

search party was again sent into the city, and the authorities were communicated with, but with no result. Then Martin was summoned before the first lieutenant, to tell what he knew of Ju and his habits, for the boatswain had reported the friendship between the boys, and that they were natives of the same place.

Martin told all he knew of Ju's habits, and when asked if he could in any way account for his absence, said, "I think, sir, he must have gone up into the hills, just to see what he could find in the way of birds or animals, he is always so fond of them. I'm afraid he has met with some accident."

"The boy could never walk far up there," said the lieutenant dubiously, glancing towards the hills towering aloft above the town; "he has not been used to mountaineering."

"He was always fond of wandering, sir: he walked right away from Langbourne down to Portsmouth and back again all by himself when he was only ten years old; he says it's in his blood. His father was something of a gipsy."

"Means will be taken to get such habits out of his blood then," said the lieutenant sternly. "When a boy joins Her Majesty's service he must know he can no longer wander where and when he likes. Is that all you can tell me?"

"He may have met with an accident, sir," faltered Martin. A horrible fear had taken possession of him which he dared not tell; he remembered Ju's threat to run away, and now it seemed as though he might have put it into execution.

Again a party was sent from the ship, this time with instructions to work up towards the hills; but they met with no more success than before. By this time Martin was nearly beside himself with anxiety, and going to the first lieutenant, he begged that he might be allowed to go in search of his friend.

"Why, my lad, what do you think you could do alone? Two parties have been out and failed; you are scarcely likely to be more fortunate."

"Listen, sir," said Martin, giving a peculiar whistle. "When Ju and I were at home together we always used that whistle as a call to one another, and I think if I could go up among the hills and use it he might hear me and

answer. I'm sure he'd answer, sir, if he only heard me." Tears stood in Martin's eyes as he pleaded, so anxious was he to go in search of his friend.

"There may be something in what you say," replied the lieutenant; "but you cannot go alone: we should have to hunt for two boys instead of one."

"I am going on shore this afternoon, sir," said one of the younger officers, "and I was thinking of riding up to the Grand Curral. If you will give the boy leave and he can stick on a horse, he shall go with me."

"Good!" said the lieutenant; "he shall go; we cannot miss a chance even though a slight one." The matter of the missing boy was causing the greatest uneasiness on board the *Niobe*, the whole affair seemed so mysterious, and it was felt every effort must be made to find him or to ascertain what had been his fate. The Portuguese authorities were giving every assistance and the English Consulate was doing its utmost to solve the mystery; while sinister rumours of foul play were circulating through the ship.

"You know which side of a horse to get up, I see," said Mr. Massey, as a few hours later Martin and he mounted.

"Yes, sir; I wasn't born aboard ship, I was brought up in the country and know something of horses."

"Well, we shall have a fine ride, and I hope we may at least hear something about Dove. I can speak enough Portuguese to make myself understood, so that may help us in making inquiries."

On and on, up and up they went. Every few moments Martin would whistle, but no answering note fell on his ears. At length, after some hours of riding they reached the great chasm in the heart of the mountains known as the Grand Curral. Martin peered down into the depths. "If he had slipped, sir!" he said, appalled at the idea of the fate which might have befallen his friend.

"I don't think that could be; inquiries have been made at the village below. As far as I can see, Dove must have got over to the north of the island. All this side has been well searched. But how he could have managed it beats me. I'm afraid, Lewis, you won't see your friend again."

This fear had been growing in Martin