PITCHERY-BIDGERY.

The Turning of the Long, Long Lane.

BY MONSIEUR DEMOULIN.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIGNAL OF FIRE.

The wreck broke in upon the monotony of Brandon's island life and changed the current of his thoughts. The revelations contained in Despard's manuscript came with perfect novelty to his mind. Potts, his enemy, now stood before him in darker colors, the foulest of miscreants, one who had descended to an association with Thuggee, one who bore on his arm the dread mark of Bowhani. Against such an enemy as this he would have to be wary. If this enemy suspected his existence could he not readily find means to effect his destruction forever? Who could tell what mysterious allies this man might have? Cigole had tracked and followed him with the patience and vindictiveness of a blood hound. There might be many such as he. He saw plainly that if he ever escaped his first and highest necessity would be to work in secret, to conceal his true name, and to let it be supposed that Louis Brandon had been drowned, while another name would enable him to do as he wished.

The message of Despard was now a sacred legacy to himself. The duty which the murdered man had imposed upon his father must now be inherited by him. Even this could scarcely add to the obligations to vengeance under which he already lay; yet it freshened his passion and quickened his resolve.

The brig was a novelty to him here, and as day succeeded to day he found occupation in searching her. During the hotter part of the day he busied himself in shoveling out the sand from the cavern with a board. In the cool of the morning or evening he worked at the hatchway. Here he soon reached the cargo.

This cargo consisted of staves and short boards. All were blackened, and showed traces of fire. The fire seemed to have burned down to a depth of four feet, and two or three feet under the sides; then the water coming in had quenched it.

He drew out hundreds of these staves and boards, which were packed in bundles, six boards being nailed together as box shooks, and thirty or forty staves. These he threw out upon the deck and on the sand. What remained he drew about and scattered loosely in the hold of the vessel. He did this with a purpose, for he looked forward to the time when some ship might pass, and it would then be necessary to attract her attention. There was no way of doing so. He had no pole, and if he had it might not be noticed. A fire would be the surest way of drawing attention, and all this wood gave him the means of building one. He scattered it about on the sand, so that it might dry in the hot sun.

Yet it was also necessary to have some sort of a signal to elevate in case of need. He had nothing but a knife to work with; yet patient effort will do much, and after about a week he had cut away the rail that ran along the quarter deck, which gave him a pole some twenty feet in length. The nails that fastened the boards were all rusted so that they could not be used in attaching any thing to this. He decided when the time came to tie his coat to it, and use that as a flag. It certainly ought to be able to attract attention.

Occupied with such plans and labors and purposes as these, the days passed quickly for two weeks. By that time the fierce rays of the sun had dried every board and stave so that it became like tinder. The ship itself felt the heat; the seams gaped more widely the boards warped and fell away from their rusty nails, the timbers were exposed all over it, and the hot, dry wind penetrated every cranny. The interior of the hold and cabin became free from damp, and hot and dry.

Then Brandon flung back many of the boards and staves loosely: and after enough had been thrown there he worked laboriously for days cutting up large numbers of boards into fine splints, until at last a huge pile of these shavings were accumulated. With these and his pistol he would be able to obtain light and fire in the time of need.

The post which he had cut off was then sharpened at one end, so that he could fix it in the sand when the time came, should it ever come. Here, then, these preparations were completed.

After all his labor in the cabin nothing was found. The bedding, the mattresses, the chests, the nautical instruments had all been ruined. The tables and chairs fell to pieces when the sand was removed; the doors and wood-work sunk away; the cabin when cleared remained a wreck.

The weather continued hot and dry. At night Brandon flung himself down wherever he happened to be, either at the brig or at the rock. Every day he had to go to the rock for water, and also to look out toward the sea from that side. At first, while intent upon his work at the ship, the sight of the barren horizon every day did not materially affect him; he rose superior to despondency and cheered himself with his task. But at length, at the end of about three weeks, all this work was done and nothing more remained. His only idea was to labor to effect his escape, and not to insure his comfort during his stay.

Now as day succeeded to day all his old gloom returned. The excitement of the last few weeks had acted favorably upon his bodily health, but when this was removed he began to feel more than his old weakness. Such diet as his might sustain nature, but it could not preserve health. He grew at length to loathe the food which he had to take, and it was only by a stern resolve that he forced himself to swallow it.

At length a new evil was superadded to those which had already afflicted him. During the first part of his stay the hollow or pool of water on the rock had always been kept filled by frequent rains. But now for three weeks, in fact ever since the uncovering of the Vishnu, not a single drop of rain had fallen. The sun shone with intense heat, and the evaporation was great. The wind at first tempered this heat somewhat, but at last this ceased to blow by day, and often for hours there was a dead calm, in which the water of the sea lay unruffled and all the air was motionless.

If there could only have been something which he could stretch over that precious pool of water he might then have arrested its flight. But he had nothing, and could contrive nothing. Every day saw a perceptible decrease in its volume, and at last it went down so low that he thought he could count the number of days that were left him to live. But his despair could not stay the operation of the laws of nature, and he watched the decrease of that water as one watches the failing breath of a dying child.

Many weeks passed, and the water of the pool still diminished. At last it had sunk so low that Brandon could not hope to live more than another week unless rain came, and that now he could hardly expect. The look-out became more hopeless, and at length his thoughts, instead of turning toward escape, were occupied with deliberating whether he would probably die of starvation or simple physical exhaustion. He began to enter into that state of mind which he had read in Despard's MSS., in which life ceases to be a matter of desire, and the only wish left is to die as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

At length one day as his eyes swept the waters mechanically out of pure habit, and not expecting anything, he saw far away to the northeast something which looked like a sail. He watched it for an hour before he fairly decided that it was not some mocking cloud. But at the end of that time it had grown larger, and had assumed a form which no cloud could keep so long.

Now his heart beat fast, and all the old longing for escape, and the old love of life returned with fresh vehemence. This new emotion overpowered him, and he did not try to struggle with it.

Now had come the day and the hour when all life was in suspense. This was his first hope, and he felt that it must be his last. Experience had shown that the island must lie outside the common track of vessels, and, in the ordinary course of things, if this passed by he could not hope to see another.

Now he had to decide how to attract her notice. She was still far away, yet she was evidently drawing nearer. The rock was higher than the mound and more conspicuous. He determined to carry his signal there, and erect it somewhere on that place. So he took up the heavy staff, and bore it laboriously over the sand till he reached the rock.

By the time that he arrived there the vessel had come nearer. Her topsails were visible above the horizon. Her progress was very slow, for there was only very little wind. Her studding sails were all set to catch the breeze, and her course was such that she came gradually nearer. Whether she would come near enough to see the island was another question. Yet if they thought of keeping a look-out, if the men in the tops had glasses, this rock and the signal could be easily seen. He feared, however, that this would not be thought of. The existence of Coffin island was not generally known, and if they supposed that there was only open water here they would not be on the look out at all.

Nevertheless Brandon erected the signal, and as there was no place on the solid rock where he could insert it he held it up in his own hands. Hours passed. The ship had come very much nearer, but her hull was not yet visible. Still he stood there under the burning sun, holding aloft his signal. Fearing that it might not be sufficiently conspicuous he fastened his coat to the top, and then waved it slowly backward and forward.

