

native. A few scattering pistol-shots followed, and then we beheld a terrible scene. The river banks swarmed with natives, and our comrades were shot down one by one with the cruel shafts, while the boat floated aimlessly down stream. A large war-canoe shot out from the shore, and the little craft became an easy prize. Cut off from our ship, we could do nothing but hide ourselves in the jungle and watch the movements of our enemies. The war-canoe advanced slowly down the stream, towing our boat behind, and as it passed by we saw the dead bodies of our comrades lying as they fell. Parties from the ship had never before advanced farther up the river than where we had landed, until this day, and it was now evident that the natives had retired on the approach of the boat, and lain in wait far enough up the stream to cut off all hope of success from the ship. They had not seen Karl and myself land, and thought they had destroyed the entire boat's crew, for they did not appear to even glance our way as they swept along. The canoe continued in its course until it drew near the mouth of the stream, and there, concealed by the heavy foliage along the river bank, the occupants, with their land allies, awaited the approach of the second boat from the ship. Our comrades on board had heard the shots in the distant outlet, and a fresh boat-load was coming with utmost speed to the rescue. As the crew neared the mouth of the river, they showed a commendable caution, however, and advanced slowly, keeping a careful lookout. The wind carried them over toward our side of the stream, but before they got within halting distance they spied the enemy. The latter, seeing that the chance for a surprise was gone, put out boldly to the fight. Several other canoes came down the stream, filled with howling natives, who joined in the attack, and shot their arrows in a perfect cloud upon the devoted crew. Half a dozen rifle shots responded, and as many of the natives dropped. The fight was unequal, however, and seeing that the first party were beyond the reach of help, the crew headed for the ship, closely pursued by the natives. Karl and I crept carefully through the dense growth along the river bank, till we gained a position whence we could see the issue of the conflict. The boat, though hard pressed, had reached the ship, and the small arms of the latter, together with her light howitzer, were called into requisition, and made fearful havoc with the pursuers. The latter gained the side of the ship, however, and swarmed upon her deck. Meanwhile, the anchor was hastily raised, and speeding some of her sails, the gallant craft shook herself free from the fleet of canoes and headed toward the sea. The assailants fell like sheep before the fire of the howitzer, and the noble ship was soon freed. We watched her sail away, hoping that she would later on lay to off shore, but she steered straight out to sea, until at last darkness came on with tropical suddenness, and shut her out from our sight.

What to do we knew not. Alone on this almost unknown shore, surrounded by enemies, of whose cruelty we had just witnessed a significant example, the chances were a thousand to one that we should shortly meet the fate of our comrades. We dared not kindle a fire, for that would insure our speedy capture; and yet, without a fire, we were at the mercy of the wild beasts of the jungle.

We finally compromised by climbing high up among the boughs of a mangrove-tree, and there passed the weary watches of the night. At the first break of day we scanned the horizon anxiously, but there was no sign of the ship, not even a speck in the distance. They had evidently given us up for lost, and sailed away for good and all.

I have seen some pretty hard situations in my day, boys, and have been placed many times where it was a toss-up whether I ever got out alive or not, but I never was so near giving up all hope as I was that morning. After a few moments of unreasoning despair, Karl and I commenced to plan what we should do. We knew from what the captain had said that we must be somewhere about due north of Cape York.

Of course, if we could keep where we were, there was a possibility that some ship passing through the Torres Strait might come near enough to the shore to see our signals of distress and take us off. But how could we remain in this locality, with the natives so close to us? And was it likely that our signals of distress would be seen from a ship before our unwelcome neighbors would arrive to investigate? We crept carefully along through the thick forest, until we neared the river again, and then took observations from a lofty tree. They settled the question for us. On the other side was a gang of about fifty natives, clearing away the jungle and preparing to erect one of their communal dwellings. They were all as busy as bees, and showed plainly that they had come to stay, and were perfectly at home. Looking up the river, we saw more canoes coming down, and these seemed to contain the women and children of the tribe. It was evidently a migration to a new locality, and the quality of the newcomers made it obvious that intruders like ourselves had best leave the coast clear. There was no option in the matter. We must get away from this dangerous locality, and at once. Already the chattering and screeching of the myriads of parrots, disturbed by our successful tree climbing, was attracting the attention of our enemies, and it was quite probable that two or three, with their bows and arrows, might cross the river.

