others presently joined their voices, beating time the while against the sides of the canoes with their paddles. Louder and more vehement became the chant, quicker and quicker sounded the rippling tapping of the paddles, until, with yet another swelling shout of ‘*Te kane!*’ the weird chorus ceased, and, the canoes being then put in motion, the fleet slowly filed past and went towards the shore, leaving, however, the one that contained Martin and Sam behind, which, as soon as the others had gone, was immediately brought alongside the schooner.

“‘Well, skipper,’ said the former, as he reached the deck, ‘you had an exciting time while it lasted.’

“‘Corks! us did so. Sam’ (to that worthy, who had also climbed aboard), ‘do you think they enemies of yours will be for coming back in a day or two with more men and more canoes? I’ll war’n’ they will.’



RETURN OF THE CANOES.

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“‘No, no ; not come back,’ replied Sam. ‘Can’t come. *Hornet* kill plenty mans—kill plenty canoe. Not got to come with now.’

“‘Good job, too,’ said the skipper.

“The canoe lay alongside, just abreast of the main rigging, and the crew of the quarter-deck carronade—of which I was one—leaning over the rail, had by this time begun to fraternize with the savages, making the most of the few words that we had picked up from Sam, and thus managing to converse after a fashion. Presently, too, by beckoning and so on, we had succeeded in enticing most of them aboard, which proceeding seemed to displease the skipper, for he said something to Sam, who thereupon called three of our visitors to him—these being apparently chiefs, for they each wore a head-dress of long red feathers, and were more elaborately tattooed than the rest—and the four of them, going aside, went through some sort of ceremony, after which the eldest chief took off the girdle that held the mat round his waist and handed it to Sam, who then mounted on the main-boom and made it fast to one of the topping-lifts. The result of this was that the other natives, pointing to the girdle and exclaiming ‘Taboo ! Taboo !’ immediately bundled into their canoe.

“‘There,’ said Sam, walking up to Dodd. ‘Now *Hornet* Taboo, no mans but chief can come aboard’—adding with a grin—‘and no womans either.’

“The three chiefs, each of whom were tall, stately men, were then presented to the skipper who, drawing himself to his full height of about five feet five, received them in a most gracious manner. (‘Look at little Doddy,’

whispered Tommy Buller, ' His Highness is as dignified as the Emperor of China ! ' ) As soon as this had come to an end, the one whose girdle was flying in the breeze picked up his mat, which had fallen on the deck, and tucking it under his arm, followed Sam and the two other chiefs to the canoe, which, shoving off, was at once paddled to the shore.

" When they had gone, the mate strolled aft, and, in his dry way, asked Dodd if he meant to keep the hands at quarters all the time that the *Hornet* remained at Naitu-loa. So, taking the hint, he at once gave the order to unload and secure the guns. After this was done, we stowed the sails, cleared the decks up, and— ' Splice the main-brace ! ' was the welcome order that brought the day's work to a close.

" ' Now tell us all about your visit to the shore, ' said some one to Martin, as we mustered round the fore-scuttle to receive each his lot of grog. ' What sort of a man is Sam's father ? '

" ' Oh a fine fellow, I can tell you, and, what is more, he is the king or head chief, whichever you like, of the island. He has— '

" ' Then Sam is a prince of the blood. Is he heir to the throne ? ' laughed Tommy.

" ' Sam's father is a magnificent man, ' continued Martin, scarcely noticing the interruption, ' and the fracture of his thigh is one of the most interesting cases of— ' etc., etc., with that he commenced a long-winded description of what he had done, how he had done it, and so forth, until— ' Oh ! bother you and your " case " too ! ' said Tommy, at last ; ' why don't you say that you

stuck the funny-bone, or whatever it is, together ; fished it with half a dozen splints and some cocoa-nut twine ; and then parcelled it over with twenty fathoms of bandage ? We should know what that means—and after all, that is the plain English of your jargon.’

“‘Do you think he will get over it?’ asked Forrester.

“‘Oh yes, in time,’ replied Martin, favouring Tommy with a look of contempt. ‘But, from what I heard ashore, it appears that this wound has put an end to his reign. It is the custom of the islanders to depose their king if from any cause he is prevented from attending to his duties, and appoint as his successor his nearest male relative. So, you see, Sam returned just in the nick of time, for he is the old king’s only son. A grand council of the chiefs was to have been held this very evening to consult as to who should reign in future—for there were two rival candidates—but the *Hornet* has saved them the trouble by bringing back the rightful heir.

“‘Sam—or Maratee, rather, for that is his right name—told me this as we were walking back to the beach, and that is all I know about it, for then came the alarm of the enemy ; the thunder of your guns ; the hurried dash for the war-canoes, which, quickly dragged from where they are kept in the woods, were launched and manned in a few minutes ; the swift paddle to the scene of action ; and—well, I need not explain further.’

“‘But will they have our Sam for a king?’ asked the mate in astonishment.