The ship moved more slowly than ever, but still it was coming nearer; for after some time, which seemed to that lonely watcher like entire days, her hull became visible, and her course still lay nearer.

Now Brandon felt that he must be noticed. He waved his signal incessantly. He even leaped in the air, so that he might be seen. He thought that the rock would surely be perceived from the ship, and if they looked at that they would see the figure upon it.

Then despondency came over him. The hull of the ship was visible, but it was only the uppermost line of the hull. He was standing on the very top of the rock, on its highest point. From the deck they could not see the rock itself. He stooped down, and perceived that the hull of the ship sank out of sight. Then he knew that the rock would not be visible to them at all. Only the upper half of his body could by any possibility be visible and he knew enough of the sea to understand that this would have the dark sea for a background to observers in the ship, and therefore could not be seen.

Still he would not yield to the dejection that was rapidly coming over him, and deepening into despair every minute. Never before had he so clung to hope—never before had his soul been more indomitable in its resolution, more vigorous in its strong self-assertion.

He stood there still waving his staff as though his life now depended upon that dumb yet eloquent signal—as though, like Moses, as long as his arms were erect, so long would he be able to triumph over the assault of despair. Hours passed. Still no notice was taken of him. Still the ship held on her course slowly, yet steadily, and no change of direction, no movement of any kind whatever, showed that he had been seen. What troubled him now was the idea that the ship did not come any nearer. This at first he refused to believe, but at last he saw it beyond doubt, for at length the hull was no longer visible above the horizon.

The ship was now due north from the rock, sailing on a line directly parallel with the Island. It came no nearer. It was only passing by it. And now Brandon saw that his last hope of attracting attention by the signal was gone. The ship was moving onward to the west, and every minute would make it less likely that those on board could see the rock.

During the hours in which he had watched the ship he had been busy conjecturing what she might be, and from what port she might have come. The direction indicated China almost undoubtedly. He depicted in his mind a large, commodious, and swift ship, with many passengers on their way back to England. He imagined pleasant society and general intercourse. His fancy created a thousand scenes of delightful association with "the kindly race of men." All earthly happiness seemed to him at that time to find its centre on board that ship which passed before his eyes.

The seas were bright and sparkling, the skies calm and deeply blue, the winds breathed softly, the white swelling sails puffed out like clouds against the blue sky beyond. That ship seemed to the lonely watcher like Heaven itself. Oh! to pass beyond the limits of this narrow sandy waste! to cross the waters and enter there! Oh! to reach that ship which moved on so majestically, to enter there and be at rest!

It was not given him to enter there. Brandon soon saw this. The ship moved farther away. Already the sun was sinking, and the sudden night of the tropics was coming swiftly on. There was no longer any hope.

He flung the staff down till it broke asunder on the hard rock, and stood for a few moments looking out at sea in mute despair.

Yet could he have known what was shortly to be the fate of that ship—shortly, only in a few days—he would not have despaired, he would have rejoiced, since if death were to be his lot it were better to die where he was than to be rescued and gain the sweet hope of life afresh, and then have that hope extinguished in blood.

But Brandon did not remain long in idleness. There was yet one resource—one which he had already thought of through that long day, but hesitated to try, since he would have to forsake his signal station; and to remain there with his staff seemed to him then the only purpose of his life. Now since the signal staff had failed, he had broken it, as some magician might break the wand which had failed to work its appropriate spell, and other things were before him. He took his coat and descended from the rock to make a last effort for life. He walked back through the gathering gloom towards the wreck. He did not run, nor did he in any way exhibit any excitement whatever. He walked with a firm step over the sand, neither hastening on nor lagging back, but advancing calmly.

Before he had gone half way it was dark. The sun had gone down in a sea of fire, and the western sky, after flaming for a time, had sunk into darkness. There was no moon. The stars shone dimly from behind a kind of haze that over spread the sky. The wind came up more freshly from the east, and Brandon knew that this wind would carry the ship which he wished to attract further and further away. That ship had now died out in the dark of the ebon sea; the chances that he could catch its notice were all against him, yet he never faltered.

He had come to a fixed resolution, which was at all hazards to kindle his signal fire, whatever the chances against him might be. He thought that the flames flaring up would of necessity attract attention, and that the vessel might turn, or lie to, and try to discover what this might be. If this last hope failed, he was ready to die. Death had now become to him rather a thing to be desired than avoided. For he knew that it was only a change of life; and how much better would life be in a spiritual world than life on this lonely isle.

This decision to die took away despair. Despair is only possible to those who value this earthly life exclusively. To the soul that looks forward to endless life despair can never come.

It was with this solemn purpose that Brandon went to the wreck, seeking by a last chance after life, yet now prepared to relinquish it. He had struggled for life all these weeks; he had fought and wrestled for life with unutterable spiritual agony, all day long on the summit of that rock, and now the bitterness of death was past.

An hour and a half was occupied in the walk over the sand to the wreck. Fresh waves of dark had come over all things, and now, though there were no clouds, yet the gloom was intense, and faint points of light in the sky above showed where the stars might be. Where now was the ship for which Brandon sought? He cared not. He was going to kindle his signal fire. The wind was blowing freshly by the time that he reached the place. Such a wind had not blown for weeks. It would take the ship away farther. What mattered it? He would seize his last chance, if it were only to put that last chance away forever, and thus make an end of suspense.

All his preparations had long since been made; the dry wood lay loosely thrown about the hold; the pile of shavings and fine thread-like splinters was there awaiting him. He had only to apply the fire.

He took his linen hankerchief and tore it up into fine threads, these he tore apart again and rubbed in his hand till they were almost as loose as lint. He then took these loose fibres, and descending into the hold, put them underneath the pile which he had prepared. Then he took his pistol, and holding it close to the lint fired it.

The explosion rang out with startling force in the narrow hull of the ship, the lint received the fire and glowed with the sparks into spots of red heat. Brandon blew with his breath, and the wind streaming down lent its assistance.

In a few moments the work was done.

It blazed!

But scarcely had the first flame appeared than a puff of wind came down and extinguished it. The sparks, however, were there yet. It was as though the fickle wind was tantalizing him—at one time helping, at another baffling him. Once more Brandon blew. Once more the blaze arose. Brandon flung his coat skirts in front of it till it might gather strength. The blaze ran rapidly through the fine splints, it extended itself toward the shavings, it threw its arms upward to the larger sticks.

The dry wood kindled. A million sparks flew out as it cracked under the assault of the devouring fire. The flame spread itself out to a larger volume; it widened, expanded, and clasped the kindling all around in its fervid embrace. The flame had been baffled at first; but now, as if to assert its own supremacy, it rushed out in all directions, with something that seemed almost like exultation. That flame had once been conquered by the waters in this very ship. The wood had saved the ship from the waters. It was as though the wood had once invited the fire to union, but the water had stepped in and prevented the union by force; as though the wood, resenting the interference, had baffled the assaults of the water, and saved itself intact through the long years for the embrace of its first love.

Now the fire sought the wood once more after so many years, and in ardor unspeakable embraced its bride.

Such fantastic notions passed through Brandon's fancy as he looked at the triumph of the flame. But he could not stay there long, and as he had not made up his mind to give himself to the flames he clambered up quickly out of the hatchway and stood upon the sand without.

