

By the time they had been six or eight weeks upon the Isle of Sands, the convicts began to expect, with ill-grace enough, the return of La Roche to take them to the main-land. As another month slipped by they began to desire his coming. Yet he came not.

Little by little their eagerness and anxiety deepened. As the chill winds of autumn blew upon them, they began to be consumed with fear lest the Viceroy had abandoned them, and they did little but watch the empty horizon from dawn till dark.

Jules's spirits fell day by day to a deeper dejection as he marked the anxious furrows increase in his father's face. At last, after a night through which they had shivered and lamented, they emerged from their huts to find the pools hard frozen, and a fringe of thin ice even along the coast.

Then they knew they were deserted—left to their fate.

For a time they were like madmen, shouting and yelling that they were betrayed—that the King had sent them here to perish, in order that he might be no longer at the cost of feeding them. Some swore while others prayed; and Jules clung, sobbing and broken-spirited, to his father.

Christophe Saintine kept a stern silence, thinking bitterly of the heartlessness which could con-

Meanwhile, how was it faring on the Isle of Sands?

There were but forty of the convicts now. Eight more had met their death in brawls. As the weather grew more and more deadly in its severity, the men found it difficult to keep from freezing in their sleep; and Jules, unhardened and homesick, suffered most. For the additional warmth of close crowding, the islanders now slept in two small huts, the chinks of which they stuffed with dry grass and seaweed.

All the provisions left by La Roche had vanished ere this. All the blueberries and cranberries had been consumed, and there was no alternative but to eat the raw flesh of the wild cattle.

At first such fare was regarded with disgust, and Jules went hungry two days before he could overcome his repugnance; but in a little while the men began to relish it; and, indeed, it was a strong and sustaining food.

At last it happened, as the sun went down on a lurid November night, that a frightful hurricane descended upon the island. Hardly had the men taken shelter in their huts when these were blown to pieces like a pack of cards, and the unhappy beings within were left unsheltered in the howling blast.

As their clothes gave out they replaced them with pieces of raw-hide; and soon, in their uncouth garments, their shaggy beards, matted hair and miserable squalor, they began to look like some kind of nameless monster, as much brute as human.

Their broils became far less frequent as they approached the depths of their misery, and grew more and more dependent upon one another for the warmth which kept their wretched bodies alive. Terror, too, drew them closer together, as the winter storms yelled over their retreat, and the island trembled under the mountains of water that thundered down upon it, grinding off great slices of the beach.

But with the return of spring, and kindlier skies, and indolence and ease, the quarrels recommenced.

For occupation, and to keep up hope, Saintine got the men interested in hunting the seals that swarmed about the island, and in preserving the furs by drying the skins in the sun and washing them with salt water.

Thus the summer slipped away, not at all unpleasantly. But no ship came.

Winter returned with all its horrors, and passed, and came again, till they began to calculate that the island had been five years their prison. For

most of them it had become their grave. There were now but twelve left—including Jules, now grown as tall as his father—to possess the great store of furs and hides which had accumulated. But at last their deliverance drew near.

La Roche had succeeded in sending word to the French king, Henry IV. was filled with compassion for the unhappy convicts. He ordered a relief expedition to set out with all speed.

It was decreed that Chetodel, who seemed reluctant, should lead the expedition. The pilot obeyed with the best grace he could assume, and after a little delay the rescue-ship set sail, with wind and weather favoring.

On just such another morning as that on which he had first set his eyes on the Isle of Sands, Jules stood on the rise of the shore and gazed vacantly to seaward. He had no hope, no expectation of deliverance, and even his

longings had grown dull and apathetic.

Suddenly he saw a sail on the horizon. His heart began to beat with choking violence, and he gazed, looked away, and gazed again, before he dared let himself believe his eyes.

Then he ran to his father and his fellows. "There is a ship! There is a ship!" he gasped. "Come to the hill!"

It was a pitiful-looking group which gathered silently on the sandy hill to watch, with eyes of passionate yearning, the ship which they had no doubt was sailing past them. It seemed to be heading far away to the southward.

After some hours of watching, the ship's course was changed. Soon they knew that she was bent on making the island. Later in the day she came to an anchorage, some miles out, and a boat put in for shore.

Then the islanders broke out in a riot of joy. Jules and his father embraced and sobbed, and told each other they would see once more the little cot outside St. Malo. Others threw themselves down, grovelling in the sand, or rushed into the surf to meet their rescuers. That same night they were all taken aboard.

As the weather remained favorable, the ship stayed another day at her anchorage, enabling the



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"THERE IS A SHIP!"

demn his innocent boy to such a fate; but Jules, at last, suggested that the Viceroy's ship might have been wrecked, or driven to some other part of the ocean. At all events, he was so convinced that the Viceroy could be guilty of no such cruelty as he was now accused of, that he half persuaded his father to a new hope.

The blacksmith, in the midst of a general clamor, thundered a demand for silence, and urged his comrades to be men and to consider what should be done. He declared that all must do what they could to secure themselves against the approaching cold, so that when the ship should come for them in the spring, they might not be found merely a lot of skeletons upon the beach.

What Jules had guessed was indeed the truth. The Viceroy, having found in Acadia a place fit for his infant settlement, set out to return to Sable Island. But a great gale drove him right across the Atlantic, and his ship was wrecked on the coasts of the Duke de Merceur, his bitterest enemy. He was thrown into prison and kept there five years before he could get a message to the King; and the fate of his wretched convicts, and of the boy whom by some chance he remembered so vividly as even to recall him by name, weighed him down with a mountain of remorse.

Seeking the nearest hollow, they all huddled together in the withered grass, each striving to get beneath his fellow to escape something of the searching cold. As for Jules, his father had wrapped him in a thick coat that had belonged to one of the murdered men, and was now busy scooping a hole in the sand that might afford him some more shelter.

That night, though all followed the blacksmith's suggestion, and burrowed into the sand in little groups, no fewer than three men died from exposure before morning. But the experience had taught a needed lesson; and they set out to build themselves a better shelter than those with which they had hitherto been content.

They constructed their new shelter in the heart of the island, under the brow of a hillock well matted with grass and vines. Selecting the heaviest wreck-timbers they could drag, they sank them deep into the sand, and made a low-roofed den, half hut, half cave.

On the roof and up the sides they heaped sand and grass, on which they piled bushes, which were kept in place by more beams, well secured. To keep out the pitiless searchings of the icy wind, they lined the gloomy dwellings with hides from the wild cattle; and here all winter they lived.