“ ‘Oh yes, no doubt about that. The people were almost wild with delight when the news of his return got spread abroad. He took the command, too, in the most natural manner when the enemy's canoes were reported in sight, and gave his orders in true kingly style. I could scarcely believe that it was he whom we know as “Sam” standing there superintending and directing the bustling natives, his eyes flashing, his clear, firm voice ringing like a cavalry trumpet. He seemed to have changed into quite another man—a king from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet!’

“ ‘My corks!’ exclaimed Dodd who had walked for'ard to listen. ‘There! I always thought th' old Sam had got a bit of a princified look about en—now, didn't I say so?—and to think that 'tis only two days ago since I made 'en scrub my berth out! I'll bet a guinea he'll pay me out for that—now you mark my words! I should if I was he.’

“ ‘You must get to find out more about this, Martin,’ said Forrester. ‘I suppose you will be going ashore again by and by?’

“ ‘Yes, I must go directly after the cook has given us something to eat, to see how my patient does; then I can, of course, get further details and let you have the latest news when I come back.’

“ ‘I say, won't this be a splendid opportunity for us!’ exclaimed Tommy. ‘In what way, worshipful sir!’ (to Forrester) ‘why—we shall be able to furnish a guard of honour to attend at the coronation for one thing—and it will be in our power to fire royal salutes

galore and dress ship with all our available bunting for another—and, of course, we shall further enliven the proceedings by manning the yards and giving three hearty cheers for our old shipmate, King Sam the First of Naitu-loa !’







## CHAPTER XXVII.

OMEEEO.

“‘WHAT a long time you have been!’ observed Forrester to Martin as the latter descended the fore-castle ladder on returning from his second visit to the shore. ‘No one would turn in until you came back, and now—see, it is close on midnight!’

“‘Have I?’ said Martin, wearily. ‘Well I have been longer away than I expected, but—’

“‘He has been knighted, I’ll wager!’ laughed Tommy, ‘the royal physician is always a knight at the very least, you know,—Sir Henry Garrod Martin, M.D., K.C.B., A.B., &c., &c., &c.,—why, what is the matter, old boy?’ exclaimed Tommy stopping his playful banter on seeing that something was amiss—‘Surely you aren’t offended at what I have said,’ he continued almost piteously. ‘I did not mean—’

“‘Oh no, it is not that,’ interrupted Martin. ‘I am sad at heart and overburdened with grief. I have witnessed a most horrible sight which has almost turned my brain.’

“‘Well, you certainly look terribly down in the dumps,’ said Forrester. ‘What is it that has put you so out of sorts?’

“‘I will tell you,’ he replied. ‘The sun was just setting when I went ashore, if you remember, and it was quite dark by the time I had seen that my patient was comfortable for the night—and so forth. On leaving the hut I noticed that there was a great glare of light among the woods at the back of the village, so I walked towards it, and, making my way between the trees, came at last to the verge of a little glade where I stood for a minute or so looking at one of the prettiest scenes that I ever saw in my life. The glade was nearly circular, and at regular intervals round its edge, quite close up to the trees, stood a double line of men each holding a blazing torch. Next to the torch-bearers, and sitting in close rows, were the people—men, women, and children—packed together in a dense mass, and inside them, but with a considerable space intervening, were about a hundred young girls, dressed alike in long, white, gauzy wrappers of the lightest native cloth, their hair bound with flowers and holding garlands of flowers in their hands. These, when I first looked in, were reclining on the grass in a ring, and girl-like, were giggling and chatting among themselves, adjusting the flowers in each other’s hair, or smiling and nodding to their friends in the audience. In the centre of the glade stood a group of chiefs, each arrayed in a deep red cloak, apparently made of some sort of feathers woven together, and the usual head-dress of feathery plumes of the same colour.

“‘So imagine the scene. The dark background of trees with the fitful glare from the torches glancing and leaping among the foliage; the rows and rows of faces; the graceful band of white-robed girls gay with

dashes of colour contributed by the flowers they bore ; and the motionless, crimson-clad figures of the chiefs in the centre—the whole assemblage bathed in the rich glow of the torch-lights, their dazzling effect heightened by the capricious play of innumerable restless shadows.

“ ‘The principal actors in whatever was about to take place had not yet appeared, as I guessed from the negligent positions of the girls, and, thinking that I might just as well have a good view of the proceedings as not, I emerged from the trees, and passing through the people, who made a way for me with many signs of respect, walked on towards the centre of the glade, where I took up a position among the chiefs, being by them most courteously received—for, let me tell you, the Medicine-man of the Great Thunder-canoe is already a person of some importance in Naitu-loa.

“ ‘Minute after minute went by in this state of half suspense, until presently a few dancing lights appeared between the trees at the lower end of the glade. Every face was quickly turned in that direction, the rustling buzz of conversation ceased abruptly, the girls rose to their feet and arranged themselves in some sort of order, the chiefs drew into line, and then slowly marched off to meet a small procession, which by this time had entered the arena, disclosing, as they walked away, what had escaped my notice before owing to their having been standing so close to each other—a huge oblong white stone, its edges rounded with age and its faces apparently covered with deep-cut characters, which lay half buried in the turf, as near as possible in the centre of the glade.

