

Perran and his three friends sat up late, deciding on a plan of action, and arranging with the engineer on the best place for rejoining him and the *Dart*, when they should have attained the object of their expedition.

"Ah, if we only knew how it would end!" said Mr. Crane; "it's a risky sort of chase you're after, man."

He addressed Perran.

"Fever — savages — starvation — death," Perran enumerated slowly and with deliberation.

"Hollo! you seem to have looked the worst full in the face," was the engineer's rejoinder.

"I have," said Perran, simply; "and whether I stayed at home or came to New Guinea, I found things would go the same way—end the same at the last. We got to die some day, all of us, and 'Lisbeth and I talked it out. It isn't death we've got to think of most, though it must come. We can't order that. But, in a way, we can order our lives and try to do our duty. Now, my duty plainly is to look up this poor little chap of mine. So, here I go, with a good heart."

Captain Mostyn got up and took his hand. "Perran, my man, you speak well. God bless your work; God bless us all in it."

They went to bed, feeling calm and solemnized after this.

The start took place at daybreak, the men all standing bareheaded while Captain Mostyn, at Perran's request, repeated the Lord's Prayer aloud, the rest joining in. Then, in very few words, he asked a blessing on their journey, to which a general and hearty "Amen" was added by the party.

Mr. Crane walked a few hundred yards with his friends, and then, bidding them a reluctant farewell, returned to his charges—the *Dart*, Sin-sing, and Johnny.

It was at first felt to be a delightful change by all—this walking under the shadow of enormous forest trees, some at least 100 feet high. The tameness and beauty, too, of the birds was very amazing. They flitted about, screaming, chattering, and cooing—almost within reach. Cockatoos, parrots, pigeons—these last quite double the size of their English cousins—kingfishers, too, and—

"Oh, missis, do look, *do* look!" screamed Molly, in intensest excitement. "Such a beautiful bird, with the feathers on to its tail out of Mrs. Ames' bonnet, as she wore at your wedding."

Every one laughed heartily, but Molly was right. It was their first view of the beautiful bird which makes the forests of New Guinea its home—the bird of paradise.

There it sat, perfectly self-possessed, on a bough, with golden head and flame-colored feathers, regarding them with interest, but no fear, and uttering a constant whistle.

"For all the world like master calling the dogs," said Molly. And so it was.

After that they came across many more of these lovely creatures; indeed, 'Lisbeth said, truly enough, they looked like the flowers of the forest—red, blue, and golden blossoms, between the leaves of the trees.

All were sorry when their route left the forest, entering on a swampy track where the grass lifted itself high above their heads.

Captain Mostyn, with his gun, was leading. 'Lisbeth was at his side. She had walked capitably, showing no fatigue, and was now chattering and laughing over some anecdote he was relating to her. The tones of her voice fell pleasantly on Perran's ear; oh, that she might always be as bright and strong throughout this journey!

Suddenly he saw her put a hand on Captain Mostyn's arm, then she turned and looked at him with a warning gesture, and a face as white as snow.

What could it be? Perran neither saw nor heard anything, but quick Peter ran up with a whispered, "Snake, Captain. Stand back; me have him!"

The next moment both he and Captain Mostyn fired at an enormous dark coil in the grass, not half a dozen paces ahead—a huge boa-constrictor, the most deadly of reptiles.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Proudfoot; the brute is quite dead," was Captain Mostyn's exclamation.

For 'Lisbeth was leaning on her husband, sick and pale.

"I'm not frightened," she said, trying to smile. "I'm not generally so silly—am I, Perran? but I never did see such a dreadful snake before. It made me shudder. It made me think of Satan in the garden of Eden."

"I've often found people shrink from serpents in that way," said Captain Mostyn, "and I think they do inspire a sort of horror in us that no other beast or reptile does. Look here! Why, the brute must be eighteen feet long."

"And he just had his dinner; just swallowed young kangaroo," added Peter.

Yes, that was indeed the case; the distended skin of the creature plainly showed what had been the nature of its repast.

"Let's get out of this," cried George Holt; "one doesn't want to meet any more of these ugly customers."

So they tramped on, the sun beating hotly on their heads.

Sam began to grumble about his load, and to cry out that it was dinner-time.

True enough; but there was no spot suitable to rest in. So he was bidden to hold his tongue.

The swamp became every moment spongier and more toilsome to traverse, so that the cr