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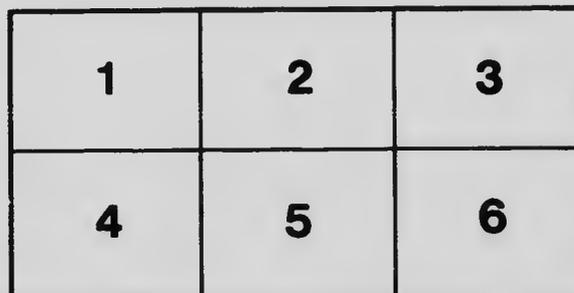
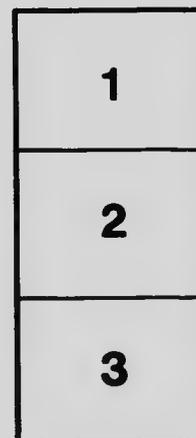
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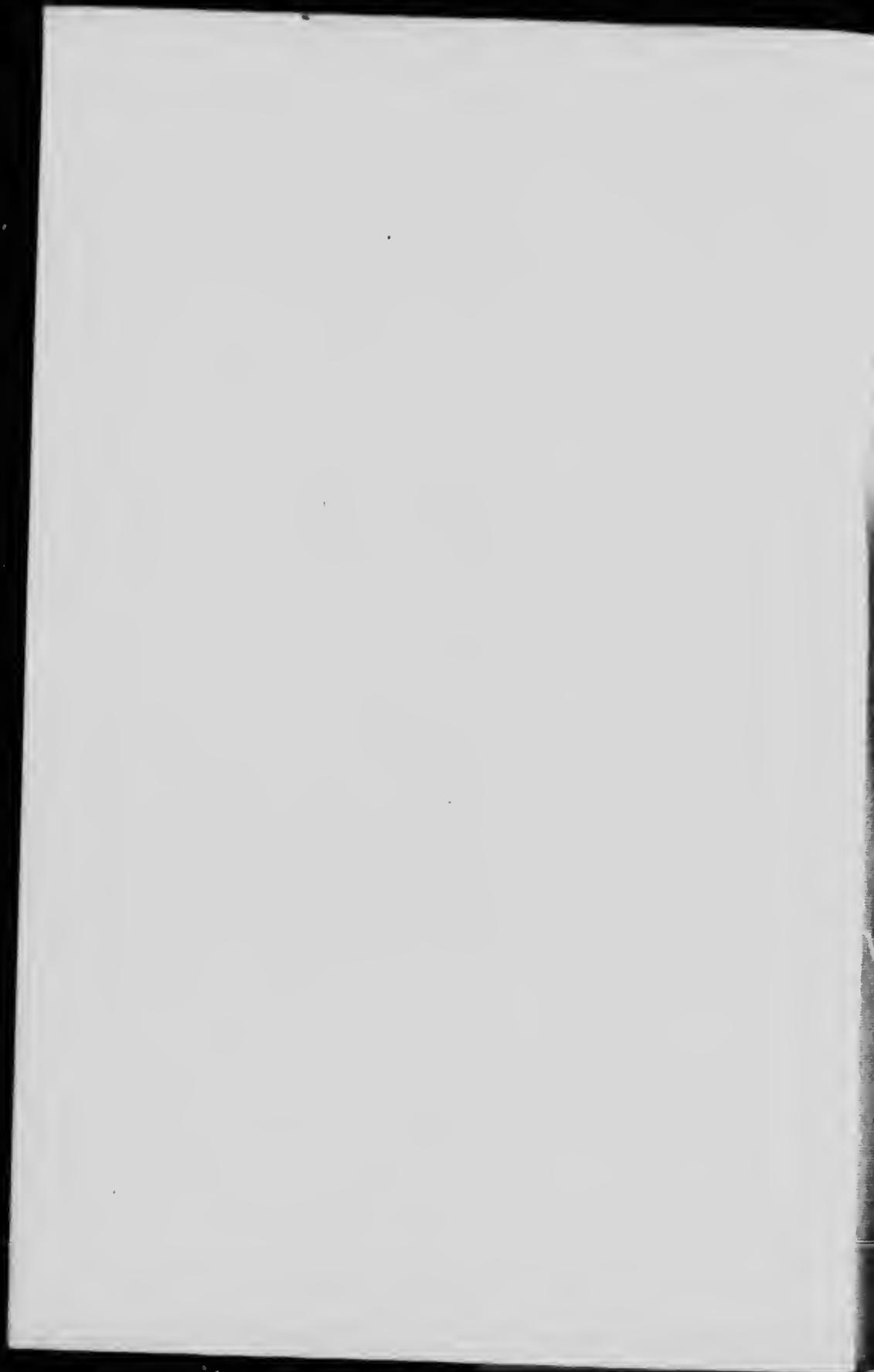
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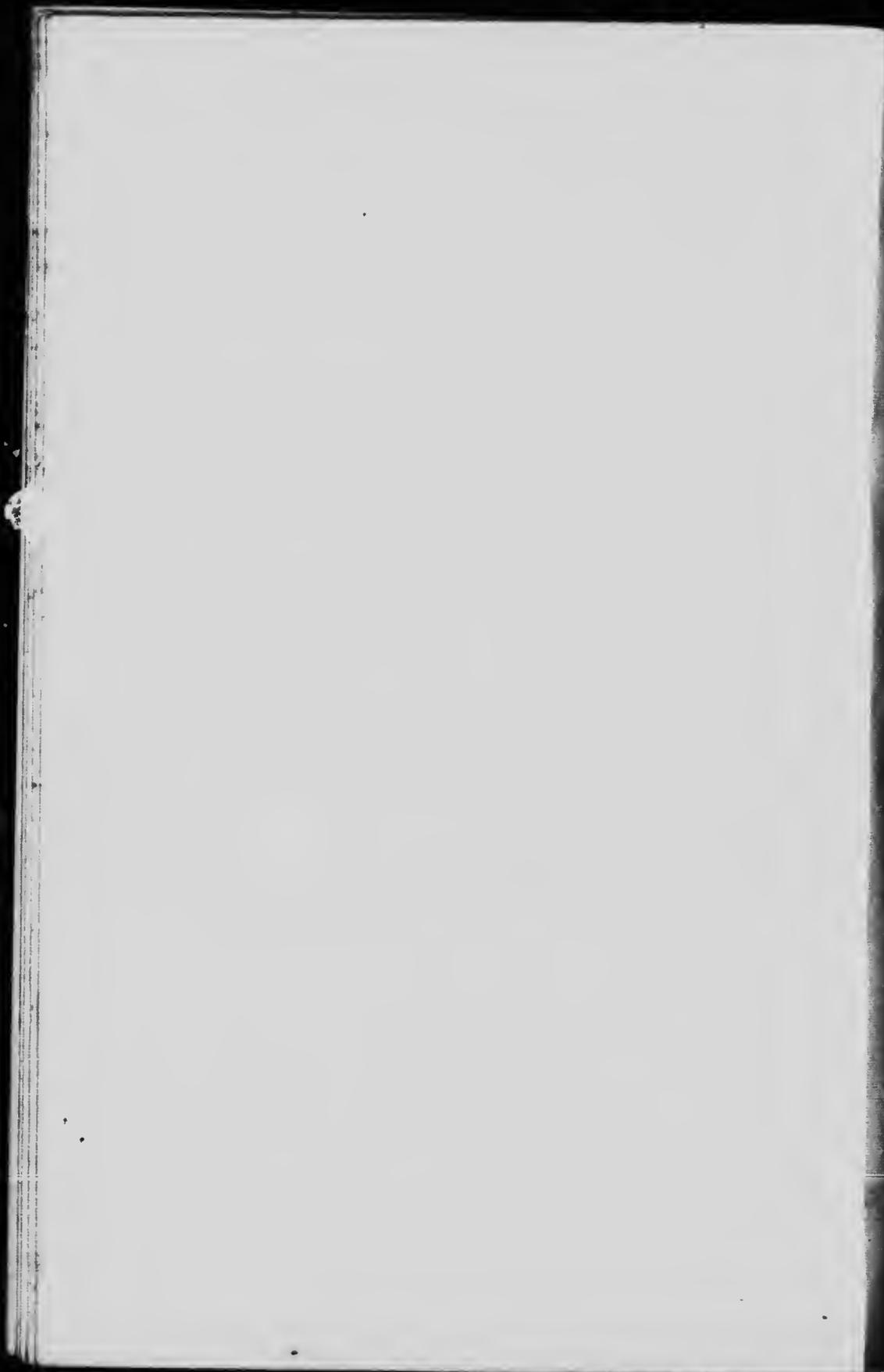
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ALVORD'S LUCK

CHAPTER I

DRAKE, the supercargo of the *Palestine*, made Alvord's acquaintance one dull, lowering day when a black north-easter was blowing hard, and a sullen, heavy sea tumbled upon the long line of beach that stretched from Point Plomer on the north to the harbour bar, ten miles away.

He, Drake, had emerged from the dense scrub of wild apple and bungalow palms, which in so many places breaks the monotony of the sea coast of New South Wales; when, from the bluff on which he stood, he saw about a mile away the figure of a man working on the beach.

"Some poor hatter* beggar beach-mining," he thought, as he laid down his gun and lit his pipe; "I'll go and have a yarn with him. Daresay I'll find him as doddery and dirty as any other 'hatter.'"

After resting a few minutes, he took up his gun and three black duck which he had shot, and descended to the beach. The tide was low, and although the

* A "hatter" in Australian mining parlance is a man who works by himself, *i.e.*, has no mate. Men of this class are frequently met with on alluvial gold-fields in Australia.

heaving seas curled over and burst continuously on the shore, the sand was hard and dry a few feet away from the water-line, and Drake's spirits rose when he saw a tent and fly standing not far from where the man was working. He had been tramping over many miles of swampy, snake-infested country ever since daylight, and the prospect of obtaining a drink of tea and a meal of damper and salt beef enlivened him so that he soon covered the distance between himself and the "hatter."

No "dodder" old greybeard, worn out with long years of toil and disappointment, answered his "Good-morning," but a tall, well-set-up young man of under five-and-twenty years of age. He was leaning against the rude cradle, shovel in hand, as Drake came up, and his short-sleeved flannel shirt, opened at the neck, revealed the muscles and chest of a powerful man.

He was dressed in all respects like the generality of the men his visitor had seen mining on the beaches along the coast, except that instead of the usual rough, lace-up "Bluchers" he was wearing an unmistakable pair of sea-boots. A thick, reddish-brown moustache hid the firm mouth with its strong, white teeth, and drooped down the sides of the square-set, determined jaws, which so well matched the grey, resolute, but yet pleasant eyes. Drake "took" to the man at once.

"Are you working alone?" he asked.

"Yes, at present. I have a mate, but he has been ill for a week. He's up there in the tent."

"Getting anything?"

The stranger laughed. "Not much, but I guess

I'm doing as well here as I could anywhere along the coast. There's plenty of gold—no doubt about it—but the layer of black sand is very thin, and then there's such a devil of a lot of big stones. Look at that pile."

He pointed to a great heap of stones picked out from the sand before it could be shovelled into the cradle. Drake nodded.

"Pretty tough work."

"That is so," and taking his pipe from the leather pouch at his belt, he cut himself some tobacco. Then he looked at the ducks.

"Get those in the big swamp?"

"Yes, would you like a couple?"

"Rather. Guess my mate will like a change. I've been feeding him on fish soup. Come up to the camp and spell a bit, and you can see the gold we've got."

As the two walked up the beach towards the tent, which was fixed in a clump of stunted wattle trees, Drake saw that a "race" had been cut at considerable labour from the bank of a small stream, which ran down to where the rude mining plant was fixed on the beach.

"I'm afraid the sea will wash all that away," he said, pointing to the race, the sides of which were protected by gum saplings. "This north-easter will hold for a couple of days yet, and there will be a big tide to-morrow."

"Well, I guess I can't stop it—it will have to go," replied the stranger with good-humoured nonchalance.

They reached the tent and the big man went inside. In a few moments he returned.

"My mate is asleep, so I won't disturb him. We can sit down here."

There was a rough table formed of some slabs of wreckage, standing under a shelter of boughs beside the tent. Two empty cases made seats, and lying about were a camp oven, and the usual tin cooking utensils to be seen in a mining camp.

"Now, here is what we have won during the six weeks we have been camped here," said the man, holding up a small glass Chutney bottle half-filled with very fine gold. He took a tin plate and poured out the bright yellow dust. "Not very much, is there, for six weeks' bullocking?"

Drake shook his head. "No, not much. About nine ounces, I think."

"Yes, about that. And it doesn't pay, working the sand as we do. You see we have no horses, and we have to hump all our provisions on our backs from the township, which is thirteen miles away. Then, too, we have to pay through the nose for anything we want—either tools or grub."

"What is the matter with your mate?"

"Guess the work is a bit too tough for him," was the reply, given with some hesitation. "The food is—well, rough; and I don't shine as a *chef*. The fact is, he will never be able to pull along at beach-mining."

"Has he been with you long?"

"No. I met him at Nambucca Heads, and as he

didn't seem to be making a raging fortune, I got him to come in mates with me."

"I see," said Drake, who surmised, correctly enough, that the stranger's companion was someone whom he had asked to share his tent and "tucker" from a feeling of pity. "It's pretty hard to have a sick mate, even on a good field, but a thundering sight worse on these lonely beaches, where a man wants to be a good bushman, a fisherman, and a jack of all trades, gold or no gold; that is, unless he has money or plenty of tick at the nearest store-keeper's."

"That is so," assented the other; "I'm pretty handy at most things, so I can get along somehow——"

"You're a sailorman?" said Drake suddenly, looking at two hammocks, slung under the wattle trees. They were made out of corn sacks, but the clues and lashings, composed of odds and ends of old rope, showed him they were the work of a seaman's hand; "I thought you were from the first."

The stranger smiled and nodded. "Yes, I've chewed a bit of salt horse in my time, and I guess you have too."

Drake laughed in turn. "Yes, but I'm having a spell ashore for a few months." Then he took up a duck, began plucking it, and pointed to the other two.

"This fellow is the fattest and will suit your mate if he's a bit weak in his internal arrangements. The other two will do for your supper to-night."

"Thank you. It's real kind of you. I'll stew that fat one down into soup for my mate. He was

saying this morning that some beef tea would pull him round quicker than anything, but I guess wild duck beats beef tea. And you can't make beef tea out of salt junk. We've got some here that would turn Lot's wife green with jealousy—it's that darned salt."

Drake ceased plucking his bird. "Well, he can have some beef tea by to-night—a bucketful if he likes. Look here, have you got a rifle?"

"Yes, an old Snider carbine. I used to get a kangaroo with it at times, but there's none about here."

"No, but there's a lot of cattle. All this country about here, from the big swamp down to the port, belongs to my mother; all the cattle you see running about here branded D over E with a cut dewlap belong to her, and if you'll come out with me towards the swamp, we'll soon knock over a young beast, and get back to the camp before sunset with as much beef as we can carry."

The stranger's face lit up with pleasure; he put out his hand instinctively and again thanked his visitor.

"Oh, that's all right. My mother would have been the first to offer you a beast if she knew you were in want of beef. Her name is Drake, mine's Tom Drake. I'm supercargo of the *Palestine*, a Fiji-Samoa trading brig, and I'm here spending a few months at home."

"And my name is Gilbert Alvord. I was second mate of a Puget Sound lumberman, but 'skipped' at Newcastle six months ago to try my luck at beach-mining."

They both laughed in unison, and then vigorously set to work plucking the ducks, talking as they worked. Then the sound of their voices awoke the sick man, who rose and came out from the tent. He was thin and pale, with fair hair and moustache, and certainly seemed quite unfitted for the rough life of a miner. He looked eagerly at the plump duck in Drake's hands, and after giving him a languid "Good-morning," told his mate that he felt as if he could "eat it raw."

"Well, we'll grill it for you in a jiffy," said the visitor. "Please make up the fire, Mr. Alvord."

In a few minutes a bright fire of dead she-oak saplings was ready, and the supercargo, splitting open the bird with his sheath knife, spitted it on a forked twig, and began to grill it, the sick man watching him with hungry eyes. As soon as it was sufficiently cooked, Alvord put it on a tin plate with a big slice of damper, and pepper and salt.

"Guess that will make you feel just bully," he said with his good-natured laugh, as the lanky invalid began to eat. "Now, Mr. Drake, I'll get out the old Snider, and we'll start as soon as you like. We'll be back by sundown, Lumley."

Lumley nodded, and endeavoured to say that he would try to finish plucking the remaining birds by their return. But he was too intent upon his plate to give either his mate or the visitor much attention.

So filling their pipes once more, the two men, with gun and carbine, set off towards the big swamp.

"Your mate is a new-chum Englishman, isn't he?" asked Drake.

"Yes," said Alvord, "he is a bit of a tenderfoot. But I think he's got grit in him, though he doesn't know it."

Drake said nothing further, but thought that Mr. Lumley would not suit *him* for a mate. However, the young fellow was evidently not physically fit for a miner's life, and that he was a severe tax upon Alvord's good nature he felt certain.

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CHAPTER II

NEARLY twelve months had passed, and the *Palestine* was berthed alongside the Queen's Wharf at Auckland, discharging her cargo of copra and malodorous shark-fins. Drake himself was lying on the skylight, reading some letters he had just received by the Sydney steamer. Pakenham, the skipper, a big, broad-shouldered American, with whom the young man had sailed as supercargo for four years, was pacing the after-deck, smoking his after-breakfast cigar, and impatiently waiting for Drake to come ashore with him.

"Luck!" he said to the captain as he read, "luck is no name for it! If I had only possessed common sense enough I should have gone in with this fellow Alvord when he wanted me. He said that if he once got on to a good patch of black sand there was a fortune in it, and that all the other fellows who were working the beaches didn't know how to do the thing properly. But no one except my mother and my brother Ted believed in him—no one in New South Wales does believe in American enterprise until they see you Yankees besting us in all sorts of things and getting all the plunder. Then we sit up in our stodgy British fashion and feel sorry." Then he read on to himself—

“For the first three months he had such dreadful disappointments. Heavy easterly gales washed away his plant, races, tables, and everything else no less than three times. And, of course, all the local wiseheads sniggered, and some of them I really believe were *glad*, absolutely *glad*, that the poor young fellow had met with such misfortune. That horrid fellow Watts, the storekeeper, whose real name, as I told you, is Israels, was so afraid that your friend was ‘stony broke’ after his last disaster, that he rode down to the mining camp and asked Mr. Alvord to immediately settle up, or give him a lien on all his horses, drays, etc. Of course the fellow had not the slightest idea that I had only lent them to your friend. However, he was very rude, and Alvord lost his temper, and pulling the man off his horse, threw him into one of the sludge-pits on the bank of the creek. He was fined £5, and the intelligent Bench—the Rev. Morven and that measly little hound Pountney, the grocer—threatened to commit him for contempt when he said that Watts was so greasy and dirty that the sludge-pit could not be used again. Mr. Morven said that it was ‘an alarming and brutal assault upon one of their most respected citizens,’ and went on talking a lot of nonsense about ‘law and order and American ruffianism which must be put down with a firm hand,’ etc.; and then everyone laughed when Alvord said, in his drawling manner, and with delightful insolence, ‘Say, Parson, you must owe a big meat bill.’ Of course it was a random shot, but it hit the mark, for the Morvens owe money to every shopkeeper in the place. Mr. Morven turned green with anger, and Sergeant

Kennedy was trying so hard to stifle a laugh that he nearly choked when he spluttered out, 'Silence in th' Coort!'

"I heard all this just after lunch, so I at once went down to the bank and drew £50, sent it to Alvord with a note, and told him not to be discouraged. He came to see me half an hour later, and thanked me in such a manly, straightforward fashion that I liked him more than ever. He speaks to *me* as he is, Tom—an educated gentleman; his quaint Americanisms, which I think are delightful, are, as you said, merely assumed, though they have become a second nature to him from the rough, wandering life he has led.

"Well, I told him that I would willingly 'back' him to the extent of £200 or £300 if it was necessary, and that I would not complain if his hopes were not realised. He said he was absolutely certain that he had struck the right place at last—about two miles from the Round Rocks, where the black sand is very deep, and that a week's fine weather would convince me he was right. Before going back to his camp he went to the court-house, and applied for an additional ground for four men. Major Cromer, the P.M., who thinks he knows everything, asked him rather sharply if he was prepared to fulfil the labour conditions, otherwise he would not grant the application.

"'Very well, Colonel,' said your friend, 'then I guess I'll have to telegraph to the Minister for Mines in Sydney to look up your qualifications as Mining Warden for this one-horse town.'

"The poor, dear old Major sat back in his chair almost

petrified, and Alvord, who, although he has only been in the colony a few months, knows the mining laws better than many people do their prayers, took the Major into his confidence, and told him what he intended doing, and the result was that his application was granted, and the two shook hands, and Alvord, attended by half a dozen wages' men, rode through the town about dusk, on their way to Round Rocks.

"In the evening, Major Cromer and the Misses C. called, and, as usual, he told me the same wearisome old story about his extraordinary escapes at Torres Vedras and Talavera. Then he began to talk about Alvord, who, the silly old man said, was 'remarkably intelligent for an American.' Grace Cromer, the rich niece, I noticed was remarkably quiet, and the other Cromer girls seemed to be giggling unnecessarily whenever Alvord's name was mentioned.

"Of course there was some mystery, and I determined to find it out, and I did that very night, from Nancy Cromer, who is a girl to whom a secret would be a positive bodily torture—she *must* tell it or die in agony. Well, 'take hold of something,' Master Thomas Drake, and try and think of what you have lost, for I am sure, *quite* sure that Grace liked you, and now it is too late, and I told you so often that I was sure she was disappointed when she came here with her cousins and found you were usually away slaughtering ducks and platypus, and she has ten or twelve thousand pounds, and is as sweet a girl as ever breathed.

"It seems that Grace Cromer was riding home by way of Round Rocks Creek about a month after Alvord

Alvord's Luck

21

had begun work there with his men, and foolishly tried to cross the mouth of the creek, got into a quicksand, had to jump off, and might have lost her life only for Alvord and a couple of black fellows, who were watching her cross. She was rescued with a heart full of gratitude, and her hair full of sand. Of course Alvord rode home with her, and of course she has been meeting him since, and pretty often, too, I imagine, from what Nancy said. I said it was very wrong, but promised I would not say anything. But as you were out of the question, I determined to help him all I could in his wooing, which I was sure would be successful. He deserves to get a good wife, and I am certain he did not dream that Grace has money.

"Now for the *first* news of which I told you. Three days after Alvord had set to work again with six wages' men, Thady Brannigan, one of them, galloped up to the house, his horse in a lather of foam, with a note for me from Alvord, telling me that that morning he had struck very rich wash dirt about a mile up the creek, which was yielding ten ounces to the load. The place is in a bend of the old bed of the creek, and quite near the sea. 'I knew my luck was coming,' he concluded.

"In half an hour after, the news had spread through the town, and the sleepy old place was gasping with excitement. First of all the fat sergeant and two troopers went past the house, followed soon after by about a hundred other men, some mounted, some on foot, and all eager to peg out claims, the measly little Pountney bringing up the rear with a cartload of stores for sale. By sunset they were all at work, sinking all

around Alvord's ground. Many of them tried to peg off some of his protection area, and then there was a fight with the police, of course. Alvord and his men had ceased work when the rush came, and had the three shafts they had sunk all covered over with sheets of bark to keep away inquisitive people, and only the sergeant was allowed down. Little Pountney, however, thrust himself past the two troopers, and lifted up a sherd of bark in one of the shafts, and was on his knees looking down, when Thady Brannigan gave him a push from behind, and down he went into three feet of water—I do wish I had been there to see the horrid little toad fished out!

“Three days after this, I drove out with Major and Mrs. Cromer and found quite three hundred men on the ground. They had come in from places a hundred miles away, but none of them were getting any gold worth speaking of, and indeed your friend seems to have not only a very rich piece of ground, but the only ground that is worth working in the systematic manner he has adopted. He paid me the compliment of asking me to take the gold he had washed out to the bank—over a hundred ounces—and since then the lucky fellow has got three hundred more, and has not yet worked out more than a quarter of his ground.

“Lumley—I don't like Mr. Lumley—is still with him, and of course shares in Alvord's good fortune, though he certainly is not entitled to it, for as you know, he never really was 'mate,' in the mining sense, of your friend. He has quite recovered from his illness, and certainly is now a very handsome young man, and

very much run after by all the marriageable girls in the district. Of course it soon leaked out that he was the Honourable Mr. Lumley, and will come in for a title; but people don't know as much about him as I do—not that that would make any difference to most of them.

“ I never did like him from the first, and when he was quite recovered from his illness, I took a further dislike to him. Alvord, as you know, has been more than a brother to him, and soon after you went away, I heard the honourable young gentleman's story from Captain Manning of H.M.S. *Orpheus*, whom I met in Sydney. He told me that Lumley was a graceless scamp and a wastrel. His father sent him out to Australia to get rid of him, and sends him £100 every six months. He ran away from Sydney—which he made too hot to hold him—and was wandering about somewhere on the north coast earning a living as a billiard-marker in public-houses, when Alvord took pity on him and carried him off to his beach-mining camp. Now, you will scarcely credit it, but at the very time that poor Mr. Alvord met with his last washaway, and had not a pound in his pocket to carry on with, Lumley had received his half-yearly remittance, and went off to Sydney to spend it, although he knew that the man who had succoured him was in great straits. Not one penny did he proffer, and not one penny did he possess when he returned from Sydney—it had all been squandered. As soon as he landed from the steamer, he called on me. He was riding a borrowed horse, and dressed like the miners you see on the stage—sloouch hat, high boots, white mole-skins, beautifully new Oxford flannel shirt—just as if he had emerged from a

packing case. He was waiting for me in the dining-room. His first remark was that no doubt I was surprised to see him back so soon.

“‘Not at all,’ I said with sudden anger; ‘of course you heard in Sydney of Mr. Alvord’s good fortune.’

“He did not like it, Tom, I can assure you, but pretended not to understand my meaning. I did not ask him to stay to lunch, and was glad to see him ride off to Round Rocks. Alvord was actually foolish enough to be nice to him, lent him some money, and, worse still, appears to now treat him as a ‘mate,’ although the fellow does hardly any work, and spends all his evenings in town, playing billiards and boasting about the richness of ‘our’ claim. Two or three times a week he goes to see the Cromer girls, and I quite believe he knows about Grace’s fortune, for he is as astute as he is worthless and lazy. However he is treading on dangerous ground, for if I know anything of your friend’s disposition, he is not a man to be trifled with in *that* sort of matter, although so foolishly good-natured in other respects.”

Thursday, 23rd.

“Nothing but trouble, and plenty of it. I do wish you were at home, if only to drive away the callers who are annoying me. Your Aunt Eliza once made me very cross by saying that if you were in a bad temper, and had a two days’ growth of beard on your chin, you would frighten any woman. Your brother being away leaves me at these people’s mercy. Now for the trouble above-mentioned.

“First—Mr. Lumley proposed to Grace Cromer, and was not accepted; second, the rejected one then told her uncle that she was meeting Alvord; third, Major Cromer went off in a tearing rage to Round Rocks, and used such stupid language to poor Alvord about his niece that Alvord lost his temper, and called him a fossil, and the Major struck him with his whip. Thank heaven the young fellow restrained himself, and begged him to go away; fourth, the Honourable Charles got exceedingly intoxicated in Hoolan's public-house, and said all sorts of things about Alvord having *cheated* him out of his full share in Round Rocks prospecting claim; fifth, Branigan called him a liar and there was a fight, with the result that Alvord heard of it, and came into town post-haste to interview the Hon. Charles. Sixth, the Hon. Charles denied everything, but was foolish enough to tell Alvord that he was a ‘presumptuous cad’ to aspire to Grace, whereupon Alvord took him by the collar and *shook* him; seventh, Lumley was mean enough to claim a half-share in Round Rocks, and the case came on before Major Cromer and two mining assessors, who of course had to find in favour of Alvord, although they did not like it; and eighth and last, Grace has been sent off to Sydney. She came to say good-bye, and I have been pestered with inquisitive callers ever since.”

Then came a break of a month.

“The Round Rocks claim is still paying handsomely, and Alvord must now be worth some thousands. He has *given* your brother Edward a quarter share—would not accept a penny for it, although lots of people here would

have given him £500 for it. But I am sorry to say that matters are all askew between him and G. C. There has been a quarrel of some sort, and they do not now correspond. He was here last night, and talking about you, and said quite abruptly that he was selling out, and thought of trying his luck in British Columbia, unless he happened to run across you in the meantime. I tried to get him to talk about Grace, but he froze at once. I am sorry for him, but he has no patience. And I shall be glad if he comes to you. Your affectionate mother,

“MARY DRAKE.”

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CHAPTER III

In the smoking-room of the Lick House, then *the* hotel of San Francisco, a big, sunburnt man in evening dress sat reading a paper. The evening was grey and dismal, for a thick yellow fog had rolled in from the sea, and creeping over the waters of the bay, enveloped the city in its damp, heavy mantle.

"Two gentlemen to see Mr. Alvord," said a boy, coming to the door.

The big man sprang up, and in another moment was shaking hands energetically with the two visitors.

"How are you, Tom, and you, Captain Pakenham? Come up to my rooms right away, where we'll be by ourselves, and can talk. Dinner won't be ready for half an hour, but I said seven in my note, knowing we should have the usual 'Frisco fog along to-night. Well, it's just my luck all over to meet you here, when I thought you were cruising way down about Samoa or the Friendlies."

In a few minutes the three men were in Alvord's rooms and comfortably seated, and his own especial waiter was mixing them each a cocktail.

"How on earth did you find out we were here?" asked Drake.

"My luck again. I was crossing over from Oakland

in *El Capitan* at two o'clock, and saw a white-painted hermaphrodite brig being towed into the dock. I knew she was an island trader, and as soon as I got ashore I went straight to the Exchange and asked her name, and when they said the *Palestine* I felt pretty good, I can tell you. So I wrote a note to you right away, and now here we are, and we are just going to do ourselves good to-night, and for a good many nights after. Captain Pakenham, I'm glad to meet you," and he raised his glass to the bearded skipper of the *Palestine*.

Drake looked round at the luxurious room with its magnificently appointed dining-table, which was set for three, and leant back in his chair and sighed with good-humoured envy.

"This is a bit different from a tent on the beach, Alvord, eh? and the 'gorgeosity' of the thing makes a fellow a bit dizzy, doesn't it, Pakenham? Do you know, Alvord, this is the first time either of us have put on evening dress for nearly two years—and, I say, old man, are you a bloated millionaire?"

Alvord laughed in his old quiet way. "Not quite, Tom; but, thanks to your mother, I've done pretty well. I cleared about ten thousand dollars from the Round Rocks. Then,"—he hesitated slightly—"I sold out, as I thought about trying British Columbia. Then I thought of buying a vessel, and running her myself in the island trade, but somehow I didn't care about going into it by myself, and I had half a mind to chase you around the Pacific until I found you, and make you come in with me. But before I knew what I was doing

almost, I was on my way to Callao—passenger in a barque whose skipper I knew. He put me in with some decent people, who were in the nitrate business, and I slung all the money I had into it, and came out 'all standing'—fifty thousand dollars to the good. Now, tell me, what brought the *Palestine* to 'Frisco?"

"Old age and ill-health. She's gone into dock, and Pakenham and I have instructions to spend two thousand dollars on her, and make her look young and beautiful, and sell her to anyone who is fool enough to buy her."

"And yourselves?"