“ “ The procession consisted of some twenty individuals, most of them, from their flowing robes, appearing to be priests, and in their midst was Maratee (Sam, you



The High Priest.

know) arrayed like the chiefs in a crimson cloak, the only difference being that, instead of red plumes, he wore on his head a wide plaited chaplet ornamented



with shark's teeth, and having a single tall white feather stuck at one side of it.

“ ‘ The chiefs opened out when they met the procession, and, closing in after it had passed by, followed on in the rear towards the white stone, on reaching which the whole party halted and grouped themselves around it, the priests and Maratee in the centre, and the chiefs outside facing the concourse of people. An old, wizened, crafty-looking priest next mounted on the stone, and standing erect, stretched out his arms towards the east, and cried in a loud, clear voice,—

“ ‘ ‘ Is it well with you, my children ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Then came the response from the crowded ranks of the natives, all of whom had risen to their feet.

“ ‘ ‘ *It is well with us, O Father.* ’ ”

“ ‘ This was repeated towards each of the four points of the compass in turn, and then the old priest commenced a long oration, his sonorous voice rising and falling in measured accents amidst the breathless silence, and, though I could only make out a word here and there, the gist of it all was that Omeeo, the Great ; the Wise ; the all-powerful ruler of the air, the sea, and the earth ; the dweller in the everlasting fires ; (a reverent murmur following the close of each sentence)—Omeeo had that day sent to them the mighty chiefs of the Great Thunder-canoe for the purpose of discomfiting their enemies, and for the purpose of restoring to them the long-lost person of their future king—Maratee.

“ ‘ ‘ TE KANE ! ’ here burst in a triumphant shout from the multitude.

“ ‘ This concluded the harangue, and immediately after-



wards a low musical air rose from some singer among the throng of onlookers accompanied by a clicking sound like the beating of castanets. Louder rose the song, which was gradually taken up by the natives on all sides, and presently the bevy of girls, joining hands, commenced to sway their supple bodies from side to side in unison with the swelling harmony. Quicker and livelier became the measure, and at length, breaking up into couples, they began, slowly at first but with ever-increasing speed, to gyrate round about the centre space in a graceful, undulating dance, their loose wrappers streaming behind in sinuous folds, and disclosing each pliant, rounded form, nude save for a closely-woven wreath of flowers encircling the hips.

“ ‘ On went the mazy dance, anon changing into many a fanciful labyrinth of winding figures, until on reaching its climax of exciting motion, the music suddenly ceased, when the performers, bringing their gambols to a close, sank panting to the ground in enchanting attitudes, and stretched their flower-laden hands towards us.

“ ‘ Then the voice of the old priest rang out again from his standpoint on the block of stone.

“ ‘ “ OMEEEO WAITS ! ” he almost shrieked.

“ ‘ “ *Great is Omeeo. He shall be satisfied !* ” came the reply.

“ ‘ Thereupon he descended, and accompanied by the rest of the priests, passed quickly along in front of the kneeling girls, pausing now and again to indicate one of them, who, immediately rising, followed in his train, each as she was selected being regarded, so it seemed to me, with envious glances by her companions. Four of the loveliest were thus chosen, and then another

procession was formed, Maratee and the four girls being in the middle, and the priests surrounding them on all sides. When this was done the little party moved off towards the higher end of the glade, while I, curious to see what was the meaning of it all, followed closely in the rear.

“‘Forrester!’ cried Martin at this point in his story, dashing his clenched fist upon the table as he spoke, ‘Those sweet girls were being led away, like lambs to the slaughter, by the merciless priests to suffer an awful death!’

“‘You don’t mean it!’ exclaimed Forrester.

“‘It is true, by all that is sacred! Listen, and I will tell you as well as I can what took place.

“‘We proceeded on amidst loud plaudits from the people, and leaving the glade and those it contained behind, passed along a beaten path through the thick woods beyond, at length reaching the region of rocks and precipices. Here we commenced to ascend a narrow, steep valley, which I at first thought had at one time been the bed of a watercourse, but after a while I ascertained by the feel of its glossy surface that instead of water a long-ago eruption of the volcano towards which we were progressing had poured a stream of liquid fire down the gulley, and that the polished rock on which we were walking was nothing else but congealed lava.

“‘On we toiled, until at last the ravine, which had been gradually closing in for some time, became overhung by the lofty cliffs that rose on either side. These, meeting above our heads and growing less and less in altitude as we advanced, changed by slow degrees what

had been an open gorge into a vaulted cavern, which, rapidly narrowing, seemed to lead into the very heart of the mountain. Good Heavens! thought I, this is the opening through which the lava rushed on its way to the open country!

“A hasty inspection confirmed me in my opinion, for the walls and roof of the aperture had been seamed and furrowed by the pouring flood, and on the floor the crevices and inequalities in the rock were filled with pools of lava so exactly resembling water that I jumped across several of them for fear of wetting my feet. Some of the pools bore on their flinty bosoms the ripples caused by a passing gust; on another a string of bubbles were apparently sailing along; here was a tiny whirlpool; there the commotion caused by the influx of a streamlet. The various impressions had been caught instantaneously, and so remained faithfully delineated as the surface cooled.

