

CHAPTER XXXVII

Just as Lugard and his crew pushed off from the *Palmyra* for a second trip, the Dutch barque parted amidst ships, her after portion falling over and sinking in the deep water on the outer side of the reef. But Schouten had been hard at work, and a very substantial raft had been put together from the yards of the fallen foremast, which was still lying alongside, thumping and swaying under the bows. And so, as the whaleboat from the brig breasted the rushing billows, and Carroll and his officers lit flare after flare to guide the boat on its way, they saw Schouten and the rest of the ship's company take their places on the raft, and let it drive before the sweeping seas over the reef towards the smooth water inside ; for the Dutch captain, knowing that the tide was flowing, was confident that the structure, heavy and unwieldy as it was, would be carried safely over.

But Lugard knew what Schouten did not know—that on the inner edge of the reef were a number of jagged boulders, just awash, and if the raft struck one of these it would be fatal to those aboard.

He swung the boat round in mid-channel.

"Pull, boys, pull your hardest ; we must get up to that raft before she gets amongst the rocks."

As the boat headed directly across the reef, with the