

CHAPTER III

THEY ARRIVE IN HUNSTON AND FALL IN WITH A STRANGER

The landscape near Hunston, as it happened, was superfluously pretty. It deserved a group of resident artists to admire and to catch it upon canvas; and it had, roughly speaking, only artisans out of a job. The one blot was the town, sprawling hideously over the hillside. Set down against the perennial wood, by the side of the everlasting river, it looked very cheap and common. But all this was by day. Now night fell upon the poor little city and mercifully hid it from view.

They had made the start too late for hurry to be any object. It was only a three hours' run for the *Cypriani*, but she took it slowly, using four. At half-past six o'clock, when their destination was drawing near, the two men went below and dined. At seven, while they were still at table, they heard the slow-down signal, and, a moment later, the rattle of the anchor line. Now, at quarter-past seven, Varney lounged alone by the starboard rail and acquainted himself with the purview.

They had run perhaps quarter of a mile above the town, for reasons which he had not communicated to

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