So we descended from the tree and started away from the river. It was hard work pushing through the jungle, and without our strong dirks it would have been practically impossible. Tall palms and mangroves, intermingled with durians, mangosteens, and other fruit trees, formed a very thick, dense covering of foliage, while giant brakes and flowering plants covered the ground. A perfect network of vines and creepers hung in loops, or crossed and recrossed from tree to tree. Had we been on a pleasure trip, we should have been charmed with the brilliant scene about us. Flowers of every conceivable color; gigantic butterflies, banded, striped, and dotted with crimson, blue, and gold; countless parrots, with bright, metallic, sheeny feathers; and even the rare bird of paradise floated before our eyes. But we were too intent on getting away from the river to stop and admire. So plucking some bananas and shaking down a few coconuts for provision, we forced our way through the forest. Occasionally, we came face to face with some stray monkey, who would whisk at once up a vine and gaze on us from the tree-top, chattering in terror; but not a native crossed our path. Climbing a tall palm just before night, Karl reported that we had rather headed away from the coast toward the mountains. We thought it advisable to keep on in the same direction, as there seemed to be smoke rising from different points along the coast, indicating the presence of villages, which we must avoid at all hazards.

We were both very tired with our hard day's work in the forest, and sleep was a necessity.

It was agreed that one should stand guard while the other slept, and cutting branches enough to form a rough bed, Karl stretched out at full length, and was soon fast asleep.

I let him slumber till about midnight, and then woke him to take my own turn. The next day was a repetition of the preceding one, a constant struggle to penetrate through the wilderness, and "watch and wait" at night. We were being driven still farther out of our course, we found, and our path was leading us more and more to the north. Thus far, we had fared luxuriously as regarded fruit, and the few pieces of ship's food we had found in our pockets had lasted wonderfully, so that it almost seemed like a pleasant jaunt. The absence of natives and wild beasts had revived our hopes, and although we considered our chances of getting back to Holland rather slim, yet we felt that we were not entirely lost as yet. At the close of the third day we found we were drawing close to the mountains, and our usual afternoon lookout from a lofty tree showed no fires or smoke for a long distance from us. We felt quite secure, and so knocked over two or three of the parrots that flattered round us with perfect fearlessness.

Utilizing one of a precious stock of matches, we built a fire, and soon had the birds spitted and roasting merrily. A little stream near by, that we had crossed on a fallen log, furnished us with the best of liquor to wash down our repast, and a liberal supply of bananas and coconuts answered for dessert.

The next morning we were making our way as usual to the northwest, and were progressing rather better than ordinarily, the forest growth being less dense as we neared the mountains.

Our progress, although necessarily slow, was still quite perceptible, and after a few days we camped among the foot-hills. How well I remember the little glen where we rested that night. On three sides the rocky cliff rose a sheer hundred feet, bare and gaunt, and almost as straight as masonry. A large cavern opened at the rear of the glen, from which issued a gurgling, prattling little brook of the most delicious water. Indeed, had it not been for the brook, we should never have found this quiet camp, for a huge detached column of rock concealed the entrance almost entirely.

Once inside the little glen, we gathered wood and built a fire.

As we had started for a hunting trip on that memorable day, which brought with it our involuntary exile, we were still well supplied with ammunition for our revolvers.

The firelight shone far into the cavern, but revealed nothing except the dashing waters of the stream, and I lay down to rest, feeling almost as safe as if at home.

The natives villages seemed to be all near the coast, and Karl could not discern a single sign of human life that evening, as he gazed as usual over the landscape. So it was almost as a matter of form alone that he mounted guard, while I sank to rest on my soft spring mattress of boughs.

Poor fellow! He was slighter than I, and the exposure and hard labor of cutting through the forest had tired him terribly. I was almost tempted to exchange places with him this night and let him have the first nap; but I soon reflected that he would be fresher for the next day's work if we followed our usual arrangement. While I was thinking about it and looking into the fire, his form seemed to waver and grow hazy, and I fell asleep.