Pakenham threw out his hands. "The same thing over again. We go back to Sydney and will be put into another ship. And we shall go on for another twenty years unless we buy or steal a ship of our own."

Alvord came over to them, and bending down, placed his hands on the supercargo's knees.

"I guess you won't, Tom Drake. I'm going to buy a ship, and Captain Pakenham is to be skipper, and you supercargo, and I'm coming too, and we're going to make things hustle in the South Sea trade, and rake in the dollars. Now don't say a word. We'll talk it over at dinner. And just sit there quiet a bit—I've forgotten something."

He went out and returned in a few minutes. Then he held out a box of cigars to them, took one himself, and lit it.

"There's ten minutes for a smoke, boys. And, say, I've just fixed up that you are to have two rooms here

on this floor, so you can send up your gear to-morrow morning. I'd as soon live in a cemetery as on board a ship when she's in dock. Now don't begin talking. You have just got to do it, and there's an end of it."

* * * * *

The dinner was over, and Alvord was listening to Pakenham, who was talking about a vessel he had seen in Honolulu three weeks before.

"She is just the right sort of ship for the island trade—a bit too big, perhaps, but that is better than being too small. She was built at Fraserburgh, in Scotland, and is only four years old. She can be bought for £2,000, which seems a big price, but she's worth it."

"Fast?"

"Fast as any island trader going, and that is saying a good deal."

Alvord nodded, and puffed away at his cigar for a moment or two.

"I'll buy her—if we are not too late. Now tell me, when do you think you'll be clear of the *Palestine*?"

"In less than a week, I hope. Dickson, the agent here, says he can sell her almost at once, but we want to get her repaired first."

"Well, now, look here. Let Dickson look after the whole show. The *San Juan* leaves for Honolulu on the 27th; this is the 10th, and to-morrow we'll book our passages, and get right away, and look at this barque, and buy her before it's too late."

The offer was too tempting a one to be refused, and the three men shook hands, and talked over their plans

till far into the night, and when they said good-night it was with the understanding that from the following morning Drake and the captain were to be Alvord's guests till they all sailed for Honolulu in the *San Juan*.

For the following three or four days, whilst Pakenham and the agent were attending to the sale of the *Palestine*, Alvord and Drake were busily engaged in buying the trade goods for their new venture, and by the end of the week fifteen thousand dollars' worth had been shipped on board the *San Juan*. Nearly every evening the three friends spent together, and when at last the poor old *Palestine* was sold, and the money paid to the owner's agent, there was nothing further for them to do but to wait till the 27th.

Not once had Alvord mentioned the name of Grace Cromer, and his friend did not think it was likely he would, when to his surprise Alvord himself told him in a few words the story of their estrangement and final severance.

"Everything was going on all right between us," he said in his outspoken way, "till I one day told her that both my parents were alive, and were working people. My father is a small farmer and ploughs his own land, and my mother makes butter and cheese, and sells it, and will go on making cheese and butter till the end of her days, I guess, though now she has no need to do it, God bless the dear old soul! Well, from that day Grace Cromer was never the same. That what I had told her worried her considerably, I could see, and it hurt me a lot, for my father was descended from a good old

Puritan family, and I reckon that an American farmer with a clean family record is as good a man—well to make it short, we broke!”

“I am sorry.”

“So was I. But I would not press a woman to marry me who would despise my father and mother, Tom. Anyway, she married Lumley, as you know.”

Drake nodded. “So my mother wrote me last year. She told me in her first letter that something had arisen between you and Miss Cromer. I’m sorry, though, she married that fellow Lumley. He’s a regular waster, and will go through her money fast enough. My mother never liked him, and I took a dislike to him the first day I met you—he was mere lazy than sick. Do you know that when you were so hard up one time he got £100 from his people.”

“So your mother told me. But somehow I could not help liking him at first. I thought he had some grit in him at bottom, and from what he told me of the way his people had treated him, I considered he had been badly used. I didn’t know the real facts of the case, or I’d have given him a £10 note, and turned him adrift right away. But I hope he’ll treat her properly.”

Drake shook his head. “My mother said that he’d drink himself to death in six months. They went to England soon after their marriage, and she wrote once to her from some place on the Continent, but did not say one single word about her husband. And that looks ominous for their happiness.”

There were a considerable number of passengers on

board the *San Juan*, when she cast off from the wharf. Some of them were residents of the Hawaiian Islands—sugar-planters and merchants who had been on a trip to the States, but most of the saloon, and all the fore-cabin passengers were booked for Sydney or Melbourne, for at Honolulu the *San Juan* connected with an Australian steamer belonging to the newly-established Sydney-San Francisco mail line. The majority of the fore-cabin passengers were returning and unsuccessful miners, whose back luck, however, had not interfered with their thirst, for most of them were noisily drunk, and already were giving trouble to the officers of the *San Juan* by coming aft into the saloon bar and making themselves objectionable generally. In those days there were no palatial mail steamers running between the city of the Golden Gates and the Australian Colonies, as there are to-day, and the *San Juan* was merely an ordinary coasting steamer impressed into the service until better vessels could be obtained. She was about 1,200 tons, a side-wheeler, with the usual unsightly "walking-beam" engines, and in favourable weather could do twelve knots if driven. However, her saloon accommodation was very good, and the big cabin which the three friends had secured was fitted with some degree of luxury.

They had come on board at the last moment, so had not had time to take notice of their fellow passengers, for the captain of the *San Juan*, who was an old acquaintance of Packerham's, had asked them to come on the bridge. It was a cold, raw day with a strong breeze, and as soon as the steamer rounded the point off

Telegraph Hill, the force of the wind drove all the saloon passengers who were on deck into the saloon, or their own deck cabins.

Drake left the bridge for his overcoat, and was walking quickly along the upper deck when he heard a woman's voice.

"Mr. Drake—Tom!"

He turned round in some surprise, which changed into amazement, when he saw a face he knew well looking at him from the door of one of the ladies' deck cabins.

"Grace—Mrs. Lumley!" he gasped in wide-eyed astonishment as he took her hand.

"Yes, Tom. It is me, indeed, though I do not suppose you would have recognised me if I had not spoken. I knew you were on board—or, at least, should be on board—for I saw a list of the passengers at Merrill and Company's office a week ago, and I thought that as I did not see you and your friends come on board, that you had changed your minds, or lost your passages."

She spoke quietly, but Drake could see that she was agitated, though she tried hard not to show it. And then as she spoke he noticed, too, that she had lost much of her former beauty, and looked like a woman of forty instead of one of three-and-twenty. Then, before he could frame a question, she hurriedly threw a cape over her shoulders, and stepped out on the deck.

"Let us sit down somewhere, Tom, out of the wind. How strange we should meet!"

"It is strange, Mrs. Lumley. My mother, the last time I heard from her, told me that you and Mr. Lumley had gone to England."

"Mr. Lumley is dead, Tom; and I am going back to Australia. I don't think my uncle will turn me out, although I have not now a penny. If he does I do not care very much. I daresay, though, your mother——"

"My mother always liked you, Mrs. Lumley," said the young man quickly, "and I know she will grieve very much indeed to hear of your misfortune. And you may reckon on her, and Ted, and myself as your good friends always."

"Thank you, Tom. But don't call me 'Mrs. Lumley.' The name is nothing but a horror to me, though I shall have to bear it till I die. Let me be 'Grace,' as I was three years ago, when I was happy."

She paused a moment or two, and then looked at him with a faint smile.

"Tom, don't look so miserable. I know what you are thinking of just as well as if you had told me. But you need not be at all alarmed, nor need Mr. Alvord. Neither of you need speak to me if you think I am going to be silly. And now do tell me how it is you and Mr. Alvord and this Captain Pakenham come to be on board the *San Juan*?"

He briefly told her, and then she in turn told him her own miserable story. Lumley had, as his mother prophesied, drunk himself to death, but not before he had squandered almost the last penny of his wife's money.

"Why I married him I don't know, Tom. I never liked him. But I became sullen and reckless, and did not care what happened. Of course, uncle had something to do with it. But I must 'dree my ain weird,' which in plain English means, as your brother Ted would say, 'keeping a stiff upper lip,' which is good colonial slang. But I am so horribly poor that I can't keep it stiff always, and I have had a good many 'weeps' to myself since my husband died, and I have had to battle my way along. Stay in England with my husband's people I would not. They did not want me—all my money being gone—and I simply grew to loathe them. The family is very old, very poor, and distressingly dull, and the estate to which Mr. Lumley was the heir is in a dank, sodden part of Hertfordshire. I spent one winter there. Ugh!"—and she shuddered—"and thanked God I had enough money left to pay my passage back to Australia. I came over to New York alone, travelled across to San Francisco alone, and feel as if I could go round the world alone now, after what I have gone through."

They talked together for quite half an hour, and when Drake left her her pale cheeks had brightened, and she smilingly assured him that she meant to be at dinner, and gave him the number of her table.

He took his coat, then went on the bridge, beckoned to Alvord, and told him the news. Alvord heard it as Drake expected he would. Not a muscle of his face moved, though he listened with interest.

"Poor little woman. It's hard lines, isn't it? We must fix up things for her somehow, Tom. Your

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mother will do it for us. We must write to her from Honolulu."

By "we" the supercargo knew that he meant himself, and that he meant to provide for the woman whom he had once hoped to call his wife.

CHAPTER IV

THREE days out from San Francisco the *San Juan* steamed into warmer weather and smoother seas, much to the satisfaction of all classes of her passengers, especially those in the fore-cabin, which was greatly overcrowded. Already there had been serious disturbances among them, and demonstrations against the captain and officers, and one man named Mullane, a particularly ruffianly and foul-mouthed character, had been knocked down senseless by the chief officer for trying to force his way aft into the saloon accompanied by half a dozen other diggers. This, of course, had not improved matters, and the captain in reply to their open threats of violence had assured them that he was fully prepared to deal severely with them if they attempted any further mischief. Some of them, who were, however, much in the minority, were decent, well-behaved men, *bonâ-fide* miners, and did not associate with the others, and before two days had passed separate "camps" were formed, and individual fights were of constant occurrence. The majority of these men called themselves miners, but were in reality the scum of the New Zealand and Australian gold-fields, whose characters were so bad that they had had to leave the Californian and British-Columbian fields at the request of vigilance committees.

Mullane, whom they recognised as their leader, was a dirty, ill-favoured ruffian, and bent upon making mischief, and as a great many of his companions were armed Captain Frost and his officers kept a sharp lookout upon their movements, and decided in the event of further trouble to disarm them, and put Mullane in irons until Honolulu was reached.

On the first day out Alvord and Mrs. Lumley had met, much to Drake's satisfaction. She had taken her seat at one of the dining tables in the saloon when the three friends came up to her on their way to their own table, and without the slightest trace of embarrassment on either side she and Alvord had shaken hands, exchanged a few remarks on the crowded state of the steamer, and so forth, and then she had laughingly declared that she meant to keep on deck all the way to Honolulu.

"I have heard so much about you from Tom, Captain Pakenham," she said to the American skipper, "that I do hope you will come and talk to me sometimes. But there are so many ladies on board that I won't be surprised if you all three keep pretty close to the smoking-room to escape their chatter."

Since then she and Alvord had met frequently, though always when others were present, for which they were both thankful, each realising that it would not be pleasant for them to be left alone, even by chance. Yet as the days went by the constraint that at first she could not but feel when, in Alvord's hearing, Drake would make some careless allusion to her former home and her relatives, gradually wore off, and ere long they would

often laugh merrily together when the supercargo would imitate the manner of some of the people with whom both she and he had been familiar since their childhood. Pakenham, who said but little but thought a good deal in his lazy way, would often watch both her and Alvord, and told Drake that he felt certain they would come to an understanding before Mrs. Lumley left Honolulu for Sydney.

His friend shook his head. He knew Alvord better than did Pakenham, and he was right—neither Mrs. Lumley nor Alvord had the faintest idea of what the captain termed “pulling together” again as lovers.

“Well, I’ll make a bet on it,” drawled the American.

“I’ll bet you five dollars that something happens before this crawling old rattletrap bumps up alongside Honolulu wharf. Mrs. Lumley will be just as pretty as ever she was by then, as you might see if you hadn’t such a wooden headpiece on that lanky body of yours.”

Drake took him up. “Might as well give me the money now,” he laughed. “I think she has had enough of married life.”

“Guess you think you know a lot about women, sonny,” said Pakenham, walking off to play euchre in the purser’s cabin.

The old *San Juan* went pounding along over a smooth sea till within four hundred miles of her destination, and then early one morning the wind came away strongly from the north-west, and by breakfast time she was plunging into a heavy head sea, and shipping water so freely that all the passengers were driven to take refuge in their cabins or the saloon. At ten o’clock Pakenham,

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his two comrades, the purser, captain, and a Dr. Gilroy, a passenger, were in the smoking-room, when the second officer sent down word that there was a lot of wreckage in sight. The captain at once went on the bridge, and Pakenham and his friends followed.

"Guess it's some big timber ship's deck load, sir," said the second officer, pointing out several long pieces of squared timber floating past the steamer; "see, there's a lot more ahead."

A man had already gone aloft, and every few minutes kept calling out, "Timber on port bow, close-to," "Long spar, right ahead," or "Lot of loose timber right ahead," and so on, necessitating the most careful steering to avoid running into the huge logs of pine, any one of which might inflict serious damage to the steamer, for the sea, which was running very swiftly, was hurling them along at a great rate.

The captain stood by the engine-room telegraph, his hand on the lever, and presently the lookout gave a warning cry, "Timber right ahead, sir, all round, and some on the starboard bow."

Round went the indicator to "Half-speed," but ere the bell clanged below there came a sudden shock, and the *San Juan* heeled over to port, and buried her sponsons deep under; then her engines came to a dead stop.

"Port wheel smashed and crank-shaft bent," was the report a few minutes later. A great baulk of timber, unnoticed by the lookout, had done the damage.

Nothing could be done in such weather and under such circumstances but to get canvas on the steamer and heave to. All round floating timber could be seen,

and even had she been able to proceed it would have been at a great risk; to attempt to let her run before such a mountainous sea was out of the question, even if she could have set sufficient sail. There was nothing to do but wait till the sea moderated and the wind hauled round to a quarter which would enable her to crawl along on her course with such scanty sail as she could set.

"You said something was going to happen before we got to Honolulu, Pack," said Drake, with something like a grin, "and for once you were right, though it is something very different from what you meant."

"And I guess there's another very different 'something' going to happen as well, sonny," said Packenham quietly as he pointed for'ard. "That fellow Mullane is just laying himself out for mischief. Tell Alvord and Dr. Gilroy to put their pistols in their pockets, and be handy if they're wanted. I'll get yours and my own too."

Drake looked forward and saw that Mullane was addressing some forty or fifty of the most blackguardly of his associates, who were gathered around him under the lee of the for'ard deckhouses, and applauding him vehemently. He could not catch all that Mullane was saying, but heard quite sufficient—the man was inciting the others by the most violent language to back him up and "have it out with this mangy Yankee skipper."

Running hastily into the saloon in search of Alvord and the doctor, he whispered to them so as not to alarm the other passengers, the ladies especially. They

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at once followed him on deck again, with their pistols, and in a few seconds were with Packenham, who was talking to the captain at the foot of the bridge ladder. He was a little, thin-faced man with deep-set eyes. He nodded approval to what Packenham was saying.

"I'm much obliged to you, Packenham. If you and your party will keep the alley way on the port side under the bridge here, we will attend to the other side. All my officers are armed, and if we *have* to shoot I guess I'll lay Mr. Mullane out first."

"They're coming aft now, sir, called out the third officer from the bridge.

Frost was on the bridge in an instant, and almost at the same moment the entrance to the alley ways under the bridge were blocked by Packenham and his party on one side, and the chief officer, second officer, chief steward, and purser on the other.

Nearly fifty of the steerage passengers were marching aft, led by Mullane and a New Zealand loafer named "Waikato Jack," one of the most noisy and foul-mouthed ruffians of the lot. They halted when they saw the alley ways blocked.

"What do you men want?" asked the captain quietly.

A chorus of "boohoos" and groans was the immediate reply, but presently Mullane stepped out, and with an oath said they had come to talk business with him.

"Well, go ahead with it."

"We want to know what the blazes you mean by

closing the fore-cabin bar, you monkey-faced little Yankee swine," said Mullane insolently.

Frost bent over the bridge rail, and holding up his forefinger, and ignoring the insulting epithet, answered:

"I closed that bar because I chose to close it. Most of you have been drunk since we left 'Frisco, and have given a lot of trouble, and I've had enough of you. Now, just listen to me. I am going to keep that fore-cabin bar closed until I think fit to open it, and that will be when you leave off trying to hustle, and come to me civilly. Now go for'ard again, and behave yourselves."

A roar of contemptuous laughter followed his speech, for they little knew the man they had to deal with, and imagined he could soon be terrified into acquiescence. All of them were armed with pistols, though only Waikato Jack, Mullane, and two or three others carried theirs openly.

"All right, my little man," cried Waikato Jack, putting his dirty thumb to his nose, "we'll give you a bit of the Waikato touch, and open it ourselves. Come on, boys."

The whole mob turned and made for the fore-cabin companion, and in a few seconds the sound of crashing woodwork told that they were carrying out their threat, and presently both the chief fore-cabin steward and the bar-tender were battered into insensibility, and the two other stewards fled aft for their lives.

Frost rose to the occasion and prepared for trouble. There were half a dozen other male passengers in the saloon, who at once responded to his call when he ex-

plained the position of affairs, armed themselves, came on deck, and joined Pakenham and the others. To the remainder of the male passengers he served out arms, and requested them to stay and guard the after-part of the ship, unless he was beaten back, and they had to reinforce him.

A few miles away there was a barque in sight, and Frost was in hopes that he would be able to get her to report the *San Juan* at Honolulu as disabled, but she, too, had evidently run foul of some of the timber or met with an accident of some kind, for she suddenly altered her course, shortened sail, and took no notice of the steamer's signals.

"That's the *Kilauea*, and she's bound to Honolulu," he said cheerfully, as he watched her bear away. "Well, it's no use grumbling. What we want to do now is to settle those fellows for'ard. It's lucky that the bartender got all the bottled liquor away in time and carried it aft. There's only a couple of two-gallon kegs of Bourbon left, and they'll soon finish that."

Some of the passengers asked the captain why he did not close the doors of the fore-companion, and thus keep Mullane and his rowdies confined below, but Frost shook his head. Such an action might drive them to desperation, and, besides that, they had left half a dozen men on guard at the companion way, and these men were now in full view from the bridge, drinking Bourbon whisky, and mockingly holding up their glasses to Frost and his officers.

All this time, however, the crew had not been interfered with, and the steamer was making fairly good

weather of it, though every now and then the drifting timber would give her a thump that threatened to drive a hole through her wooden hull, especially when some huge piece, over a foot square, and fifty or sixty feet long, came spinning along on the crest of a sea, end down.

Nearly a quarter of an hour passed, and Frost and those with him anxiously awaited events. The captain himself was in hopes that the prime movers of the disturbance would become too drunk to incite the others to much more mischief, and that once they were seized and put in irons matters would settle down. Although a resolute, he was a cautious man, and averse to using firearms, even upon a mutinous crew, unless it was a case of stern necessity.

At last, however, his patience became exhausted, as the yells and shouts of the drunken orgie in the fore-cabin increased instead of diminished, and presently a dozen or more of the respectable portion of the steerage passengers forced their way through the men on guard and came aft for protection, and one of them excitedly said that Waikato Jack and Mullane were cutting through the fore-cabin bulkhead so as to get into the fore-hold, where they meant to broach cargo. They had, he said, provided themselves with lights, which were being carried in a reckless manner by their confederates.

Frost swore under his breath. "They'll set the ship on fire! Come, follow me," and he called by name to the first and third officers, the purser, boatswain, and two of the engineers, who all, pistols in hand, dashed

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down the ladder after him, followed by Packerham and his party.

So sudden was their rush for'ard that the men who were outside the fore companion had but little time to resist, and after firing a few shots, they were quickly overpowered and dragged aft by some of the crew to be ironed. Then the little captain led his men down through the cabin, just as a drunken "hurrah" burst from the rowdies. They had cut through the bulkhead, and already one had crept through with a lantern in his hand when Frost raised his pistol and shot Mullane through the shoulder, and his second bullet broke the leg of another man.

"Put up your hands," he cried.

For a moment or two the gang were too surprised by the unexpected onslaught, and the fall of one of their leaders, to grasp the position, but they meant fight, for the instant that Waikato Jack drew his pistol, they followed suit and began firing at their assailants, until Alvord, making a dash at Waikato Jack, seized him by the throat, and flung him half-way across the cabin, where he was at once rendered quiet by a gentle tap on the head. The others at once threw up their hands and surrendered, and were being driven up on deck to be ironed, when Alvord staggered to the table and sat down.

"I'm hit, Tom," he said quietly.

"Come here, Doctor, quick!" cried the supercargo, as he rushed to his friend's aid.

"It's here, Doctor," said Alvord, placing his forefinger on his right side. "I must have been hit after I

stung that fellow among you. I guess it's gone up into the shoulder, as I can't move my arm."

As quickly as possible, he was taken aft to the captain's cabin, and in a few moments Pakenham and Drake were overjoyed to hear from Dr. Gilroy that there was no danger—the bullet had struck a rib, glanced upwards, and lodged just outside the shoulder-blade, where it could be felt quite easily.

"Get it out soon, Doctor?" queried Alvord.

"Yes, at once. It won't hurt much."

"Right. But what about those other poor devils?"

"They can wait."

The operation was soon over, and leaving his patient in the care of his two comrades, the doctor went off to attend to Mr. Mullane and his fellow-rowdy, and by luncheon time, the excitement on board had so far subsided that everyone was ready for it. Waikato Jack and a dozen of his friends were meditating in irons, and Frost and his men were hard at work on the ship, for the wind was rapidly hauling round again to its former quarter, and the sea was going down as quickly as it had arisen. An hour before sunset the *San Juan* was on her course again, though only making two or three knots an hour, and then, to the delight of everyone on board, word was sent from the bridge by the captain that the barque had answered the steamer's signals, and would stand-by all night.

Alvord had had a good number of visitors, none of whom, however, were allowed to come into the captain's cabin, and among the first to inquire about him was Grace Lumley. Alvord heard her talking to Drake just

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outside the door, and called out in his old cheery voice:
"Thank you very much, Mrs. Lumley. I am feeling just bully."

She pressed Drake's hand, and went quietly away again to her own cabin, where she remained for the rest of the evening. About midnight, however, as Packerham was walking the deck, she came to her door and called him.

"Not in bed yet, Mrs. Lumley?"

"No, not yet. I do not feel a bit sleepy. It has been such a dreadfully exciting day. How is Mr. Alvord?"

"Splendid! He's been asleep for an hour."

"I am so glad. Good-night, Captain Packerham."

Early on the following morning the *Kilauea* was seen close-to, and her captain came on board to see what was wrong with the steamer. He and Frost soon came to an arrangement, and the latter then called his passengers together.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, I'm real sorry you have had such an unpleasant experience on board the old *San Juan*; but it might have been worse. Now, my friend here, Captain Sayers, is going to make all speed to Honolulu, and a steamer will be here in forty-eight hours to tow us there. But it will take her four days at least to do it, and that will mean that those of you who are going to Australia may miss the Sydney boat, which perhaps won't wait for the *San Juan*. So I am sending the mails on by the *Kilauea*, and I advise all of you who want to catch the Australian steamer to go ahead in the barque. She's a large vessel, and can accommodate thirty

saloon and fifty steerage passengers. Of course this company stands all expense. The sea is now very smooth, so that those who decide to go on in the barque had better tell the purser, and the second mate will get all their luggage into the boats."

Nearly all the Australian passengers prepared to leave the steamer, and Drake at once went to Mrs. Lumley and asked her if she was going, as he would himself see to her luggage.

"No, Tom. I shall stay. I really do not care if I miss the *Wonga Wonga*, and have to stay in Honolulu for a month. And, indeed, only this minute I promised Mrs. Lane" (the wife of an Hawaiian planter) "that if I do miss the Sydney steamer, I will stay with her until the next one."

"I'm glad of that. And you'll like Honolulu, Grace—it's a lovely place—that is, once you're out of the town—and Lane has a fine place, I hear."

Half an hour later, and whilst the passengers were being transferred to the barque, a steward came to him.

"Mr. Alvord wants you at once, sir. Captain Sayers and Captain Pakenham are with him."

Hurrying to Captain Frost's cabin, he found Pakenham engaged in tumbling some of his effects into a bag, and Alvord talking to the skipper of the barque.

"Tom, you'll have to hustle and get away with Pakenham. Captain Sayers here has just told us that the *Highlander* was offered to some fellow last week for \$9,000, but he's haggling and wants her for \$8,000. Now it won't do for us to run any risks, and so you and Pakenham must get away. Get her for \$8,000 if you

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can; if you can't, go the other thousand dollars, or two thousand if Pakenham thinks it worth while. Captain Sayers says she's cheap at two thousand pounds."

Sayers nodded in confirmation.

"Here's all you want," resumed Alvord, giving him some letters. "There's a draft on Spreckles Bros. for \$15,000. Go straight to the owners of the *Highlander* and cut in as quick as you can. Give them half of what they want right down, and clinch the matter. Now don't get talking about me. I'm only just mad I can't go myself, but Gilroy won't let me, and I don't want to be ill when the *San Juan* gets to Honolulu. Now, hurry up, Tom. It's just my good luck again meeting with you, Captain Sayers."

Ten minutes later, Drake and Pakenham bade him good-bye, and hurried after the skipper of the barque, who was in his boat awaiting them, all the rest of the transferring passengers having already gone on board the barque.

"Good-bye, Captain Frost, good-bye," they said, warmly wringing the little man's hand, and then as Drake turned to descend the gangway, he felt a hand on his arm.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, why didn't you tell me you and Captain Pakenham were going. It was cruel of you not to tell me."

"I didn't know of it myself till a quarter of an hour ago, Grace," replied the supercargo, and then he added contritely as he saw her eyes were filled with tears, "and both Pack and I had to rush things so that I couldn't come and tell you. Alvord simply 'hustled' us off.

Dr. Gilroy will tell you all about it. Good-bye, Grace."

He pressed her hand and clattered down the gangway into the boat after the lengthy Pakenham, and in half an hour the *Kilauea* was slipping through the water with all sail set, heading S.E.

* * * * *

Six days afterwards, as Pakenham and Drake were finishing a late breakfast on board the newly-bought *Highlander*, the boatswain ran aft.

"Flag is up on Diamond Head, sir, for the *San Juan*."

"Bravo!" cried Drake, jumping up from his seat.

"Let us get ashore, Pack, and go off in the Customs launch."

"Guess we won't. The *San Juan* will pass right under our stern in another hour, and I reckon the owner would like to see the captain aboard of his new ship. You can go, if you like. But you had better stay. Put on a white suit, and look pretty, and I'll let you dip the colours as soon as I catch sight of Alvord."

Drake thumped his friend on the back, and laughed as he went on deck to look at the approaching steamer.

An hour later the *San Juan* came slowly past, in tow of another steamer. Standing together on the spar deck, quite apart from the other passengers, were Alvord and Grace Lumley. As the barque's colours were run up to her gaff, Grace waved her handkerchief and Alvord came and stood at the rail.

"All right, Captain Pakenham?" he asked.

"All right, sir."

"Come ashore and lunch with us."

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"Aye, aye, sir."

Unseen by Grace, Packerham's hand crept softly up to the supercargo's ear and seized it.

"Give me that five dollars, or I'll shake your head off."

* * * * *

"Boys," said Alvord, as he met them with outstretched hands, "I've got some news for you."

"Guess you've found something you thought you'd lost," said Packerham, with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

Alvord nodded and smiled.

"Well, it's your luck again," said the skipper.

GUN-RUNNING IN THE SOUTH SEAS

TWENTY or thirty years ago even the poorest class of white traders in the Pacific Islands had great opportunities of making money rapidly, and this was especially the case in Samoa, where many of the natives were wealthy men, and where the continuous internecine warfare afforded enterprising Europeans great opportunities of selling rifles and ammunition at an enormous profit.

In the days of 1870 the German residents in Samoa were in a state of terror that the French Pacific fleet under Admiral Clouet might appear at any moment and burn all the German merchant ships in Apia harbour. But Clouet (from Tahiti) sent a message, by the late Lord Pembroke, in his yacht *Albatross*, to the German Consul in Apia, that he did not intend to molest unarmed merchantmen, and there was much rejoicing—and consumption of beer—thereat.

At this time the German community in Samoa were openly aiding the rebel chiefs to crush King Malietoa, whilst the sympathies of the English and American settlers were all, with one exception, on the side of the much-worried ruler. The exception was the United States Consul, who made no secret of the fact that his

interests lay with Germany, for he received from the great firm of Goddeffroy's, of Hamburg, a salary of \$2,000 per annum for acting as adviser to them in all their land purchases from the natives.

About this time I heard from the *Albatross* that an American barque named the *Menchikoff* had left San Francisco for Apia on one of her usual trading voyages, but on this occasion was carrying a large number of Evans's, Winchester and Springfield rifles, which she would endeavour to land at Tutuila—sixty miles from Apia. Two American men-of-war were then cruising in the islands—the *Resacca* and, I think, the famous old *Kearsage*. The latter, however, met with an accident to her machinery, and I did not see her in Samoa. With the *Resacca*, however, I was very familiar, and had many friends on board, from whom I obtained much useful information. Her commander had instructions from the Navy Office to prevent any American vessels from selling munitions of war to the Samoans, and it was for this reason that the skipper of the *Menchikoff* had decided to try and dispose of the arms on Tutuila, where he was not likely to be seen by the cruiser.

At this time I was running a forty-ton cutter between the Samoan Group and Wallis Island, and my half-caste partner and I decided to try and interrupt the *Menchikoff*, do a "deal" with the skipper, and bring such arms as we bought back to Upolu, and sell them to Malietoa and his chiefs. At this time His Majesty was sorely pressed for want of arms, and was willing and able to pay handsomely for good weapons.

We left Apia one Sunday afternoon, ostensibly bound for Falealili, a port on the south side of Upolu; but as soon as it was dark, I stood away to the north and east and began to beat up against the trade wind to Tutuila, intending to cruise off the western end of that island until we sighted the American barque. Besides my partner and I, there were two Polynesian seamen on board—natives of Nuié (Savage Island) and five passengers—three young women and two boys. These people had been forced upon me by the then British Consul—Mr. John Williams, a son of the famous "Martyr Missionary." They belonged to Falealili, and being afraid to cross the island in the disturbed state of the country, Mr. Williams, whose official protection they had sought, asked me to take them in the cutter. I was in a quandary, for Mr. Williams was our principal creditor. We owed him nearly six hundred dollars for trade goods—Consuls traded in those days—and I dared not refuse, especially when he said he would credit the cutter with these natives' passage money. To have told him I was not going to Falealili would have aroused his suspicions, so my partner and I had no choice. The young women were accommodated in the hold—we were in ballast—and gave us no further trouble, as they had brought their own provisions and were quiet, respectable girls, members of the family of the chief of Apia, Se'u Manutafa, who afterwards so greatly distinguished himself by his humanity to his German foes when the three German warships were destroyed in the great *Calliope* gale of March 17, 1889.

I must mention that an American merchant in Apia,

to whom we had revealed our intentions concerning the *Menchikoff*, had advanced us \$1,000 in cash, and given us a letter of credit for another thousand dollars on the understanding that he was to receive one-third of the profits.

