

we have cost that poor creature his life—it's all we hadn't the women with us. Bring the sago, though it is hardly worth what we have paid for it—that sight. Don't tell your wife."

"No, no," said Perran, hastily.

It was an ugly welcome to the country—all felt. 'Lisbeth was surprised to hear so short a report of the proceedings on shore, and very eager for the moment when she might be permitted to land.

Towards evening they came across a canoe paddled by two women—one had a baby slung in a netted bag round her neck. The women, like the other natives, were making off in great haste, when they were attracted by the sight of a small looking glass, flashed in the rays of the setting sun by 'Lisbeth.

"Show a red handkerchief too, Perran," she cried.

The bait was evidently tempting. The women gazed curiously at the steamer and its occupants; but at last decided that safety lay in flight, and, applying themselves vigorously to their paddles, soon vanished up a neighboring backwater.

"Me go after them, Captain; me catch 'em easy," cried impulsive Peter, making preparations for launching the boat.

But Captain Mostyn stopped him. That would terrify the women and defeat their own ends. "We must be careful to earn a good reputation," he said. "I expect those women will carry away a wonderful report of us."

"We may look out for visitors, then, tomorrow," commented Perran.

And sure enough at daybreak the banks of the river, right and left, were lined with half-naked savages, brandishing bows and arrows, and threatening attack. Women were among the throng, their only garment a short fringe petticoat of grass.

The *Dart* kept well in mid-stream, but, after a while, canoes began to put off from the bank, and the situation became serious.

"Steady at your posts," cried Captain Mostyn, "and let no one fire without orders. Peter, you hear! These creatures evidently have never seen firearms before. I expect one discharge will send the whole lot flying. I don't want to scare them, but—"

But it was evidently necessary. In vain the cry of "Peace" was raised in their own tongue, and all the treasures of the store chests exhibited. More and more canoes full of armed savages put off, as it appeared that the great smoking ship-house was harmless; and gestures and intentions being evidently warlike, Captain Mostyn at last, after serious consultation with his three friends, raised his rifle and fired in the air.

The effect was so instantaneous and remarkable that the defenders on board the *Dart* could not restrain a shout of laughter. Half the

attacking party dropped their paddles and fell, as if struck dead, into the bottoms of the canoes. A vast number leaped into the river and swam ashore in the wildest alarm, while such as retained sufficient self-possession made all haste to gain the banks with their paddles. Never was such a stampede. The crowd on land, chiefly composed of women, fled also, falling over each other in their terror and confusion till they lay in heaps on the ground, too frightened to extricate themselves. Birds flew out of the neighboring forest, screaming in chorus—a beautiful red and green parrot, dashing blindly against the steamer in its alarm, being promptly secured by Peter.

In four minutes there was not a living soul to be seen, though the river was dotted with overturned canoes and paddles.

"No need to say that we have first introduced gunpowder here," said Perran.

"What's the next move, Captain?"

"Onwards," was the answer. "The river widens farther on, and we shall have a better outlook over the country; besides, the poor wretches will want to recover their possessions. I should like to take a canoe on board as a specimen of New Guinea workmanship. But, firstly, we must be honest, and, secondly, we haven't room."

"Oh! Missis," screamed Molly, in great excitement, "here's another of them babies in a fishing net."

Poor little dark-skinned mite! Yes, indeed, there it lay, calmly asleep in a forsaken canoe, which was drifting slowly by them. Sam put out a big hand, and lifted it on deck, net and all.

"Oh, Perran!" cried 'Lisbeth. "What must we do? The poor, forsaken little thing!"

All eyes gazed curiously on the first Papuan which had come amongst them. It was a little creature of a few months old, lying snugly in a netted bag, which the mother could easily pick up to carry about with her, or hang it on a peg, if more convenient. A necklace of shells constituted its sole clothing.

It opened its eyes, and showed no fear of the white skins; but the poor little creature, shaken by a bad cough, shortly set up a wail.

'Lisbeth must needs have it in her arms to comfort it, but only for a few minutes, since it was decided that baby must be returned to its own canoe, and allowed to drift ashore. The mother was certain to return for it.

It seemed cruel to turn the babe back adrift again, all alone; but it had to be done; and presently Molly, who was sharp-eyed to a wonderful degree, cried out that she saw the mother watching among the reeds, for all the world like the sister of Moses.

What would she think of the new bead necklace that garnished the little brown neck now? The *Dart* steamed out of sight before the meet-