

Presently Lugard, having dressed himself, joined them, and they all three walked up to Helen's shelter where Hewitt and the two other men had made coffee and spread out the provisions they had brought on a piece of time-worn, weather-beaten plank.

Montgomery had just passed Helen a cup of coffee, when he raised his hand suddenly.

"Listen!" he said.

"What is it?" asked Helen.

"I fancied I heard the sound of oars quite near us—as if a boat were passing along the outer side of the reef."

They all listened intently for some seconds, and both Helen and Haldane fancied they heard a dulled *click, click*, as if oars were being rowed between wooden thole-pins.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Haldane, with a laugh; "it is pelicans clamping their great mandibles simultaneously. There are hundreds of them quite near. I have often heard them on the mainland making this peculiar noise—it is their idea of music, I suppose."

"Quite right, sir," said Cole, "they open their wings, and snap their bills together all at once."

Half an hour passed, and then the rain suddenly ceased, the sun came out, the pinnated leaves of the pandanus palms around them rustled to a freshening breeze, and the thick mist disappeared as if by magic.

"Come," said Lugard, as he rose, "we must get on with——"

"*Surrender!*" cried a hoarse voice, and Coffe, of the Coot, followed by half a dozen seamen with drawn cutlasses, sprang into the grove of palm-trees.

"Back!" shouted Lugard, as, seizing Helen in his left arm, he drew his pistol and pointed it at Coffe,