We had bad weather from the start. It began to blow at 10 p.m. that night, and the cutter—a very “wet” vessel—pitched and laboured so much that I thought she meant to drown us. The poor Samoan girls were all dreadfully sea-sick in the hot, steamy hold; and, as we could not keep the hatches open, we let them into the little cabin, where they and the two boys occupied our berths. It took us two days and two nights to sight Tutuila, and then I had to work in under the land, and anchor in a little sheltered bay, for not only was the cutter leaking, but I and one of the native crew were nearly mad with ophthalmia, which had attacked us simultaneously.

We kept a keen lookout for the barque, both from the shore and from on board; but ten weary days passed, and we saw nothing of her. Then early one wild, rainy morning, when I was sleeping on shore, I was aroused by the cry of—

“*Le folau! le folau!*” (“Ship! a ship!”)

Running down to the headland I soon saw the ship—and was disappointed. She was not the American barque, but a very large, full-rigged ship—a Norwegian guano-man, named the *Otto and Antonie*. She was tearing along before the gale, steering W., and I found out afterwards that she was leaking so badly that the master was running for Apia for assistance.

I went on board the cutter for breakfast—my eyes were still bad, and I was wearing a shade made of green coconut leaves—and had just sat down when again the cry of "A ship! a ship!" rang out. This time it was the *Menchikoff*. I knew her by her short, stumpy masts, white American cotton canvas, and wide, bulging quarters. (She was an old Alaskan-Russian sealer.) She, too, was coming along at a tremendous pace, but also bearing away from the land towards Apia! We ran up our colours and tried to attract her attention, but no notice was taken. Not waiting to heave up anchor, we slipped, and under a close-reefed mainsail and jib, I stood out of the little bay after her. Her captain, Bannister, was an acquaintance of mine, and I felt sure that he was running for shelter somewhere on the north side of Upolu, or would not have disregarded us, as our cutter was well known to him.

We spun out of the bay at a great rate, and then came misfortune! There was a very short, jumpy sea on outside, and we had just cleared the horn of the reef when she took a sudden, violent plunge, and the rudder-head snapped off like a carrot, sending me, tiller in hand, against the low rail with such force that I was stunned. Then in a few seconds more she broached-to, and great green seas tumbled upon her decks, sweeping away the galley, the boat, and in fact making a wreck of her.

When I came to again, I was below, minus a tooth or two, and with a head that seemed to belong to someone else, and by the way the cutter was rolling I surmised she was running before the gale. In a few minutes my

half-caste partner put his head down the companion, and told me that "everything was all right," and he was running under the jib only for Fagaloa Harbour, on Upolu; that the mainsail was blown away, and that he had extemporised a new tiller from two boat oars.

We ran into Fagaloa at dusk, and there found the American barque—almost in as bad a condition as we were, for her decks had been swept, and, by a curious coincidence, her wheel smashed. But what concerned us most was this—she had landed and sold all the coveted arms at Leone Bay in Tutuila four days previously.

After making all necessary repairs we left Fagaloa—this time for Falealili in reality. And then came good luck!

Soon after rounding the most easterly point of Upolu, we sighted the brigantine *Magellan Cloud*, of Sydney, coming through the straits—between Upolu and two little islands name Nu'ulua and Nu'utele. It was beautiful weather, and scarcely any wind. In reply to our signals, Captain Mackenzie sent a boat, and in half an hour I was on board.

"Have you any arms on board?" was my first question.

"Whips. But I heard in Tonga that I can't sell a gun in Apia."

"Indeed you can't," I said promptly. "H.M.S. *Cameleon* is about the group, the *Rese...a* is looking out for Bannister (whom I tried to meet, but was too late, as he had already sold his guns), and the consular police boats in Apia hang about every vessel that comes into

port, day or night. You can't land a cartridge there now without risk of seizure."

"Hum!" growled Mackenzie, "that's a nuisance. I have three hundred short Sniders on board. Bought 'em in Sydney for 7s. 6d. each—condemned arms."

"I'll give you \$5 each for the lot—American gold."

"Done. What about cartridges—they're dear."

"How much?" I asked.

"£7 10s. a thousand."

"Right. I'll take the lot."

He had three thousand on board.

In less than an hour we had the rifles and cartridges on the cutter, and the burly Mackenzie had my letter of credit from — and over \$600 in cash in his pocket, and we parted mutually satisfied—he to go on to Apia, and we to land our arms at a convenient spot on the south-east coast of Upolu as soon as we could get into communication with some of the leading chiefs. We then decided to take the young women into our confidence; and as the arms were for their own party, they solemnly took oath not to betray our trust.

But fearing that we might possibly meet with either an American, German, or British cruiser—the three Powers had a tentative agreement to act jointly in preventing gun-running—I resolved to go back to Tutuila, hide the rifles in the skin of the cutter, and fill up the entire hold with a cargo of old coconuts, then bringing the abnormal price of \$6 per hundred in Apia, owing to the scarcity of food caused by the war. A vessel with a cargo of old nuts would not excite suspicion; a vessel in ballast would be rigidly searched, and I had no

desire to be deported to Fiji for "irregular conduct," as the British naval authorities humorously described anything from sailing with "faked" papers to piracy and murder.

Tutuila was taking no part in the fighting, and Mauga, the head chief of that beautiful island, was a connection by marriage of my partner, who had married his cousin; so we decided to go back to Tutuila, to one of Mauga's villages, and buy, beg, borrow or steal ten thousand old coconuts, all we could carry unhusked. Meanwhile it was necessary to let the chiefs in the Aleipata and Lepa districts know of what was afoot, so as to be prepared for us. But we had no boat, and were then seven miles from land—Aleipata church being in sight—and the wind was falling light. We were too far off for any canoes to board us, although we saw several bonito fishing outside the reef, and in two or three hours more it would be dark.

Calling the eldest of the three girls into the cabin, my partner and I asked her if she was willing to swim ashore at nightfall with a letter to the chief of Aleipata. We would, we said, stand in towards the reef at once if she would undertake the venture. (I must mention that my partner, a splendid type of the Polynesian half-caste, was most anxious to do this himself, but as my eyes were still bad, and he was practically sailing the cutter, I refused to accede.) And we offered her \$50.

The girl, who was about nineteen years of age, and extremely good-looking, although somewhat too short and too fat, at once acquiesced, but refused the offer of monetary compensation. "Give me a *jana* (gun) and

pulu (cartridges) instead." Then she told us that if it was dark when she reached the land she would have a torch lit and waved along the beach to show us she was safe.

The wind had died away to hardly more than a breath, when, at dark, we were within three miles of Aleipata village, the fires in the houses of which were plainly visible from the deck of the cutter. Then this brave girl, Selema o-le-Vai-tafe ("The Portuguese man-of-war-in-the-river") made her preparations to swim three miles through a shark-infested sea. Tying her long, glossy black locks up in a knot over the top of her head (in which my letter, wrapped up in a piece of oil-skin, was placed), she let her two girl companions rub her entire body with coconut oil, then with them and the two little boys knelt down in prayer, for she was a shining light in missionary circles in Falealili.

Five minutes later she appeared on deck wrapped in a large piece of tappa.

"*Faa 'mole mole aua le vavai, alofa mai, alii*" ("Please do not look, I entreat of you, gentlemen"), and then she whipped off her covering and slid over the side, *au naturel*.

Although by this time it was calm, the current was carrying us steadily away from the shore, though we could hear the thundering breakers pounding on the reef. Two hours afterwards my partner (Alan Strickland) and myself, who were both aloft watching, were delighted to see the light of a brilliant torch carried along the beach, and we knew that our fat little friend was safe.

About ten o'clock a fresh breeze sprang up, and we were heading for the island of Tutuila, which we reached at daylight, and having no spare anchor, I ran the cutter upon a bright little beach in front of a native village of about thirty houses, and in less than an hour the natives, wildly excited at the price I offered them (five cents) for every old unhusked coconut, were carrying them down by thousands, whilst Alan and I were ripping out the skin of the cutter and "planting" the Sniders and cartridges in between the knees, the skin, and the outer planking. By four in the afternoon we were finished, had hauled out the cutter, and were ready to sail, when fresh trouble arose.

A whaleboat, belonging to one Charlie Brown, an old ex-man-of-warsman, who had settled at Tiavea (on Upolu) came alongside, and three of his stalwart half-caste sons, with two Samoans, boarded us, and asked me if I would sell them a case of Hollands gin, as they were invited guests to a wedding at a village near Leone Bay, and although they had ample wedding presents in the way of silk blouses, accordions, musical boxes, etc., for the bride, they had no grog—for themselves.

Anxious to be rid of them, I made them a present of three bottles of liquor which, much to my annoyance, they at once opened on board, instead of getting into their boat and going off. By this time we were moving through the water with the Browns' boat alongside, and I could see that the wedding guests meant to finish their liquor before leaving, and would then probably want

more. My surmise was correct, for in a quarter of an hour they were drunk and quarrelsome and began to annoy the two girls.

Now Alan, my partner, was a man who had achieved renown in Auckland and Sydney as a light-weight in the "P.R.," and the Browns had also great local fame as "pugs"—their old father having given them much useful instruction from their very earliest years. Presently the eldest of the brothers, coming aft, informed Alan that he could "do him up in four rounds."

Tired out and weary as he was, Alan made short work of Mr. Brown, who was soon laid out on the main hatch to recover. Then I heard a scream from the cabin, and Pépé, one of the girls, called to me for help. Letting go the tiller, I jumped below and found her struggling with the youngest of the three brothers (Aleck), who had seized her by the hair, and was trying to drag her on deck, telling her that she would suit him admirably for a wife. Catching hold of his legs I threw him down. He was up in an instant, and in ten seconds had given me two beautiful black eyes that lasted me for a month, for in the struggle the leaf shade I was wearing slipped down and I could not even see my antagonist. Then again seizing poor Pépé, he again tried to drag her on deck, when Alan appeared, and gripping him by the throat, almost strangled him, dragged him on deck by the feet, and lifting him high up, threw him into the boat with such violence that he nearly stove her. The two Samoans and the other brother meanwhile were fighting with our

two sailors, who being sober, and very powerful men, soon disposed of them, both the Savage Islanders using belaying pins.

Alan, usually the quietest of men, was now mad with passion, and picking up the three men one after the other, hurled them over the rail into the boat. The eldest brother, who was still unconscious, he dealt with more tenderly—simply dumping him on the top of his four companions, who were all lying in a heap on the thwarts and bottom boards. Then we cast off their painter and let them go.

After mutual congratulations we made all sail on the cutter, and stood away for Lepā, on the south-east coast of Upolu, where we were sure we would be expected. We had a few young pigs on board, and one of these we killed, and Alan and Pépé took the hot liver and made a Samoan substitute for a beefsteak poultice for my eyes, which were now quite closed. In three or four hours I could see.

All that day and night the wind continued light, and it was not until daylight that we were abreast of Lepā. There was a heavy sea mist, and we could barely see the land, although we could hear the Lepā church bell—it was Sunday morning, and the bell was ringing for the early service.

Suddenly the mist was lifted and dissolved by a faint breath of air, and then Pépé and the other girl, together with the two little boys, uttered exclamations of terror, and pointed to four large *taumualua*, or native boats, crowded with men, which were within less than a quarter of a mile of the cutter.

“*Le itu tāua! le itu tāua! mai Savai’i*” (“A rebel party from Savai’i).

It was indeed a war-party of two hundred natives of the rebel faction, who were waiting for daylight to attack Aleipata. The moment they saw the cutter they plunged their paddles into the water and came towards us.

Now both Alan and I knew that according to Samoan ethics of warfare, the two girls, Pépé and Moe, would, as well as the little boys, be ruthlessly slaughtered and decapitated if this particular war-party were in a bad mood, especially as they belonged to the Se’u Manutafa family, for that redoubted chief was the trusted fighting general of King Malietoa. We hurried the two girls and the boys into the little cabin, closed and locked the scuttle and waited.

In a few minutes the rebels were alongside. A splendid-looking lot of men they were, their golden-yellow, lime-dyed hair bound around with strips of Turkey red twill. Many of them were armed with needle guns and the Swiss Vetterli rifle, others had old smooth-bore Tower muskets, with barrels brightly polished. The younger men, in addition to their fire-arms, nearly all carried the *nifa oti*, or death knife—a cumbersome blade of twenty inches in length, with a hook at the point; this knife was solely used for decapitation. Twenty of them jumped over the low bulwarks of the cutter and then moved aside to let their leader pass.

In an instant Alan and I recognised him as the chief of Paulaelae in Savai’i, a splendidly built man of about

sixty years of age. A silver crucifix was suspended from his neck, and resting upon his great brawny and naked chest, showed him to be a Roman Catholic, though nearly all his followers were Protestants. He advanced to Alan and myself with such a quiet dignity, and yet so proudly a conscious air of his reputation as a *toa* (warrior) that we could not but admire him.

"*Taloja alii*" ("Greeting, gentlemen"), he said in Samoan, "I am sorry to trouble you, but we are in want of water," and then in an instant his keen eye discerned the locked companion. He stretched out his mighty right arm, pointed to it, and, addressing me personally by my Christian name, asked me why it was locked.

"That is my business, *Tamalefaiga*," I replied, "this is my *vaa* (ship). You want water. You are welcome. We have plenty."

In an instant this half-naked Samoan, bent upon a mission of destruction and slaughter, became the courteous gentleman, and apologised so gracefully for his question that I felt sure he at least would not harm the boys and girls if they were discovered. On the skylight I had placed in readiness a bottle of brandy and three glasses, and whilst his men filled their water-bottles from the scuttle-butt, he, Alan, and myself drank together. Then he rose to go.

"*Tamalefaiga*," I said with a smile, "you think that some Samoan men are in the cabin. I pledge you my word there are none."

"I believe you," he replied gravely, as he shook hands.

We were delighted to so easily get rid of our visitors. Had it been a less powerful chief than Tamalefaiga in command I believe that the poor girls would have been killed had some of the young *manais* (bucks) found them.

As soon as the war-party was out of sight we worked in to the land, and several canoes came off. One brought a letter from Selema saying that all the chiefs of the district were anxiously awaiting the cutter, but that the Rev. Mr. P——, of Falealili, was then in Lepā, holding the annual May festival, and that it would not do for us to land the arms whilst he was about. I was very glad of this intelligence, for Mr. P—— would certainly have laid an information against the cutter, although most of his fellow-missionaries would, for the welfare of Samoa, have been extremely pleased to have seen Malietoa inflict a crushing defeat upon the German-aided rebels.

Anchoring the cutter I went ashore, and met Selema and a trusted adherent of King Malietoa named Felipe. The chiefs, they told me, were waiting to receive me in a little bush village three miles away, and now urged me to land the arms at once, as the Aleipata people were very short of ammunition and could not withstand an attack. This was all very well, but I had to consider my clerical friend.

Then Selema—fat, clever little Selema—made a suggestion.

“ Ask Misi ” (the Rev. Mr. P——) “ to lend you the mission boat to bring coconuts on shore. Then you can put the guns in the boat as well, and if evil tongues talk

to the Faamasina Peretania" (British Consul) "then it will be said that the missionary lent his boat."

The temptation was too great. We succumbed; but not being brazen-faced enough to make the request myself, put it on to my partner, whose conscience was more elastic, and whose business instincts were truly admirable.

In less than two hours we had landed every rifle and cartridge in the mission boat and made a profit of about 600 per cent. Then as we thought that Apia might not prove a healthy locality just then we sent our American friend his one-third of the profits by Selema and Felipe, and left a few days after for Tonga, where we made a very satisfactory charter with the Reverend Shirley Baker, who then was getting His Majesty King George into leading strings and filling his own pockets. We were chartered for three months to convey chiefs and their families to and fro between the Tonga Group, and although it was not so exciting as gun-running it was very profitable and "highly respectable."

THE AWFUL DUEL ON UTUAN

It was a fearful affair, and took place in New Britain, when part of the "bust-up" French expedition of the Marquis du Ray was under the protection of Tom Farrell, the English trader. The contingent numbered about two hundred of the most useless creatures that ever wore shoe-leather; the men were all loafers, and the women all "ladies."

When Tom Farrell went to their assistance in New Ireland, and rescued them from the quagmire they had named Nouvelle France, he also took possession of their storeship—a big barque named after the marquis—and their crazy old steamer the *Genil*.

Mr. Thomas Farrell was an Irish gentleman of very few words.

"Look here, you fellows," he said, "I'll take two hundred of you over to my station, and let you stay there until I can send you to Sydney—or Hades. But you'll have to live on board the steamer, and if you try on any monkey tricks with me, I and my niggers will murder the lot of you."

He brought them over in the barque and steamer, then anchored both vessels close in to his house, turned everyone out of the barque (which contained all the provisions and liquor) into the steamer, and then made

the engineer of the latter unship the crank shaft and take it on shore, where Farrell hid it in the bush. The Frenchmen were all well armed, but did not protest—they only embraced Thomas, and wept down his back, and called him their gallant saviour—they were in deadly fear he might back out of his promise to send them to Australia. And then, besides that, Tom's sixty-five jet-black, shaven-headed, stark naked, betel-chewing savage Bougainville Island cannibals, whom he employed as labourers, made them shudder to look at.

Tom didn't treat them badly, though he reviled and blasphemed at them freely and openly to their faces. He pitied the women, bad as they were—for many of them were ill with fever. From his overseer, who spoke French, he learnt all the insulting words in the language that that gentleman knew, and the manner in which he fired them out in an unbroken volume at the contingent as often as possible was marvellous.

The European society at Farrell's station at Mioko comprised himself, his overseer, a boatbuilder named Charlie Young, and one Denison, supercargo of Farrell's schooner *Sea-Rip*. The two latter were both down with fever, and lived together in a hut on the wharf. At times some of the Frenchmen would come to see them, and in a way they became friends—especially with two of them, a fat, podgy, bald-headed little ex-captain of Artillery named Serrey, and a long, thin doctor named Lebourg. Serrey—so he said—had to give up a glorious career in the army by calling out and killing a Russian Prince, who had interfered in a lady's affections; the

doctor had left France in a hurry for some reason which he had forgotten. But they were both brave men—heavens, how brave!

At four o'clock one afternoon, as the two sick men were lying down under a shady wild mango-tree near the wharf, inhaling the cool sea breeze, they saw M. le Capitaine Serrey coming towards them as fast as his little legs would carry him. Puffing and panting, he embraced them, and then, placing his hand on Denison's arm, said solemnly in broken English (for Denison knew but little French):

"M'sieu, le docteur Lebourg no good. Ah, he is scélérat. To-morrow I have kill him dead in ze duel. And you, my friend, you will me support, ah?" and he eyed Denison eagerly.

"What is it all about?" asked Denison.

Serrey struck his chest melodramatically, as he sat down between the Englishmen, and a tear came into his manly eye. "Ah, Marie, my Marie, she love him! Ah, he is ze hog-pig and ze beast!"

"Oh, it's Marie Pitaur, is it?" said Denison, who knew the young lady very well by sight, and had heard much about her kaleidoscopic affections, she having during six months transferred them from Rabardy, the commander of the *Genil*, to the mate of the storeship, who was a full-blooded Azores nigger; then to the Chinese engineer of the steamer, the Genoese steward, then to Serrey, and now finally to the long doctor.

Now, although Denison liked both men and was eager to see a French duel, he could not act as friend to either, for he was too weak to walk more than a dozen

yards. This he explained to Serrey, but suggested that perhaps Charlie Young, who was much stronger, would act.

Mr. Young was quite agreeable, but asked how much he would get for the job.

"What does he say?" asked Serrey in French.

"Wants to know how much you will pay him."

"Mon Dieu! *le* is l'affaire d'honneur!" and the soldier's eyes protruded in astonishment. Then he begged Young to believe in his everlasting gratitude—if he would become his second. So Denison pleaded with Young to accept the honour.

"Not under two quid," replied the builder of boats, "and cash on the nail in advance. He can't expect me to do it for less—'specially when I'm ill an' sufferin'."

Serrey could not grasp the awful idea of any man wanting to be paid for such a glorious privilege—but then he thought, "These English, money is their god!" So off he went to seek someone else.

Half an hour later Doctor Lebourg appeared, soliciting the same favour as his rival, whom he stigmatised as a drunken thief, an abnormal liar, and a suspected assassin. Young renewed his offer to attend for £2; or, if the doctor "hadn't got the stuff," he would accept his silver Geneva watch instead. But the doctor said he was a poor man, and his watch was the only thing of value he had left him. Then, too, he went off to look for someone possessing a keener sense of dignity. Why both he and Serrey wanted Englishmen as seconds Denison could not understand—he afterwards learnt that they and their friends were anxious to let Tom

Farrell see how Frenchmen acted in a case of wounded honour.

However the seconds were found at last—an ex-priest named Chateau, and an absconded grocer from Nantes named Desforges—and the duel was fixed to come off at 8 a.m. on the following morning (New Year's Day) at a little island in the harbour called Utuān. Farrell agreed to lend them four boats to convey all the members of the expedition thither—it was to be, in a sense, a public duel.

At seven in the morning the combatants and their friends embarked, and the boats were about to push off when Black Sam, Farrell's Maori half-caste sub-overseer, appeared with four natives, carrying picks and shovels, and took their places in one of the boats. Black Sam was a herculean, vicious-eyed creature, an expugilist, and an exceedingly quarrelsome man, drunk or sober. He was dressed in the usual half-caste style—dungaree pants, with a gaily-coloured print shirt, the lower portion of which flowed gracefully down outside the nether garments, a Panama hat, and bare feet.

"What are these for?" inquired a French gentleman in English of Sam, pointing to the implements.

"To dig the graves with," replied Sam surlily; "the boss says he won't have anyone buried near the station 'cos our pigs always root up anything wot's buried. And wot's more, your crowd will have to pay me three pound ten if I have to dig two graves; if there's only one to be dug, it'll only be thirty-five bob for me, and a pound of terbacker each for the four niggers. Push off there!"

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The Frenchman translated this to the company, who shuddered, and Lebourg and Serrey pressed the hands of those nearest them.

Landing on Utuān, the heroes of the day and their friends walked to the spot chosen, a grassy sward, thickly interspersed with coconut trees.

"Is this the place?" asked Sam, looking about him.

"Oui, m'sieu."

"All right; then where do you want 'em buried? I s'pose I can start on one grave, anyway. Look, that's a good place over there under that breadfruit tree," and then without waiting to hear whether they approved of the spot or not, he lifted his foot, kicked the nearest native, and told them to begin to dig.

A chill of horror fell upon the assembly as they saw the four savages plunge their spades into the soft ground and shovel out the soil vigorously. Then Black Sam leant against a coconut tree, lit his pipe, and watched the duelling ground being measured off, whilst the surgeon of the *Genil*, a young man with melancholy blue eyes, and a thick red underlip and scanty beard, opened his case of instruments, and began the usual preparations. This interested Sam deeply, and pointing to the largest surgical knife in the case, he asked the surgeon if he would sell it. Sawbones held up his hands imploringly, shook his head, and begged him to be silent.

"Taisez-vous, m'sieu, taisez-vous, s'il vous plait."

"Give yer five hob, see," and Sam held up one hand, and spread out his dirty fingers, and then retired in disgust when the Frenchman shook his head vehemently.

Then he turned his attention to the duellists, and watched the concluding preparations, which were conducted in dreadful silence, broken only and accentuated by the horrid *thump, thump* of the gravediggers' spades, and the accompanying grunts of the toiling savages as they struck them into the soil. It was ghastly and terrifying in the extreme, and every face was pale—except those of Black Sam and the naked burial party.

At last everything was ready, and Serrey and his opponent stood facing each other pistol in hand—and a good twenty yards apart. To the right were the spectators, and every eye was fixed, and every ear was open, when a fearful English oath rang out as Black Sam hurled a stone at the gravediggers, who had stopped to look at what was going on.

“What yer lookin’ at, yer man-eatin’ lot o’ black swine! Go on diggin’ or I’ll boot yer bloomin’ souls outer yer hides.”

The interruption, ill-timed as it was, made the assembly breathe a sigh of relief, and whilst Sam’s niggers went on digging vigorously, and the seconds again consulted, the combatants managed to put a few more yards between themselves unobserved.

Once more everything was in readiness, and they were asked if they were ready. In voices broken with emotion, they replied they were.

One, two dread seconds, then the word was given, and both pistols rang out simultaneously, and the horrified spectators saw both men stagger, and Captain Serrey, letting his pistol fall from his hand, fell prone upon his

face, and lay still, his bald head, from which ran an ensanguined stream, resting quietly upon his left arm. Lebourg was received in the arms of his second, who laid him gently on the ground.

"Place, messieurs, place," screamed the surgeon to the crowd that had gathered round his brother professional, "faites place. Considérez ma position—il faut que je soigne les deux hommes morts ou mourants!"

The sympathisers of Dr. Lebourg fell back, and then a cry of joy escaped them, when, after a rapid examination, the surgeon sprang to his feet.

"Fainted—shock to the system—throw water in his face, Monsieur Desforges." Then he sped to where the gallant Serrey lay, surrounded by his friends, who were all weeping over the fallen man.

Kneeling down, the young surgeon, with some assistance, turned the "corpse" over on its back, thrust his hand inside the thin shirt, and placed it over the heart.

"He lives, messieurs! Retire, I beg you, a little distance—all but you, M. Villacroix and you, M. Duval."

Then he rapidly passed his fingers to and fro over the bald, ensanguined head, feeling for the bullet hole.

"Water, water," he cried.

The dying man opened his eyes and moaned—"Some brandy," he murmured.

Both were quickly forthcoming, and the brandy given first.

"Shall I live, M. Houelle?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, my friend. Now close your eyes while I discover the wound."

Taking a can of water, the surgeon poured it in a steady stream over Serrey's head, and washed away the blood. Then an exclamation of pleased astonishment burst from him.

"Messieurs, it is marvellous. Our dear friend has had a truly wonderful escape! The bullet struck him on the top of the head, and ploughed its way over the top of the skull without injuring it."

Serrey at once revived, and demanded some more brandy, which was promptly given him, and the loud Vivas! put life into his opponent, who was now sitting up, receiving congratulations on his bravery. He begged to be taken to Serrey, to embrace him.

"Patience, M. le Medecin," said someone; "the Captain, too, desires to embrace you, but his head is now being dressed by M. Houelle. Mon Dieu! m'sieu, you are terrible—you have shot off the top of his head, but he will recover."

The long man was about to vehemently declare that he had fired at least thirty metres over his opponent's head—as was actually the case—but a feeling of combined vanity and prudence restrained him. Why should he not retain the reputation of being a deadly shot?

Then took place an affectionate reconciliation. He was led to M. le capitaine, who was seated against a tree with his head neatly covered over with strips of antiseptic plaster. They embraced again and again, and the spectators shed tears as they withdrew a little apart.

"My beloved friend," whispered the doctor, "I swear

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to you I fired thirty metres at least over thy poor head, as was arranged."

"And I over thine. But something hit me. Perhaps you fired higher than you thought, and the bullet struck me when it fell. But, silence—our friends approach!"

A large hamper of provisions and wine had been brought, and very soon the two heroes were seated side by side surrounded by their admiring friends. Many speeches were made and everyone proceeded to get joyous, drunk, and when Black Sam strolled up and asked them if there was any brandy left, they gave him a tumblerful, neat. He drank it slowly and lovingly, and then, as he set down the glass, he caught sight of three young green coconuts, each weighing about three pounds or so, lying on the grass a few feet away. They were all more or less blood-stained. He picked one up.

"I'd like to have it as a sort o' keepsake of the fust jewel I ever sore," he said to the English-speaking Frenchman and his friends.

They applauded, and gave him some more brandy. Then his manner changed, and he came to business. What about paying for the grave he had had dug? he asked. Oh, it was no use of 'em saying it wasn't wanted. That wasn't his fault, and he wasn't going to be bilked by anybody. Were they going to ante-up or not?"

"Monsieur Sam, you are rude."

"Am I? Well, look there," and he pointed to where the four boats, as well as his own, were waiting—some

hundreds of yards from the shore—"there's all the boats, and if you don't give me my thirty-five bob, I'm going to take 'em back with me and leave you here all night. An' the miskeeters will eat yer alive afore daylight, and the bush is chock full o' pizen snakes!"

The threatening aspect of Farrell's barbarian minion had its effect, apart from the dread of spending a night on an island where the mosquitoes were simply ravenous, and serpents in profusion. A hurried consultation was held. Result, seven francs fifty—all the coin that could be raised. Black Sam looked at it, and snorted contemptuously.

Then the doctor arose—grand, noble, magnificent!

"Will this satisfy you, my friend?" and he held out his much-valued watch.

Sam took it suspiciously. "Does it go?"

"It is an excellent watch, my friend, and cost one hundred and sixty francs in Paris."

"Very well. I want a watch. Now gimme another nip, an' I'll call for the boats."

* * * * *

"Yer sec, boss," said Sam to Farrell and Denison an hour later, "the little cove was a standin' right under a coconut-tree 'bout seventy feet 'igh, and loaded with nuts, big an' little, an' old an' young. I watched the long cove raise his arm to fire, and saw his pistol was pointed a long way over the other chap's head—right at the bunches o' coconuts in fact—and the next second I saw two or three young nuts like this one fall right a-top of his bald head. Down he went as if a cannon ball had fallen out o' the bloomin' sky."

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The next week was a time of unalloyed bliss to the gallant capitaine, for not only had the weeping Marie begged his forgiveness, but, on the day following the duel, a German warship entered the harbour, and Serrey had the delight of taking off his hat and bowing at least fifty times a day to the officers during their stay, and revealing the wounds received on the field of honour.

“DULCE EST DESIPERE IN LOCO”

For four nights I had not slept, and the approach of another sunset filled me with a childish, unreasoning dread—that dread that besets those in whose veins the mad blood of malarial fever is racing and burning, and adding to an already disordered imagination wild, weird phantasies and visions terrifying. I crawled from my bed and staggered to the open window, gasping for air; for although the fierce Australian sun was low, not a breath moved the pale green, dusty leaves of the gum-trees which stood about the house. Oh, how I loathed the bush, and the heat, and the curse of myriad flies, and the jarring notes of the horse and cattle bells which tortured my aching brain as if hot needles were being thrust into it again and again. Oh, for the sea, the cool, cool sea, and the tumbling, creamy surf as it laved the long stretches of white curving beaches thirty miles away! Only thirty miles away! And night, the hated, dreaded night, was near to me again, with its black terrors and that awful, awful sinking of the heart and the ever-burning thirst and the throbbing, whirling brain!

With half-closed eyes I moved painfully to the open door of my bedroom and listened to the murmur of voices from the dining-room. Thornton, my genial, kindly

host, and his family were at tea, and I knew that in half an hour he, big-bearded, broad-chested, and jack-booted, would, pipe in mouth (oh, how hateful tobacco smoke smells to a man ill with fever), come in to see me and make me swallow the pint of hot beef-tea, which always made me deadly sick and use those words which I should not have used. And I wanted water to drink—cold, cold water—quarts, gallons, buckets of it, and there was no cold water anywhere nearer than two hundred miles—away up under the shadows of the New England ranges, where it was merrily tumbling and brawling down over the rocky beds of hundreds of mountain streams towards the sea. The night, the dreadful night, was near, and I felt that I should go mad. Ah! the sea, the cool, cool sea, and the swish and swirl of the foaming surf, and the hard, wet sand, whereon I could lie and let it lave my bare, fever-heated body from head to foot. And then—ah, my heart leapt to think of it!—the deep, wide creek that flowed swiftly to the Pacific between its verdured banks—but half-way to the sea. I would lie in it and drink, drink, drink! No, it would not be cold, like the mountain water, but it would be cool; ah, cool!—only to think of it made me breathe quickly. Cool! And there were big, shady trees on the banks, with soft, moist leaves at foot; then, beyond, the bright, bright sea, and only thirty miles away! Yes, I would go; I would get away from the agonies of another night.