The smoke was pouring through the hatchway, the black voluminous folds being rendered visible by the glow of the flames beneath, which now had gained the ascendancy, and set all the winds at defiance. Indeed it was so now that whatever wind came only assisted the flames, and Brandon, as he looked on, amused himself with the thought that the wind was like the world of man, which, when anyone is first struggling, has a tendency to crush him, but when he has once gained a foothold exerts all its efforts to help him along. In his mood, half cynical, half imaginative, he watched the progress of the flames.

Soon all the fine kindling had crumbled away at the touch of the fire, and communicating its own heat to the wood around, it sank down, a glowing mass, the foundation of the rising fires.

Here, from this central heart of fire the flames rushed on upon the wood which lay loosely on all sides, filling the hull. Through that wood the dry hot wind had streamed for many weeks, till every stave and every board had become dry to its utmost possibility. Now at the first breath of the flame the wood yielded; at the first touch it flared up, and prepared to receive the embrace of the fire in every fibre of its being.

The flames rolled on. It threw its long arms through the million interstices of the loose piles of wood, it penetrated every where with its subtile, far-reaching power, till within the ship the glow broadened and widened, the central heart of fire enlarged its borders, and the floods of flame that flowed from it rushed with consuming fury through the whole body of the ship.

Glowing with bright lustre, increasing in that brightness every moment, leaping up as it consumed and flashing vividly as it leaped up. A thousand tongues of flame streamed upward through the crannies of the gaping deck, and between the wide orifices of the planks and timbers the dazzling flames gleamed; a thousand resistless arms seemed extended forward to grasp the fabric now completely at its mercy, and the hot breath of the fire shriveled up all in its path before yet its hands were laid upon it.

And fast and furious, with eager advance, the flames rushed on, devouring everything. Through the hatchway, around which the fiercest fires gathered, the stream of flame arose impetuously on high, in a straight upward torrent, hurling up a vast pyramid of fire to the ebon skies, a phlogos megan pogona which, like that which once illumed the Slavonic strait with the signal fire first caught from burning Troy, here threw its radiance far over the deep.

While the lighter wood lasted the flame was in the ascendant, and nobly it did its work. Whatever could be done by bright radiance and far-penetrating lustre was done here. If that ship which had passed held any men on board capable of feeling a human interest in the visible signs of calamity at sea, they would be able to read in this flame that there was disaster somewhere upon these waters, and if they had human hearts they would turn to see if there was not some suffering which they might relieve.

But the lighter and the dryer wood was at last consumed, and now there remained that which Brandon had never touched, the dense masses of which still lay piled where they had been placed eighteen years before. Upon these the fire now marched. But already the long days and weeks of scorching sun and fierce wind had not been without their effects, and the dampness had been subdued. Besides, the fire that advanced upon them had already gained immense advantage; for one half of the brig was one glowing mass of heat, which sent forth its consuming forces, and withered up, and blighted, and annihilated all around. The close-bound and close-packed masses of staves and boards received the resistless embrace of the fire, and where they did not flame they gave forth none the less a blazeless glow.

Now from the burning vessel the flame arose no more; but in its place there appeared that which sent forth as vivid a gleam, and as far-flashing a light. The fire had full sway, though it gave forth no blaze, and while it gleamed but little, still it devoured. From the sides of the ship the planks, blasted by the intense heat and by the outburst of the flames, had sprung away and now for nearly all the length of the vessel the timbers were exposed without any covering. Between these flashed forth the gleam of the fire inside, which now in one pure mass glowed with dazzling brightness and intense heat.

But the wood inside, damp as it was, and solid in its fibre, did not allow a very swift progress to the fire. It burned, but it burned slowly. It glowed like the charcoal of a furnace from behind its wooden bars.

The massive timbers of mahogany wood yielded slowly and stubbornly to the conflagration. They stood up like iron bars long after the interior was one glowing mass. But, though they yielded slowly, still they had to yield with the passage of hours to the progress of the fire. And so it came to pass that at length the strong sides, sapped by the steady and resistless assault, surrendered. One by one the stout timbers, now wasted and weakened, gave way and sank down into the fervid mass beneath. At last the whole centre was one accumulation of glowing ashes, and all that remained were the bow, covered with sand, and the stern, with the quarter-deck.

The fire spread in both directions. The stern yielded first. Here the strong deck sustained for a time the onset of the fire that had consumed everything beneath, but at last it sunk in; the timbers of the sides followed next and all had gone. With the bow there was a longer and a harder struggle. The fire had penetrated far into that part of the vessel; the flames smouldered there, but the conflagration went on, and smoke and blue flames issued from every part of that sandy mound, which, fiercely assailed by heat, gave way in every direction, broke into a million crevices and in places melted and ran together in a glowing molten heap. Here the fires burned longest, and here they lived and gleamed until morning.

Long before morning Brandon had fallen asleep. He had stood first near the burning wreck. Then the heat forced him to move away, and he had gone to a ridge of sand where this peninsula joined the island. There he sat down, watching the conflagration for a long time. There the light flashed, and if that ship for whom he was signaling had noticed this sign, and had examined the island, his figure could be seen by any one that chose to examine.

But hours passed on. He strained his eyes through the gloom in the direction in which the ship had vanished, to see if there were any sign there. None appeared. The progress of the fire was slow. It went on burning and glowing with wonderful energy all through the night, till at last, not long before dawn, the stern fell in, and nothing was now left but the sand mound that covered the bows, which burning beneath, gave forth smoke and fire.

Then, exhausted by fatigue, he sank down on the sand and fell into a sound sleep.

In the midst of thronging dreams, from the depths of that imaginary land where his weary spirit wandered in sleep, he was suddenly roused. A hand was laid on his shoulder, which shook him roughly, and a hoarse voice shouted in his ear.

"Mess mate! Halloo, mess mate! Wake up!"

Brandon started up and gazed with wild, astonished eyes around. It was day. The sun was two or three hours above the horizon. He was surrounded by half a dozen seamen, who were regarding him with wondering but kindly faces. The one who spoke appeared to be their leader. He held a spy glass in his hand. He was a sturdy, thick set man of about fifty, whose grizzled hair, weather beaten face, groggy nose and whiskers, coming all round under his chin, gave him the air of old Benbow as he appears on the stage—a reg'lar old salt, sea dog, or whatever other name the popular taste loves to apply to the British tar.

"Hard luck here, mess-mate," said this man, with a smile. "But you're all right now. Come! Cheer up! Won't you take a drink?" And he held out a brandy flask.

Brandon rose mechanically in a kind of maze, not yet understanding his good fortune, not yet knowing whether he was alive or dead. He took the flask and raised it to his lips. The inspiriting draught gave him new life. He looked earnestly at the captain as he handed it back, and then seized both his hands.

"God Almighty bless you for this, noble friend, whoever you are! But how and when did you get here? Who are you? Did you not see my signal on the rock yesterday—?"

"One question at a time, mess-mate," said the other, laughing. "I'm Captain Corbet, of the ship Falcon, bound from Sydney to London, and these are some of my men. We saw this light last night about midnight, right on our weatherbow, and came to see what it was. We found shoal water, and kept off till morning. There's the Falcon, sir."

The Captain waved his hand proudly to where a large, handsome ship lay, about seven miles away to the south.

"On your bow? Did you see the fire ahead of you?" asked Brandon, who now began to comprehend the situation.