“Along this cavernous way we walked with hurried steps, the light from our torches flashing from side to side and from floor to roof in glancing beams, and so proceeded until presently a pale red glare showed in the blackness ahead, while to our ears came a faint roar as of a distant waterfall. Onward, until the growing light made the farther use of the torches unnecessary—Onward, as the wild uproar increased to a series of deafening crashes—Onward, until, turning a sharp corner, we found ourselves standing on a projecting ledge *in the very crater of the volcano!*

“The sight was sublimely awful, and no words of mine will describe its stupendous terrors. All I can

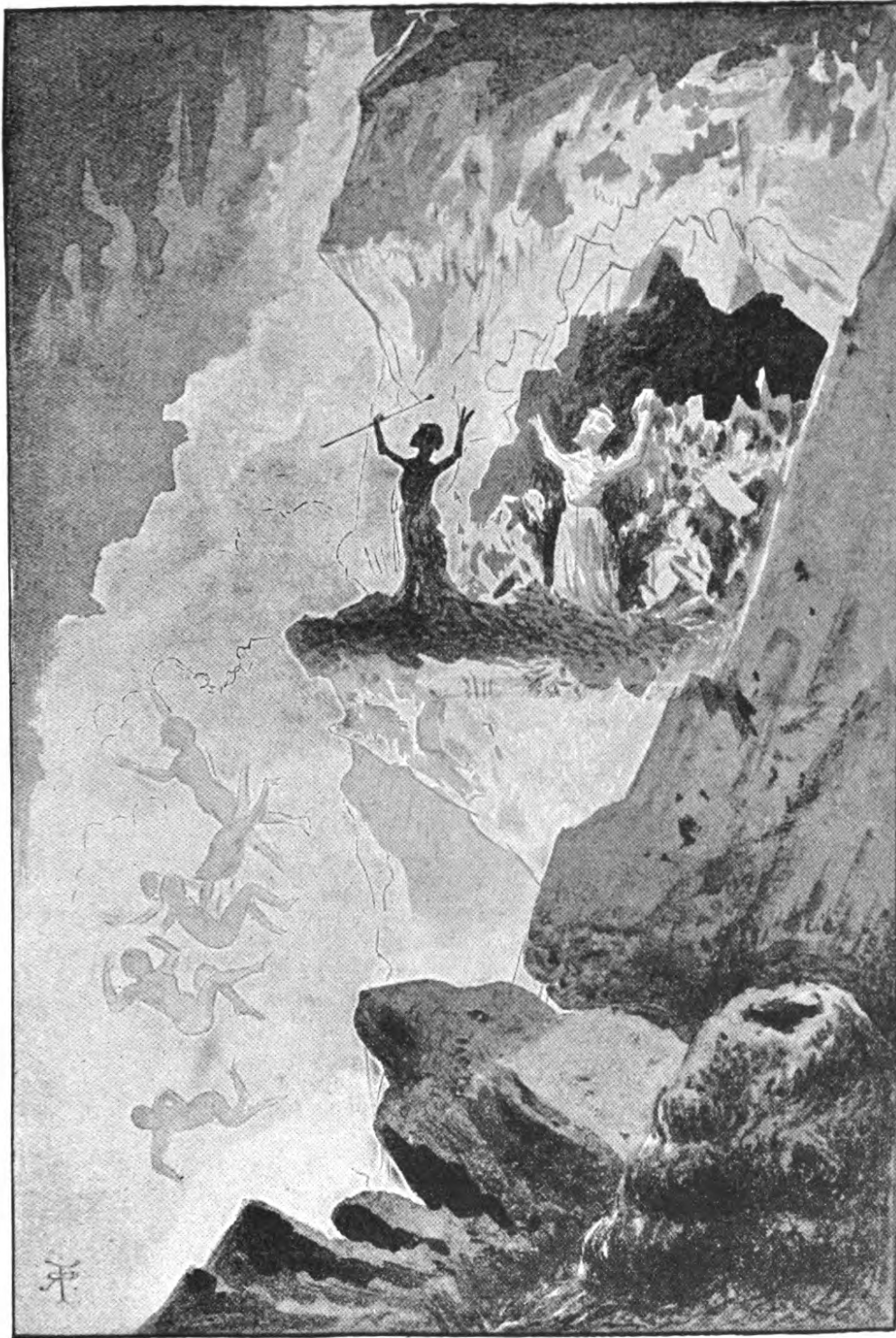
tell you is that below us a raging sea of molten lava leapt, and reared, and whirled in fiery tumult—surging against the rocky walls in vast billows of flame, and flinging columns of blood-red spray high into the air—rushing from side to side in glowing masses, which, meeting with a roar like thunder, fought, and dashed, and seethed in a convulsion of wild, maddening fury, while far above our heads towered the hollow cylinder of the crater, filled with the reeking vapours and tinged with the vivid and ever-changing colours thrown upwards from the scene of incandescent turbulence below.

“ ‘ Then came the tragic, horrible conclusion, of which even up to the very last moment I had not received the faintest inkling, and to do him justice, neither had Maratee.