The cunning of the sick man came to me, and the racking clamour in my brain seemed to cease. I gathered all my senses together, and, with a stupid smile, went into the dining-room, threw myself down upon a

couch, said I was a lot better, and felt sleepy and a little hungry, and was sure I should have a good night at last. And when the whole family declared that they would on no account disturb me I felt mean—very contemptuously mean.

Ten minutes later I was back in my room, silently preparing for flight from my kind-hearted friends. Thornton, I was sure, would never let me go if he knew what I contemplated; so I wrote him a note, and told him that if he came after me and tried to bring me back he "would be the death of me"; that I knew all about fever, and that he didn't; but if he did want a thirty miles' ride he would find me at the fishing station at Crescent Head. Then I laid down and waited till everyone was in bed, the house quiet, and only the squealing of the opossums and the mopoke's cry were breaking the silence of the hot, steamy night.

Taking my boots in my hand I managed to get out of the window without noise, and under the silvery light of a waning moon walked across the arid station garden to the slip-rails of the milking-yard, where I knew there was a cask of water kept for the cows. It was quite warm, but to me was nectar. I drank deeply, and then, still carrying my boots, set out along the dusky track that led to the coast.

* * * * *

How I managed it I cannot tell, but at dawn I struck the creek, fifteen miles from the station, and in a few minutes was stumbling down the bank, drinking the fresh, sweet water, scooping it up in my hot, feverish hands and dashing it over my head and face; then I

drank again, slowly and carefully, and then, with a sigh of content, lay down at the foot of a great "black-butt" tree and went to sleep—a heavy, dreamless, peaceful sleep.

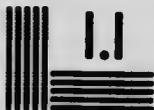
When I awoke and looked at my watch, it was ten o'clock, and for the first time for a week I felt hungry, and greedily devoured some biscuits my hostess had given me. The morning was very still, and a cool, gentle breeze was rustling the lofty crowns of the giant "tallow-woods" and "black-butts" that lined the banks of the creek. On a dead log near me an old black-and-yellow skinned iguana was stretched out at full length, apparently asleep, but in reality watching me eat. I threw a piece of bark at him, and in three seconds he had torn across the intervening carpet of leaves and was fifty feet up the smooth bole of a tallow-wood, and peering back at me over his shoulder. It was good to lie upon the ground, and see through the leafy canopy above the white, fleecy clouds drift westwards across a sky of brightest blue, and listen to the water-hens a few feet away, calling *Chickery! Chickery!* as they swam in and out among the fringe of reeds that lined the margin of the creek.

'Twas a new country to me, for when I came to visit my friends in the hope of getting rid of the New Guinea fever which had tortured me for so many weary months, I had travelled to them by coach through the hideous, grey-gummed, monotonous bush. And the Australian bush—away from the littoral, where the verdure is green and birds' notes are sounding all around you from dawn till dark—is not a cheerful environment for a sick man.



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(Being a native of the island continent, the writer knows something of it, and trusts that no indignant fellow-countryman will stigmatise him as some "new-chum Johnnie," who is libelling Australia.) It is as exhilarating as a mothers' meeting would be to a colonel of cavalry, and as full of life and gaiety as London in a dense midnight fog in the month of November.

After a bathe I set out again towards the sea. There was no track along the banks of the creek, but the soft and noiseless current flowing to the east was guide enough for me, and the sea was mother to me—me with the hot poison of fever in my veins, and the longing, aching desire for the feel of the wet, hard sand under my feet and the sound of the tumbling surf and the whistling notes of the snow-white gulls. As I walked between the giant trees, over the yielding, sweet-smelling leaves, a flock of some hundreds of white cockatoos sped by overhead, their harsh, screaming notes reverberating through the quiet forest aisles. Another mile brought me to where a bar of rocks stretched across the creek, and made a miniature waterfall. Crossing over, I ascended the bank, and then came a surprise. In a cleared, open space of about four acres was an abandoned "selection"—the house, fences, and all else gone to decay, and half eaten up by white ants. The roofless dwelling faced a pretty little lake, or rather swamp, for its surface was covered with reeds and water lilies, among which were feeding a number of "whistling" duck. They rose the moment they saw me, and with a great whirr and whistle disappeared over the tree tops; a solemn Nankin crane, meditating on a log in the swamp,

looked at me for a few moments, and then with lazily flapping wings flew noiselessly away and settled down again among the reeds on the farther side. All around the deserted homestead were hundreds of Cape gooseberry plants, all in full bearing, and I was soon engaged in plucking and eating the bright golden-hued acidulous fruit; thirty or forty yards from the house, and growing in the bed of a saw-pit, were two good-sized lemon trees, of the kind known as "sweet rough skins," also in full fruit. Judging by the height of these trees, the place had evidently been abandoned for some years; the gooseberry plants were of that season's growth only. It is a peculiar fact that wherever in the coastal regions of eastern Australia land has been cleared or a bush fire has occurred these plants appear and thrive amazingly. Lemons were just the thing I wanted, and plucking as many as my handkerchief would hold, I started off again, every moment feeling a better and stronger man, and that the dreaded fever visions of the night would no longer haunt me.

After a short search I found a track that led from the "selection" to Crescent Head. It was much overgrown, but was well shaded from the sun and soft to the foot. Resting occasionally to eat a lemon, I kept steadily on, and at five o'clock I heard the music of the beating surf, and, half an hour later, emerged from the forest and bared my head to the sea-breeze. Before me was the smooth, grassy summit of noble Crescent Head against whose grim, steep face of rock thundered the rollers of the blue Pacific—and I was content.

OLMSTED'S ADVENTURE

CHAPTER I

"WHO is this fine-looking old man coming along the road?" said Drake to Captain Turnbull, the Matāfēle storekeeper.

Turnbull came from behind his counter and joined him at the door, and placing his hand over his eyes to shield them from the dazzling Samoan sun, gazed down the road in the direction of the German quarter. Then his face lighted up with pleasure.

"That is Captain Ted Olmsted, of Honolulu, of whom you've heard often enough. He is coming to see me—don't go away, as you must meet him—he is the pluckiest and best man that ever trod God's earth. That brigantine which came in yesterday belongs to him."

The vessel in which Drake was serving as supercargo had only arrived that morning from Fiji. He had noticed the brigantine—a fine, handsome craft of three hundred tons, and had been told that she was named the *Virginia*, belonged to Honolulu, and had brought a general cargo to Samoa to sell, for in those days the bustling little port of Apia was the Mecca of many a wandering trading vessel that had

goods to dispose of to either the European merchants or the natives. The name of the captain of the strange brigantine was not, however, mentioned; had it been, he would have at once been interested, for he had heard a great deal of "Teddy Olmsted," whose name was familiar to white men from one end of the Pacific to the other as a man of many adventures, and the most dauntless courage and resourcefulness.

In a few minutes he stepped up on Turnbull's verandah, and shook hands warmly with the storekeeper, who introduced Drake, and the three then went inside to the sitting-room.

As Drake surmised, however, that the visitor and Captain Turnbull would have business matters to discuss first, he took a seat at a little table covered with books and papers, and waited.

"We won't be long, Tom," said Turnbull, turning to him, "Captain Olmsted and I can make a deal in a brace of shakes, and, like a good fellow, he has come to old William Turnbull first with his manifest so as to give me my pick."

The newcomer laughed, and his laugh did one good to hear—it was so clear and honest in its ring, and as merry as that of a boy. Then, as he and Turnbull began to talk, Drake had a good opportunity of studying his appearance, which was strikingly picturesque.

Although a fairly tall man, he did not appear so, for his great breadth of shoulders made him appear rather short than otherwise, and yet his figure was most

gracefully proportioned, and his movements quick as those of a youth of twenty, although he was within a few months of sixty-five years of age. He was dressed in a thin, perfectly-fitting lounge suit of dark brown cloth, with a wide turned-down linen collar and an old-fashioned black bow necktie. His hair and beard were both of the most silvery whiteness—the former falling, in American frontiersman style, in short, delightfully curling locks to his shoulders, and the latter, full, thick, and voluminous, spread well down upon the broad, deep chest. His face, smooth and unwrinkled as that of a young girl, was tanned a deep, rich brown, so deep indeed, that were it not for his distinctly Anglo-Saxon type of features, one might well have taken him for some Asiatic of noble race, who by some strange chance had wandered thus far into southern seas. His hands, smooth, shapely and strong, were of a still darker hue; and to Denison he looked the *beau idéal* of a sailor—handsome, strong, and graceful in his carriage, and with determination and “will” shining from his dark grey, kindly eyes.

After remaining an hour or so, the old captain went off to his ship, and Turnbull and Drake promised to come on board to breakfast on the following morning.

As they watched him step lightly along the road in the direction of Apia, Turnbull—himself an old and grizzled ex-shipmaster—said to the young super-cargo.

“Did you ever hear what he did in the Admiralty Islands?”

“No.”

"Well, it's worth hearing. Come in to-night and I'll tell you."

That chance meeting was, for Drake, the beginning of a lasting friendship with Olmsted, the memory of which is strong with him to this day.

And this is the story told to him by Turnbull.

* * * * *

One rainy, squally day, a large, full-rigged ship with fore and main top-masts missing, made her appearance off the northern coast of Admiralty Island,* and by a lucky chance—for the coast of the great island was utterly unknown except to the masters of two or three trading vessels—succeeded in picking up an anchorage at the entrance to a small, but deep bay, on the shores of which was a native village containing nearly a hundred houses. The moment the anchor was down, a clamour of excited voices came from the shore, and several canoes, filled with light copper-coloured savages, set off for the ship.

The captain of the ship, which was named the *Scarborough*, was a prudent man, and knowing by hearsay of the ferocious disposition of the inhabitants of Admiralty Island, had made every preparation to resist and beat off the natives should they attempt any mischief. He had a large and reliable crew of Englishmen, and able officers, and the ship was, although a merchantman, well armed, for she was in the China trade, and had more than once been attacked by pirates—a not at all uncommon event in those days.

* A large and fertile island near the south-east coast of New Guinea.

But, confident in the strength of the ship's company, and resolved, if possible, to establish friendly relations with the natives, he awaited their coming without serious misgivings. If they came to attack the ship, he could drive them off; if they were disposed to be friendly—which he hoped might possibly be the case—he would be well pleased, for he had been driven to anchor by sheer necessity, and was anxious to bring about friendly intercourse for a good reason—the *Scarborough* was leaking, had lost some of her upper spars, and in all probability he would have to remain at anchor some weeks effecting repairs, provided he could do so with safety.

Standing with him on the poop were eleven cabin passengers, and as five of them were ladies, he politely requested them to go below, frankly telling them that he was quite uncertain whether the approaching canoes were hostile or not, and it would be better for them to be out of the way. The ladies obeyed him promptly, with the exception of one—Miss Kate Morley—who protested strongly at being sent below to remain in ignorance of what might happen on deck.

“Do not be so childish, Kate,” said, with some asperity, her father, Dr. Morley. “Go to the cabin with your mother like a sensible girl, and stay there till Captain Rich thinks you may all come on deck again.”

Suddenly the mate, who was intently watching the canoes, called out:

“There is a man dressed like a white man in the leading canoe, sir.”

“I see him,” said Rich. “But we must be careful

all the same. He may be some renegade beachcomber. I'll hail him as soon as he gets a bit closer."

But in this he was anticipated by the man of whom he spoke, for suddenly the natives, in the canoe in which he was seated, ceased paddling, and he stood up and hailed.

"Ship ahoy! Can we come aboard?"

"Yes," replied Captain Rich, coming to the rail, "but not too many of you."

"Very well, sir;" and then turning to the natives in the other canoes, he spoke rapidly to them in their own tongue. They at once stopped paddling, and in a few minutes the European-dressed individual came alongside and quickly clambered up the side ladder on deck.

"Good-morning," he said to Captain Rich, "I am glad to see you, sir. Although I don't look it in these rags, I am a white man. My name is Olmsted. I was mate, and am the only survivor of the schooner *Fortescue*, cast away on this island nearly three years ago."

"I will hear your story later on," said the captain; "but first of all tell me something about this place, and the natives. Am I safe in anchoring here? Are the natives to be trusted?"

"You can lie here in safety, in almost any wind or weather; the natives are not to be trusted, but as this is a well-armed ship, you need be under no anxiety. I will do all I can to assist you, but you will need to be constantly on your guard. They will not, however, attempt any mischief unless opportunity is given them."

"Thank you. That is what I wanted to know. I have a big crew, and will keep on my guard. But I have lost several of my spars, as you see, and the ship's rudder and stern post are injured. I cannot proceed on my voyage to Sydney in our present condition, and must repair the ship here."

"You need have no fear, then. The natives can be as hospitable and friendly as they can be savage and treacherous. But, as I have said, you will require to be always on the watch. Don't let too many of them on deck at once; but at the same time don't let them see that you suspect them."

"I understand. I suppose it will do no harm to let some of them on board now. I want to buy some fresh provisions."

"Let them all on board. They can then see for themselves that they would have a hard nut to crack if they thought of cutting off the ship."

"Then will you please tell them."

Olmsted went to the rail and called out something, and in a few minutes all the canoes came alongside, and twenty or thirty natives clambered eagerly on deck.

"Now, sir," said Rich, "come below to the cabin. There are five ladies on board, and I must allay their fears."

Olmsted drew back. "I am not in a fit condition to be seen by ladies, sir. These remnants of a shirt and trousers are all the clothing I possess. I have neither hat nor boots, and, as you see, my skin is darker even than that of the savages."

"Your want of clothes can soon be remedied. Come to my cabin first, and I will rig you out decently."

Following the captain into his own cabin, he was soon provided with a suit of clothes, boots, hat, etc., and the transformation in his appearance was so great that Rich could not help complimenting him. He (the captain) had noticed that the man's body was tanned by the sun from head to foot, and on making some jocular but good-natured remark thereon, Olmsted frankly told him that he had been compelled to discard for two years even the scanty garments he possessed for fear of wearing them out altogether, and having to make his appearance on board the first ship that called dressed as a native.

When the master of the *Scarborough* re-entered the main cabin with his guest, he found his lady passengers awaiting him—they were eager to go on deck to see the wild-looking natives.

"Ladies, this gentleman is Mr. Olmsted, who had the misfortune to be shipwrecked here nearly three years ago;" and he then introduced the young man—for Olmsted was then but twenty-five years of age—to them in turn. They were a Mrs. Macartney, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Swann, and Mrs. and Miss Morley.

They were all very anxious to hear Olmsted's story; but the latter was eager to assist the captain in bargaining with the natives for a supply of fresh provisions, and gravely said that his story could well keep.

Accompanying the captain on deck, he called the natives together on the main deck, and briefly addressed them. They were, though wild and savage in their

appearance, remarkably handsome and stalwart, their smooth, reddish-brown skins shining like satin, and their carriage haughty and assured. They listened intently—making but few interruptions—to what Olmsted said, and at the conclusion of his speech, evinced unmistakable signs of satisfaction.

“I have told them,” said Olmsted, turning to the captain and officers of the *Scarborough*, “that the ship will remain here for two weeks; that you will pay them well for such provisions as they have to barter—pigs, fowls, pigeons, turtle, fish, vegetables and fruit. These they have in the greatest abundance. And I have also added that it is your wish that, as there are white women on board, they will not bring their arms with them when they visit the ship, as the ladies would be terrified. Last of all, I told them frankly that they need not for one moment entertain the idea of being able to cut off such a big and well-armed vessel as this.”

“What did they say to that?”

Olmsted laughed. “They were equally as frank, and said they saw that from the first. But now they are eager to make as much as they can out of you, and you will find them extremely hospitable.”

“It will be necessary for me to send men ashore to work,” said Rich. “Will it be safe?”

“Quite, but let me talk to them on the matter;” and he again spoke to the natives, one of whom replied at length for the others, and Olmsted translated his reply to Rich.

“Everything is satisfactory, sir. Not only will they *tabu* a certain piece of the foreshore where your men may

work, but they will build a house on it, supply them with food, and, if you wish it, assist the men. Furthermore, if you still doubt them, they are agreeable to an exchange of hostages—some of your people to sleep on shore, and some of theirs on board the ship."

"What is your opinion?"

"I am certain that you need have no apprehension whatever of any breach of faith. In fact, sir, I should be glad if you would now come on shore with me and meet the chiefs. It would create a good impression."

"Certainly I will. And I am much indebted to you for the suggestion. Of course, Mr. Olmsted, you will come on to Sydney with us?"

"I took it for granted, sir, that you would give a shipwrecked seaman a passage."

"Indeed I will. And there is a spare berth for you aft."

"I am obliged to you, sir. But I am indeed most willing to do duty as an A.B. for'ard. I have had three years of bitter misery and loneliness, and it did my heart good to feel myself standing on a ship's deck once more."

"You must tell me your story after we get aboard again," said the sympathising master of the *Scarborough*.

CHAPTER II

EARLY on the following morning work was begun on the ship. As it was necessary to heave her down by the head so as to get at the rudder and stern post, her anchor was lifted and Olmsted piloted her in close to the shore, where the water was so deep that her fore and main yard arms were thrust deep into the midst of a tangle of pendant lianas and other creepers that hung from the far-reaching boughs of two huge teak trees that grew on the bank above high-water mark. Then, whilst some of the crew, assisted by a score of natives, began to lighten the ship aft, others set to work to make good all damages aloft.

In this work Olmsted was most anxious to assist, but Captain Rich good-humouredly refused to allow him. Consequently the young ex-officer found that he was likely to have plenty of spare time on his hands, though the ladies were much inclined to monopolise it, for the captain and Dr. Morley had heard his story the preceding day, and, of course, it was duly repeated to them, Olmsted being too diffident a man to tell it twice, though he freely answered all their questions concerning the wild people with whom he had lived for such a length of time.

The *Fortescue*, so he told Rich, was a small brigan-

tine belonging to Singapore, and owned and sailed by his father. She sailed from that port on a trading cruise to the islands to the northward of Admiralty Island. All went well till the vessel anchored at the Anchorites Group, and trading for turtle-shell was begun with the natives, who evinced a most friendly disposition. Suddenly the crew were attacked with the utmost ferocity by a number of savages who were on deck, and who were immediately reinforced by many more from some canoes alongside. One of the first to fall was the unfortunate master, who was slain by a lance thrust, and before the natives could be beaten off, the boatswain and three A.B.'s had been slaughtered, and several more badly wounded. Young Olmsted and the survivors at once slipped the cable and put to sea, only to meet with further disaster. A day after leaving the Anchorites, a gale of almost hurricane force overtook the *Fortescue* and she had to run before it to the south-east.

Young Olmsted, who was now in command, and had twice before visited Admiralty Island, determined to make for the only harbour available—that which the *Scarborough* had found, and on the following evening it was sighted almost right ahead. Unfortunately, however, just as the brigantine was rounding the southern point, and bearing up for the smooth water inside the passage, a heavy sea struck her, the wheel ropes parted, and in a few minutes she was carried stern first on to the reef, her decks being swept by terrific seas. Of the eight remaining men on board, six were drowned, and Olmsted and the Chinese steward were dashed ashore on

the sandy beach in an unconscious state. Here they were found by the natives, who took them to their village and treated them kindly. The Chinaman, who had been badly injured when he was washed ashore, only lingered a few weeks. Scarcely a single article of value was recovered from the wreck—of the hull itself nothing was left on the morning following, and such things that were washed up on the beach during the night were carried out to sea again when daylight broke by the unusually high tide.

Olmsted soon found that, although the natives treated him very well, they regarded him to a certain extent as a captive, and for the first six months would not allow him to leave the village without being accompanied by several young men. The reason they gave was that the bush tribes in the mountains would certainly kill him if he wandered beyond the boundary line which separated their territory from that of the people inhabiting the littoral.

This story about the bush people he, later on, found to be perfectly true. Some few miles in the interior there was a large village of these "bushmen"; and, although they and the coast people were not actually at war, either party would, and frequently did, kill anyone who trespassed over the agreed upon boundary line, for such action was regarded as a challenge. On the other hand, the "bushmen" and shore people frequently met on neutral ground for purposes of barter, the former exchanging obsidian, scarlet parrot feathers, boars' tusks, jade-headed clubs, and other weapons for fish, turtle, and salt-water. This

latter commodity was essential to them, it being used as a sauce for their vegetable and animal food, and they had no means of obtaining it except in a friendly manner from the coast natives, for access to the sea was rigidly denied to them. It was carried in long bamboos, the joints of which were punctured, and one end closed by a wooden plug. From the mountain village a narrow path descended through the dense forest to the shore, and terminated in an open spot on the banks of a stream, and within a few hundred yards of Olmsted's village—Mākoan. Here the "bushmen," fully armed, would meet the shore-people, and transact their bartering. On the neutral territory there was not the slightest apprehension of treachery on either side, neither was there if people from the two villages met on the path itself. At the other—or mountain end of the path—there was a similar strip of neutral ground, where the shore natives would frequently go with fish or turtle and shout out to the "bushmen," whose fortified village was just across the line, to come and barter.

As the months went by, Olmsted began to realise that it might be years before he could be rescued. There was not then a single white trader on the island, and such few trading vessels as did visit it, only called at the south side, and then but at rare intervals. Several times he thought of endeavouring to cross the island and making his way along the south coast till he came to one of the harbours at which these ships called, but the people of Makoan emphatically and earnestly assured him that he would be killed by the bush people as soon as he crossed

the neutral ground. Then, by promises of an ample reward, he tried to induce them to convey him to the south coast by sea in one of their splendidly-built and equipped canoes.

They shook their heads. It was impossible, they said. No one of them had ever been to the south coast of the island, and they would certainly be looked on as invaders and slaughtered, if they attempted to land there.

Fifteen months passed, and during that time Olmsted had studied the language, customs, and mode of life of the people so well, that he was not only treated with kindness, but deference and respect as well. He invariably accompanied them on their hunting and fishing excursions, and, as time went on, became in a measure reconciled to his lot, though always hoping that he would be rescued by some chance vessel. His active and vigorous habits, and his great bodily strength, went far in deepening the regard of the natives for him, and his steady refusal to be provided with a wife increased instead of diminished his influence. With the "bush people" he soon became acquainted, although at first they regarded his white skin with mingled dread and aversion; for he was the first European whom they had seen, but, as he adopted the native costume, and his skin became more and more tanned by exposure, this fear wore off, especially when at the end of a year he could converse with them with considerable fluency. Never having quite given up the idea of crossing the island, he sought to ingratiate himself with them by every possible means, and became every day more and

more of a native, and less like a white man. His hair, which was dark, he allowed to grow to such a length that it could be curled by means of long leaves rolled tightly into a cylindrical shape, and then, after continuous bleaching by a paste of coral lime, he reddened it with ochre into the approved colour, and he always went armed with an obsidian-pointed spear and a club, as was customary.

After a year and seven months had passed, he was one day gladdened by the cry that a ship was in sight. Somewhat to his surprise, the head chief of the village made not the slightest demur to his wish to board her, and he quickly got into a large canoe manned by a number of natives, which at once started.

But a bitter disappointment awaited him, for the vessel, which was a large barque, was bearing away from the land before a strong breeze, and was soon out of sight. On his return to the village, the chief sympathised with him, and then frankly said:

“I am sorry you have come back. You are becoming a great man here. If you become greater than I, then I shall have to have you killed. And I bear you no ill-will.”

Here was an unlooked-for danger. He earnestly assured the chief—in whose house he lived—that his one wish was to leave the island, and again said he would attempt to cross the island alone. But, curiously enough, the chief, whose name was Dikea, would not consent to this. To permit him to go to destruction, would, he said, be the signal for his own death at the hands of his people, who would regard it as an evil and

wanton act. But, on the other hand, if he, Dikea, fearing that Olmsted's influence was likely to usurp his own, himself killed or ordered him to be killed, the people would regard it as a perfectly legitimate and reasonable course for the supreme chief to take, however much they would regret losing Teki—as they pronounced his Christian name of Ted (Edward), although he had been also given another formal and tribal name—Ravue—by which he was especially known to the inhabitants of the great bush town.

As time went on, Dikea overcame his fears regarding his loss of supremacy, for Olmsted was now very cautious not to give him the slightest cause for anxiety. If, for instance, he accompanied the chief on a pigeon-catching excursion into the forest—a pastime greatly affected by the people of Makoan—he would take especial care to so injure some of his own traps as to render them ineffective, and thus not arouse the jealousy of Dikea by capturing more birds than the chief himself. For the *mana** of Dikea was great, and to lessen it by any inadvertence would be courting death.

Thus had the long, long months gone by, until the ill-wind that blew no good to the *Scarborough* brought good to the wearied and almost hopeless young seaman, who had become so used to his position, and so assimilated in body, and almost in mind, to the appearance of, and condition of, the savage people of Makoan, that, only

* Prestige in this case; but the word has a wide significance and very many meanings. There is the *mana* of chiefly prestige, the *mana* of heroic descent, the *mana* of bravery in battle, the *mana* of witchcraft, of wizardry, and of occult power generally.

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when he stepped on her deck, and found there were white women on board did he fully realise that he must have presented a startling, repellent, and degrading aspect.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE ten days had passed, so energetically had the crew of the *Scarborough* worked, assisted by the natives, in landing and reshipping the cargo from her after-hold, that she was almost ready for sea again. But, much to the annoyance of Captain Rich, a spell of calm weather had set in, and Olmsted assured him it would last for a week at least.

Within three days after the arrival of the ship, Captain Rich's passengers lost all fear of the natives, who, men and women alike, now seemed to strive to outdo each other to show their friendliness. From an early hour in the morning, the decks were filled with women and children in such numbers, all eager to talk to, or rather try to talk to, the white ladies, that they became somewhat of a hindrance to the captain and officers. Olmsted, however, whose services as an interpreter were always in requisition, would then come to the rescue, and good-humouredly prevent the native women and children from pressing too closely around the ladies. Next to Kate Morley, whose vivacious disposition made her a great favourite, Mrs. Macartney and her baby—an infant of a year old—stood highest in their estimation, and they evinced the wildest delight

whenever she appeared with the little one. To touch it, and see it stare wonderingly at them with its blue eyes, caused the greatest delight and excitement, and the mother was pressed to accept all manner of presents for her child—ranging from pearl shell bracelets and necklets to baskets of raw and cooked fish, and an enormous quantity of fruit.

One of Miss Morley's most assiduous admirers and devoted attendants was a strikingly handsome girl about fifteen years of age. Her name was Valuwa, and her merry laughing manner and boyish exuberance of spirits made her not only an especial favourite with Miss Morley, but with the rest of the lady passengers as well. Consequently whenever Mrs. and Miss Morley went on shore, they were sure to be closely attended by Valuwa, who was quite jealous of any other girls of her own age joining the party, and several times actual disputes had occurred, and Olmsted had been called on to smooth matters over, much to Miss Morley's delight, for she could not but feel flattered at the attentions showered upon her by the natives.

Almost every day the ladies, either by themselves or accompanied by some of the gentlemen, paid a visit to the village, where they were received with the utmost courtesy and respect, and invited to eat. Kate Morley, however, was not satisfied with remaining in the village, and frequently took walks along the beach on either side, always, however, accompanied by Valuwa, and perhaps two or three other young girls. At her especial request, Olmsted had shown her the neutral ground meeting-place, and she laughingly told him that she

would one day like to walk on the neutral path which led to the mountain village.

"Pray do not think of doing such a thing," said the young seaman earnestly; "it would be rash in the extreme."

"But I have never yet seen any of these mountaineers, Mr. Olmsted," she said petulantly, "and I really must see them."

"That can be easily managed, Miss Morley. A party of them, numbering some hundreds, are coming down to barter to-morrow, and will remain on the neutral ground most of the day. You will then have an excellent opportunity of seeing pure, unmitigated savages. I fear, however, that their appearance will terrify you."

"Why? I am not at all frightened of these people here."

"The mountaineers are much wilder and savage-looking, like all bush tribes; they are darker in colour, and are noisy and rude in their demeanour."

"Well, I am determined to see them to-morrow. And I'm not easily frightened, sir. Please understand that."

Olmsted laughed good-naturedly—"You must not be too daring, Miss Morley. The people of Mākoan are savage enough, but these mountaineers are not only savages, but cannibals as well."

She clapped her hands with affected childishness—"How delightful to be able to say that I have not only seen, but have spoken to real cannibals."

On the following morning, immediately after break-

fast, a party of seven left the ship to await the arrival of the mountaineers. It consisted of Dr., Mrs. and Miss Morley, Mrs. Swann (a lady going to Sydney to join her husband), two other cabin passengers—Vesey and Wrench—and Olmsted.

As soon as they entered the village, they were joined by a number of women and children. Valuwa, of course, was with them, and at once darted up to Miss Morley, and seized her hand, of which she kept possession, glancing with undisguised affection at the young lady's beautiful face. Already a number of the Mākoan people had preceded them to the meeting-place with the usual articles for barter with the bush people, and when the party from the ship arrived, they found the neutral ground crowded with some hundreds of natives of both sexes. Bartering was going on in the most vigorous manner between the mountaineers and the shore people, but the instant the former caught sight of the white people they gave a loud and united cry of astonishment, and at first drew back in terror. But this soon gave place to curiosity, and when they were told which were men and which were women, they laughed, shouted and gesticulated in the most unbounded amazement. Olmsted was plied with incessant questions, the mountaineer women especially being devoured with curiosity to at least feel the bodies of their strange, white-skinned visitors. At first they imagined that their garments were actually part of their bodies, and for some minutes a number of wild, fierce-eyed young men clustered round Mr. Vesey and other male members of the party, and stared

open-mouthed at their boots, exclaiming at the blackness of their feet and the absence of any toes! The Mākoan people enjoyed the scene thoroughly, and made some lively sallies at the ignorance of the bushmen, till at last the latter became somewhat too demonstrative, and rather inclined to be rude.

Miss Morley's bright golden hair attracted especial attention, and she was quite surrounded by a concourse of savages, who kept shouting vociferous inquiries to Olmsted and the Mākoan people. They wanted to know how it was she had succeeded in dyeing it such a colour, for they naturally imagined it had previously been black like their own until they had had it bleached by means of coral lime. Then Miss Morley, at the repeated requests of both the mountaineers and the Mākoan villagers, unfastened it, and let it fall down her back. This evoked a perfect babel of excitement, and huge, brawny savages, thrusting their womenkind rudely aside, sprang forward to get a nearer view of the wonderful sight.

At last, however, the bushmen became more composed, and quickly bartered some of their beautifully carved weapons and bamboo water tubes for nails and other pieces of metal, with which, at Olmsted's suggestion, the passengers had provided themselves.

"Come here, Mr. Olmsted," cried Miss Morley. "Make this woman understand that I want her to let me have that lovely string of jade beads;" and she pointed to an immensely fat mountaineer woman whose waist was encompassed by a triple row of beautifully polished and perforated beads of dark green jade.

"Tell her that I will give her anything I have that she wants. Oh, do be quick! See, she is going away."

Olmsted at once called her back, and conversed with her for some minutes. Then he turned to Miss Morley, and shook his head to denote that he had failed.

"I am very sorry, Miss Morley, but that particular belt of green jade is too precious a thing for her to part with. But I can easily get you one quite as good, or even better, from Dikea, the chief of Mākoan."

"I don't want any but that particular one, so I shall not trouble Dikea. Now, do please, Mr. Olmsted, ask her again," and she smiled persuasively.

Olmsted looked disturbed.