"Yes."

"Then you didn't pass me toward the north yesterday?"

"No; never was near the place before this morning."

"It must have been some other ship, then," said Brandon, musingly.

"But how did you get here, and how long have you been here?"

Brandon had long since decided on the part he was to play. His story was all ready:

"My name is Edward Wheeler. I came out supercargo in the brig Argo, with a cargo of hogshead staves and box hooks from London to Manilla. On the 16th of September last we encountered a tremendous storm and struck on the sand-bank. It is not down on any of the charts. The vessel stuck hard at first, and the sea made a clean breach over us. The captain and crew put out the boat, and tried to get away, but were swamped and drowned. I staid by the wreck till morning. The vessel stood the storm well, for she had a solid cargo, was strongly built, and the sand formed rapidly all about her. The storm lasted for several days, and by the end of that time a shoal had formed. Several storms had occurred since, and have heaped the sand all over her. I have lived here ever since in great misery. Yesterday a vessel passed, and I put up a signal on the rock over there, which she did not notice. In despair I set fire to the brig, which was loaded with wood and burned easily. I watched till morning, and then fell asleep. You found me so. That's all I have to say."

On hearing this story nothing could exceed the kindness and sympathy of these honest hearted seamen. The Captain insisted on his taking another drink, apologized for having to carry him back to England, and finally hurried him off to the boat. Before two hours Brandon stood on the deck of the Falcon.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MALAY PIRATE.

Two days had passed since Brandon's rescue. The light wind which had brought up the Falcon soon died out, and before the island had been left far behind a calm succeeded, and there was nothing left but to drift.

A calm in other seas is stillness, here on the Indian Ocean it is stagnation. The calmness is like Egyptian darkness. It may be felt. The stagnation of the waters seems deep enough to destroy all life there. The air is thick, oppressive, feverish; there is not a breath or a murmur of wind; even the swell of ocean, which is never-ending, here approaches as near as possible to an end. The ocean rolled but slightly, but the light undulations gave a lazy, listless motion to the ship, the spars creaked monotonously, and the great sails flapped idly in the air.

At such a time the calm itself is sufficiently dreary, but now there was something which made all things still more drear. For the calm was attended by a thick fog; not a moist, drizzling fog like those of the North Atlantic, but a sultry, dense, dry fog: a fog which gave greater emphasis to the heat, and, instead of alleviating it, made it more oppressive.

It was so thick that it was not possible while standing at the wheel to see the forecastle. Aloft, all the heavens were hidden in a canopy of sickly gray; beneath, the sea showed the same color. Its glassy surface exhibited not a ripple. A small space only surrounded the vessel, and beyond all things were lost to view.

The sailors were scattered about the ship in groups. Some had ascended to the tops with a faint hope of finding more air; some were laying flat on their faces on the forecastle; others had sought those places which were under the sails where the occasional flap of the broad canvas sent down a slight current of air.

The Captain was standing on the quarter-deck, while Brandon was seated on a stool near the wheel. He had been treated by the Captain with unbounded hospitality, and supplied with every thing that he could wish.

"The fact is," said the Captain who had been conversing with Brandon, "I don't like calms any where, still less calms with fogs, and least of all, calms off these infernal islands."

"Why?"

"Because north'ard is the Strait of Sunda, and the Malay pirates are always cruising about, often as far as this. Did you ever happen to hear of Zangorri?"

"Yes."

"Well, all I can say is, if you hadn't been wrecked, you'd have probably had your throat cut by that devil."

"Can't anybody catch him?"

"They don't catch him at any rate. Whether they can or not is another question."

"Have you arms?"

"Yes. I've got enough to give Zangorri a pleasanter reception than he usually gets from a merchant-ship, and my lads are the boys that can use them."

"I wonder what has become of that other ship that passed me on the island," said Brandon, after a pause.

"She can't be very far away from us," replied the Captain, "and we may come up with her before we get to the Cape."

A silence followed. Suddenly the Captain's attention was arrested by something. He raised his hand to his ear and listened very attentively. "Do you hear that?" he asked, quickly.

Brandon arose and walked to where the Captain was. Then both listened. And over the sea there came unmistakable sounds. The regular movement of oars! Oars out on the Indian Ocean! Yet the sound was unmistakable.

"It must be some poor devils that have escaped from shipwreck," said the Captain, half to himself.

"Well, fire a gun."

"No," said the Captain, cautiously, after a pause. "It may be somebody else. Wait a bit."

So they waited a little while. Suddenly there came a cry of human voices—a volley of guns! Shrieks, yells of defiance, shouts of triumph, howls of rage or of pain, all softened by the distance, and all in their unison sounding appallingly as they were borne through the gloom of the fog.

Instantly every man in the ship bounded to his feet. They had not heard the first sounds, but these they heard, and in that superstition which is natural to the sailor, each man's first thought was that the noises came from the sky, and so each looked with a stupefied countenance at his neighbor.

But the Captain did not share the common feeling. "I knew it!" he cried. "I expected it, and blow my old eyes out if I don't catch 'em this time!"

"What?" cried Brandon.

But the Captain did not hear. Instantly his whole demeanor was changed. He sprang to the companion way. He spoke but one word, not in a loud voice, but [illegible] so stern, so startling, that every m[illegible] heard the word:

"Zangorri!"

All knew what it meant. It meant that the most bloodthirsty pirate of the Eastern seas was attacking some ship behind that veil of fog.

And what ship? This was the thought that came to Brandon. Could it by any possibility be the one which passed by him when he strove so earnestly to gain her attention?

"Out with the long boat! Load the carronade! Man the boat! Hurry up, lads, for God's sake!" And the captain dashed down into the cabin. In an instant he was back again, buckling on a belt with a couple of pistols in it, and calling on his men, "Don't shout, don't cheer, but hurry, for God's sake!"

And the men rushed about, some collecting arms, others laboring at the boat. The Falcon was well supplied with arms as the captain had said. Three guns, any quantity of smaller arms, and a long Tom, formed her armament, while the long boat had a carronade in her bows. Thanks to the snug and orderly arrangement of the ship, everything was soon ready. The long boat was out and afloat. All the seamen except four were on board, and the captain went down last.

"Now, pull away, lads!" he cried; "no talking," and he took the tiller ropes. As he seated himself he looked toward the bows, and his eyes encountered the calm face of Brandon.

"What! you here?" he cried, with unmistable delight.

Brandon's reply consisted simply in drawing a revolver from his pocket.

"You're a brick!" said the captain.

Not another word was spoken. The captain steered the boat toward the direction from which the sounds came. These grew louder every moment, more menacing, and more terrible.

The sailors put all their strength to the oars, and drove the great boat along through the water. To their impatience it seemed as though they would never get there. Yet the place which they desired so much to reach was not far away; the sounds were now very near; and at length, as they drove onward, the tall sides of a ship burst on their sight through the gloom. By its side was a boat of the kind that is used by the Malays. On board the ship a large number of savage figures were rushing about in mad ferocity.

In a moment the boat was seen. A shout rose from the Malays. A score of them clambered swiftly down the ship's side to their boat, and a panic seemed to seize all the rest, who stood looking around irresolutely for some way of escape.