“ ‘ We two, after a single glance at the abyss, recoiled, dazed and terror-stricken at the tremendous spectacle, into the mouth of the cavern, while, pursuing their way, the priests and the four girls continued onward to the very brink of the jutting ledge of rock, where, drawing themselves up in a line facing the awful chasm, they halted, and, mad with frenzied enthusiasm, stretched forth their arms and cried upon their God.

“ ‘ “ Omeeo ! ” — “ Omeeo ! ” rang their frantic shouts, distinct even above the thundering concussions of the boiling lava. Then the priests drew back, and—oh the piteous horror of the recollection of what followed almost drives me distracted !—the four girls, hastily throwing aside their white, veil-like wrappers, twined their arms round each others necks and—still holding their garlands of flowers—bent forward and plunged headlong into the fiery hell at the bottom of the crater ! ’ ”





THE SACRIFICE.

*To face page 330.*







## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### VARIOUS.

“JACK, I don't like that part of your yarn a bit,” said I (Fred). “It is too dreadful, and the very idea of those demented girls leaping into the red-hot lava makes me fairly shudder. I cannot for the life of me make out why they did it, either.—Why did they sacrifice themselves in that fearful manner?”

“Well, it was part of their religion, you see. Peculiar things are done all over the world in the name of religion; look, for instance, at the Hindoos who throw themselves under the car of Juggernaut, for the honour and glory of being crushed to death beneath its wheels.

“It was customary in Naitu-loa to celebrate a victory, or, in fact, any other important event, by making human sacrifices at the shrine of Omeeo, who was supposed to dwell in the crater of the volcano. That was part of the islanders' religion, and, of course the priests took good care that the ceremony was always duly observed. Indeed, these had such a strong hold upon the superstitious natives, that to be selected for this horrible purpose was considered to be a great honour by the poor deluded victims and by their relations. Con

sequently there was no lack of candidates whenever the horrible practice was observed. No one besides the king of the island and the priests had actually witnessed the dread scene, for to all others the entrance even was strictly tabooed ; so it was probably for the purpose of initiating Maratee that he was allowed to be present on this occasion.

“ Omeeo was the chief god of Naitu-loa, and, besides him, there were plenty of subordinate ones: the god of the reef—the god of canoes—one who was supposed to watch over the breadfruit-trees—and so on, down to the little god whose duty it was to keep the babies from squalling and the children from fighting and getting into mischief, and who, therefore, was called upon and upbraided for neglect of duty oftener than all the rest put together.

“ According to the traditions which had been handed down from remote ages concerning the origin of the island and its inhabitants (which are interesting because they tally so closely with our own account of the beginning of all things), Omeeo, the silent one and god of all gods, came flying along over the face of the waters when there was neither land nor light, and, wanting to rest, he created Naitu-loa. Then, seating himself on the mountain-top, he called up the sun and ordered him to march along the sky from sea to sea every day as long as the island remained. When the sun had set he called up the moon and the stars and ordered them to do the same at night.

“ Omeeo next made a man out of the husk of a cocoa-nut, and afterwards, so that the man should not be lonely, he caused him to fall into a deep sleep, when, taking out one of his ribs, he made from it a woman.

“ Thus the island became populated. In time, though, the people became very wicked, so Omeeo, repenting of what he had done, took hold of the island one morning and pushed it under the sea, until only the top of the highest mountain was left above water, thus drowning everybody except one man and his wife, who, having been warned in a dream, had put out to sea during the night in a canoe.

“ This canoe eventually landed on the mountain-top, whereupon the man and his wife prayed to Omeeo that the land might be restored to them. After awhile he agreed to this, and, by sending streams of fire from the mountain, drove the sea back to its proper place, promising, too, that the island should never be inundated again so long as the fire in the interior of the mountain continued.

“ There was also a tradition that at the beginning, while the canoe-god was showing the first man how to build a canoe, the sun, sinking towards the west, appeared likely to set before the work could be finished. So the god caught hold of the sun's rays and made them fast to a grove of trees, thus making him stand still in the heavens until the canoe was built.

“ And, besides these traditions, there were prophecies which had also been handed down from generation to generation, one of which was that a canoe without an outrigger would one day visit the island and cause remarkable events to happen. The prophecy was vague as to what these events were to be, but they were to be remarkable and make a great stir. I must tell you that all the native canoes were narrow, crank affairs,

which would not stand up in the water without the support of an outrigger, so an outriggerless canoe was as much an impossibility to the inhabitants of Naitu-loa as Mother Shipton's carriages without horses were to English people before the invention of steam.

"Well, here was the prophecy fulfilled at last, for the *Hornet* was certainly an outriggerless canoe; while as to the rest of it, referring to the remarkable events, we seized upon and made use of that at once for the commendable purpose of putting a stop to the hideous practice of offering human sacrifices at the shrine of the fire-god Omeeo."

Note : Old Jack gave me a long and detailed account of how they managed after awhile to bring this about, but I must confess that it did not interest me very much, and, as I don't think that its recital here will give you any pleasure, I have decided to skip it. We don't want anything dry, do we ?