"I assure you, Miss Morley, that nothing would induce that woman to part with even a single bead of that jade. It is *mana*—that is, it possesses to her and her family a very high and particular value. To part with it would, to the native idea, be inviting the greatest misfortunes that could possibly befall them. Dr. Morley"—and he turned to the young lady's father—"will explain to you something of this mystic and strange power of *mana* which may be possessed either by a living person or an animal, or an inanimate object."

"Thank you, very much, for your learned dissertation," she replied, with studied coldness. "I am sorry I have troubled you. I shall try someone else;" and turning to Mr. Vesey, she said: "Would you mind

trying, Mr. Vesey, as Mr. Olmsted is too busy—or too disinclined—to oblige me in such a simple matter.”

Olmsted's face flushed, and Dr. Morley spoke sharply to his daughter.

“How silly you can be, Kate. I am quite sure that what Mr. Olmsted says is absolutely correct, and that the woman will not, and cannot, part with the belt. And then, as Mr. Olmsted says, you can get even a better one from Dikea.”

Kate's eyes flashed angrily—“And I decline to take one from Dikea or anyone else. I want that particular belt, or none at all. See Mr. Vesey,” and she gave him a number of silver coins, “perhaps these will tempt her;” and then she gave poor Olmsted a look of withering scorn, which he felt, though he pretended not to notice. But he spoke a few words in a low tone to Dr. Morley.

“Call Mr. Vesey back, sir,” he said hastily. “I assure you that any further attempt to induce the woman to sell the girdle will give very great offence, even to the Mākoan people. To try to obtain possession of anyone's *mana* will be regarded as a very serious matter.”

“Come back, Vesey,” cried Dr. Morley, and then, to Kate's now undisguised anger and amazement, Mr. Vesey obeyed, and nodded in acquiescence to the doctor's explanation.

“May I ask you, sir, if you told my father not to allow Mr. Vesey to fulfil my request?” she said, her lips quivering with anger.

"I did, Miss Morley. But I assure you——"

"Your presumption, sir, is unbounded. But I must remember that you have lived for three years among savages;" and turning haughtily away from him, she walked over to Mrs. Swann.

By this time the big woman with the girdle had withdrawn to the further side of the neutral ground, where she was joined by a number of young men, to whom she began to talk with an appearance of anger, glancing every now and then at Miss Morley. Presently one of the men to whom she was speaking angrily called out to the Mākoan people that the white people wanted to rob his mother of a *mana* which had been in the family's possession "since the days when the world was young."

"Nay," cried Olmsted in the native tongue, "be not alarmed, friends. The white woman did not know 'twas *mana*."

The savage shook his bundle of obsidian-pointed spears angrily.

"She hath touched it, and now its virtue hath departed," he cried fiercely. "Would that her head were in my hands so that I might take it and the long hair, and let the blood restore the strength to the girdle of jade."

In an instant the Mākoan people raised an outcry of protest at the savage wish; the mountaineers withdrew in a body to the further end of the open ground, and it was evident that the incident had caused bad feeling on both sides.

"What did that fellow say?" asked Dr. Morley of Olmsted.

"Nothing of importance," he replied evasively; "and as the bartering is pretty well over now, I think we had better return."

At dinner that day Miss Morley, who deeply resented what she regarded as Olmsted's unwarrantable interference, took not the slightest notice of him, and he was glad to return to the deck again, feeling hurt at her inconsiderate and harsh words.

Soon after dinner Dikea came on board with the information that a vast number of pigeons had just made their appearance on three small, low-lying islands, situated about five miles down the coast, and that as he and a number of his young men were going there to capture some of the birds in the native fashion, he thought that the captain and a party from the ship would like to join them. It was intended, he said, to stay there for the night, and return on the following day.

On learning from Olmsted that the trip might be made with safety under the care of Dikea and his men, Captain Rich decided to accept the chief's offer, and shortly afterwards a boat, manned by six seamen, left the ship. There were with Captain Rich four others—Mr. Macartney, Mr. Grant, Olmsted, and Dikea himself, the latter especially delighted at being provided with a double-barrelled gun, lent to him by Dr. Morley.

They started off in high spirits, Olmsted having assured them that they would thoroughly enjoy the

excursion. The chief's largest canoe, manned by over fifty men, and carrying some women and children as well, had already started, and within an hour both canoe and boat had rounded a verdured headland, and were out of sight from the ship.

CHAPTER IV

VESEY, a good-looking, good-natured, reckless young Englishman, who fancied he was very much in love with Kate Morley, was seated under the awning on the poop-deck lazily smoking his after-breakfast cigar, and wondering what he should do to pass the time, when Miss Morley herself appeared. She smiled brightly at him, and asked him if he was not sorry that he had not joined the captain's party.

"Too hot, Miss Morley. And I am quite content to be on board—to-day."

She laughed. "How lovely the island looks, does it not? It seems too fair and beautiful to be real."

It was, indeed, a beautiful scene that lay before them. South, east, and west, the loftly forest-clad mountains stood out bright, clear, and green in the warm morning air, and lower down on the softly-sloping spurs thin, straight columns of smoke arose from the scattered native villages, while on the shore itself the long, long lines of coco palms, which fringed the snow-white curving beach, reflected their plumed crests in the still, deep water. The village itself was very quiet, and only now and then would the murmur of voices be heard, as women and children walked lazily along the shaded paths from house to house, or towards the bright,

clear waters of the mountain stream which entered the little bay, and where all day long they might be seen, filling their coconut water-shells, or bathing their smooth, brown-skinned bodies in the crystal stream. Eastward from where the *Scarborough* lay, almost embowered in the branches of the lofty trees which overhung her decks, was the sea, shining like burnished silver under the tropic sun; and on each side of the entrance to the harbour the white surf, smooth as was the ocean expanse, tumbled and seethed lazily upon the coral barriers.

For some minutes Miss Morley did not speak. She was thinking of a plan she had in her mind, and determined to see if she could not make Vesey—who she knew adored her in his lazy way—bend to the accomplishment of her wishes. And Vesey himself gave her an opening.

“Sorry you did not get that jade affair, Miss Morley. I’m sure that ponderous creature would have given it to me if Dr. Morley had not called me back.” Then he added, with a certain amount of vindictiveness—for although he was naturally a good-hearted, genuine man, he had resented the interest his fair listener had once displayed in Olmsted and his adventures—“Mr. Olmsted took it for granted that whatever he chose to tell us we should have to be satisfied with.”

“I, for one, am not,” said Kate angrily, “and I mean to show him so—very decidedly;” and she tapped her foot quickly on the deck.

“Glad to hear it. I think the captain has made a little too much of him.”

"Well, I have quite made up my mind about that girdle of jade beads. I shall get it myself. I mean to go to the bush village this very morning."

Vesey was somewhat dubious. "Do you think it will be quite safe?"

"I did not ask *you* to come, Mr. Vesey. That girl Valuwa will be quite willing—and not *very* frightened to come with me."

"Oh, come now, Miss Morley," said Vesey, protestingly; "I shall be delighted to join you if you will only ask me."

"Very well, then. I shall be ready in a few minutes."

She went below to her cabin for her hat and a basket, in which she had already put a few articles and trinkets which she imagined would tempt the owner of the girdle. Her mother was in her own state-room, and so did not see her, much to her satisfaction, for she feared that she might attempt to detain her did she learn her purpose.

Vesey was awaiting her when she returned, and they soon found themselves on shore, on the side opposite the village. Here they were met by Lane, the mate of the *Scarborough*, who was strolling about on the bank looking at the ship with a critical eye.

"Going for a walk, Miss Morley?" he said, as they passed.

"Yes, Mr. Lane, but we are waiting for Valuwa to come. It's past her usual time."

"I think I saw her in the big canoe, Miss, with a number of other girls."

"Oh, well, it's of no consequence," she said, though she was really angry. Then as soon as Lane was out of earshot, she said to her companion:

"Just fancy that girl taking herself off like that when I wanted her. But it really does not matter. I know the path quite well. This is the way."

Vesey walked beside her with the foolish confidence born of ignorance, and Kate, unfortunately for herself, decided to avoid being seen by any of the Mākoan people, so kept well out of sight of the village until they reached the open space of neutral ground, at one end of which they saw the narrow path leading directly into the heart of the forest on its way to the mountains.

"How lovely and cool it is here, in the shade of the big trees, is it not?" she said gratefully, as they stepped on to the path. "We shall have nearly three miles to go, I believe. Then we come to another meeting-place, like that on the shore, only that there is a bamboo rail barricading the path, and the bush village is within a few yards of it."

"Then what shall we do?"

"Wait at the barricade and see if any of Mr. Olmsted's 'shocking savages,' as he calls them, come out to us. If they do not, then I am going into the village myself."

Vesey looked at her admiringly, despite a not unnatural nervousness he was feeling.

They walked steadily on through the cool forest, and in less than an hour reached the bamboo pole stretched across the path—the sign that the ground beyond was

forbidden. Then Vesey raised his voice and gave a loud "Halloo!" again and again. No answer came, and although the houses of the mountaineers were plainly in view, not a soul could be seen, not even a child was visible. Yet smoke here and there curled upwards among the groves of breadfruit trees which encompassed the russet-hued houses of screw-pine thatch.

Once more Vesey shouted, and Kate joined her voice to his, only to hear the echoes reverberating among the mountain forest.

"Come, let us go to them, since they won't come to us," said Kate valiantly, though at heart she was herself now beginning to regret her impulsiveness.

She stooped under the bamboo, which was breast-high, and Vesey quickly followed suit; and then, almost ere they had regained an upright position, a dozen naked forms sprang upon them from the tangled undergrowth and silently bore them to the ground before they could utter a cry. Poor Vesey struggled furiously as he was being bound, and the last that Kate remembered was seeing a stalwart savage kneeling on his chest and plunging an obsidian dagger into his throat again and again.

Bound hand and foot, and gagged with a piece of green, slippery bark, the unfortunate girl was lifted up by one of her captors and swiftly carried to the village, which had now broken out into clamorous life, and a chorus of delighted yells burst from the inhabitants when they saw her being borne towards them.

* * * * *

Captain Rich and his party reached the three islands

about noon, and found, as Dikea had promised them, excellent sport, for the trees on the islands were literally covered with an incredible quantity of large purple-grey pigeons. In less than two hours some thousands had been killed by their four guns and by the natives. As, however, the sun was very hot, and it was time to get something to eat, the white men, including the boat's crew, retired to the shelter of an extemporised hut, to rest awhile, whilst some of Dikea's people set to work plucking some of the birds, and making ground ovens in which to cook them.

"This is very comfortable, captain," said Macartney, who was lying on his back, smoking. "It is fairly cool here, and——"

His further speech was cut short by an unmistakable sound, the boom of a cannon.

"By Jove, that is one of the ship's guns!" exclaimed Captain Rich, springing to his feet in alarm.

In an instant the loud chatter of the natives around them ceased, and Dikea himself sat with clenched hands staring at Olmsted and the others, his dark face showing the greatest perturbation.

"Boom!" came a second time, even louder than the first, and ere the echoes had died away it was followed by a third report.

"The ship is attacked!" cried Rich, grasping Olmsted by the shoulder, and looking threateningly at Dikea.

"By Heavens, if I thought this fellow," pointing to the chief, "has decoyed us away, I would shoot him dead on the spot."

"No, no," cried Olmsted imploringly. "I pledge

my life for him and his good-will. But I fear there is something wrong;" and then he spoke hurriedly to Dikea, who at once shouted out to his followers. A scene of the wildest hurry and confusion followed, as the natives rushed for the canoe.

"Quick, gentlemen! We must return at once," said Olmsted. "Dikea himself thinks that something has happened either to the ship or to the village. Are you sure, however, Captain Rich, that your chief officer may not be firing the guns for some other purpose than to call us back?"

"Certain. Why should he? No; there is some treachery or mischief afoot," and, even as he spoke, a fifth report from the ship's nine-pounders reached them.

"Dikea thinks that the mountaineers may have attacked Mākoan," said Olmsted to the captain, as they all ran down to the beach. "Don't bother about the boat, sir. Dikea has told the women to stay behind and bring her after us. We shall get back in half the time in the canoe. Please tell your crew to come with us in the canoe."

Seizing their arms, the six sailors followed the captain and the others into the huge canoe, which at once got underway, and with five and twenty paddles plunging quickly into the water on each side, she shot out from the shore with a wild cry of mingled rage and defiance from Dikea and his warriors.

In less than a quarter of an hour, with the foam curling from her sharp bows, the canoe rounded the point, and a cry of thankfulness burst from Captain Rich when he

saw the ship lying as usual, with no signs of disturbance on board.

"Thank God," cried poor Macartney, who was thinking of his young wife and child, "the ship seems all right."

"Aye," said the master, with a sigh of relief, "and, look, they see us coming. There go her colours up."

But there was evidently something wrong, for a cloud of white smoke belched from her side as another of her guns was fired with a heavy blank charge, and now people could be seen standing about on her after-decks.

"Ha!" cried Dikea to Olmsted, "listen, Teki."

A strange, hoarse, rattling sound came from the village, and as the labouring savages in the canoe heard it their dark eyes gleamed, and a deep guttural cry burst from their brawny chests, and they plunged their long paddles with mad haste into the seething water, so that the canoe lifted and trembled in every timber.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Grant, anxiously.

"The war drums—Dikea's war drums are beating. See to your arms, gentlemen. We shall be aboard in a few minutes and find out what is the matter."

The loud appalling rattle of the great wooden war drums now so increased that the air was filled with the wild clamour, and Dikea and his men seemed maddening with excitement.

Grasping the haft of the great broad-bladed steering paddle in his strong hands, the chief swung the canoe round under the ship's stern, and brought her up alongside with a rush.

"What has happened, Lane?" cried Rich, as, followed by the others, he jumped on deck.

"Miss Morley is a prisoner with the mountaineers, sir, and Mr. Vesey, I fear, has been murdered by them."

Mrs. Morley, whose face was already swollen with incessant weeping, ran to her husband's outstretched arms.

"Oh, Harry, Harry, what can be done. . . . Our child, our child. Oh, Mr. Olmsted, for God's sake, take pity. . . . Tell me what has happened, for as yet no one on board quite understands."

Sick at heart with a deadly fear, Olmsted would not let his face betray him, as he answered with assumed confidence. "With God's help, Mrs. Morley, your daughter shall be on board again within a few days, perhaps sooner. But I must hear the story from some of the Mākoan people. Then we shall know how to act."

Hurriedly beckoning to Captain Rich, Wrench, Macartney, Grant, Dikea, and some natives from the shore, they followed him into the main cabin, and he at once began:

"Now, gentlemen, have patience for a few minutes. This is a sad business, and, as Dr. Morley is not here, I tell you frankly that I fear the very worse for Miss Morley. But I will now tell you what these men here," pointing to the natives who accompanied Dikea, "have tried to explain to Mr. Lane, by means of signs and gestures, for not one of them can speak a word of English."

Then he turned to one of the natives, a youth of under twenty years of age, named Sali, and told him to speak;

and, as he listened, his face darkened, but at the end he uttered an exclamation of apparent satisfaction, and said in English, "Ha! that will help us."

"Now, gentlemen," he said, addressing his listeners, "here is what has occurred. Soon after we left this morning, Miss Morley and Mr. Vesey went ashore. For some reason—at which, I think, I can guess—Miss Morley made up her mind to go to the mountain village. Both she and Mr. Vesey took to the left-hand bank of the creek, crossed the *Lu* or square of neutral ground, and struck into the path leading to the mountains. This lad here—Sali—and that one standing beside Dikea, were, as it happened, just about to start on a visit to a little village two miles away, down the coast, when they saw the young lady and Mr. Vesey going into the forest along the neutral path. Being very daring lads—and curious as well—they followed them right up to the bamboo barrier, but kept carefully out of sight. Mr. Vesey called out several times to the mountaineers, but no one answered, and then both Miss Morley and himself crossed into the mountaineers' territory. They had, however, been watched, for almost in an instant they were seized. Mr. Vesey was at once slaughtered, and the young lady bound and carried off to the village.

"These two boys, terrified for their own safety, watched all that went on from behind some old, rotten, and moss-covered logs. Fearful of stepping out on to the path till all was quiet, they saw Miss Morley taken into the 'devil-house,' as the people here call their temple, in which their ancestors' skulls are deposited. Some time passed, and then they saw a boy, about eleven or twelve

years of age, emerge unobserved from one of the houses, and slyly make his way to where Mr. Vesey had been killed. He was evidently searching for whatever the unfortunate man had dropped in his struggles, and was soon rewarded by finding a key and a pipe case. Then, eager to obtain something more, he boldly slipped under the bombo barrier, and continued searching within a few yards of where Sali and the other youth were hidden. Watching his opportunity Sali dealt him a stunning blow on the head, which felled him. He was at once bound and gagged, and partly carried, partly driven, before them to Mākoan, where he is now a prisoner in Dikea's house." He ceased speaking for a moment or two, and his listeners looked at him inquiringly.

"Now," he went on slowly, "the only chance of saving Miss Morley's life will be through that boy."

"You will keep him as a hostage?" queried Macartney.

Olmsted shook his head—"No. He is of no value for that purpose. But I will make use of him in my own way."

"I have thirty good men——" began Captain Rich.

Olmsted held up his hand—"I know what you would do, sir. But I earnestly and solemnly assure you that Miss Morley cannot be recaptured by force. Such an attempt would fail—utterly fail—and your men would be slaughtered one by one ere even the mountain village was reached. Firearms in the hands of white men are of no avail with such people, for the forest is so dense that an unseen enemy can send an arrow or spear through you without giving the slightest indication of his where-

abouts. Dikea, here, could he speak English, would bear me out. And even if you succeeded in forcing your way to the village you would find it in flames."

"God help the poor girl, then," said Rich, moodily. "What can be done?"

"Leave it to me. This much I can tell you. If Miss Morley is not dead she will be back with you in two days from now. If she is not back, you need not expect to see me either. What has to be done must be done quickly. Dikea will give me all the assistance I need, and you will do well to spare him six rifles and some ammunition, for he has about half a dozen men who understand the use of firearms. But I beg of you not to send any of your men with him, or come yourselves—it would hamper him, and ruin my plans. Now, gentlemen, I shall be glad of two of the best revolvers I can get."

"Take mine," said Lane, "they are brand new Colts;" and he jumped up, went to his cabin and returned with them.

"Now, it is time for me to go;" and handing the pistols and ammunition to Dikea, he rose, shook hands with them quietly and went on deck.

Half an hour later he was in Dikea's house, stripped to the loins, and talking quietly to the chief as he waited for sunset.

CHAPTER V

As darkness fell on the land, a dense mist crept down from the mountain towards the sea, and the village was hidden from the view of the anxious people on board the *Scarborough*. But although no sounds of life came from the houses, and the inhabitants had not even lit the usual evening fires, there was in reality a silent activity.

Under threats of an instant and cruel death, the boy prisoner had consented to lead Olmsted and a body of fifty of Dikea's men to the mountain village through the forest, not, of course, by the neutral path, but by taking them from a point some few miles down the coast. Both Dikea and Olmsted had given him their solemn assurances that if he led the latter to the temple in which Miss Morley was confined, his life would be spared, and, after some hesitation, he had consented. When questioned as to the fate in store for her, he had frankly told the truth: she was to be killed on the following day by strangulation, and her head preserved as a *mana*. The executioners were to be two women, one of whom was the woman whose anger she had so aroused by endeavouring to obtain possession of the jade girdle. These women, so the boy said, would be sure to be guarding her in the house, but whether she was bound or not he

could not tell. After her death her head would be carefully decapitated by the priests and put aside for the purpose of embalming it in the usual manner; the rest of the body would be eaten unless the priests decreed that it also was *mana*, in which case it would be treated with respect and buried.

As soon as it was quite dark the rescuing party started. Olmsted, who was nude to the waist, and was wearing sandals of soft bark, took charge of the prisoner, who was secured by a light chain fitting tightly round the waist, and the end held by Olmsted, the chain itself being so interwound by cinnet fibre as to make no noise. A rope would not have been safe, for, as the prisoner's hands were free, he might, Dikea suggested, succeed in biting it through if an opportunity to do so were afforded him in the darkness of the forest. The lad himself had promised faithfully not to attempt to escape, for he not only believed in Olmsted's assurances, but Dikea had sworn to him by his father's shades that not a hair of his head would be harmed if he but did exactly as he was bidden by Olmsted.

Following the white man and the captive boy, whose name was Ralu (Watery Sun), came the girl Valuwa, who carried Olmsted's brace of Colt's pistols, so that he could take them from her at whatever moment it was necessary. She had been allowed to accompany the party at the suggestion of Dikea, who thought that she might be able to gain an entrance into the temple in which Miss Morley was confined (when Olmsted might fail), and give her a slip of paper on which certain instructions had been written by the white man.

An hour's steady march along the seashore brought the party to a point on the coast where the white sandy beach on which they had hitherto walked, came to an abrupt termination at the rocky foot of a mountain spur covered with trees. Without the slightest hesitation the guide led the way upward, and in a few minutes the entire party were enshrouded in the darkness of the forest, and treading a narrow winding path thickly covered with a carpet of soft, fallen leaves, which gave forth no sound to their naked feet. This track, so the boy told Olmsted, led to within quite a short distance of the mountain village, and although its existence was known to the people of Mākoan, it was but rarely used, and then only by parties hunting the wild boar; so both Dikea and Olmsted felt confident that they would be able to bring their men almost up to the mountaineers' houses without being discovered.

After following the path for two or three miles the guide stopped, and pointed to a gleam of light shining through the trees. Olmsted at once halted the party, and he, Dikea, and the boy turned off the track, and, walking softly between the trees, reached the spot from where they obtained a fairly good view of the houses, in only two of which were fires burning.

The "devil-house," or temple, in which Miss Morley was a prisoner, was first pointed out to them by the guide. It was quite a large structure, with a very lofty conical roof, and was surrounded by a high palisading of thick logs, through which were two entrances, one facing seawards, and the other opening out upon the mountain side. The space between the palisading and

the house itself was, so the boy said, about two fathoms wide, and covered with a cane-work floor raised a hand's breadth from the ground, and which gave forth a creaking noise when trodden upon. In the day time this space was much used by the young men in attendance on the temple; they sat or lay there chatting and chewing betel-nut, but at nightfall they either went to their respective houses, or to one of the several tree-forts commanding the village. Unfortunately, however, one of these forts was situated directly over the "devil-house," in a huge tree, whose branches overhung one side of the palisading. The fort itself was simply a roofed-in platform, erected among the branches at a height of a hundred or more feet from the ground. Access to the platform was gained by means of a ladder of thin, strong vines and canework, which could easily be pulled up by the garrison when occasion demanded it.

"How many men sleep there?" whispered Olmsted to the boy.

"Sometimes many, sometimes but few. To-night there may be many. And they will surely hear thee if thou triest to enter the devil-house, for the ground around the tree and about the devil-house is covered with dead branches and sticks which constantly fall from the great tree. And as one steps on them they crack."

Olmsted considered for a few moments, then turning to Dikea told him what he intended doing.

"I shall take this boy with me, to guide me to the mountain side entrance through the palisading. It may be that the white woman is awake, and that Valuwa can creep in and the two be able to flee from the house ere

the women who are on guard can stay them. But yet, Dikea, the white woman may be bound; or there may be many people in the house watching her; there may be many things, and blood may flow."

"Aye," replied the chief, in a guttural whisper, "blood may flow to-night, Teki. But I shall not fail thee. And if it is to be that we of Mākoan are called to aid thee, we shall carry back many heads for our houses."

Olmsted, recognising that the savage instincts of his former protector were beginning to dominate him, begged him to be cautious, and then told him exactly what to do if he heard shots fired. Then he desired the chief to call the girl Valuwa.

She came in an instant, and stepped silently to the side of the prisoner-guide. In her hand she held a broad-bladed, heavy knife with a razor-like edge; and the guide knew from what Olmsted had told him that the moment he attempted to utter a sound that would betray the rescuing party, the weapon would be plunged into his back. But the boy meant to keep good faith, and when Valuwa, to terrify him, drew the knife swiftly across his naked arm, so that the blood flowed, he merely uttered the one word "fool!" and kicked her on the knee with fierce contempt.

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An hour passed in silent watching, and then Olmsted and the boy and girl stepped out quickly towards the giant tree whose branches overhung the "devil-house." The left hand of Valuwa grasped the belted chain around the boy's waist; her right held her knife, ready to plunge into

his back. Behind came Olmsted with his two revolvers in each hand.

In a few minutes the three, creeping slowly and cautiously, were under the fort on the great tree, and crouching together beside the many-buttressed trunk, listened. No sound came from above, and every house in the village was silent, dark, and lifeless.

"They sleep," whispered the boy, pointing upward.

Satisfied that the men in the tree-fort had not observed them, Olmsted resolved to enter the temple with Valuwa, instead of sending the girl in alone.

"Go on," he whispered to the guide.

Crawling along on their hands and knees the three emerged from under the tree, and gained the entrance through the palisading; it was an opening about three feet in width, and faced the rounded canework side of the temple. Evidently the doorway was further on, for the boy still crept on steadily for another twenty or thirty feet. Then he stopped and spread out both hands warningly, as the cane floor on which they were gave forth an ominous, creaking sound.

"Look," he said, turning his head and placing his lips to Olmsted's ear, "see, there are men inside as well."

As he spoke he gently pulled aside a coarse mat which answered the purpose of a door, and Olmsted had a full view of the interior of the house, which was rendered visible by the light of a fire made of dried coconut shells. Seated near the fire, with her hands in her lap, and her head bent upon her bosom, was Miss Morley. Her motionless figure and utterly de-

spondent attitude filled the young seaman's heart with pity, the more so as he could see that even at that moment the tears were coursing down her pale cheeks. Seated a few feet away from her were her two women guards—the women who were to strangle her early on the morrow. They were both awake, lying stretched out upon the matted floor, and conversing in low tones, and in the huge creature who was nearest the captive, Olmsted recognised the possessor of the fateful jade girdle. As she turned her face slightly towards those who watched her, and the white man saw her hideous mouth, with its horrible scarlet lips and teeth stained black with the juice of the betel-nut, he felt such a savage hatred of the creature that his hands itched to clutch her by the thick, coarse throat, and strangle her into insensibility.

But the presence of the two women gave him but little concern compared with the main danger that lay between them and the doorway—eight stalwart savages, fully armed, were sitting or lying down together in the centre of the house, chewing the inevitable betel-nut and talking, the flickering light from the fire every now and then falling upon their wildly ferocious countenances.

He whispered a word to Valuwa, who released her hold of the chain around the guide's neck, gripped her knife tightly in her right hand, and rose softly to her feet. But little as was the sound she made, it was enough—two of the men caught sight of her, and, with a loud and simultaneous cry, sprang to their feet, clubs in hand.

Then Olmsted's pistol rang out and they dropped—one shot dead, and the other with a broken thigh. And then before he had fired a third shot, Valuwa sprang forward and plunged her knife into the back of the big fat woman, and withdrawing it with lightning-like rapidity, she dealt the second woman a savage slash across the face, and in a few moments her arm was round Miss Morley's waist, and she was urging her towards the door, just as Olmsted staggered and nearly fell with a spear thrust through his shoulder.

"Run, run," he cried, "run for your life! But for God's sake do not fall. Valuwa will guide you;" and as he spoke he fired again at a savage who made a rush at him with a short heavy club. The shot told, and as the man fell the remaining five rushed through the other door of the temple, and left him to follow Miss Morley and Valuwa.

Bleeding profusely from the gaping wound in his shoulder, he succeeded in overtaking them outside the palisading just as pandemonium seemed broken loose, for the whole place was now awakened, and yells and savage outcries mingled with the rattle of a wooden war-drum, vigorously beaten at the far end of the village, and answered by rifle shots from Dikea's party, who had now rushed to the rescue, and were actually within sight, spearing and clubbing every one of the mountaineers they came across, sparing neither age nor sex, setting fire to the houses with torches, and yelling as only savages can yell when the blood-lust is upon them.

But the mountaineers were no cowards, as Olmsted

found to his cost, for no sooner had he overtaken Miss Morley and Valuwa than the former, in a half-fainting condition, tripped over a stack of loosely-piled bamboos, and as the white man and the native girl were trying to raise her so as to carry her off towards the rescuing party, three mountaineers made a rush at them.

Dropping the unconscious girl, Olmsted shot one of his assailants through the stomach, and the next moment was felled by a blow from the club. After that he remembered no more till he found himself on board the *Scarborough* with Dr. Morley holding his hand.

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"Is Miss Morley safe?" was his first question.

"Safe and well, thanks to you my brave fellow," replied her father huskily. "And, as soon as you will, she wishes to come to you and ask your forgiveness."

Then the doctor told him how some of Dikea's men had rescued him, Miss Morley, and Valuwa almost at the last moment, and carried them safely down to the ship. Dikea himself had remained with most of his fighting men in the mountain village until the last house had been burned, and the last head taken. Not a single life except that of the boy Ralu was spared.

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Three days later the *Scarborough* sailed for Sydney, after Captain Rich had amply rewarded Dikea and the Mākoan people, and Kate Morley had wept her farewell upon the bosom of the faithful Valuwa.

Olmsted's Adventure

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And long ere the bold cliffs of Sydney Heads were sighted, Olmsted had recovered from his wounds, and the girl for whom he had risked his life had promised to become his wife.

THE PEARLERS

KABAIRA BAY, on the north side of the great island of New Britain, is one of those spots of which it could be truly said, "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile;" for there are but few other small harbours in the world that approach it in the strange and wondrous beauty of its scenery, and hardly any other spot in the universe was inhabited by an equally ferocious, treacherous, and cannibalistic race of savages. Here, in the early days of trading in New Britain, I was stationed, and I very soon learnt to hate my surroundings most intensely, for it was a hot-bed of malaria. The headquarters of the firm by whom I was employed were at Samoa, with a branch at the Duke of York's Islands, situated between New Britain and New Ireland, and one hundred miles distant from my station, which was the "farthest west" and most isolated of even the few then established on any of the islands in that part of Oceania. Kabaira had an evil reputation. One of my predecessors, the Hon. G. S. Littleton (a nephew of the late Lord Lytton) had been speared in the house as he lay reading on his bed one night; and his predecessor, a Captain Murray, and three other white seamen, had been ruthlessly slaughtered by the natives of a village a mile distant from the main

town, under circumstances of the most abominable treachery.

But the trader's house on Kabaira Station was never untenanted by a white man for more than a few weeks. Men will dare much to make money quickly, and at Kabaira, if one escaped death by fever, or from the clubs or spears of its savage, betel-nut chewing people, a twelve-months' stay meant a good sum of money, for the district was rich in island produce.

I went there in January, and by March felt so assured of my safety that I never openly carried any arms when I went about the district. Twenty years in the South Seas had made my body almost as brown as a berry, and my rapid acquisition of the Kabaira dialect, and the Kabairan customs (bar cannibalism) made me a welcome guest at villages hitherto unvisited by my ill-fated predecessors.

One morning in May a cutter arrived from the head-station at Apia, Samoa. It was in charge of a fine, stalwart Fijian half-caste named Hicks. He handed me a letter from the manager marked "Urgent." It was curt but explicit.

"I have received absolutely reliable information that there is a bed of black-edge pearl shell about ninety miles west from Kabaira. The shell is in shallow water, four to five fathoms. As I have no other vessel available, I am sending you the cutter with Hicks and four Manahiki men, who are all good divers. Shut up your house, leave it in charge of the chief, and make all haste to the place indicated on the chart herewith. Cutter is well provisioned, and has ample arms and ammunition. Try to

establish friendly relations with natives. Will send another vessel to join you within a month. Black-edge shell is now at £68 per ton."