The boatswain was in the bows of the long boat, and as the Malays crowded into their craft he took aim with the carronade, and fired. The explosion thundered through the air. A terrific shriek followed. The next instant the Malay boat, filled with writhing dusky figures, went down beneath the waters.

The long boat immediately after touched the side of the ship. Brandon grasped a rope with his left hand, and, holding his revolver in his right, leaped upward. A Malay with uplifted knife struck at him. Bang! went the revolver, and the Malay fell dead. The next instant Brandon was on board, followed by all the sailors, who sprang upward and clambered into the vessel before the Malays could rally from the first shock of surprise.

But the panic was arrested by a man who bounded upon deck through the hatchway. Roused by the noise of the gun, he had hurried up, and reached the deck just as the sailors arrived. In fierce, stern words he shouted to his men, and the Malays gathered new courage from his words. There were about fifty of these, and not more than thirty English sailors; but the former had carelessly dropped their arms about, and most of their pieces were unloaded; the latter, therefore, had it all their own way.

The first thing that they did was to pour a volley into the crowd of Malays, as they stood trying to face their new enemy. The next moment the sailors rushed upon them, some with cutlasses, some with pistols, and some with clubbed muskets.

The Malays resisted desperately. Some fought with their creeses, others snatched up muskets, and used them vigorously, others unarmed flung themselves upon their assailants, biting and tearing like wild beasts.

In the midst of the scene stood the chief, wielding a clubbed musket. He was a man of short stature, broad chest, and great muscular power. Three or four of the sailors had already been knocked down beneath his blows.

"Down with him!" yelled the Captain. "It's Zangorri!"

A venomous smile passed over the dark face of the Malay. Then he shouted to his men, and in an instant they rushed to the quarter deck and took up a position there. A few of them obtained some more muskets that lay about.

The Captain shouted to his men, who were pursuing the Malays, to load once more. They did so, pouring in a volley, and then rushed to the quarter-deck. Now a fiercer fight took place. The Captain with his pistol shot one man dead; the next instant he was knocked down. The boatswain was grappled by two powerful men. The rest of the sailors were driving all before them.

Meanwhile Brandon had been in the very center of the fight. With his revolver in his left hand he held a cutlass in his right, and every blow that he gave told. He had sought all through the struggle to reach the spot where Zangorri stood, but had hitherto been unsuccessful. At the retreat which the Malays made he hastily loaded three of the chambers of his revolver which he had emptied into the hearts of three Malays, and sprang upon the quarter deck first. The man who struck down the captain fell dead from Brandon's pistol just as he stooped to plunge his knife into the heart of the prostrate man. Another shot sent over one of the boatswain's assailants, and the other assailant was kicked up into the air and overboard by the boatswain himself.

After this Brandon had no more trouble to get at Zangorri, for the Malay chief with a howl of fury called on his men, and sprang at him. Two quick flashes, two sharp reports, and down went two of them. Zangorri grasped Brandon's hand, and raised his knife; the next instant Brandon had shifted his pistol to his other hand; he fired, Zangorri's arm fell by his side broken, and the knife rang on the ship's deck.

Brandon bounded at his throat. He wound his arms around him, and with a tremendous jerk hurled Zangorri to the deck, and held him there.

A cry of terror and dismay arose from the Malays as they saw their chief fall. The sailors shouted; there was no more fighting; some of the pirates were killed, others leaped overboard and tried to swim away. The sailors, in their fury, shot at these wretches as they swam. The cruelty of Zangorri had stimulated such a thirst of vengeance that none thought of giving quarter. Out of all the Malays the only one alive was Zangorri himself, who now lay gasping, with a mighty hand on his throat.

At last, as his struggles grew feebler, Brandon relaxed his grasp. Some of the sailors came up with uplifted knives to put an end to Zangorri. "Back!" cried Brandon fiercely. "Don't touch him. He's mine!"

"He must die."

"That's for me to say," cried Brandon in a stern voice that forbade reply. In fact, the sailors seemed to feel that he had the best claim here, since he had not only captured Zangorri with his own hands, but had borne the chief share in the fight.

"Englishman," said a voice, "I thank you."

Brandon started.

It was Zangorri who had spoken; and in very fair English too.

"Do you speak English?" was all that he could say in his surprise.

"I ought to. I've seen enough of them," growled the other.

"You scoundrel!" cried Brandon, "you have nothing to thank me for. You must die a worse death."

"Ah," sneered Zangorri. "Well. It's about time. But my death will not pay for the hundreds of English lives that I have taken. I thank you, though, for you will give me time yet to tell the Englishmen how I hate them."

And the expression of hate that gleamed from the eyes of the Malay was appaling.

"Why do you hate them?" asked Brandon, whose curiosity was excited.

"My brother's blood was shed by them, and a Malay never forgives. Yet I have never found the man I sought. If I had found him I would not have killed any more."

"The man—what man?"

"The one whom I have sought for fifteen years through all these seas," said the other, hoarsely.

"What is his name?"

"I will not speak it. I had it carved on my creese which hangs around my neck."

Brandon thrust his hand into the bosom of the Malay where he saw a cord which passed around his neck. He drew forth a creese, and holding it up saw the name cut upon the handle: "John Potts."

The change that came over the severe, impassive face of Brandon was so extraordinary that even Zangorri in his pain and fury saw it. He uttered an exclamation. The brow of Brandon grew as black as night, his nostrils quivered, his eyes seemed to blaze with a terrific lustre, and a slight foam spread itself over his quivering lips. But he commanded himself by a violent effort.

He looked all around. The sailors were busy with the captain, who still lay senseless. No one observed him. He turned to Zangorri.

"This shall be mine," said he, and he threw the cord around his own neck, and put the creese under his waistcoat. But the sharp eye of the Malay had been watching him, and as he raised his arm carelessly to put the weapon where he desired, he thoughtlessly loosed his hold. That instant Zangorri took advantage of it. By a tremendous effort he disengaged himself and bounded to his feet. The next instant he was at the taffrail. One hasty glance all around showed him all that he wished to see. Another moment and he was beneath the water.

Brandon had been taken unawares, and the Malay was in the water before he could think. But he drew his revolver, in which there yet remained two shots, and stepping to the taffrail, watched for Zangorri to appear.

During the fight a change had come over the scene. The fog had begun to be dissipated and a wider horizon appeared. As Brandon looked he saw two vessels upon the smooth surface of the sea. One was the Falcon. The other was a large Malay proa. On the decks of this last was a crowd of men, perhaps about fifty in number, who stood looking toward the ship where the fight had been. The sweeps were out, and they were preparing to move away. But the escape of Zangorri had roused them, and they were evidently waiting to see the result. That result lay altogether at the disposal of the man with the revolver, who stood at the stern from which Zangorri had leaped.

And now Zangorri's head appeared above the waves, while he took a long breath ere he plunged again. The revolver covered him. In a moment a bullet could have plunged into his brain.

But Brandon did not fire. He could not. It was too cold-blooded. True, Zangorri was stained with countless crimes; but all his crimes at that moment were forgotten; he did not appear as Zangorri the merciless pirate, but simply as a wounded wretch, trying to escape from death. That death Brandon could not deal him.

The sailors were still intent upon the Captain, whose state was critical, and Brandon alone watched the Malay. Soon he saw those on board the proa send down a boat and row quickly toward him. They reached him, dragged him on board, and then rowed back.