I may as well say, however, that Maratee (who had been enlightened in many ways during his cruise in the *Hornet*) and Martin succeeded in bringing the natives to a sense of their evil doings. They were backed up, too, by the moral influence of the Great Thunder Canoe, which was considerable; so, in the end the natives renounced their ancient belief, and, as usual, flying into the other extreme, broke down their carved and fanciful representations of the imaginary Omeeo, of which there were several on the island, and bundled them into the crater, with—sad to say, and before they could be stopped—every man jack of the priests as well !

The long tunnel that led into the volcano was the



only possible way by which its heart of fire could be reached—for the summit was quite inaccessible—so on the morning following the death of the priests and the destruction of the idols, a strong party landed from the *Hornet*, and prevented any repetition of these tragedies in a most effectual manner by mining the sides of the cliffs, and blowing up the entrance to the cavern, filling it, and the end of the deep gorge as well, with thousands of tons of rock.

Now, if you please, we will get on.

“‘So much for Omeeo, we have bunged him up once for all!’ exclaimed Tommy Buller after the last charge of gunpowder had exploded, and the dust-laden air had cleared sufficiently to show us the havoc that our blasting operations had wrought.

“‘Well, yes,’ rejoined Martin, ‘or until another eruption takes place—then our barrier will be swept away by the flood of lava like so much chaff. There has not been one within the memory of any one now living in Naitu-loa, at all events,’ he continued, ‘and I hope that there will not be another for some time to come, or else the natives will be sure to think that it has been caused by the anger of Omeeo. Then all our labour will have been in vain—the new religion would be thrown to the winds directly, and the old one reinstated in, if possible, a more malignant form than before.’

“‘It will be a vile shame if the old volcano blows up while we are here,’ laughed Tommy; ‘we should look rather small if it did.’

“‘That us should,’ observed Dodd, who had accompanied the engineering party, at the same time glancing

at the top of the mountain. 'Us must up stick and run at the first sign of a rupture, or 'otever 'tis called, and be off home—if home is the next place us am bound to. Have any of 'e thought about that, yet—going back to Plymouth I mayn?'

“‘We were talking about it only yesterday,’ replied Forrester. ‘Most of us want to be in England in the spring—say some time during April, or the early part of May at the latest—and we must not forget that there is a long passage before us. We ought to allow ourselves plenty of time.’

“‘Well, I’m glad to hear 'e say that,’ rejoined the skipper, ‘and, to tell 'e the truth, I sha’n’t be sorry when us see the dear old Mount Edgecombe again—I’m pretty near tired of these here islands; and the blue say; and the blue sky; and that old turk of a sun scorching of 'e up. There’s no peace in the daytime because of he, and by night the mosquitos ’most tear 'e limb from limb. Corks! I caitched one last night—such a whopper! four like he wid fill a pint pot. Did'e hear'n hollin pen an' ink when I had'n by the tail?—No! Well, you wasn' listening.

“‘Going back to what us was telling about,’ continued Dodd, ‘about the passage home. There’s no hurry for a month, but us must start then, so as to make sure of getting down by Cape Horn while 'tis fine weather time there. So what is it to be—stay here for the rest of the time or go some place else, in between whiles?’

“‘Oh, stay here!’ exclaimed several.

“‘Of course we will,’ said Tommy. ‘Naitu-loa is a

most beautiful place, and the natives are charming. They—the girls especially—would be dreadfully disappointed if we went away after so short a visit, and—well we aren't going. Sam—I beg your royal highness's pardon—Maratee,' with a low bow to that personage, who with one or two of the chiefs had just joined us, 'is to be formally proclaimed king of this realm to-morrow, and the rejoicings over such an important event cannot positively be concluded under a fortnight. *I* have taken charge of our contribution to the festivities, and have arranged a two days' regatta with fireworks on the final evening, a cricket match—larboard watch *v.* starboard watch—Dodd, can you play cricket?'

“ ‘Donnaw,’ replied he, ‘but I can play chequers.’

“ ‘Oh, almost a similar game,’ laughed Tommy; ‘we will soon show you the difference. Then there is to be a ball aboard the *Hornet* one night, and a dinner to the chiefs the next; so, as we are to be feasted and entertained by the natives in return, there will be gay times, my masters, and junketings galore!’

\* \* \* \* \*

“Well, next morning, as soon as the decks were washed down, we set to work and rove the dressing lines and bent on all our bunting, of which there was a good store in the *Hornet*, and got the guns ready for firing a salute. At eight bells the roar of the cannon began, and at the first report the flags were run up. Then, as the deeper boom of the pivot gun brought the salute to an end, all hands mounted into the rigging and gave three British cheers. This commenced the day's proceedings.

“ Shortly before noon, as had been previously arranged, we went ashore in a body, and escorted by hundreds of the natives, marched up to the little glade, where Maratee and the chiefs were waiting for us.