I was ill with fever at the time, and could scarcely walk, but the prospect of making perhaps a large sum of money in a month or two infused new life into me. In less than two hours I had shut up my place, and the cutter was off to the westward before the lusty S.E. trade wind, and I was overhauling the provisions, arms, etc., on board. The arms consisted of six Snider carbines with a case of one thousand cartridges, two old needle-guns (used perhaps at Sadowa) with five hundred cartridges, and a couple of French Le Fauchaux double-barrelled sporting shot guns, with an ample supply of their dangerous pin-fire cartridges, of which only one in three was good. The *zund nagel* paper-covered ammunition, although so old—judging by its appearance—was in good order, although some of the cartridges had burst open, and we expended a few rounds in firing at isolated rocks, etc., on the coast, as the cutter swept along, and agreed that the two needle-guns—excepting my own dearly beloved .44 calibre Winchester—were the best and most reliable guns we had.

All the four native seamen on board knew me well, and so did Hicks, who, some years before, had been second mate of an island-trading brig, of which I was supercargo. Consequently we were quickly in accord, and the Samoan language instead of English was spoken.

Thirty-six hours after leaving Kabaira we were abreast of the place indicated on the chart. It was raining heavily, and blowing as well, and the coast of

New Britain was only dimly discernible, although but two miles away, when we let our anchor go in six fathoms, and paid out forty-five fathoms of chain so as to ride easily, for there was a long swell running. Ten minutes later, in a blinding mist of rain, the cutter struck stern on to a reef, canted over to port, and began pounding so heavily on the coral that in ten minutes her rudder was carried away, and there was a big hole in her amidships on the port side, and we knew that she was doomed, and that we should have to take to the boat if she broke up. It was then about two o'clock in the afternoon.

Half an hour later the rain ceased, the sky cleared, the sun came out, hot and strong, and the first thing we noticed was a fleet of over thirty canoes within a quarter of a mile of us. They were all heading for the cutter. Fortunately, the tide was on the ebb, and the little vessel soon settled down on the coral, and we were able to get ready for our visitors, who had evidently seen our mishap from the shore, and meant to take advantage of it. They approached us in a semicircle, and when within three hundred yards I hailed them in the Kabairan dialect, and told them to keep off, or we would fire into them. A yell of derision was the answer, and one man in the foremost canoe, which contained ten men, stood up and brandished his jade-headed club. That meant that they intended to kill us.

Taking my Winchester carbine, I steadied myself and fired, intending to hit the canoe, and missed it; and my native crew, who knew that I had the reputation

of being a good shot, looked at me wonderingly, as they gripped their Sniders, waiting the word to fire. Throwing down the Winchester in disgust, I hurriedly picked up one of the needle-guns, but was anticipated by Hicks, who fired his Snider, and the savage who was standing fell; in another instant we all opened fire together, every shot either wounding a man or hitting a canoe. And then, just as the crowded canoes were thrown into confusion, and were turning tail, there came a calamity—the whole of the needle-gun cartridges, which were in a small open candle-box, exploded, killing one of the natives outright, and sending Hicks, another man, and myself over the lee side of the cutter into the water. Had it been deep water, we should certainly have all been drowned, for we were stunned by the violence of the explosion. How it happened I do not know, but probably a piece of burning wadding had fallen into the box, and as many of the cartridges were burst, and the powder was loose, the accident occurred.

Clambering on board in a half-dazed state, minus our rifles—which went overboard with us—we found the cutter on fire in the hold, and the other native seaman so badly injured by burns and bullet wounds that he died in a few minutes.

Hardly had we gained the deck when a second explosion took place in the hold—two tins of kerosene ignited simultaneously, and a burst of flame shot upward, and nearly blinded us, and in a few seconds the entire hold, from stem to stern, was ablaze, and making such a roar that even the delighted yells of the savages who saw our predicament sounded faint and far away.

Hicks, the two natives and I, dazed and half-blinded as we were, managed to get the cutter's dinghy over the lee rail on to the reef, and drag her thirty or forty yards over the coral away from the burning vessel. Then we got on board again, and succeeded in saving most of the arms and ammunition that were left, an axe, Hicks's Newfoundland dog, which was badly burned, and howling dismally with pain and terror, the cutter's compass, and an unopened tin-lined case of dynamite cartridges with fuse and detonators, which had fortunately been lashed on deck under the heel of the bowsprit.

All this gear—including the poor dog—we carried to the boat, which was now high and dry on the reef. Then, as the cutter burned, we attended to our arms, and made ready for another attack, for the canoes were now completely surrounding us. Examining my Winchester, I soon found the cause of my missing the canoe at which I had first fired. A few weeks before we left Kabaira I had intended to shoot hornbills, and had slipped into the breech one .44 revolver cartridge, which fitted the weapon, and which I often used for shooting hornbills. They were very effective up to one hundred yards, but not more, and I had quite forgotten to take this one out and reload the magazine with the proper cartridges.

As the cutter burned, the canoes drew nearer.

I loaded the Winchester with the right ammunition, and sent a shot plump into three or four, which were all lying alongside of each other.

"That's enough for 'em, sir," cried Hicks. "You hit one of 'em; they're off;" and, taking the Winchester

from my hand, he, with the lust of slaughter inborn in him from his Fijian mother, discharged the remaining cartridges—and every shot told.

When the tide rose, and as the burning hull of the cutter sizzled into a black skeleton, we took to the oars, and headed eastward. Although without provisions, we were not concerned, for the dynamite gave us all the fish we wanted, and the two shot-guns provided us with pigeons and cockatoos, with which New Britain abounds.

Fifty miles from the scene of our disaster we met an American schooner, which gave us a passage to the Hermit Islands, where there was an agency of the firm which had sent us out on our unfortunate expedition.

THE KIDNAPPING OF SANDY COSTELLO

CHAPTER I

EARLY one morning in August the schooner, *Marion Renny*, was lying alongside Town's Wharf in Sydney Harbour, taking in the last of her stores and "trade" for a six months' "labour" cruise among the Solomon Islands.

The mate, a grizzled and hardy old Nova-Scotian, with a complexion like much-used pump-leather, was strolling up and down the wharf, smoking his after-breakfast pipe and watching the crew of Rotumah Island natives hoisting in some cases of muskets and other trade goods, when he was approached by a lad of about sixteen years of age, who, taking off a battered straw hat, revealed a shock of the most violent red hair.

"If you please, sir, are you the captain of this schooner?" he inquired politely.

"No. What do you want with him?"

"I want to go to sea."

"Do you now? Well, take my advice and *don't* go to sea. That red hair of yours must have burnt up all the brains in your skull."

The lad's blue eyes flashed angrily, and he advanced so threateningly towards the officer that the latter stepped a pace or two back.

"What has my hair to do with you? How would *you* like anyone telling you that your beard, which ought to be white, is a dirty yellow-green from tobacco juice?"

"I don't want any o' your sauce, youngster."

"I'm not saucy, but I don't like to be jeered at because I have red hair."

"Well, I'm sorry if I've hurt your feelings."

"And I'm sorry, sir, you think I meant to give you cheek," was the prompt and frank response.

The "sir" had a magic effect on the rough, but good-hearted old mate.

"Well, the captain will be on board in half an hour. Had any breakfast?"

"Yes, thank you."

Rossiter leant against a wharf bollard and began questioning the boy.

"What d'ye want to go to sea for, sonny?"

"Father gave me the chuck out yesterday. Mother's dead this six months, and father married Mrs. Mullens—the grocer's widow—about a month ago, and she's made it too warm for me ever since."

"Ah, I see. Mrs. Mullens any children?"

"Yes, two boys—nearly as big as me. They got on to me yesterday about my hair; and I did 'em up in ten minutes. Then father went for me and gave me a fearful licking, and Mrs. Mullens took my clothes and slung 'em out into the yard and told me to get."

"What is our father?"

"Blacksmith—Jimmy Costello is his name. I've worked in the forge ever since I was eleven. I'm seventeen now."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"One sister—she is ten. Father ain't been kind to her since Mrs. Mullens came; so this morning I sneaked back to the house and called her outside, and she run away with me."

Rossiter whistled—"Where is she now?"

The lad looked at him steadily for a moment—half afraid to give further confidences.

"You needn't be afraid. I've children o' my own, and won't blab."

"Well, I took her to some friends of mother's. They are dairy people named Gowan, living at Botany. We went there this morning in a 'bus. Mrs. Gowan offered me a job at milking, at ten bob a week, and says she'll keep Jenny for nothing for six months. But I don't care about work like that. I'd rather go to sea and learn to be a regular sailor and get my £7 a month."

Rossiter shook his head—"You won't get £7 a month for a long time, my lad. Better try for a berth ashore. And then, besides that, you'll want some sea togs."

"I've a good-sized bundle up there in the wharfinger's shed," and he pointed to a building at the end of the wharf; "and I have £2 left to buy oilskins and boots—that is, if I can get a ship."

"But don't you think you ought to have given most

of that money to the people who are taking care of your sister?"

"I did give Mrs. Gowan £6, although she didn't want it. But I made her take it; and she says she'll put it by for Jenny."

"Well, you're a good lad, and Mrs. Gowan is a brick," said the mate kindly. "Ah, here comes the skipper with the recruiter. I'll put in a good word for you."

Captain Meredith was a young, swarthy-faced, extremely handsome man, with a somewhat stern expression in his deep-set grey eyes. He was dressed in frock coat, wore a tall hat and gloves, carried a light cane in his hand, and looked more like the usual London man-about-town than the captain of a "blackbirder," as labour vessels were then styled. He listened to what the mate had to say, and young Costello saw him smile—evidently Rossiter had told him of the lad's resentful bearing at the allusion to his hair—and then turn and speak to the recruiter.

Presently the three men came towards him, and the lad raised his hat.

"You want to see me, do you?" said the captain, in a drawling, languid, but kindly voice. "Then come on board and I'll hear what you have to say presently."

Leaving Costello on deck with the mate, the captain and recruiter went below. A quarter of an hour later they reappeared, the former now wearing a well-fitting blue sac suit, and looking the sailorman from head to toe. He beckoned to Costello to come aft.

"The mate has told me the yarn you spun him," he said in the same quiet, slow manner which was habitual with him. "Is it true?"

"Yes, sir, quite true."

"What is your name?"

"Alexander Costello."

"Your father walloped you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't see any marks."

"He did wallop me, sir—pretty badly, too."

"With what?"

"Supple-jack cane, sir."

"Show me; strip off your pants."

The boy unfastened his coat, vest, and then pulled off his shirt, which was blood-stained. Then, with an angry light in his eyes at what he doubtless considered a reflection on his truthfulness, he drew himself up and turned his back to Meredith and the recruiter; it was a blue-black from his shoulders down to his hips.

"Put your shirt on again, my lad," and the swarthy-faced young captain placed his hand on the boy's shoulder, "and come below. I'll dress your back for you with some lotion from the medicine chest. And I'll ship you as ordinary seaman at £3 a month, and I'll give you a month's advance."

An hour later "Sandy" had signed articles for six months, and was at work assisting in taking in stores, when the captain sent for him. He was in the cabin with the recruiter.

"Sandy," said Captain Meredith, "this gentleman is Mr. Devine, my recruiter. Do you know what that is?"

No? Well, I'll tell you. This ship is what is called a 'labour vessel,'—stupid people would call her either a 'slaver' or a 'blackbirder.' We go down to the Solomon Islands or the New Hebrides to engage natives to work on the sugar and cotton plantations in Fiji and Samoa. The work is very, very dangerous." He paused. "Are you easily scared, Sandy? Sometimes these people attack the boats, and then we have to fight to save our lives—see?"

"Yes, sir; I won't be frightened;" and the lad looked steadily into the captain's eyes.

"That's right. Now, Sandy, I hardly know whether I am doing right in taking a lad of your age on so dangerous a voyage—as a matter of fact, I was going to send you away, but Mr. Devine spoke for you, and persuaded me to ship you. And it's all on account of your hair."

An angry flush again tinged the boy's cheeks but quickly died away when he saw that Meredith was speaking seriously.

"You see, Sandy, the natives of a great many islands are particularly fond of red hair, and as their own is naturally black they dye it by using a plaster of slack lime for years and years until it becomes a bright golden colour; but red of some kind is the colour they are dead set upon, and after the golden hue is reached they use a vegetable dye which turns it into a dirty brick-red. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sandy, now deeply interested.

"Well, Sandy, you have the most wonderfully deep-red hair that either Mr. Devine or I have ever seen, and

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so I am taking you into my confidence, for we are both sure that you are a very sensible lad. Now, I'll tell you what it is you can do for us, and why in addition to the £3 a month wages, I mean to give you five shillings for every native we secure as a labourer. If all goes well, and you don't get scared, obey Mr. Devine in everything, you ought to earn £25 over and above your wages. That will be a nice little thing for you and little Jenny, eh?"

Sandy's eyes sparkled.

"Now this is what we do when on a labour cruise. Say we get to a certain island—Bougainville or Guadalcanar—two boats are sent ashore; Mr. Devine and six hands go in the first with a box of trade goods for barter; the second boat is called the 'covering boat,' and is in charge of either the first or second mate, whose duty is to watch the first boat, and if she is attacked—which often happens—pull in to her assistance or open fire on the natives. Sometimes we get along very well and have no trouble, for Mr. Devine is a great linguist, and he and myself and the *Marion Renny* are well known all through the Solomons, and we generally get all the kanakas* we can carry—one hundred."

"Yes, sir;" and Sandy's eyes glowed with interest.

"But sometimes we get very bad luck, Sandy, and last voyage we had two men killed in the landing boat, Mr. Devine badly wounded, and one man killed in the covering boat. The natives are very treacherous, and we

* Kanaka is the common term for natives of the Pacific Isles. It is a corruption of the Samoan "tagata" (man).

carry our lives in our hands—you know what that means, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Sandy, Mr. Devine thinks you will prove a *mascotte* to us—*mascotte* means luck, it's a French word—and he wants you to come with him in the landing boat. That head of yours will bring us luck. When the natives see you they will make no end of a fuss over you, and instead of our being fired upon with muskets and poisoned arrows, and bloodshed happening, we'll get along splendidly. Eh, Devine?"

Devine, a man about the same age as Meredith, and as deeply bronzed by tropic suns, nodded and smiled, and Sandy's heart went out to him instantaneously.

"Now, Sandy, my boy," Meredith went on, "Mr. Devine will take good care of you, but you must be loyal to him. Don't be scared; do exactly what he tells you to do. And we want you, on the voyage down, to get yourself as much sun-browned as possible; in fact, we want you to look as much like a native as you can. Don't wear any clothing except a loin cloth, and rub your body every morning with some coconut oil, and by the time we get to Bougainville you'll be as brown as a berry. Are you willing?"

"Yes, sir. I'll do whatever you tell me to do."

"Good lad! And now, Sandy, I'll tell you a secret. There is another labour vessel—the *Meteor* brig—whose skipper is always bragging about the number of natives he recruits through his second mate, who has read hair. But *his* hair isn't anything like yours. You can give him points, and Mr. Devine and I are going to knock

spots off Captain Farquharson and the *Meteor* this cruise; that is, if you have plenty of pluck, and will do everything that Mr. Devine orders. The *Meteor* will be in the Solomons at the same time as the *Marion Renny*, and we are going to pit you against Farquharson's red-headed mate. Understand?"

"Yes, sir, I will do anything to please you and Mr. Devine."

"That's right. Now, here are two sovereigns. Take them to the good woman who is taking care of your sister, and say I sent them, and then be on board again by ten o'clock to-night, for we sail at daylight."

CHAPTER II

Six months later the *Marion Renny* was lying at anchor in Carlisle Bay, Santa Cruz Island, better known as Nitendi. She had already taken a full load of "recruits" to Levuka (Fiji Islands), and was now near the end of a second cruise.

Sandy—or "Ginger" as the white sailors called him—had proved a great acquisition, and both Meredith and Devine were delighted with the good luck his red head had brought the ship. From the very first things had gone smoothly, and only on one occasion had the boats been fired upon. This occurred in the Solomon group, at the island of Vella Lavella, where the boats had been sent ashore to buy provisions. Sandy, as usual, was with Devine in the landing boat with five hands, and a few minutes after Devine and Sandy stepped on the beach they were surrounded by natives, who evinced the utmost friendliness, and bartering for pigs, fowls, yams, etc., was at once begun by Devine. Presently, however, one of the native crew called out in English to Devine that the women and children were quietly slipping away—an ominous sign.

The recruiter hailed the covering boat, "Stand by, Rossiter."

Then turning to Sandy, he said quietly, "They are

going to attack us. Get into the boat quickly, and tell the hands to be ready."

The landing boat, as was usual, was stern on to the beach, and the crew had kept her afloat, for the Vella Lavella people had a bad reputation.

Suddenly Devine, whom the treacherous natives believed to be quite unsuspecting, launched out his right arm and struck a short, sturdy savage between the eyes, and sent him over on his back; in another moment he sprang for the boat, the crew of which at once gave way, and sent her skimming along the water. Then from both sides of the tree-clad shore of the little bay, and from the beach astern, the savages opened fire with muskets and poisoned arrows. Sandy, who was pulling bow oar, set his teeth. Devine, he saw, was as cool as ever, and stood up grasping the steer oar as if the bullets and arrows which were humming about the boat were things of no moment, and from that moment the recruiter became a hero to him.

"Scared, Sandy?" asked Devine, as a heavy, round iron musket ball plumped into the boat, and splintered a plank between the boy and the man next to him.

"No, sir."

"That's right; we'll be out of range in a minute or two."

Meanwhile Rossiter and his crew in the covering boat had opened fire with their Winchesters, and the natives at once "cleared" into the bush, and the firing ceased.

The boats came alongside the schooner, and were

hoisted up, and Captain Meredith stood away along the coast for another village where the natives were better disposed. As Devine came aft he inquired if anyone was hurt.

"No, a bullet or two hit my boat—that was all."

"How did the mascotte like it—funky?"

"Never turned a hair. He's all right," replied the recruiter, as he turned to go below.

From Vella Lavella the schooner cruised northward through the Solomon group, and then went south-eastwards till she reached the beautiful Nitendi,* the largest island of the Santa Cruz archipelago. Here Meredith and Devine expected to make up their complement of recruits, and then sail for Fiji, a "full ship."

Six months of seafaring had done young Costello a world of good. He was a lad of exceptionally fine physique, and gave every promise of growing into an extremely powerful man. Devine, who had a great liking—almost an affection for him—had treated him more as an equal than a member of the crew, and with the crew themselves, both European and native, he was a great favourite.

The *Marion Renny* was anchored within half a mile of one of the largest villages on the island. It contained about one hundred large and well-built houses, each of

* It was at Carlisle Bay, Nitendi, that that gallant sailor, Commodore James Graham Goodenough, was murdered by the natives on August 21st, 1875. Four years previously, on September 20th, 1871, the good Bishop Patteson and a fellow-missionary were killed by the people of Nukapu, an island in the same group.

which was surrounded by a neat stone wall, within which grew numbers of the most beautifully-coloured crotons imaginable, whilst the village itself was encompassed not only by the ever-graceful coco-palms, but by groves of bread-fruit, orange, lime, and other fruit trees. The natural beauties of the place were enhanced by the carefully-tended gardens and plantations of bananas, sugarcane, yams and taro, whilst the shady lanes dividing the houses were always kept well swept and free of fallen leaves and other *debris*.

The natives themselves were a remarkably handsome, athletic race, very light coloured, and manifested the greatest friendship; but Devine, who spoke their language well, knew that they were not to be trusted, and care was taken not to allow too many of them on board at once, as they never relinquished their arms—bows, spears, and clubs.

During the three days that the schooner had been lying in the quiet little harbour, not a single man had offered himself as a recruit, but Devine was not impatient, for there were a number of villages in the bush whose people had promised to visit the ship in a day or two, and Devine was confident that he could induce some of these to "recruit"; in fact, he was prepared to give them three times the usual "advance" in trade goods. His reason for this was a simple one. There were on board the schooner over seventy natives from one island in the Solomon Group—Bougainville—and he wished to leaven them with at least twenty natives from another island—natives whose language would be entirely different to that spoken by the people of Bougainville. To

have a cargo of recruits all from one island was very risky, as they were apt to plot, and in some cases had risen and murdered the captains and crews of labour vessels; but with a mixed "cargo" this source of danger was never apprehended, for the diversity of language alone prevented any collusion for mischief.

On the evening of the fourth day two chiefs, Nupani and Thomba, came on board and asked the captain if he, Devine, and "the young man with the hair like fire" would come on shore as their guests to a feast and to witness a dance by the young women of the village and remain till the morning. Meredith declined the invitation for himself; but said that if one of the chiefs and his family would remain on board as hostages, Devine and Sandy could go and see the dance. The chiefs readily consented, though they reproached the captain for being so suspicious.

Meredith laughed, and asked them, in view of their evil reputation, was he not justified in being cautious? "My friends," he added, "you people of Nitendi have killed a number of white men."

"True" was the frank response, "but we have killed none now for five years."

Thomba's wife and children were soon on board, and then Devine, Sandy, and Nupani went on shore. The people treated the two Europeans with the greatest hospitality; and, as usual, Sandy's hair attracted respectful attention, hundreds of the natives begging him to allow them to touch it, much to his amusement. The dance was a very decided success, nearly two hundred young women and girls taking part therein. The feast lasted

practically all night, and an enormous quantity of food was consumed—baked pork, wild pigeons, crayfish, turtle, etc. Meredith had made a contribution of two 50-lb. tins of ship biscuit and a bag of white sugar, of which the people of the Santa Cruz Islands are extremely fond.

About two o'clock in the morning Devine and Sandy tired of the dancing and singing, and Nupani, seeing this, conducted them to a new house on the outskirts of the village. It was beautifully constructed, and the walls, posts, and rafters ornamented with coloured cinnet of coconut fibre, whilst the gravelled "floor" was thickly covered with elegantly-worked mats.

"This is a new house," said the chief. "No one has ever yet slept in it. It was built for my son, and took thirty men two months to build. The *fala* thatch was made by the best thatchers on Nitendi, and will last the half of a man's lifetime. But just as the house was finished by son died, and no one but I, Nupani, hath ever entered it. To-night I will sleep here with you."

Some women then appeared carrying a number of fine sleeping mats, which they spread out for the chief and his guests, and then retired to their own homes. Nupani and Devine sat up smoking and talking for nearly an hour, then laid down and were soon asleep.

* * * * *

Just as daylight was breaking and the village and the shores of Carlisle Bay were still enwrapped by the soft fleecy sea mist of the night the second mate and the four armed seamen who were keeping watch with him

were startled by loud cries from the shore, the flashing of torches and then the discharge of rifles.

In a few seconds Meredith, Rossiter, and the whole watch below were on deck, all armed and ready for any emergency. Meanwhile the uproar in the village increased.

"What is this?" said the captain to the hostage Thomba.

The chief declared with convincing emphasis that he did not know.

"Man the waist boat, Mr. Rossiter, and go on shore and see. I'll send a covering boat, if necessary. But I don't think anything has happened to Mr. Devine and Sandy—this fellow Thomba here wouldn't be so quiet if there has been treachery."

The boat was soon manned, and Rossiter and six hands, all armed with Winchester rifles and revolvers, were about to push off when a large canoe emerged from the mist, and the people on board heard Devine's hail. So quickly was the canoe urged ahead that she was alongside in a few minutes and Devine sprang on deck.

"The bush people made a raid on the house we were sleeping in, Meredith, and carried off Sandy," he cried. "I escaped, but Nupani is badly wounded. Let us decide what is to be done and decide quickly. We must storm that village and rescue Sandy within twenty-four hours or it will be too late."

Then, as briefly as possible, he narrated what had occurred. "During the dancing I saw one or two of the bush people wandering about. They were evidently—"

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so Nupani now thinks—spies, and when they found out that Sandy and I were to sleep in Nupani's new house they hurried off to the bush villages and reported it.

"About four in the morning we all three were fast asleep, when we were awakened by a rush of men into the house and were literally overpowered by weight of numbers. My first thought was treachery on the part of Nupani, but at the same moment he called out to me that they were bushmen, and then the poor fellow was stabbed two or three times, and I was given a gentle tap on the head to keep me quiet. Poor Sandy was whisked outside in a jiffy and carried off, although he struggled most gamely. Of course the noise made brought a lot of Nupani's people to the house, and some of them started off in pursuit, firing as they ran."

He paused a moment. "How many men can you spare me, old man?"

"Take ten or a dozen. The recruits won't give us any trouble here in a strange island—they wouldn't venture on any mischief with the ship at anchor in a strange country. And Nupani's people would help me, I am certain, if I was in need of it."

Half an hour later, Devine, with five white seamen, five native, and six Solomon Islanders (picked from his "recruits") were ready to go on shore. The Solomon Islanders were armed with clubs and axes.

Just as Devine was leaving the cabin for the boat, he turned to Meredith.

"Meredith, old man, I daresay you can guess why these beggars of bushmen have kidnapped poor Sandy."

"I think so—they want his head."

"Yes, for their *gamal** house. God helping me, I'll save him."

* The *gamal* or *madai* house of these island groups is a building of a public character, though occasionally used for religious ceremonies, incantations, etc. Here the young men of the village eat, sleep, make their arms, and gossip. Here also are the images of their deified ancestors, or the bodies of animals, alligators, sharks, etc. into which the spirits of their ancestors may have entered; the most prized articles of all, however, are the preserved heads of enemies killed in warfare. These *madai* houses correspond in many social purposes with the *bure* of Fiji, the *fule kaupule* of the Ellice Islands, and the *batani* of the Sulu Islands.

CHAPTER III

THE village to which Sandy had been taken by his captors was about six miles inland from Carlisle Bay, and was, so the natives told Devine, "a very strong place, so strong that not even two hundred men can take it." But Devine knew what could be done by a few determined men with modern firearms. As the boat was nearing the shore his thoughts were busy, and he felt sick at heart at what would most likely occur at the *gamal* house that night if he failed to rescue Sandy. He remembered too, all too vividly, a story he had heard of a Miss Morley, who had been captured by the natives of Admiralty Island about the year 1830, for the same reason that had inspired the Nisendi bushmen to kidnap Sandy. She possessed bright golden hair, and her head was destined to ornament the "god-house" of the town. Only after much bloodshed was the village taken, and she rescued by the crew of the *Scarborough*, East Indiaman, on which ship she was a passenger.

The seventeen men, as soon as they landed, were met by a number of Thomba's people, who tried their utmost to dissuade Devine from marching upon the bush town. It was madness, they said.

He pushed through them with angry contempt, passed

through the town at the head of his little force, and soon reached the track that turned off to the bush village. The path led into a magnificent forest of immense trees, from which depended enormous liana and other climbing vines, though the sun was now well up, not the slightest ray of sunshine fell upon the road owing to the branches of the trees meeting overhead. For some days previously it had rained heavily, and the red, sticky mud made the progress of Devine and his party so slow that it was not until ten o'clock that they came in sight of an outlying tree fort, situated about half a mile from the village itself, which was still hidden from view by the jungle. The garrison of the fort—eight or ten wild, bushy-headed savages, armed with bows and arrows and piles of heavy stones piled up on the platform of the "fort," which was forty feet above the ground—were so surprised at the appearance of Devine and his men, that they had barely time to draw up their ladders of cane and vines ere Devine was within fifty yards of the bole of the tree. Bidding his men halt, he stepped out a few paces and hailed the fort.

"Where is the red-haired white man?" he asked.

A burly, partially bald-headed savage—evidently the leader—came to the edge of the platform and looked down. Devine laid his Winchester on the ground, and gazed up at the man, who had a rather pleasant face, and repeated his question.

"Over there," was the reply, and the fat man pointed towards the village. "Do you come to fight?"

"To fight if the red-haired man is not given back to

me—to be friends if no harm is done to him. Come down and let us talk.”

The savage shook his head.

“Then lower the ladders and I, alone and unarmed, will come up and we two can talk. It is a bad thing to shed blood,” said Devine, who was in great hopes of being able to effect Sandy’s release by ransom.

The savage hesitated and then talked to his companions, who were evidently very averse to Devine coming up, for presently he said:

“We are very strong here. You cannot hurt us; go away or we shall kill you.”

“You are fools,” said Devine, “and I may have to kill you all. See, this is what I shall do. I leave here two men to watch you. You cannot hurt them with your arrows, but they can kill you with their guns. When you hear my guns in the village you will know I am a man of my word, and if you and your men try to come down you will be shot.”

He fully meant what he said. Turning to a white seaman named Mason and a Samoan sailor named Sasa, he bade them watch the tree fort, and shoot every man who tried to descend.

“If they shoot a single arrow at you, you can wipe out the whole lot,” he said to Mason. “You and Sasa can pick everyone of them off by firing at them from underneath. But look out for the stones.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” replied Mason—an old hand in the labour trade.

Then turning to the rest of his little force, he first spoke to the six Solomon Islanders—who were armed

with Snider carbines—and gave them their instructions in their own language; then to the four white and four native seamen he said in English:

“Men, there is fighting before us. These beggars have collared poor Sandy to cut off his head and put it in their *gomal* house. Now, we must rush the village and get Sandy away before they have time to carry him off elsewhere. If the bushmen show fight, shoot; and shoot carefully—don't miss your man. Have you all matches?”

“Yes, sir,” replied one of the white seamen.

“Then fire every house as we pass it.”

So far they had not seen a single native, with the exception of those in the tree, and the utmost silence had pervaded the surrounding forest; but now as they resumed their march there came the loud, sonorous boom of a conch shell, and ere its echoes had died away the natives began firing at the party with smooth-bore muskets and arrows. Calling to his men to follow, Devine made a dash for the village, and their unseen assailants fled before them.

Suddenly as they emerged from the forest they came in full view of the village. It was situated on a hill and was protected from assault by a stockade, and outside this, by a strong abattis of sharpened bamboo stakes. A shower of arrows met them, and one of the Solomon Islanders fell forward on the abattis with two arrows through his body, and one white and one native seaman were wounded. Seizing the axe of the fallen man Devine and the remainder of the Solomon Islanders set to work on the abattis, and in five minutes had cleared

the way to the stockade. Here for a few minutes they halted to gain breath and extract the arrows from the wounded men. Between the posts they could see the village square and hundreds of hushmen running across it to their respective houses, and Devine, whose blood was now up, shot five of them with his Winchester ere they succeeded in getting cover.

A breach was soon made in the stockade, and then came the whizzing of arrows and the hum of the heavy round bullets as the natives again opened fire from the houses.

"Follow me, boys!" cried Devine, who had refilled his magazine again, "that's the *gamal* house over there among the breadfruit trees;" and he pointed to a curiously-built and grotesquely-carved building with two very high and pointed gable ends. It was from here that the musketry fire was coming—not much, it is true, for there were not fifty muskets in the village—but at too short a range to be pleasant.

As they rushed across the open space the Solomon Islanders, eager for the assault, outstripped their leader, and uttering the most diabolical yells sprang upon the platform of the *gamal* house, forced an entrance, and then began hewing and slashing at the occupants with their axes. The place was in semi-darkness owing to there being but one door and no windows, but in a few moments, and just as Devine and the rest of his men burst in, some of the defenders tore a huge hole through the thatched roof as a means of escape, thus giving more light and enabling Devine and his seamen to use their Winchesters with terrible effect. The oaths, yells and

savage cries and the groans of dying men turned the *gamel* house into a pandemonium, and amidst it all the rescuers heard the voice of Sandy shouting from some unseen quarter. As the last of the beaten bushmen fled from the now ruined house, pursued by the blood-maddened Solomon Islanders, quiet was restored.