Brandon turned away. As yet no one had been in the cabin. He hurried thither to see if perchance any one was there who might be saved.

He entered the cabin. The first look which he gave disclosed a sight which was enough to chill the blood of the stoutest heart that ever beat.

All around the cabin lay human bodies distorted by the agonies of death, twisted and twined in different attitudes, and still lying in the position in which death had found them.

One, whose appearance showed him to be the captain, lay grasping the hair of a Malay, with his sword through his enemy's heart, while a knife still remained buried in his own. Another lay with his head cut open; another with his face torn by the explosion of a gun. There were four whites here and about ten Malays, all dead. But the fourth white was a woman, who lay dead in front of a door that led to an inner cabin, and which was now closed. The woman appeared to be about fifty years of age, her venerable gray hair was stained with blood, and her hand clutched the arm of a Malay who lay dead by her side.

While Brandon stood looking at this sight he became aware of a movement in a corner of the cabin where there were five or six bodies heaped together. He hurried over to the place, and, pulling away the bodies of several Malays, found at length a Hindu of large stature, in whom life was by no means extinct, for he was pushing with hands and feet and making faint efforts to rise. He had been wounded in many places, and was now quite unconscious.

Brandon dragged away all the bodies, laid him in as easy a posture as possible, and then rushed up to the deck for some water. Returning he dashed it over the Hindu, and bound up one or two wounds which seemed most dangerous.

His care soon brought the Hindu to consciousness.

The man opened his eyes, looked upon Brandon first with astonishment, then with speechless gratitude, and grasping his hand moaned faintly, in broken English,

"Bless de Lor! Sahib!"

Brandon hurried up on deck and calling some of the sailors had the Hindu conveyed there. All crowded around him to ask him questions, and gradually found out about the attack of the pirates. The ship had been becalmed the day before, and the Malay proa was in sight, evidently with evil intentions. They had kept a good watch, and when the fog came had some hope of escape. But the Malay boats had sought them through the fog, and had found them. They had resisted well, but were overpowered by numbers. The Hindu had been cook of the ship, and had fought till the last by the side of his captain.

Without waiting to hear the Hindu's story Brandon went back to the cabin. The door that opened into the inner cabin was shut. He tried it. It was locked. He looked into the keyhole. It was locked from the inside.

"Is any one there?" he asked.

A cry of surprise was the sole answer.

"You are safe. We are friends. Open!" cried Brandon.

A BOSTON CHINAMAN'S FUNERAL.

The funeral cortege was formed at the undertaker's rooms, where a large number of Chinamen gathered shortly before 2 p. m. to pay their last respects. The remains were exposed to view for the last time. Chung was dressed in his best frock, trousers, white stockings and soft sandals, and had on even the broad-brimmed, soft, black felt hat which his people are so fond of wearing. The remains were inclosed in a rosewood casket, surmounted with silver handles. On the plate were inscribed in Chinese hieroglyphics his name, and the fact that he was 30 years old. When the lid was closed the mourners became quite cheerful and chatty, and in a short space of time a score of Celestials were ensconced in four hacks and followed the corpse to Mt. Hope cemetery. The cortage went at a lively jog, the mourners dropping along the streets little bits of paper of various colors, all bearing Chinese characters. The pieces of paper are supposed to bear implicit directions showing the way the deceased should reach heaven, as well as prayers for Chung's safety. The cemetery was reached with little delay, and the mourners were soon kneeling around the grave. The burial rites were then begun, and consisted in the burning of a basketful of paper, of all colors, in the bottom of the grave. On these papers were printed further instructions and prayers for the guidance and safety of Tung Chung on his celestial journey. The body was soon lowered and the casket sprinkled with rice water. The mourners then carried lighted tapers of papers, during which the grave was filled in. The mound formed to mark the spot where Chung lay was decorated with little sticks resembling miniature rockets, and these were soon lighted. They were placed around the grave with the purpose of affording Chung candle light should darkness overtake him on his journey to the spirit land. The mourners continued to burn papers, and built a fire at the foot of the grave, on which they placed chickens, pork and rice, to be used by Chung should he get hungry. Wine was also placed at the grave, so that, at all events, Chung should not suffer from thirst. These ceremonies concluded the mourners returned to the carriages and were driven to their respective wash shops. The remains of Tung Chung will be disinterred in a few years, and what may then remain of him will be subjected to the boiling process at the Harvard Medical school. The bones, after being dried and scraped, will be surrendered to his associates here and by them sent to China.—Boston Herald.

ONE CHANCE IN A THOUSAND.

A San Francisco Teamster's Recovery From a Broken Neck.

San Francisco Chronicle.

About five months ago the daily press published a short item regarding a teamster named John Collery, who attempted to drive his team through a barn door, and in so doing had his head forced down on his breast until his neck was broken. Police Surgeon Stambaugh made an examination of the injured man, and found that the seventh cervical vertebra was fractured, and that the spinal cord had been stretched nearly two inches. So serious was the injury that the reporters, after chronicling the incident under the head of fatal accidents, paid no further attention to the matter, and failed to inquire after Collery's condition, considering him dead and buried. A Chronicle reporter was therefore exceedingly surprised yesterday afternoon to meet the supposed corpse near the city prison looking remarkably well for a man with a broken neck. In a conversation which ensued, Mr. Collery stated that he was as well as before the accident, a slight stiffness in his right side constituting his entire "unhealthiness." After his removal to his home Collery states that he was laid flat on his back with a sort of fence about his neck and head which kept him immovable for over two months. Both the body of the vertebræ and the arching luminæ were discovered to be broken, and the operation of joining them together without pinching the spinal cord where it had sagged between the ragged edge is described as one of the most difficult ever performed. For a month the patient lay on his back, completely paralyzed in one-half of his body and with little feeling in the other. If he moved in the slightest degree during the first fortnight he could plainly feel the jagged edges of the bone grate together and for hours after such an attempt he was content to lie on his hard bed without attempting to move a muscle for fear that the spinal cord should be crushed and his existence ended in a twinkling. The straightest position attainable was required, and to this end Dr. Stambaugh was compelled to refuse him a mattress, forcing him to lie on a wide plank Collery says that before his eight weeks of enforced quietness were ended he thought that board was made of adamant. The most dangerous time he experienced, he says, was one day when an attendant told him that a man whose neck could stand breaking as his had was not born to be hanged. His desire to laugh was irresistible, and the shaking up his merriment gave him caused his fastenings to burst and the fracture came near being ruptured afresh. During the first five weeks he did not move over a foot from his first posture. The paralysis has now almost entirely disappeared, and Dr. Stambaugh yesterday promised him that he would be able to go to work within six months. The average fatality in cases of clearly defined fracture of the spine is estimated at 999 in 1,000.

—The Chinaman who thought he was Americanized enough to squeeze a Texas girl's hand on the sly, has departed for some quiet place in the hills where he can pick sixty bird-shot out of his legs.

ABOUT PREACHERS, CHURCHES AND RELIGION.

In New York one of the handsomest churches adjoins the finest beer garden in America.

A young couple were baptized together at Trousdale, Tenn., and immediately afterward were married, and in their dripping garments, by the same clergyman.

The French Government has purchased Munkacsy's picture of Christ Before Pilate, which will probably be placed in the Luxembourg.

There is a gradual rise being made in the salaries of first class New York City clergymen.