I awoke with a strange, terrible feeling of oppression to find a large, broad shouldered, big-whiskered native sitting astride my chest, while two others were quietly knotting a strong, twisted vine around my wrists and ankles. Just in front of me I saw, swung up on the sturdy back of a six-foot native, the trussed-up form of Karl. As soon as I was properly secured, I was slung up in the same manner, and we started off. It was a few moments before I sufficiently recovered my senses to realize where I was and what

was going on, and when in a measure I regained my mental equipoise, I made a strange discovery. I have said that the "old man of the mountain," who was calmly sitting on my chest when I awoke, had a heavy, bushy beard. But this was not the only peculiarity comprising in his personal make-up. As I was tossed upon his back, I saw a neat little tail, about a foot long, apparently growing from the base of his spinal column. Glancing at the others in the party, I found that one and all were similarly endowed. Were they men? Or had we fallen into the hands of a troop of monkeys? Either way, it made little difference, I thought, as our bones would soon be whitening under the tropic sun. I had little time to look around, for our captors entered the cavern at once, and the light from the fire faded away in the distance behind us, until it became a mere glowing star afar off, and finally disappeared altogether.

We could see nothing, but the constant splashing and tinkle of the streamlet told us that our captors were following up its course. Hour after hour passed away, and still the steady march was kept up. Occasional guttural sounds were exchanged among our bearers and the escort, but as a general rule a perfect silence was maintained.

I think it must have been about noon when we made a halt. Although our bonds were not loosened, we were carefully fed and treated to refreshing draughts of the cool, sweet water. This looked favorable, and we cheered up a little. As we had not been gagged, a little conversation was possible on the way, and Karl confessed, with much contrition, that he had fallen asleep at his post, and allowed us to become the victims of a surprise. I could not blame the poor fellow, for he had been completely overcome by fatigue. So I told him not to mind it, but keep up a good heart, for we could at least die together like men. After a short halt the procession started again. The leaders lighted torches now, and in the dim light which they gave, our bearers made their way over stones and through pools of water, sometimes crouching almost on all fours, then again walking erect as the cavern ceiling receded. At last a bright star appeared ahead, and as we drew nearer, the rays glowed brighter and brighter, till at last we came out in broad daylight.

The spot where we emerged seemed to be the bottom of a great well. High up on either side rose the gaunt, rough cliffs, till nothing but a narrow ribbon of sky could be discerned. I have called it a well, but I suppose canon would be a more correct term, as we found when we were carried along farther. It was a cleft in the mountain, and just wide enough to afford a narrow and uneven path along the brookside. Here we halted for the night. Karl and I were duly and liberally supplied with provision and fruit, and a cushion of soft boughs was provided for our bed. Thus far, we had met with kind treatment in all save the restriction upon our liberty, and as we were completely worn out, we fell asleep in the midst of our enemies with the trustfulness of childhood.

We were awakened at dawn, and the bonds about our legs released, but we were obliged to walk in single file along the narrow path. It was only a short uphill jaunt before we reached a small pool where the little stream found its source. Skirting the shores, we clambered up over the farther bank, and then commenced a descent. We twisted and turned and doubled on our tracks, climbed over small obstacles, and took detours around large obstructions, until at last, just before dusk, we reached a spot where we saw spread out before us a beautiful sight. We stood on the edge of a lofty cliff. Two hundred feet below, the feathery tops of the palm brushed against its rocky face, and the dark green leaves seemed like billows of an ocean of foliage. Here and there were glimpses of water, shining silver-white like molten lead, or touched with golden fire by the descending sun. About a mile away was a most charming lake dotted with islands, and far across the valley were the snowy caps of a sister range of mountains. As we walked on the scene dissolved as though shifted on the slides of a magic lantern, and we continued our descent. It was a long and arduous task, but our captors seemed resolved to complete it that night at all hazards. When it became dark, torches were lighted, and we kept on until finally we entered the forest.

It was only a few steps, seemingly, before we saw ladders made of fiber dangling from the lofty trees all around us. With a double escort, we mounted the one pointed out to us, and were soon snugly ensconced in what seemed a huge bee-hive, or thatched bird's nest, firmly built among the higher branches. Here we passed the night. In the morning we descended with our guards, and were marched off again through the forest; but this time we were surrounded by a swarm of these strange natives, who chattered incessantly among themselves, evidently making all sorts of comments upon our personal appearance.