"Where are you, Sandy?" shouted Devine.

"Here, sir, down below," was the reply. "They dropped me down here through a trap-door. I'm tied up like a trussed pig."

The floor of the *gamel* was of stout bamboo slats, and raised six or eight feet above the ground. Devine soon found the trap-door, and in a few moments was beside Sandy, cutting his bonds of green, slippery bark.

"Thank God, we have found you, Sandy," he exclaimed. "Are you hurt?"

"No, sir, not at all," replied Sandy, as he rose stiffly to his feet. "They only tied me up when the firing began, and then they lowered me down here and shut the trap-door again. Can you see at all, sir?"

"Not very well;" and Devine struck a match, and in a few moments Sandy and he were pulled up, and the men gave a loud hurrah!

"There's a lot of things down there, sir," said Sandy. "I saw a big ship's bell and brass work and other gear."

"We'll have a look at them then before I put a light into this cubby house of the devil," said the recruiter; "but we'll give the other houses a start first."

By this time not a native was left in the village, though every now and then a bullet, fired from the jungle, would come crashing through the sides of the *gamel*.

Just as they were about to leave the house to fire the village Joyce uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and pointed to one of the cross-beams overhead.

"Look there, sir," he said, "strings of money bored through and strung together."

"Yes," said Sandy, "I saw it when I was brought here."

"Never mind it now," said the recruiter, "we'll overhaul the whole shop when we come back."

Leaving the blood-stained *gamal* they went through the village and fired every house. In half an hour the whole place was in roaring flames, and vast volumes of smoke ascended through the windless air. The *gamal* house, being apart, was in no danger. In some of the houses wounded men were found, and Devine had the utmost work in preventing the poor wretches being slaughtered by the Solomon Islanders, who could not understand anyone showing mercy to an enemy.

At last the work of destruction was completed, and Devine and his men returned to the *gamal*.

CHAPTER IV

THE interior of the *gomal* under ordinary conditions would have presented a weird and terrifying experience to the European eye, but the carnage that had just taken place had added an additional horror to the scene. Twenty-three stalwart savages lay dead or wounded upon the ensanguined floor or on sleeping platforms of cane which extended round the house.

Stepping over the bodies, which were mingled with hideous wooden gods, alligators' heads, and smoked and dried human heads, weapons and other articles which had fallen down from their places during the *melle*, Joyce raised his cutlass and severed the stout piece of coir rope with which the strings of coins was tied to the beam; it fell with a crash on the bamboo floor.

Bending down Devine lifted one of the many cinnet cords on which the coins were strung by holes having been drilled through them, and examined the money. It was all French, the pieces ranging from five francs down.

"I reckon these fellows got this money out of the wreck of a French man-of-war, or transport, which was lost on the Santa Cruz group some time in the fifties,"

he said. "Well, they're worth a good deal at any rate, defaced as they are. Now what else is there here?"

"Here is something, sir," said Sandy, and he picked up an empty surgical instrument case. It was made of mahogany, and was in good order. On the cover was a brass name-plate, on which was engraved "Henri Desmazures."

Suspended from the rafters were other relics of the wreck—four of the ship's dead-eyes, which the ingenious natives had turned into hideously-grotesque human faces by some clever carving, the insertion of huge eyes of red stone for pupils, and lime cement for the whites.

Descending through the trap-door Devine and his men broke down one side of the darkened room, and a curious collection of European articles revealed itself under guard of twenty or thirty small wooden gods, which were placed in position around the walls. In a large earthenware bowl was the dried head and bill of an enormous hornbill, wrapped in a tricolour, which was so rotten by the moist heat of the tropics that it fell to pieces when unrolled; a Japanese painting on glass covered another bowl, in which was a solitaire board, with a few of the coloured glass balls and one tarnished epaulette. In the centre of the room were two 50 lb. tins of what had been preserved potatoes, a pile of pig-iron ballast, a broken swinging lamp, and a five-gallon wicker-covered spirit jar, which had been carefully ornamented by the natives with red and green parrot feathers to such an extent that none of the wickerwork was

visible. But what was evidently prized most of all was a very large piece of the gilded scrollwork from the ship's stern; for it was suspended by four stays overhead, and the back carved and painted by the natives.

Satisfied that there was nothing worth taking away except the strings of coins, Devine and his men ascended, took the money and then set the great *gamal* on fire in four places. It made a terrific blaze, and as the wall posts of huge bamboos and the floor of bamboo slats ignited, the joints of the former exploded like cannon shots; and indeed, as Joyce remarked, it sounded as if an artillery battle was being fought.

The march back to the tree fort was without incident. Mason and the native seamen still had their men treed—in a very literal sense—and said that no attempt had been made by them to descend; in fact, so terrified were they when they heard the firing that none of them showed himself for a moment.

Devine stepped near and hailed them, and the fat man screwed up courage and put his head over the platform.

"Look!" said Devine, pointing to the heavy pall of smoke hanging over the site of the burnt village, "you stole my red-haired man to put his head in your *gamal* house, and see what has happened. I have killed a score and a half of your fighting men, and all that is left of your village is there;" and he again pointed to the smoke.

A wail of terror came from the men in the tree. They

all expected instant death; but felt easier when Devine, feeling some pity for them, bade his men lay their arms upon the ground.

"Now," he resumed, "there has been much blood shed this day, and we want to shed no more, so I go away and leave you men in the tree in peace. Have no fear. I am a man of my word. But bid your headmen (chiefs) take warning. It is a bad thing to want the head of a white man for a *gamal* house. Farewell."

All his wounded men were able to walk, and in three days the party were back in Nupani's village and surrounded by hundreds of excited natives, who told him that Nupani was dead. They all expressed the greatest wonder at Devine's exploit, and he found it hard to make his way through them to the boat.

The moment the delighted Meredith saw Sandy was in the boat he ran up the schooner's colours and literally danced on the deck, and he, Rossiter, and everyone else on board wrung the rescued lad's hands so heartily that they ached for an hour afterwards. All work was suspended for the day, and Sandy's red locks were invested by a fresh halo of glory.

The money found in the *gamal* amounted to nearly 3,000 francs, and was sold by Devine on behalf of himself and the rescuing party to the French Government, who paid £100 for it as defaced coinage. It had been intended for paying the troops in the newly-founded settlement of Noumea in New Caledonia.

When the *Marion Renny* returned to Sydney, Sandy went ashore a happy man. He spent a few weeks with

his sister and the people who had come to his assistance, and then once more he turned his face to the sea to meet with other adventures with Devine and Meredith.

“KUSIS”

“COME,” said my host Kuis to me, at sunset one day, “there will be a bright moon to-night when the tide has ebbed, and now is the season for the great crabs, which feed among the sea-grass in the lagoon.”

Kuis was headman of the little village of Leasé, in Coquille Harbour, situated on the lee or western side of that loveliest of all the countless beauty spots in the North Pacific—Kusaie, or Strong’s Island. I had then been living with him and his family for many months on the shores of a tiny bay, lying under the shadow of Mont Buache. The vessel of which I had been supercargo had been driven ashore on the reef at Port Lottin—eight or ten miles distant from Leasé—and in consequence of differences between her captain and myself, I had elected to sever my connection with the rest of the ship’s company, and take up my quarters with Kuis in Leasé, declining invitations from other villages, for my host and I were firm friends, and he was delighted to have me come to him. A finer specimen of a Micronesian native, physically and socially, than my brown-skinned entertainer was not to be found in all the North Pacific, and he and his wife and daughter made my existence a

very happy one. Kuis and his cousin Nana were famed as the two most expert and successful boar hunters in the island. Every foot of the wild, romantic-looking interior of Kusaie was known to them, and many were the long campings-out we had together in the mountain forests, two thousand feet above the sea.

But it was as a fisherman that Kuis won my deepest affections, and scarcely a day or night passed that we were not out, either on the quiet, land-locked lagoon, which stretches from Port Lottin to Cap Vauvilliers, or else out at sea, fishing beyond the reef in a hundred fathoms or more of water, or looking for turtle among the many deep pools on the reef itself.

The lagoon, however, was the place I loved best, for not only did it teem with fish and turtle, but it was free from sharks, and its surroundings were beautiful beyond conception; no pen could properly pourtray its delights and charms. It was about four miles in length, and half a mile in width, and was formed on the south side by a chain of thickly-verdured coral islets connected by the reef; on the northern side was the mainland, sloping gracefully upwards towards the precipitous range of mountains which traverse the island. Here and there—wherever a stream had cut its way down through the forest and out through the dark mangroves into the quiet lagoon—would be seen little yellow beaches on which stood a native house or two, built on neatly squared platforms of stone, and backed by groves of the inevitable but always graceful coco-palms and screw pines (*pandanus*). No roads nor tracks leading from

village to village were on this part of the island, though many led into the interior; this was because the dense mangroves prevented communication. But if Miss Selika or Miss Kinié wanted to gossip with Miss Srué or Miss Naia, who were her next neighbours, she simply stepped into her canoe and either paddled or poled it over the lagoon waters, singing lazily to herself as she went. If the tide was out, and the mangrove flats were bared and steaming in the sun, golden plover and snipe settled there to feed on the tiny many-hued soldier crabs, and blue and white cranes stalked solemnly to and fro on the watch for sand eels, taking no heed of the human watcher, unless he came within a few yards; then they would rise with lazy wing and settle down again noiselessly. And all day long, snow-white tropic birds floating over the lagoon and the islets, sometimes sinking slowly down till their long scarlet ventricles almost touched the water, then rising and sailing away over the tree-tops beyond—sweet, beautiful creatures, to look upon them when so near was a joy of itself!

As your canoe glides softly along, black, snaky heads rise out of the deeper blue pools, and then disappear. They are hawkbill turtle, and if you cease paddling and look down into the wondrous coral forest above which you are floating, you will see them swimming slowly to and fro, peering into the sandy nooks and crannies of the walls of their lovely home in search of the small grey and red sand-octopus, which buries itself cunningly under the fine *débris* of broken coral and coarse sand at the bottom of the pools.

Westward as you go towards Cap Vauvilliers (or *Rao Rika*, as the islanders call the cape) the lagoon narrows and shallows, and you pass over a field of brown and green sea-grass, which sways gently with the current as the tide flows in over the barrier reef, two miles away. This is the haunt and feeding-ground of the crabs—great purple-backed fellows with red-black nippers and claws of marbled blue and grey. Their flesh is very delicate in flavour, and greatly prized by the natives, who prefer it to that of the small crayfish caught at night-time on the reef. One of these crabs is quite sufficient to make a meal for three people, and the Kusaican women prepare them in several ways—that most favoured being as a *mayonnaise*, with grated yam and pellets of pork fat, the whole being carefully mixed, and then baked in the shell in the usual ground oven of heated stones covered in with banana leaves. Moonlight nights are usually chosen for catching them, for then they are revealed very clearly as they crawl through the sea-grass, but dark nights will do as well if torches are used. In the daytime they generally remain inactive, each one burying itself flush with the surface of the sand on which the grass grows, but their resting-places can always be discovered by a trained eye. The native women (whom custom will not permit to use a spear) catch them in cunning little nooses made of green cane, and then deftly drop them into specially made baskets.

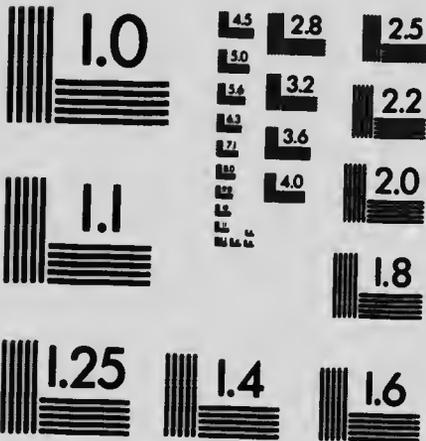
But I am quite forgetting my friend Kuis and our moonlight excursion to the above-mentioned sea-grass flats. We were accompanied by some women and

children as carriers, for the tide being on the ebb we could not use canoes to take us from the village to Cap Vauvilliers—four miles distant. *Leassé*, as I have said, was on the lee side of the island. It consisted of about thirty houses—elaborately built, curious-looking structures with saddle-backed roofs, like those of most of the inhabitants of the Caroline archipelago; the floors, which were of strong cane-work bound together with coir cinnet, having in their centre a square hole or pit, used as a fireplace for purposes of light at night-time, and minor cooking operations. Each supporting post was of polished bread-fruit or other handsome wood, and at intervals wound round with broad bands of red and black cinnet, showing ingenious and pretty devices in squares, diamonds, or circles. On the cross-beams overhead were placed, when not in use, the family sleeping mats, made to roll up, and constructed, with infinite care and patience, of flattened strips of bright yellow pandanus leaves, sewn so neatly together with a fishbone needle as to resemble one whole piece. Hanging from the walls were fishing-nets of many kinds, gaffs, turtle spears, bonito rods, and perhaps an ancient musket or two with barrels polished as bright as a new pin, and standing on a platform in the corner two or three small looms for weaving banana fibre. These looms are (or rather were, for they are now disappearing) the most treasured of all the belongings of a Caroline Islands woman, for with them she weaves the many-coloured and silky fibres into beautiful and intricate patterns, for the broad *nök* or band she wears around her hips when bathing or fishing in the company of men, who



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also wear similar girdles, but of a coarser and poorer quality.

Straight from the house we stepped out on to the clean, broad, coral-gravelled path leading to the beach. *That* beach, the most glorious of all the beaches ever trodden by foot of man! For, to the west, it faced the white line of tumbling surf on the reef with the blue ocean beyond, and between the reef and the shore was a sheet of pale green water that sometimes darkened to purple or black patches, as a passing cloud overhead cast its shadows upon it, then shimmered and shone and laughed joyously again to the bright golden sun. Eastward the fair, fair littoral, with lofty mountains, forest-clad and misty-topped, looking down upon the shining beach and long lines of rollers surging on the wall of reef. And then the sand itself! Hard as newly-laid cement to the naked foot (the writer possessed no boots in those days) at, and near the water's edge, it was a yellowish, golden-brown; but above high-water mark, where it lay in wavering dunes, it was bleached snow-white by a generous sun, and gave forth a musical *clink! clink!* when the bosom of its virgin purity was trodden upon. It was a beach on which "Red Spinner" of *The Field* would have forgotten rod and line and gun, and laid himself down under the shade of the palms to dream in restful content, even though all the beauteous ones of river and sea were within easy length, and the many-voiced woodland called aloud.

After nearly four miles of walking, we came to where the lagoon, of which I have written, has its western

sea entrance. A mile or more away was the reef point of Rao Rika, against which the rollers thundered unceasingly, and between the cape and the mainland was a white boil of seething surf, running across in an almost straight line, to within a few hundred fathoms of where we sat down to rest and smoke before setting out for the sea-grass flats. Our resting-place was in a grove of beautiful fruiting screw-pines, which at night-time were whitened by many hundreds of tropic birds, whose incubating grounds were in a thicket of low *puka* trees nearby. On the seaside verge of the grove was a moss-grown and vine-covered pile of coral stones, erected to the memory of a white man, who, from what I gathered from Kusis, must have been one of the crew of the Russian explorer Lutke, who visited the island in the earlier years of the last century on the frigate *Seniavine*, for, so Kusis said:—

"In my father's time a ship with many men and many cannons came to Utwe (Port Lottin) and the captain and some of his gentlemen, attended by some common sailors, came to this point, and looked at the sun through glasses fixed in poles. It was a hot day, and one of the sailors fell down and died, and they built up this pile of stones to mark the place."

Presently Tulpé, the wife of Kusis, his daughter Kinié, and several other women and girls slipped off their cotton gowns, and donned their fishing girdles of hibiscus bark over their gaily-hued hip bands, and slung their baskets over their naked shoulders. Then we started from the beach in a line, about six feet apart, the women and girls with their cane nooses, and Kusis

and the writer with short-handled scoop nets, such as are used for catching crayfish. Scarcely had we proceeded fifty yards or so towards the sea-grass, when we came to a shallow pool, and one of the children gave a scream of delight; it was filled with a species of tassel-fish, with bodies about six inches long, though their streaming fins and tails made them appear three times that length. These fish, whose flesh is very delicate, are such slow swimmers that we soon caught all that were in the pool—five or six dozen—put them into one basket and sent a little girl back to the shore with them, to light a fire and grill some on the coals, against our return.

A few minutes later we reached the margin of the sea-grass, and took three or four crabs simultaneously. They were all very lively, and showed fight by turning round and backing away from us with their huge nippers held up threateningly. Further on, towards the islets, we came across them in such numbers that one had to be very careful when wading through the grass, the top of which was lying on the surface of the water, for although there was a bright moonlight, it was hard at times to distinguish between what appeared to be a flat piece of coral and a crab. The natives, however, always put out their right foot and touched the object; if it was a crab resting amid the grass, or on the bottom, with his nippers folded together, it at once made the fact manifest by either burrowing under the grass or trying to escape into deeper water, pursued by several of the children, each one trying to slip her cane noose over one of his angry-looking nippers. Every now and

then we would see a pipe-fish swimming lazily along, and, as they make the best possible bait for albacore, even after they have been dried, we killed all we saw by a blow across the back, and dropped them into the baskets. Then, too, there were swarms of small fish like minnows, but with big, staring, stupid eyes fixed in bony heads, which were out of all proportion to their bodies. In my boyhood's days these fish were very common on all the Australian tidal rivers, were called "hardy-heads," and much sought after as schnapper bait. The Strong's Islanders, however, would not eat them, on account of their oily and highly purgative qualities, but use their oil to soften the peculiar red clay with which they paint their canoes.

Suddenly our sport came to an end—a rain squall swept down on us from the mountains, and in a few minutes we were hurrying back to our camping-ground on the point, near which were some tiny huts of coconut boughs put up for sheltering fishing-parties such as ours. Half-way across we saw the bright gleam of a generous fire, kindled by the little maid whom we had sent away with the tassel-fish. Not only had she cooked the fish in the most dainty manner, but had it served out on platters of *ti* leaves (*C. terminalis*). Then with some cold yam as bread we ate our supper in comfort in one of the huts, oblivious of the drenching rain outside, counted our take of crabs (two score), lit our pipes and cigarettes of strong black tobacco rolled in dried pandanus leaf, and waited for the end of the squall.

It stopped with a "snap," as suddenly as it began.

Out came the bright moon, away went the mist before
the gentle land breeze, and, with the call of the surf
singing to us from the reef beyond, we trooped back along
the bright, shining beach to *Leassé*.

THE TRAITOR

AFTER several years of South Sea life I was glad one day to find myself in Sydney, New South Wales, from the Caroline Islands in the North Pacific, where I had been engaged in winding up the affairs of a trading company, which had become insolvent through a destructive hurricane destroying their principal depôt and wrecking their trading fleet. A few weeks after I landed I received a letter from a relative of mine in Queensland asking me to come and spend a few months with him. He was engaged in business at what is now the city of Townsville, then newly-founded, but already prosperous, owing to the great "rush" of miners to the rich goldfields discovered at Charters Towers, the Cloncurry, Etheridge, Gilbert Rivers, and, later on, the Palmer and other widely separated districts in North Queensland, for which Townsville was the *entrepôt*.

Long years in the South Seas, afloat and on shore without a break, had wearied me of Island life, and as I had never been to Queensland—although a native of the sister colony—I accepted my relative's invitation, and fourteen days later arrived at Townsville; and almost ere I knew it was seized with the *auri sacra fames*, which seemed to possess everyone. New gold-

fields had been discovered in the Charters Towers district, and men who a few months before had landed penniless in "Cleveland Bay," as Townsville was then called, had already returned with thousands of pounds' worth of alluvial gold, and were spending it right royally, and, alas! too often very foolishly. My relative wished me to remain in Townsville and go into business, but the gold fever was too strong, and the morning after I arrived I set off for a new alluvial rush on the Gilbert River, three hundred miles inland, in company with a young marine engineer (twenty-two years of age) who, curiously enough, was a Jew. He was an excellent comrade, full of vivacity, and we soon became great chums. He had been employed in the Cunard Line, and had simply come to Australia more in search of adventure than to make money. His real name was Moses David, but he called himself Maurice Donaldson, and, when occasion demanded it, could speak with such a strong Aberdeenshire accent that, later on, he made friends with many Scottish-born diggers. I shall always remember him as the most cheerful, energetic, hard-working little fellow I ever met, and two years later I was not surprised to hear that he was manager of a large gold-rushing plant at Ravenswood, North Queensland, at a salary of £500 a year.

Arriving at the Gilbert River "rush" my Jewish comrade and I parted with mutual regrets—he setting up a blacksmith's forge, and I going mates with a digger named Charles Deroy, who had a rich alluvial claim, and wanted a working partner. He knew my people very well, and upon my paying him £100 I became

half-proprietor of the claim, which was called the "Polly McAlister," after Deroy's sweetheart, a barmaid in Melbourne.

We did exceedingly well; there were men all around us getting as much as 50 and 60 ounces of gold a week, principally in small nuggets of from 5 to 10 up to 20 pennyweights each, and at the end of fourteen weeks Deroy and I and two German diggers named Busch and Trood, who had the adjoining claim to ours, had over 2,000 ounces of gold, worth £3 15s. per ounce. At that time there was no gold escort from the new fields to Townsville, and consequently we were much concerned about its safety, as already robberies had occurred, and the sergeant of mounted police, who, with two black troopers, was stationed on the field, had warned us all to take care of our gold, as he had received information from Brisbane that a gang of expert gold thieves from Melbourne were at work at Charters Towers and some of the other "rushes" in the district.

Deroy, the two Germans, and I, took counsel together, and we decided that I—who wanted to return to Sydney to join a new vessel for the island trade which a friend of mine had bought—should take the gold to Bowen (Port Denison), sell it to the branch Bank of New South Wales there, and, drawing my own share, place the remainder of the money to the credit of my mate Deroy and the two Germans, Busch and Trood.

The gold was contained in four packages—much of which was in nuggets. One of these, containing about

20 lbs., was rolled up in a strip of canvas and strapped in front of my saddle like a valise, but was covered over with my mackintosh overcoat. The remaining parcels were tied up in pieces of flour bags and placed in the canvas pack-bags of the pack-horse I was to lead, which carried my supply of provisions for the long journey to Port Denison.

Just as I was about to start, Finnerty, the sergeant of police, came up, and in his rich Irish brogue asked me if I was travelling alone. I replied that I was.

"I'm thinking that ye'll have the company of Mister Lance Derby before ye get far on your road," he said in a whisper, so that Deroy could not overhear him, "an' I'm pretty sure that Mister Derby is the boss of the gang from Melbourne. I wish I could send Tommy with ye." (Tommy was one of the black police.)

I thought at first that Sergeant Finnerty had been drinking and did not know what he was saying. Mr. Lance Derby, of whom he had spoken, was a man who had been on the new field for three or four months, had shares in many claims, and was looked upon as a "straight" man in every way. Furthermore, I had met him frequently, and he, my mate, and I had talked together about our buying a quartz-crushing battery to work some of the gold-bearing reefs on the field.

"You take my word," said the sergeant, "he's a wrong 'un. If I could prove it, it would mean an inspectorship for me. If he doesn't know that you are taking the gold don't tell him, and, anyway, shake

him off as soon as you can. He says he is going as far as the Don River Cr'tle Station to buy bullocks, maybe he is; anyway, don't let him drop behind you."

"But it's the truth, Finnerty," I said; "he's been talking about going for the past three weeks."

"Thin he made up his mind very suddint, I'm thinkin,'" said the sergeant drily; "now just have a care of yoursilf, and I'll be glad to hear news of ye whin ye get to Bowen."

Somewhat curtly I said that Derby already knew that it was likely I should leave that morning, and that I should not feel a bit surprised if he joined me, as he was going the same way as I was for two hundred miles.

Bidding my mates and the sergeant farewell, I rode off, leading the pack-horse. Most of the diggers who saw me leaving thought I was going to Townsville to buy stores, and no one but ourselves knew I had the gold. Several of them asked me to execute small commissions for them, and I readily promised to do so, knowing I could buy what they wanted in Port Denison, and send the packages by the mailman.

Riding easily along the stony ironstone track, I mused on the sergeant's suspicions of Derby, which I regarded as unwarrantable and preposterous. He was a man of excellent family, well educated, and many of the people he knew in Sydney were friends of my parents (I have called him Derby for obvious reasons). He was a tall, dashing-looking fellow, clean-shaven, except for a yellow moustache, and he was also a splendid rider. That he

was a great gambler everyone knew, but that in a mining camp was nothing against a man as long as he played fair.

The bark humpy where Derby lived with his two mates was two miles from the main camp and on my road. These two mates were not diggers, but earned a good living as horse-breakers and horse-dealers, and nothing was known against them as far as I knew. They seemed to be just the usual type of rough Australian bushmen.

As soon as I came in sight of Derby's humpy I was not surprised, and in fact rather pleased, to see his riding-horse and a pack-horse all ready for the road in front of the door, from which the man himself presently emerged with a cheery "Good-morning, old man. How are you? I made up my mind to do a rush at the last moment and get away with you." Swinging himself up into his saddle, he called out good-bye to his mates, who came to the door to see us off, and in another two minutes we were trotting along, the two pack-horses going on ahead. It was a delightful winter morning in June, and the grass and trees were white with frost.

I need not here enter into details of our long journey to the coast. We usually made about thirty miles a day, camping at some creek or water-hole as night came on, "spelling" for a day to give the horses a rest, and catching fish and shooting turkeys (we each had a shot-gun as well as our revolvers) to break the monotony of a diet of salt meat and damper. As the blacks were then rather dangerous in that district we

always shifted our camp every night about a quarter of a mile from where we had lit our fire (to cook our food and boil our tea), short-hobbled our horses, and took watch and watch of two hours until daylight.

Only once or twice did my companion allude to the gold I carried, and then only in a very casual manner—once when my pack-horse became bogged in a quicksand in the Burdekin River and we had to unload him, and on another occasion when, on account of the weight, I shifted the gold which I carried in front of me on my saddle to the pack-horse bags.

“You’ll get to Bowen stony broke if Peterkin (the pack-horse) drowns himself or is collared by an alligator,” he said laughingly.

We had to cross the great Burdekin River twice above Cape Bowling Green. We did this so as to shorten the journey to the Don River Cattle Station, where we were to part. Our comradeship so far had been most pleasant, and I no more thought of treachery from him than I would have suspected my own brother or father of trying to murder me.

On the second occasion we crossed the Burdekin we camped on the right-hand bank for a two days’ spell. The river, although it was winter, was low, and many of the broad stretches and water-lily covered pools were teeming with the beautiful black and white “Burdekin” duck and teal, so that we had great sport. In these pools, which were very transparent, there was no danger of alligators, and so we had no hesitation in swimming in them to get the game we shot.

Quite near our camp was that of four Chinese, who were engaged in catching and curing the fish known as "barramundi," with which the river abounded. Three of them came to see us and asked for "fever medicine," as one of their number was very ill. I gave them some quinine, and they went off with expressions of gratitude.

At noon on the following day, whilst I was dressing my horses' backs with some Stevens' ointment, Derby came up. He had been, he said, for a bathe in a big waterhole near the camp, and advised me to go and do likewise.

"No," I answered, "I must not waste any more time if I am to catch the *Atjeh* (a Dutch-Batavian mail-boat), as she will leave Port Denison on Saturday, and to-day is Tuesday, and I want to do some work to my saddles."

"Oh, hang the saddles, old man, go and take a swim. I'll do them for you." As he spoke I noticed with some wonder that his face was white and drawn, and asked him if he was ill.

"No," he replied, "but it worries me to see you fiddling about the horses when I can do all that is necessary. Go and take a swim to freshen you up." (I must mention that I was slightly lame in the left foot, and a day's riding always left me pretty tired.)

I went down to the waterhole, and on the bank found two of the Chinamen, who were just beginning to put out their lines for Jew fish. I began to undress, when they gave a warning shout and rushed towards me.

"Two big fellow alligator here, boss," one of them

cried excitedly, "suppose you go in water you die quick."

"Not in this pool, John," I replied, "my mate has just been swimming here."

"No, your mate no bathe here, he bathe in sandy pool over there"; and the man pointed to a shallow, clear pool in the sandy bed of the river. "Wha' for your mate tell you bathe here? Me and my two mates see him come here and stand on bank here, and look at big alligator over there;" and he pointed to the opposite bank of the pool, where I now saw the impressions of an alligator's body on the semi-muddy sandy bank. "Your mate he fool, or he lie."

And then in an instant Finnerty's warning and Derby's agitated manner a few minutes before flashed through my mind. Did my trusted comrade mean to send me to a horrible death? I could not believe it.

I dressed myself again, and motioning to the Chinamen to remain quiet, took a roundabout way to the camp, creeping through the long, pendulous branches of the *ti* trees, which overhung almost to the ground. On gaining the bank, I could see nothing of my mate. The four horses were grazing quietly about the camp, and only the squawking of some long-tailed pheasants in some Leichhardt trees broke the silence.

My loaded shot-gun was lying against a mimosa tree, together with saddles, blankets, and other gear. I seized it, and then noticed that Derby's gun, which had been placed beside it, was gone.

As I stood wondering, listening, and thinking that I was madly nervous and suspicious of my comrade, the

third Chinaman came out of the scrub, and silently motioned me to follow him.

"You savee your mate welly well," he said in a whisper, "you savee him number one chop man?" He meant did I trust my mate—was he a reliable and good man.

"Him number one chop man, I think," I replied.

"You come along me, and you savee;" and the man led me, cautiously and silently, through the scrub to the bank of the big pool, and then pointed to the figure of Derby, who, with his gun in his right hand, was lying prone, gazing into the alligator-haunted pool!

I stepped softly up to and covered him with my gun. "Thank you, Mr. Derby," I said. "I suppose you were watching to see that I was not grabbed by an alligator, and were ready to fire when I was grabbed, so as to save me. I think you had better clear. Finnerty knew you better than I did."

He rose, white-faced and shivering, guilt in his eyes, and dropped his gun. "I made a mistake—about the pool," he said, tremblingly. "I meant—I meant——"

"You meant to let me be eaten by an alligator, and then scoot with my and mates' gold to Port Denison," I cried; and throwing down my gun, I "went" for him, as Australians say, and although I was the smaller man, I gave him something to remember me by. The three Chinamen certainly improved matters by kicking him when he was down.

Ten minutes later, we dragged him back to the camp, saddled his horse and pack-horse for him, made him mount, and told him to "get," unless he preferred to be shot.

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He rode slowly from the bank, and leading the pack-horse, crossed the Burdekin, and then disappeared up the rise on the other side. He was never seen or heard of again, and most likely he either reached Townsville and got away by steamer, or when crossing one of the anabranches of the Burdekin was taken by an alligator, for the pack-horse was found a month later on a sugar plantation at Barratta Creek, seventy miles away from the spot where he had tried to send me to my death.

“ RIMA ”

CHAPTER I

THIS is how I came to know Rima.

During the sixties and seventies there were far more sailing vessels engaged in the South Sea Islands trade than there are at present, although both exports from the Australian colonies and imports from the islands are fourfold to what they were thirty years ago. Sydney then, as now, was the headquarters of the trade, the other Australian seaports taking very little share in it. The manufacture of coconuts into copra by drying them in the sun was not begun in the Pacific Islands until well on in the seventies, and all the coconut oil which was brought to Sydney was made by the usual native process of scraping the nut, letting it rot in old disused canoes, and then straining it into barrels. Of course, in addition to coconut oil, there was the usual lucrative trade in pearl shell and pearls, fungus, candle nuts, etc.