Pope Leo XIII. is very methodical in his habits. He rises invariably at 6 in the morning and retires at 11 o'clock at night.

It is odd that there are professors of religion who are between 89 and 90 years of age who are "not afraid to die if I was only prepared for it."

A little girl read a composition before the minister. The subject was A Cow. She wove in this complimentary sentence: "A cow is the most useful animal in the world, except religion."

"What kind of little boys go to Heaven?" A lively four year old boy, with kicking boots, flourished his hat. "Well, you may answer," said the teacher. "Dead ones," the little fellow shouted to the full extent of his lungs.

The best coal mine in Iowa was discovered by a man who was fishing on Sunday, but it was on another man's land and all the discoverer got was a ducking.

On a recent Sunday John B. Gough refused to occupy pulpits in the leading churches in Chicago, but accepted an invitation to lecture to the poor people of the Railroad chapel.

The pastor and members of a Brooklyn church, last Sunday, offered prayers for a defaulting member and his family. Queer place, that Brooklyn; queerer still its people.

A boy who was caught in the New York cathedral on Sunday last picking pockets, said he did it to earn money to learn to read and write so he could commit forgery.

In view of his last sermon the New York Times says Mr. Beecher can have no difficulty in exchanging pulpits with Mr. Bob Ingersoll.

Rev. S. S. McMahon of Rising Sun, Ind., declined to sign a petition for Mason and is likely to have to leave his church in consequence.

The Rev. F. R. Beattie, M. A., of Baltimore, has accepted the call from the first Presbyterian church at Brantford, and will be inducted soon.

A new bell, bearing the inscription, "Sinners, this bell calls you to the worship of Christ and nothing more," has been presented to the Baptist church of Dedham.

The Right Rev. Dr. French, bishop of Lahore, has been awarded the war medal for Afghanistan, having ministered under fire to dying soldiers in the campaign of 1879 81. The Rev. Mr. Allen, of Bombay, received a war medal for similar services in 1840-41.

A Maryland man who wanted to do something in memory of his wife has erected a church spire and put four big bells in it. The people in that locality will keep that woman's memory green for years to come.

The very elements of justice and equity are threatened when a Canadian clergyman, in a sermon received with plaudits by his congregation, declares that it was a disgrace to punish Mason for his attempt on Guiteau's life.

In the notorious ecclesiastical trial of Hare against Hinman there has been a good deal of uncleanness and some fun. Perhaps the best mot was the remark of Deacon Clark that a certain woman was not a real Christian woman, but a Presbyterian.

A Methodist clergyman who had been assigned to a congregation that began to criticise his preaching, said that they only ridiculed themselves. "Because, beloved friends, if I could preach well do you think I would have been sent out here to minister to a lot of lankheaded ignoramuses like you?"

A woman went into a Philadelphia church and took a pew. Another woman, she says, came to the pew door and looked and looked. I stepped out, and she stepped in, and sat at the door of the pew. Thereupon I left. In some prayer books of that church is written: This pew holds six persons. Strangers are requested not to sit here.

Dr. Ryle and Dr. O'Reilly are the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bishops of Liverpool, and letters addressed to the Bishop of Liverpool are constantly getting into wrong hands. Recently Dr. O Reilly got one containing a large subscription for a religious purpose in which Dr. Ryle was interested, and Dr. Ryle got a missive congratulating him on the zeal he was displaying in converting England to Catholicism! Dr. Ryle is a red-hot Protestant.

Long after the Reformation, Protestant indulgences were granted in England. On the fly leaf of the first volume of the register of Plympton, is written: "Whereas I certainly know that the wife of Edmund Parker of Bovington, in parish of Plympton, is under such a distemper of bodie that she is not fit to eat any salt flesh or fish whatever, therefore I think fit, as minister of said parish, to license her to eat flesh during the time of her sickness according to the laws and statutes of the realme in that behalf. Given under my hand March 4, 1600. Samon, D. C." Another entry, dated two years later, and signed by another clergyman, gives a similar indulgence to John Slanning.

The Methodist church, both in Canada and the United States, is on the verge of a rebellion against the itinerant system for the ministry. It is often the case that clergymen of great merit and peculiar adaptability to a given field, are compelled to remove to some place where the conditions are such as to render them practically useless. Both clergy and laity are beginning to understand that all men are not suited to all fields of work, and to appreciate the advantages of a system that shall permit the permanent location of a minister in a church to which he may be adapted by nature and education.

The wife of Mr. Bianchina, the restaurant keeper of San Antoine, Texas, formerly a Methodist, renounced her Christian faith and joined the Jewish church. Though legally married, they were still not religiously so, according to the demands of the Jewish law. The Rev. Dr. Lowenthall read the 11th and 12th verses of a chapter from the book of Ruth, and also the 118th Psalm. Mrs Bianchina made a confession of faith before the ark of the covenant, and was received into the faith. An appropriate and eloquent address by the Rabbi followed, in which he admonished her as to the due observance of the Sabbath and appointed festivals. He said her change of faith should in no way separate her from her former friends, as the principles of the Jewish faith were charity, goodness and humanity.

THE COMING DAY.

Mine eye can see in vision the meridian of the sun
On that day when earth's dominions shall be welded into one:
On His holy hill of Zion the rightful Sovereign be
From pole to pole victorious—from the river to the sea.

It is Joy's ecstatic hour, and the triumph is complete;
By decree from all eternity the Son assumes the seat;
While the royal proclamation from the mighty retinue,
Summons all who shared the labor, and the weary watching too.

O, my soul! what is thy station, as that Blessed One appears?
Was the path where strayed thy fellow ever spangled by thy tears?
Is that joyful heart responsive? List the beatific word—
"Inasmuch as ye have done this, share the glory of thy Lord!"

—Christian at Work.

A Boston paper says: The great Methodist Episcopal machine is a marvel, and works marvelously free from friction. When it is considered that the relations between pastor and people in nearly a thousand churches are each year here in New England alone reviewed, and in at least a third of the cases changed, from three to five hundred clergymen going to new fields of labor, and as many churches receiving new pastors, all within a period of thirty days, with but a single Sabbath's interruption of the work, and all, too, noiselessly and quietly, it is not to be wondered at that, with all its intricate machinery, the masses of its ministers and members are opposed to change and resist innovations. Methodism as a system has its hardships and its disadvantages, but it has also its advantages, and must be reckoned when taking account of the moral forces of New England.

Some thirty years ago Mr. Green, an amiable Englishman, seeing a rather shabby old man looking for a seat in church, opened his pew door, beckoned to him, and placed him in a comfortable corner, with prayer and hymn books. The old gentleman, who carefully noted the name in these latter, expressed his thanks warmly at the close of the services. Time had effaced the incident from Mr. Green's recollection, when he one day received an intimation that by the death of a gentleman named Wilkinson he had become entitled to $35,000 a year. Mr. Wilkinson was a solitary old man without relatives. Green's act prepossessed him in his favor; he inquired about him, and found that he bore the highest character. There was a marvellously courteous hospitality in the matter of pews for some time after that bequest, but nobody else has yet got $35,000 a year for a seat.

ANGING A BLOOD AND THUNDER NOVELIST.

The other day a stout woman, armed with an umbrella and leading a small urchin, called at the office of a New York boys' story paper.