“ The ceremony—which immediately followed our appearance—was very simple, for the eldest chief present, having first said a few words in a loud voice, then placed a gorgeous helmet-shaped head-dress of feathers on Maratee’s head amid the triumphant shouts of the assembled natives. This completed the coronation—or whatever you may like to call it—though, no doubt, a more elaborate display would have been made if the priests had been there to take a share in the proceedings. However, they, poor wretches, had all gone to their last account and had followed the many scores of their victims into the molten bosom of the volcano.<sup>1</sup>

“ A long procession was next formed, our little band of blue-jackets being at the head, the newly crowned king and the chiefs following us, and the concourse of people bringing up the rear, in which formation we moved off towards the village, where the rest of the day was spent in feasting, dancing, and general merry-making.

“ A month slipped quickly by, and at last the day came when we had to fly the blue peter at the fore, and say good-bye to all our friends in Naitu-loa. Maratee came aboard directly after breakfast in the morning, dressed in the uniform that he had worn while he was borne on the ship’s books, and insisted upon being allowed to lend a hand in the preparations for our

<sup>1</sup> Served them right, too. F. A.



departure, which we had already commenced to make. 'Don't call "Maratee" now,' he pleaded, almost tearfully, 'call "Sam," like first. Poor Sam, shipmate once you remember. He never forget—you think of me sometimes, eh?'

"'Ay, that us shall, Sam,' replied the skipper, kindly; 'and talk about 'e often enough, too. Many's the time in the years, I hope, to come, that I shall look back to the days us have spent together out to say and here in your beautiful island, and wish they had to be gone over again. So shake hands, Sam. Old Dodd wishes 'e peace and happiness in your future life, and a long and prosperous reign. You was a good boy while you was aboard here along with us, and as there is the makings of a seaman about 'e, I *knaw* you'll make a good king—that is warranted. Don't forget what Martin's been telling, and what you was taught in this ship, about the great God that watches over all of us; and keep your people in the mind to worship Him instead of they foolish old idols. As for Omeeo, there never was no such person, as well you know—and so did the priests. 'Twas their biz'ns, to make folks believe in he, for it was the means of their being able to lead comfortable lives and live without work on the fat of the land. Well, us am all ready now; maybe the canoes wid like to give us a taw out clear of the points—tell 'em so, will 'e?—and you can take hold of the wheel and steer her along till 'tis time for 'e to go.'

"'Mr. Gibbs!'

"'Sir,' came the reply from for'ard.

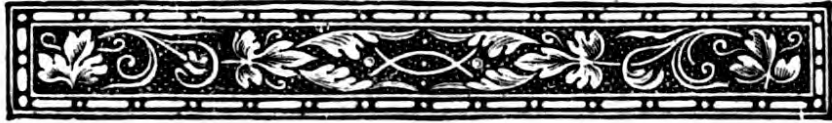
"'Give the end of a line over the bows to the canoes'



(they were swarming round the *Hornet* now), 'and then pick your anchor up. Heave away, my hearties, and strike up "Homeward Bound."'

"Across the sheet of quiet water the little *Hornet* stole easily along, her jib-boom end pointing towards the patch of wind-swept sea that was visible between the jutting headlands that encircled the bay. Gliding past them she took the breeze, and, increasing her speed, slid, with a buzz of foam under her fore-foot, towards the passage in the reef, still accompanied by the canoes, some paddling, and others hanging on, two and three deep, all around. Then came the hurried parting with Sam (as soon as, owing to her rapid way through the water, it had become no longer safe for such fragile crafts to remain alongside), and his departure, when the little fleet sheered off and left us to continue our course alone, and—homeward bound.





## CHAPTER XXIX.

END HO !

“WELL, my tale is almost told. We sailed away to the south, and there picked up a strong westerly wind, before which we ran, under a close-reefed fore-topsail, for over a week, and which carried us right round Cape Horn. Thence we made rapid progress on the homeward passage, nothing of any importance happening until the day before we arrived at Plymouth, when at daybreak a large vessel, which presently turned out to be a French frigate, was in sight to windward.

“There was scarcely a breath of wind, and thinking that we were comfortably under his lee and could be had for the fetching, Johnny Crapaud squared away, set his stunsails both sides, and with all his boats towing, came creeping towards us. However, we had our paddles rigged in a very few minutes, and with all hands at the capstan we were able to make better way than the frigate for all her boats and the wide spread of canvas that she was able to show. The end of it was that the chase was abandoned as hopeless ; and keeping on with our work, in a couple of hours the frigate was out of sight astern.

“ ‘There, that’s enough—unrig the paddles,’ cried Dodd ; ‘no need to drudge with they no longer. Corks ! us have gived he the go-by to rights ! Made they stare, I know, to see us flip off like this here.’

“ So the paddles were unshipped and put away, and sailing slowly on for the rest of the day, at sunset the long undulating line of the English coast was plainly in view ahead. Making the best of the light airs that prevailed during the night, at break of day we were close in with the land—Lizard Head bearing about N.W., distant some fifteen miles, a capital land-fall.

“ The breeze increased with the sun, and by noon the little *Hornet* had finished her long and adventurous voyage, and was lying quietly at anchor in her old berth at the head of Plymouth Sound.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ On the evening of the third day after our arrival we all met together and dined at the same hotel where the similar event had taken place before the commencement of the voyage. During the merry time that followed the clearing of the tables Forrester rose and—

“ ‘Shipmates !’ said he, as soon as the talking and laughing had subsided.

