

native of New Guinea. He would be their pioneer, their interpreter, the bearer of their white flag to his fierce fellow-countrymen!

"We are in luck to get the fellow," said Captain Mostyn, rubbing his hands.

But before they had left the shore a half-mile there was a sound of a splash, and the slippery native was swimming hard for land, his first week's wages concealed about his person in the shape of a clasp knife, a red handkerchief, and a quantity of tobacco.

"Me shoot" cried the Sandwich Islander, with a hand on a rifle and an eye on the captain; and when hastily and sternly forbidden to do so, he was speedily overboard in pursuit, only, to his disgust, to be summoned back to the steamer.

"Better let the fellow go; an unwilling interpreter would be worse than none," said Mr. Crane.

It is not to be supposed, however, but that the incident was rather depressing.

It was a Saturday evening on which New Guinea was sighted, and the next day the *Dart* anchored close to the mouth of the river near which the *Medway* had gone ashore.

The voyage had so far been calm and prosperous. Captain Mostyn read the morning service to an attentive audience, and Peter's voice was soon to be heard leading the hymns. The melody he easily caught, and he supplied at times his own words. In the place of a sermon the captain delivered a short address, mainly insisting on the duty of obedience to authority. After that "the bosses," as Sam called the Proudfoot party, held a council regarding their future proceedings.

The *Dart* was to make straight up the channel of what, in the absence of any known name, our party called the Great River. The little vessel would proceed cautiously, endeavoring by all means to establish friendly terms with such natives as might be found on the banks, and noting what possibilities there were for provisioning the crew in case of a prolonged stay. During the fortnight spent in Somerset Perran and 'Lisbeth had managed to make out a list of useful words, and even phrases, gleaned from the few natives of New Guinea that had found their way to the mainland. But each being of a different tribe, and employing often a different word for the same thing, it was a rather discouraging attempt at learning a language.

Still, it might be very valuable to be able to cry "Peace" to alarmed savages; and the Papuan for "white boy," "ship," "food," and so forth, must be discovered at the risk of much blundering.

Perran had made a rough map, too, from the various accounts of the coast given by trading vessels. There was a star marking a certain spot far up the Great River.

"What is that for?" questioned 'Lisbeth.

"At this spot the river must be left, and a land party organized to reach a tribe at three days' distance in the mountains."

"Where Jesse will be found," concluded 'Lisbeth quite simply.

She had no doubt of the ultimate success of the expedition.

"How long shall we be in reaching this place, Mr. Crane?" she asked.

"Six weeks up to six months we give ourselves, madam," he answered. "It depends on the weather, the navigation of the river, and the opposition we meet with in our course. The *Dart* will be the first steamship that has ever ventured on this stream." He spoke with proud anticipation of success also.

"Do you believe, Perran, that these Papuans, as they call the New Guinea people, are cannibals?" asked 'Lisbeth, steadying her voice to as commonplace a tone as possible.

"No I do not," said Perran; "that they are complete savages I do not doubt, and I dare say they mistrust all white people."

"They can hardly help that, poor wretches," said Captain Mostyn, "for all the white visitors they have had yet have either been Dutch seeking to capture them for slaves, or French convicts escaped from a neighboring island. There are, however, many tribes, differing in disposition—some fierce, some gentle."

"How shall we be able to make them understand that we come to do them no harm?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Proudfoot; all that must be left to circumstances. We shall try to conduct our affairs peaceably certainly. This shall be our last resort." He put his hand on the revolver he always carried about with him.

"Ah, I have learned to use mine, and Molly has had some lessons too," declared 'Lisbeth, "but oh, Perran, I hope we shall never, never have need of them."

"I hope not indeed," returned Perran.

"It is well, however, to be prepared for all emergencies," said Captain Mostyn. "We are not ordinary explorers, you see, Mrs. Proudfoot, intruding ourselves unnecessarily into a hostile country; we are here on an errand of mercy."

"And justice," whispered 'Lisbeth.

"Yes, justice too, if you will; a good cause, in fact, and so a hopeful one."

"I fancy we shan't have much trouble at first," said Mr. Crane. "Ships must be a common enough sight on the coast, though few are so venturesome as to come within reach of a flight of arrows. I shouldn't wonder if some mercantile spirits among the natives were to put out to us in their canoes."

"Oh, I hope so," declared 'Lisbeth; "that would be a good beginning. Do you know, Perran, I feel as if nothing would alarm me on this expedition—unless I lost sight of you," she added, dropping her voice.