Little and big, male and female, all rejoiced in the same caudal appendage, the lack of which in their prisoners evidently struck them as a matter of wonder and amusement. About noon we reached the shores of the lake, and here most of our escort left us, a few of our original captors still remaining. A long canoe lay almost concealed among the thick rushes at the water's edge, and into this we were pushed, and then paddled out into the lake. Our guards, like the rest of this strange people, wore only a breech-clout, and were covered with a growth of light,

downy hair, not nearly so marked as the thick-matted growth on the bodies of their monkey brothers. All were well-built, athletic fellows, and they propelled us over the water at considerable speed. We darted along, now skirting the shore of some little island, then crossing a belt of clear water, and then again gliding through a narrow passage between the clustering islets. At last we reached our destination, and were landed on what seemed the largest island of the lake. Here our coming caused the greatest commotion, and troops of these strange beings assembled from all quarters, running up and down their ladders like disturbed inhabitants of an ant-hill. Our guards conducted us to another "bee-hive" for our night's rest. What were they going to do with us? Since we had found our lives spared, we had never ceased to puzzle over this question. Could it be that the usual managery conditions were to be reversed, and that men were to become a travelling show for monkeys? With the dawn of day came a partial solution of the mystery. Embarking again, we set out in the midst of a large number of canoes, well loaded down with their human (?) freight. One craft was evidently a great object of interest to the tribe, and the calm, white-whiskered old personage who sat in the stern, clothed in a bright red tunic, seemed to be treated with great reverence and looked up to by all. When we landed opposite the shore we had left the day before, the patriarch gave a few commands in a guttural tongue. Three or four stalwart fellows immediately responded, and cutting the ropes which secured our hands, each wrist was firmly grasped, and we were run along into the edge of the forest. Here we were thrown into a large cage formed of rails of some tough, heavy wood, almost as hard as iron. Our dirk knives had been carefully taken away, but for some unknown reason they had left us our revolvers and our small but precious stock of cartridges. Once in the cage, the door was securely fastened by driving down several posts in front of it, and then the natives disappeared, leaving us alone. Looking around our prison, we found in its center a jar of water, and near by several clusters of bananas, a few coconuts, and some small water-like cakes of coarse bread. This did not look like starvation, and we felt somewhat reassured; but a further search brought out some ghastly developments. Opposite the door, and fixed on the wall of the cage, was a grinning skull, and following a line of the same height around the cage, we saw no less than nine of these horrible monuments.

It only remained a problem now, what death we were to die, and we awaited without a ray of hope some new and final phase of the situation.

Just as night fell, a solitary native drew near and threw inside the bars a junk of raw meat. As the darkness came on we crouched together in the center of the cage, and awaited our fate in silence, too frightened to move. Suddenly there came a mighty roar, and a dark, massive body dashed against the side of the cage, almost crushing in the wire bars. It was a lion of the largest kind, and his eyes blazed like glowing stars, as he tore away at the cage in his endeavors to get at the meat inside. His furious roaring was answered from all quarters, and hundreds of fiery eyes glared upon us from every side, until the whole forest around seemed sprinkled with glittering sparks. Lions, panthers, and leopards dashed at the cage, or hurled themselves down from the branches upon it, till it seemed that no structure could stand against the terrible force of their attacks. They clustered around us so close that we could almost feel their hot breath, and thrust their long paws through the bars, almost reaching us as we lay on the ground beneath. We could not rise to throw out the offensive meat, for to do so would be certain and immediate destruction; and so the long watches of the night wore on, until at last, after seeming ages of torture, the first faint light of the moon appeared through the tree-tops. This revealed dimly the figures of the beasts outside, and we determined to have a shot or two at our foes. Raising my revolver, I took a careful aim at the glowing eyeball of a panther, who was crouching above us on the top of the cage. The crack of the revolver was followed by a terrible blood-curdling yell, and the panther dropped dead on the bars. His body was quickly dragged off and devoured by his companions, and the taste of blood made them fiercer than ever. They shook the bars of the cage, and reached in their paws till their claws tore through the ground almost at our sides.

One leopard got a claw through Karl's shoe and stripped it off, cutting deep gashes in his foot. He became a victim to his greed, however, for Karl seriously wounded him with a lucky bullet, and he was torn in pieces at once by the savage brutes.

Several more of our enemies were shot, and day dawned, finding us still alive, but almost maniacs, after our night of horrors.

Our brute enemies withdrew with the morning light, leaving the last victim, a leopard, lying where he fell. Noon came and found us busy digging, with one of the skulls for a spade, a deep hole in the center of the cage, to creep into for refuge in the night to come.

Just at dusk the same native put in an appearance, carrying in one hand a rude wooden cross. He seemed thunderstruck at finding us alive and the cage unbroken, and stood looking at us fixedly.

A queer idea flashed into my mind on seeing the cross, and I put it into immediate execution. I took our last few matches from my pocket,