“ ‘The toast which I am about to propose is one that I know full well requires but to be mentioned to be received with all the enthusiasm that you have to bestow. I give you the health of our dear old DODD.’ (Loud tumult and cheers.) ‘Our steadfast, true-hearted skipper. The valiant and trustworthy seaman who has guarded and guided us during the time that we have sailed under him in the *Hornet*. More than this I need

not say, for his rare and sterling qualities are well known to everybody in the room. So—bumpers! and three times three! Long life and every happiness to DODD!’

“Well, the cheering and hullaballo that followed this speech was very nearly enough to raise the roof, and nothing would do but that the skipper should reply at once.

“‘Well, well,’ said he, rising to his feet, ‘whatever can I say, and however be I to say it?—Mr. Forrester, and all, there you be, your dear faces all round about where I’m stood. Do ’e remember what I said the last time us was here in this rume? I said that us was bound away on a long voyage, and that I hoped us should all be spared to meet again when ’twas auver. Well, here us be, none missing, thank God, though dangers us have had, and battles us have fought. Plenty of both too, as well you must remember. Ay, ’twas good of ’e to think of drinking my health,’ continued he, with emotion, ‘but I ’aint got the words to give thanks in, so ’tis no use trying. I feel it, but I can’t say it. I’m bursting to say what I mayn, but can’t!’

“‘There’s a toast I want ’e to drink before I sit down, and I know you will,’ resumed Dodd, after a pause, ‘and that is,—Here’s to the sweetest, bonniest little craft that ever sailed over the say—

“THE HORNET!”’

“‘Hurrah!’ shouted Tommy Buller. ‘Three cheers

for our noble little schooner, that has carried us over so many thousands of miles of salt water, and has brought us safely back after all our

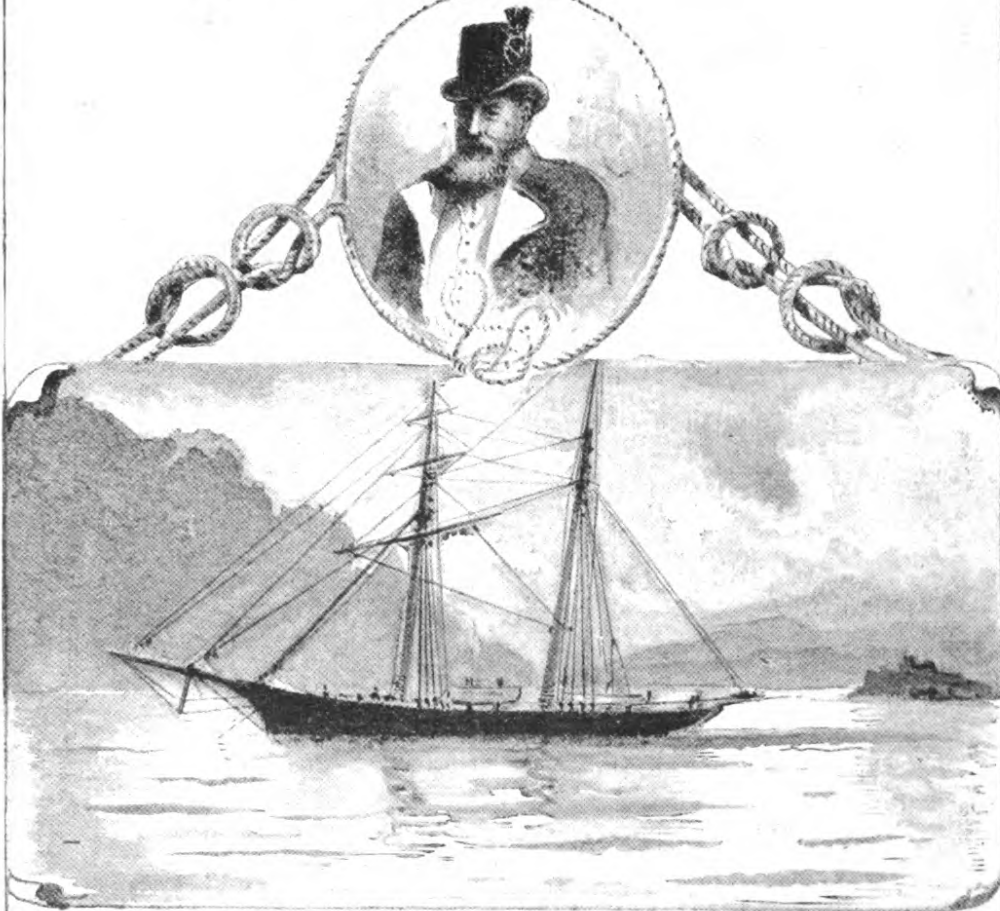
PERILS IN THE PACIFIC !

“ ‘ Hip—hip—hip — HURRAH ! ’ ”

THE END.



THREE CHEERS  
FOR  
" OLD DODD "



" THE HORNET. "

FINIS



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