"Is this the place where they fight Indians?" she inquired of the man in charge. "Is this the locality where the brave boy charges up the canyon and speeds a bullet to the heart of the dusky redskin?" and she jerked the urchin around by the ear and brought her umbrella down on the desk.

"We publish stories for boys," replied the young man evasively.

"I want to know if these are the premises on which the daring lad springs upon his fiery mustang and, darting through the circle of thunderstruck savages, cuts the captive's cords and bears him away before the wondering Indians have recovered from their astonishment? That's the information I'm after. I want to know if that sort of thing is perpetrated here!" and she swung the umbrella around her head.

"I don't remember those specific acts," protested the young man.

"I want to know if this is the precinct where the adventurous boy jumps on the back of a buffalo and with unerring aim picks off one by one the bloodthirsty pursuers who bite the dust at every crack of his faithful rifle? I'm looking for the place where that sort of thing happens!" and this time she brought the unlucky young man a tremendous whack across the back.

"I think—!" commenced the dodging victim.

"I'm in search of the shop in which the boy road agent holds the quivering stage driver powerless with his glittering eye, while he robs the male passengers with an adroitness born of long and tried experience, and kisses the hands of the lady passengers with a gallantry of bearing that bespeaks noble birth and a chivalrous nature!" screamed the woman, driving the young man into the corner. "I'm looking for the apartment in which that business is transacted!" and down came the umbrella with trip hammer force on the young man's head.

"Upon my soul, ma'am—!" gasped the wretched youth.

"I want to be introduced to the jars in which you keep the boy scouts of the Sierras! Show me the bins full of the boy detectives of the prairie! Point out to me the barrels full of boy pirates of the Spanish main!" and with each demand she dropped the umbrella on the young man's skull until he skipped over the desk and sought safety in a neighboring canyon.

"I'll teach 'em!" she panted, grasping the urchin by the ear and leading him off. "I'll teach 'em to make it good or dance. Want to go fight Indians any more? Want to stand proudly upon the pinnacle of the mountain and scatter the plain beneath with the bleeding bodies of uncounted slain? Want to say 'hist!' in a tone that brooks no contradiction? Propose to spring upon the taffrail and with a ringing word of command send a broadside into the richly laden galley, and then mercifully spare the beautiful maiden in the cabin, that she may become your bride? Eh? Going to do it any more?"

With each question she hammered the yelping urchin until his bones were sore and he protested the permanent abandonment of all the glories enumerated.

"Then come along," said she, taking him by the collar. "Let me catch you around with any more ramrods and carving knives, and you'll think the leaping, curling, resistless prairie fire had swept with a ferocious roar of triumph across the trembling plains and lodged in your pantaloons to stay!"—Brooklyn Eagle.

ANECDOTES OF LINCOLN.

His Kindness of Heart—Protest Against Mileage on His Speech in Congress.

In the year 1840 B. R. Randall, now a veteran in the land department of the Burlington and Missouri River railroad, located in Lincoln, Neb., commenced learning the printing business in the Springfield, Ill., Journal office, then managed by the Francis brothers. He arrived in town in the morning, and was taken to the printing office, his clothing packed in a small sized trunk. It was a time of great political excitement. The log cabin enthusiasm was at its height. The day of his arrival the Whigs of Chicago came in, bringing with them a full rigged schooner on wheels and made their headquarters at the Journal office. When the great convention adjourned, the Chicago delegation loaded their ship and returned home, carrying with them, by mistake the little trunk of the new apprentice boy. He was not long in discovering his loss. It was his first great misfortune. A good many miles from his Schuyler county home, and among strangers, the poor lad sat on the sidewalk and bewailed his loss. A benevolent looking gentleman came along while the boy's grief was at its height. Placing his hand on Dick's head, he said: "What's the matter, my son?" "Matter enough!" said the boy; "I've lost my trunk and all my clothing." "How did you lose it?" again queried the kind hearted stranger. "I put it in the front office, and them Chicago fellows must a took it." "Well," continued the tall gentleman, "don't cry. I'll see if I can get it back for you." Taking the name of the boy and a description of the little trunk, the stranger departed. Within ten days the missing property was returned, and Dick Randall's heart made happy. The stranger was Abraham Lincoln. In speaking of this incident of long ago, Mr. Randall says: "My love and veneration for Mr. Lincoln have never faltered. The man who would thus interest himself in the affairs of a strange child must have a heart in the right place, and Abraham Lincoln's whole life proved that it was thus located." I would state in this connection that, during Mr. Lincoln's occupancy of the Presidental chair, Mr. Randall served faithfully as Assessor of Internal Revenue in one of the central Illinois districts.

During Mr. Lincoln's only term in Congress he made but one set speech, and in that effort he displayed great logical powers, and the exposure of the President's pretense that "American blood had been shed on American soil" by the Mexicans was overwhelming. It commanded the wrapt attention of the house. When he concluded his brother members gathered about him and tendered hearty congratulations. In the heat of the argument he had moved up and down the aisle several times. Finding himself in the vicinity of the clerk's desk he would retire and again talk himself to the front. One Ohio member, nicknamed "Sausage" Sawyer, didn't want to enthuse at all, probably owing to a want of sympathy with Lincoln's politics, and to an eastern member's question, "Sawyer, how did you like the lanky Illinoisian's speech? Very able wasn't it?" "Well," said Sawyer, "the speech was pretty good, but I hope he won't charge mileage on it."

—The Courier-Journal knows of forty-four cases where people who smoked after going to bed awoke in a brighter land.

—Camels are said to thrive in Arizona, where they must create much astonishment, on account of being able to go so long without drinking.

—A dog owned in Bethlehem, Pa., carried the smallpox into seven families, and died feeling that he had accomplished his whole dog-goned duty.

—There are some men in our town,
And they are wondrous wise,
They promptly pay their paper bills
And also—adverti e
And while they reap a thousand fold,
The foolish ones stand y
And say, "We, too, might win the gold,
But we're afraid to try."

—When a young man stands up during a theatrical performance in St Louis to show off his clothes, they throw beans, wads, cigars, marbles and door keys at him from all over the house, and as soon as the performance is over his garments are torn to pieces and carried off for relics.

—This is how it appears in the New York Star of Monday: "About two weeks ago Durrant's store and post office in West Flamboro', near Hamilton, was entered by burglars, who made a clean sweep of the premises, securing about $700 in boots."

Cries Sylvia to a reverend Dean,
"What reason can be given
Since marriage is a holy thing,
That there is none in heaven?"
"There are no women," he replied.
She quick returns the jest:
"Women there are; but I'm afraid
They cannot find a priest."

—A young man who is contemplating matrimony dropped the following document from his pocket. It was picked up by one of his friends, who is now thoroughly posted as to what the wedding expense will amount to: Cards, $5; set furniture, $100; carpet, $35; chamber set, $5; license $4 50; hacks, $5; preacher, $10; sexton, $3; organist, $5; gloves, $3 75; clothes, $40; total, $216 25. A second friend of the would-be Benedict on being shown the paper, suggested that it would be a better plan to take $5 off the preacher's pay and put it on hacks, and then save $2 by letting the sexton down with a $1. The $5 worth of music he thought all right, but saw a decided saving in buying a suit of store clothes, instead of paying $40 for an outfit made to order.