All the Sydney “ island ” vessels were well known to me, for I was brought up in that port, and made the acquaintance of the captains and officers as well as that of the crews—white and native. We lived on Dawes’s Point, in a house which overlooked not only the wharves of Sydney Cove (now called Circular Quay) but those of

the cove between Dawes's Point and Miller's Point to the westward, and "island traders" always discharged and loaded in one of the two days. Consequently the arrival of a vessel from the South Seas always brought me down to the wharf, and I invariably returned home laden with coconuts, dried bananas, mats, weapons, and other island curios dear to a boy's heart. In the evenings, and on Sundays, many of the native seamen—Polynesians and Melanesians—would come to the house and be given supper by our cook, who was a good-natured old soul, and always willing to please us boys, though she was somewhat frightened at the wild, semi-savage aspect of the Melanesians with their black skins, woolly hair, and flat negroid type of features—so different from the Malayo-Polynesians, whose straight black hair, Semitic cast of countenances, light copper-coloured skins, and polite manners made a startling contrast to their Papuan shipmates, whom they treated with a good-natured contempt as (as they indeed were) an inferior race of people.

When I was eleven years of age there one day came into Sydney, and moored at Town's Wharf—quite near our house—a fine Melbourne barque named the *Anna*. She belonged to a firm of merchants who owned and worked several of the guano islands in the Phoenix Group, situated lat. 3° to 5° S., and long. 170° to 175° W. Her crew was composed almost entirely of natives of the island of Niué (Savage Island), and I was not long in making friends with them. The *Anna*, they told me, was bound on a recruiting voyage to their own island to engage two hundred of their

countrymen to work the guano deposits on Howland Island.

A few evenings later a number of them came to the house, bringing with them a shipmate named Rima, who was the boatswain of the barque. The moment I saw him I felt sure that he was not a native of Savage Island, for although, like them, he was dressed in the usual European sailor style, his features were of a type new to me, and his cheeks, neck, and the backs of his hands were tattooed. Then, too, he was more reserved in his manner than the others, who, I noticed, showed him a certain deference. He spoke English very well, and told my father (who often came and talked with "the boys' cannibals"—as he termed our native friends)—that he was a native of Nanomea, or St. Augustine's Island, the most northerly of the Ellice Group, was twenty-five years of age, and had been to sea ever since he was a lad of fifteen.

"Have you never been home since?" asked my father.

"No, sir. All my people are dead—they died before I came away—my father, mother, and one brother. The two head chiefs of Nanomea took my father's land, and I was too young to stop them. And so I went away from the island on a schooner belonging to Sydney called the *Welcome Home*. The captain was very kind to me, and taught me to read and write, as well as making a sailorman of me. I was with him for seven years, until he was killed by the natives of Tanna (New Hebrides). Then I came to Melbourne, and Grice, Somner and Co. (the owners of the *Anna*) gave me a berth as boatswain

because I can speak the Niué and Tokelau languages, and can always help the captain to get plenty of recruits for working on the guano islands."

My father was interested, and so when Rima came again with some of his shipmates, I was sent to ask him to come into the dining-room. He came with the utmost diffidence and nervousness, but three lusty boys, ranging from eleven to sixteen, were too much for him. We dragged him into the room, and then followed a delightful two hours—my father questioning him of "isles beyond the sea," we listening with bated breath; and Rima, his dark eyes sometimes smiling, sometimes grave, told us of his adventures since he had left his beloved Nanomea.

It so happened that Rima became a frequent visitor to us; for a few days afterwards a barque named the *Queensland*, which was lying ahead of the *Anna* at Town's Wharf, caught fire, and a hurrying steam-tug, in coming to her assistance to tow her into the stream, ran into the *Anna*, and knocked a hole through her below water line. So whilst the wool-laden *Queensland* burned merrily away, the *Anna* settled quietly down on the mud—much to the delight of her native crew, who appreciated the fascinations of Sini,* and knew that the ship would have to be docked, and that she could not put to sea for at least another two or three weeks.

When this affair occurred, there was in Sydney a detachment of the famous old 50th Regiment, which, I believe, was known as the "Dirty Half Hundred," from some Peninsula episode which had redounded to their

* Sydney.

already glorious record. One of the officers, Captain D—, and my father were old friends. Both were great sporting men, and fond of the gloves, and one day the latter, after being worsted in a stiff bout with the military man, laughingly told him that he knew of a fellow who could knock him out in four rounds.

“Who is he?” said Captain D— eagerly.

“Oh, he’s a friend of my boys. He’ll do you as quick as he can do me.”

“Professional pug?”

“Not at all; coloured sailor man, boatswain of an island trading ship. My boys and he are great friends, and I like him. He was taught to use his hands by a former skipper of his named McKenzie. He’ll hurt you, D—.”

“Bring him along,” laughed Captain D—, a wiry-framed, big-hearted man from County Kerry, “an’ we’ll get the lightest gloves obtainable. I’ll bet you £20 he won’t stand up to me after the fourth round.”

“Fifty?”

“Fifty it is.”

The match came off next night, in Town’s wool shed, on the wharf. A lot of the 50th officers, some naval men, and a young English barrister—who afterwards became the Chief Justice of the Colony—were present, together with the crew of the *Anna*, and those of several London wool-ships loading at the Circular Quay. We boys were hustled outside, but promptly got in again, and ensconced ourselves behind some bales of greasy wool.

Presently in came Rima, escorted by the captain of the *Anna*, a little, undersized man who looked like a

clergyman—he had such a quiet, white, mild face. He was wearing a frock coat and top hat, and said something to Rima in a low voice; then he went up to the other end of the great shed, prodded the bales of scoured wool with his walking-stick, and disappeared with a sigh, for he was a man who pretended that he hated fighting, but yet wanted badly to stay and see one. However, he knew that my father would look after Rima.

Captain D—— arrived, and after him a stout, pompous squatter named Menzies turned up, and D—— and Rima were introduced; they laughed, shook hands, and then Menzies, who had evidently been drinking freely, suggested, much to D——'s disgust, that gloves should be discarded.

"Oh, hang it, man," said the officer angrily, "you must be drunk or mad to think of such a thing!"

Rima eyed Menzies so sourly that the squatter asked him who the deuce he was looking at; and then he added, with an insulting laugh:

"It's easy enough to see that *you* don't like the idea of a mill without gloves. I never yet knew a nigger that did."

The next instant Rima, disregarding the courtesies of the P.R., shot out his right, and took Menzies between the eyes with such terrific force that he went down with a thud.

"No man shall call me a nigger," he said quietly; and then turning to my father, he said, with a flush on his dark face:

"If you please, sir, I would rather not box with this gentleman," and he turned to go.

“By Jove, you’re a decent fellow,” said Captain D—, warmly, “and I don’t blame you for feeling put out.”

Rima’s eyes lit up. “He did make me angry, sir; but I did not mean to hit him so hard—and I’m sorry.”

Consternation was depicted on every face when it was known that the match was not to come off, and the irate naval officers seized the luckless Menzies and pitched him outside. Then, aided by my father and the 50th men, they induced Rima to change his mind, and a loud hurrah went up from the onlookers when the ring was again cleared, and Captain D— and Rima began to divest themselves of their coats, etc.

And then, oh woe! As some of the wool bales were being shifted, my father caught sight of us, and I, being considered too young to be allowed to remain, was ignominiously turned out, and the great sliding doors of the wool-shed were closed.

Half an hour later, amidst wild cheering, the match came to an end, the doors were thrown open, and as the crowd poured out, I pushed in. Rima was surrounded by a number of officers, who were shaking hands with him, and presently I heard Captain D—’s voice. He was being assisted to dress by some of his brother officers, and was speaking to my father.

“You said he would give me a doing, and, by Jove, he has. Bring him round to my quarters to-morrow—I’ll be able to look at him by eleven o’clock.”

Everyone laughed, and then he and Rima shook hands and said good-night, and we went home, highly elated at Rima’s victory. On the following day my father gave

him half of the stakes, and took him to the barracks to see Captain D—. The quiet, clerical-looking skipper of the *Anna* went with them at my father's invitation. They remained there quite two hours, and the merchant skipper told the soldier that which Rima was too modest even to tell my father.

"He's the best man in the colonies, bar none. MacKenzie taught him, and MacKenzie was one of the best heavy-weight boxers ever seen in Australia. And although I'm against gambling, Captain D—, I'm willing to put up £100 on him at any time. My ship won't sail for another two weeks."

"There is no one in Sydney good enough," replied the soldier, with a laugh.

At the end of two weeks, Rima bade us a sorrowful good-bye. Ten years passed before I saw him again.

CHAPTER II

I WENT to sea when I was thirteen years of age, and at the end of eight had acquired a good deal of knowledge of the islands of the North and South Pacific.

One morning the vessel of which I was supercargo—the brig *Isabella*, of Sydney—hove-to off Ngatik, a group of eight fertile islands in the Caroline archipelago, and I went on shore to buy a boatload of pigs and turtle, with which these islands abound. Heavy rain began to fall soon after we pushed off, and by the time the boat reached the landing-place at the village, my crew and I were wet through, and I was very glad when a native came to me and said he had been sent by the local trader to ask me up to his house. Following the messenger (who was accompanied by nearly the entire population) along the clean, hard path, I was conducted to a well-built house with a wide verandah on all four sides. The door was open, and as I ascended the steps the trader met me. For a moment we stared at each other, and then we were shaking hands so vigorously without speaking a word, that the natives looked at us in astonishment.

“Rima, dear old Rima!” I cried. “I never expected to see you again.”

“Nor I you, sir. Come inside. Lita, where are you? Here is an old friend of mine.”

A door of another room opened, and one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen came out, and shook hands with me. She was about twenty-three years of age, and was dressed in the usual muslin gown worn by native and European women alike, and her long, glossy black hair was in one great plait.

"This is my wife," said Rima. "She cannot speak much English yet;" then he made a gesture which she understood, for she smiled brightly, tripped away, and returned with a tray, on which were a stone bottle of Schiedam and glasses.

"Now you must change your clothes," said Rima, after we had drunk together. "Lita, get some new pyjamas out of the store. Then we're going to have a long talk."

After changing my clothes, I transacted my business of buying the pigs and turtle, and sent them off to the brig with a note to the captain, asking him to come ashore, as I had met an old friend who would be glad to see him at dinner at one o'clock. It was then only ten, so Rima and I had plenty of time to ourselves, for which I was afterwards very glad, for the story he told me was one that he would not have related before a stranger.

Seating ourselves on a cane lounge on the verandah, facing the lagoon, we lit our pipes. I first briefly told my host of what I had been doing since we parted in Sydney, and then he began his own story.

"I was five years on the *Anna* after we left Sydney that time. Then a new captain was appointed—the old one having bought a brigantine to run in the labour trade between Fiji and the Solomon Islands. He asked

me to come with him as second mate. Now I liked the *Anna*, but I could not leave the captain, who was always very good to me, so of course I shipped as second mate on the brigantine; she was the *Mistral*, and belonged to Honolulu.

“ We had made a good many voyages from Levuka—about ten, I think—when several German vessels from Samoa made their appearance among the Solomon Islands, recruiting natives for the two big plantations there, and before long there was a lot of bad feeling between the English and German captains. One English vessel, the *Thyra*, had a whole boat’s crew murdered by the natives of Malayta, who shot them down with Prussian needle-guns. Now everyone knew that these needle-guns could only have been bought from the German labour ships, who always carried them for sale to the white traders in the group. They were all condemned army rifles, and when Sniders came into use the big German firm in Samoa imported three or four thousand of them, and the traders in the Western Pacific complained very much of their selling them to such murderous savages as the Solomon Islanders.

“ Well, after the *Thyra* massacre, all the English captains and traders made a united protest to the German Consul-General in Samoa. He took no notice, and matters soon became worse.

“ One day our ship anchored off a big village at the south end of Ysabel, where we had always procured at least half a dozen recruits every time we called there. The natives knew our ship very well, and we had never had any trouble with them. I was in charge of the

leading boat, and the mate had the covering boat. We pulled in, quite unsuspecting of any danger; but as soon as my boat was near the beach, and I was slewing her round so as to back her ashore, I saw all the natives on the beach suddenly vanish, and in another moment or two they began opening fire on us from all sides. Before the two boats could get out of range, we had four men killed and three wounded, and the boats were half full of water from bullet holes when we got alongside, and these bullets were needle-gun bullets, for we found several of them in the boats and in the bodies of the dead men.

"Our skipper nearly went mad with rage. You remember him, sir—a little, clean-shaven, white-faced man. He was always a very quiet-spoken chap when he spoke at all, which was not often. He called the mate and me below, and said:

" 'This is the work of that scoundrel Eckmann. The *Apolima* is cruising about here now, and I believe he has paid these natives to fire into my boats. If I can prove it I will shoot him.' He meant what he said.

"This Captain Eckmann was the skipper of the *Apolima*, a splendid fore and aft schooner of 200 tons, which was recruiting for Samoa. He was a big, powerful American, with a long red beard, and he was the bully of the German quarter of Apia. I knew him very well, for one night, fifteen years ago, when I was an A.B. on the *Welcome Home*, and we were in Apia Harbour, Eckmann and my captain—MacKenzie—fell out over a game of billiards, and MacKenzie knocked him about so much that he was laid up for a week. He

was a foul-mouthed, brutal fellow, always boasting of the number of natives he had shot; and so, when he was lying senseless on the floor, I was not surprised to see two other German captains, who had been watching the game, come up to MacKenzie and shake hands with him.

“‘He insulted you grossly,’ said one of them, a Captain Niebuhr, ‘and you have given him what he wanted badly. But, look out—he’s as treacherous as he is cruel.’

“We buried the four men at sea that night, and then stood away to the north for Choiseul Island, and anchored off the south end two days later—just abreast of a small village of about ninety houses. I knew the place and people well, and went ashore with five hands to have a talk with the chief, and see if we could get any of his people to recruit. He was a trustworthy young fellow, and the first thing he told me was that the *Apolima* had been there three days previously, and that Eckmann had come ashore and told him that our skipper was being sought for by the English men-of-war for murdering the ‘recruits’ after we got them on board, and that he (Eckmann) had been asked by the English commodore to tell the Choiseul people that they could fire upon and kill any of the crew of the *Mistral*. Then he gave the chief—whose name was Tarōa—half a dozen needle-guns and a case of cartridges, explained the mechanism of the weapons to him, and urged him to use them if the *Mistral* came along and sent her boats ashore to recruit.

“Tarōa, who knew that Eckmann was lying, took the

guns, and led the American to believe that he would do as he wished, and Eckmann went away well satisfied. Then I asked the chief if he knew where the *Apolima* had gone. Yes, he did know. She was only thirteen miles away in a little bay which I knew well. She had been ashore on a reef and had carried away part of her false keel, and Eckmann had beached her for repairs.

"I hurried aboard and told Captain Lavers all I had heard. He smiled grimly.

"We've got him now, Rima. The *Apolima* must never leave that bay. She's going to burn to-night. Now listen to me, Rima, and I'll tell you what to do."

"He gave me my instructions, and half an hour later I was away again with a boat's crew of six Rotumah Islanders, all thirsting for revenge upon Eckmann, for Lavers had told them who was the instigator of the massacre of their countrymen at Ysabel.

"I got into the little bay about seven in the evening. It was quite dark, but I made out the *Apolima* quite easily. She was canted over on the port side, lying upon big logs, so that her keel could be got at. We pulled up to within a couple of cables length, and then grounded on the sandbank on which she was lying. Leaving two hands in the boat, the rest of us got out and started for the schooner. We could see the lights of the village about a quarter of a mile away, and from the noise that was going on, I knew that there was some kind of a jamboree in full swing.

"We walked over the sand and soon were alongside. I could see lights from the stern and quarter ports, but

there were no lights on deck, and I and my men quietly clambered up the side ladder on the port side, and got on deck, where the mate, a Dane named Jansen, was lying in a drunken sleep on the main-hatch. We let him lie there, and then went for'ard, and surprised five native seamen who were playing cards in the fo'c'sle. These we lashed, hand and foot, and brought on deck, and told them that if they made the slightest noise they would be shot.

“Then I went aft and found that the cabin door was locked. I forced it and entered, and saw Lita—who is now my wife.

CHAPTER III

" "WHO are you?" she cried out in alarm, for I had my revolver in my hand.

" "Never mind who I am," I said in English, "I will not hurt you, but you must answer all my questions. Who are you?"

" Her name, she said, was Lita; and in broken English she told me that Eckmann had stolen her from her people on Hermit Island two months ago. As soon as I found she was from Hermit Island I began to talk to her in Samoan, which she understood, and could speak fairly well. The first thing she asked me was if I would help her to escape.

" "When the captain went on shore this evening he locked me in," said the poor girl. "Not once has he let me go on shore since he stole me."

" "Yes, Lita," I said, "you shall escape this night, and I shall burn this ship."

" Then I learned from her that as yet the *Apolima* had no recruits on board, and that the rest of the crew were on shore with the captain. This made things very easy for me.

Going on deck again I called my men, and told them to gag the five native sailors, and carry them and

the drunken mate down to the sandbank, leave them near the boat, and await Lita and me. I did not want them to have a hand in the burning of the ship, nor let them actually see me do it. But I told them to keep a sharp look-out for anyone coming from the shore.

“It took them half an hour to carry out my orders. Meanwhile, I got a lantern, and went into the hold and fixed things up. Then I went into the fo’c’sle, then into the cabin, and when everything was ready I gave Lita a box of vestas, and took another myself, and returned to the hold, and in ten minutes the schooner was on fire in half a dozen places. Then we got over the side and ran for the boat.

“We had not gone more than a hundred yards, when we saw a bright light coming towards us. It was a torch, carried by a native, and beside him was walking Captain Eckmann. We should have escaped his notice had it not been for his dog—a big Newfoundland—which saw us, and began barking furiously, and then I suppose Eckmann must have perceived us, for he called on us to stand. We pressed on harder than ever, and then he began firing at us with his pistol, and the second shot took me in the thigh and down I went. Lita tried to raise me, but it was of no use.

“‘Run, girl, run to the boat,’ I cried, ‘and tell two of my men to come here and carry me. Quick, girl, quick!’

“‘No, no,’ she cried, ‘Eckmann will kill you!’

“As she spoke another bullet hummed by. Eckmann

was firing as he ran, and he was now within thirty yards of us. Suddenly, as I pushed Lita away from me, he stopped, and by the bright light of the torch, I saw the brute take careful aim at her. Both he and I fired at the same time, and I hit him, for he dropped like a stone, and the native who was with him threw down the torch, fled back to the village, and then a moment later, that beast of a dog had me by the throat."

He lifted up his chin and showed me the cicatrised mark of the wound.

"Lita picked up my revolver by the barrel and beat the beast over the head with all her strength, until the animal was stunned, all the while shrieking to my boat's crew, who, hearing the firing, were now running towards us. Taking the pistol from Lita, who was almost exhausted, I managed to sit up and put a bullet through the dog, and then let her bind up my throat with a piece of her gown, for I was bleeding profusely.

"My men came up in a few minutes, and as the torch which the native had dropped was still burning on the sand, and I could see Eckmann's figure beside it, I told them to carry me over to him. If he was not dead, I did not want him to be drowned when the tide came in. He was lying on his back, with his pistol in his hand, and when he saw Lita he raised it and again fired at her, but the bullet went wide. In another moment one of my men shot him through the head.

"We hurried back to the boat, liberated the five

native sailors, who were scared out of their lives, and making them and the mate of the schooner, who was now awake and asking for drink, get into the boat, we pushed off and landed them at the entrance to the bay.

“By this time the *Apolima* was ablaze from stem to stern, and in a little over an hour from the time I had fired her, her magazine caught, and the biggest explosion ever heard in the South Seas took place, for she had one hundred kegs of powder on board. I tell you, sir, that when I saw all her upper works going to glory in a regular firework style, it made me feel good, and I forgot the pain in my thigh.

“We were alongside the *Mistral* by daylight, and Captain Lavers, after I had told him what had occurred, put to sea at once, after first sending for Tarōa and telling him to keep his mouth shut, and giving him a present of ten rifles and two thousand cartridges. Then he took the bullet out of my thigh. It had struck the bone, glanced off, and had made a complete circle, coming back within an inch of the spot where it had hit me.

“We went back to Levuka, and Captain Lavers, who knew that he and I were likely to get into serious trouble, quietly sold the *Mistral*, gave me £50, and advised me to clear out as quickly as possible. He told me that he had made as much money as he wanted, and that if I wished to see him again, I was to come to San Rafael, near San Francisco, where he intended to settle, and ‘grow ducks and other vegetables.’

"Lita and I were married in the Wesleyan Chapel in Levuka, and as I had nearly £400, beside the £50 given me by Captain Lavers, I thought I would become a trader and leave sailorising alone. So we came here, and I have been doing pretty well. But——" and here he stopped suddenly.

"But what, Rima?"

"I am afraid to stay here. I have heard that the Germans are establishing trading stations in the Carolines, and that there is some talk of the Spanish Government selling the whole group to Germany. Is it true?"

"It is quite true, Rima, and you had better clear out."

"There is a reward of a thousand marks out for me. I saw that in the *Fiji Times* two years ago."

"Rima, you and Lita must get away from here. If the Germans collar you, you'll be shot."

"I know that—but what can I do?"

"You and Lita must bundle up and come on board the *Isabella*. Our skipper is a good fellow, and will do all he can to help you. Now, good men are wanted as traders in the Paumotus—French territory—where you'll be safe. Will you go there?"

"Gladly. Let me tell my wife."

And as Lita's dark eyes, shining with happiness, looked into mine, I raised her hand to my lips and kissed it.

"When you have a son, Rima, you must name him after me," I said.

"Here is the son!" exclaimed Rima, and darting

into the house, he brought out a baby boy, and cried, "Catch!"

"I caught," and for the first time in my life held a real live baby in my arms. It was very soft, and clean, and had a fat laugh.

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THE SUPERCARGO

KUSAIE, or, as it is called on the chart, Strong's Island, is one of the most fertile and beautiful spots in the North Pacific. It is the eastern outlier of the great Caroline archipelago, is about forty miles in circumference, traversed by a range of forest-clad mountains three thousand feet high, and is marvellously watered by hundreds of streams, debouching into the sea all round the coast. Tropical and semi-tropical fruits abound, and on the west, or lee side of the island, there are miles and miles of pineapple plants and mountain bananas growing wild, and furnishing food for the droves of wild pigs which haunt the solitudes of the ranges.

It was my exceedingly good fortune to be cast away on Strong's Island on March 17, 1873, and spend many of the happiest months of my existence there. The vessel in which I was wrecked, and of which I was supercargo, was the brig *Leonora* of Shanghai, and her commander was the notorious Captain "Bully" Hayes, about whom so much has been written. A little over a year later H.M.S. *Rosario*, then searching for Hayes on a charge of piracy, suddenly appeared at the island. To make a long story short, Hayes escaped with one companion in a small boat, and actually succeeded in reaching Guam, over a thousand miles to the northward,

and the writer was given a passage in the *Rosario* to Sydney.

My connection with the "Pirate of the South Seas," as he was called, arose in a very simple manner. Two years previous to the wreck of the *Leonora*, I was a recruiter in the Kanaka labour trade between Samoa and the Gilbert Islands and was one day asked by a firm of English merchants in Apia if I would take a small vessel of theirs to the Marshall Islands and hand her over to Captain Hayes, who was to sell her to the King of Ahrnu, one of the Marshall archipelago. I consented, and after a voyage of forty-four days reached Milli Lagoon, where I found Hayes awaiting me. The voyage from Samoa had been a disastrous one; but I need not here say more than that as a result the vessel was in such a condition that Hayes refused at first to take delivery. Later on, however, we came to an amicable arrangement; the alleged "pirate" set his carpenters to work, and the schooner was patched up and sent to Ahrnu under the command of a German skipper, and my connection with the matter came to an end—for which I was devoutly thankful.

I took up my quarters on shore to await the arrival of either a trading vessel or whaleship, by which I could return to Samoa. Hayes, whom I had previously met in Samoa, where his wife and children were living, told me that I might have to wait six months on Milli for a ship, and urged me to come with him as supercargo. I had always liked the man, and accepted his offer, and on the following morning we sailed on a six months' cruise through the Carolines, Pellews, and the Marianas;

and I remained with him on the *Leonora* till the brig was lost on Strong's Island, and lived with him on shore for three months longer, when serious differences arose between us and we parted. A reconciliation followed a few days later, and he urged me to return, but I declined; and from that time until I left the island in the *Rosario* I lived in a village some miles away from where Hayes and his ship's company had settled. It was called *Leassé*, and was situated in Coquille Harbour, on the west side—one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen during my twenty-eight years' experience in the South Seas. The headman of the village was named *Kuis*, and he and I became firm friends. "One of Nature's noblemen" is a very stereotyped phrase, but it conveys its meaning clearly—*Kuis* was a gentleman, courteous, dignified, brave and truthful. His household consisted of his wife *Tulpé*—a handsome olive-skinned woman of about thirty—and a daughter by a former marriage, a merry, mischievous elf of ten years of age, named *Kinié*. When I came to live with them, an annexe was made to their dwelling, and every family in the village contributed something for my comfort and benefit. One sent a sleeping mat, another a native pillow, another a mosquito net, and so forth; and the young men between them presented me with a new canoe, a set of bonito rods and pearl-shell hooks, and a basketful of beautiful hand-made deep-sea fishing-lines.

With these kindly people the days never flagged with me, and whilst at Hayes' village—he actually built a new village—treachery, debauchery, and murder, and all that was evil, ran riot among his followers, here at

Leassé one peaceful day succeeded another, and only once were we disturbed by a visit from some of Hayes' people—thirty or forty savage natives of Pleasant Island—who, however, behaved themselves fairly well, after compelling the Leassé people to give them a "present" of ten fat hogs. These Pleasant Islanders, I must mention, were passengers on the *Leonora* when she was wrecked, and formed the retinue of four white traders whom we were conveying from Pleasant Island to Arrecifos Lagoon, a large uninhabited atoll in the North Pacific, densely covered with coconut trees. Hayes had taken possession of it; and these white men, their wives and families, and their savage followers, had been engaged by him to go there and engage in making coconut oil for him for five years. The natives of Pleasant Island are noted for their fine physique, warlike disposition, and haughty, independent manner. With those on board the *Leonora* I was fortunate enough to be a *persona grata*, and once when a mutiny—the leaders of which were the four white traders—broke out and Hayes nearly lost his life, three or four of them entered my house at dead of night, and, begging me to keep silent, compelled me to go with them to a fishing hut situated a mile away. Two of them remained with me, one holding me tightly by the wrist for over an hour, and imploring me not to attempt to escape, or I should be killed. The manner in which "Bully" quelled the mutiny is a story in itself: he not only disarmed the fractious traders, but so placated the fierce Pleasant Islanders, that from that night forth they cherished the most devoted admiration for him. My abductors stead-

fastly refused to tell me what was occurring in the village, and to the volleys of abuse I poured out upon them made no retort; they merely gazed stolidly into the glowing embers of a small fire they had lit. Both of them were armed with Snider carbines, and knowing that they had saved very few cartridges from the wreck, I tried to bribe them with a promise of giving them fifty if they would let me go. They shook their heads reproachfully, and I desisted. About one in the morning a Pleasant Island girl rushed into the hut, and cried out, "It is all over, the captain is not hurt. Tiki (one of the white men named Dick) fired at him twice, then the captain beat him and Pita (Peter, another white man) with his fists until they fell as dead men."

We at once returned to the village, where I found Hayes had assembled all his people in his big house—those who were loyal to him and those who had mutinied. One by one they all, white and native, gave him a solemn pledge of obedience, and the whole thing ended with a dance and the consumption of much arrack. Hayes asked me to see to the two white men, as he "thought he had hurt them a little." I went to their respective dwellings, and found that one had a broken jaw, and the other two broken ribs! They were both noted "toughs," and I was not sorry for them. However, I returned to Hayes, who came back with me, and attended to their injuries.

In the mountain forest at the back of the Coquille Harbour wild pigs were very plentiful, and I was much upset at not being able, for many weeks after my arrival at Leassé, to accompany the native hunters who sallied

forth after them almost daily; but when the brig was lost I had received some severe injuries which practically crippled me for nearly four months. But as soon as I recovered I had some glorious sport in company with my host Kuis and a man named Nana, both good sportsmen. I, fortunately, possessed a Winchester rifle and a Snider carbine and plenty of ammunition for both weapons. When the *Leonora* foundered after striking on the reef, she sank in fourteen fathoms of water, and although we had time to save all the small-arms and ammunition in the main cabin, a number of cases of ammunition for breech-loading rifles and muzzle-loading carbines, which were in my trade-room, went down with the brig, and we never expected to recover them again. But a few days after that on which the vessel was lost, it blew a fierce gale from the south, and a tremendous surf resulted in our recovering many treasures from the poor battered hull of the once beautiful *Leonora*—bolts of canvas, cases of axes, knives, casks of rum, etc., and countless small articles—all of which were either washed ashore among the mangrove swamps or into shallower water, where they were recovered by the Pleasant Islanders diving for them. One day, just after I had quarrelled with Hayes, and had decided to leave him, a young half-caste Samoan-American negro, named John Tilton, whom I had brought with me from Samoa, told me that he had found a case of Winchester cartridges and two cases of Snider cartridges, together with a lot of other things, in five fathoms of water, and, with the assistance of another man, had got them up on to the reef, and, unobserved, carried them on

shore, where they had hidden them in a pandanus grove. His reason for his secrecy was that, as Hayes and I had had a quarrel (*misa*), he thought that I should at least have all the cartridges I wanted for my Winchester and Snider, especially as "there was trouble coming between Hayes and the white men." He took me to the place, and we opened the outer cases, which were double tinned, and found them perfectly uninjured; and then I had them carried up into the forest and planted in an old native cemetery. From there they were taken by my friends, Kuis, Nana, and several other Strong's Islanders, and brought over the mountains to Leassé. I salved my conscience later on by sending Hayes two thousand five hundred each of Winchester and Snider cartridges, and wrote to him saying that as five of the Winchester rifles in his possession were my property (I had brought them from Samoa as a private "spec."), I thought we could cry quits. He wrote me a humorous letter in reply, and said it was a fair deal, as it was indeed; for in 1873 these weapons were selling at \$125 each anywhere in the South Seas. Nowadays the latest model (1902) can be bought for \$30.

After I had recovered from my injuries I began to enjoy life as I had never enjoyed it before. In addition to wild pig-hunting there was pigeon-shooting, and such pigeons, too—great fat birds that lived in the mountain forest, feeding on the berries of the white cedar trees. It was impossible to shoot them on the wing, owing to the density of the jungle, and yet it required a good shot to bring one down from the branch of a tree 150 feet above with "home-made" shot fired from an old,

heavy smooth bore "Brown Bess." There were plenty of these antiquated weapons on the island, the natives having brought them from whale ships, but no shot was obtainable. Hayes, however, showed me how to make my own shot from sheet lead, by cutting it first into long narrow strips, and then into little squares. When about ten pounds of the squares were ready we put them into a round-buttoned iron cooking pot, and worked them into shape with a pestle; the result was that we made very fair No. 3 shot, though it was devoid of polish.

Two or three days in every week, accompanied by my native friends, I spent in deep-sea fishing, about a mile from the barrier reef outside Coquille Harbour, where, at a depth of seventy to eighty fathoms, there was a patch of about ten acres in extent, almost free of coral, and frequented by an extraordinary variety of fish, many of which were of great size. There was one species of trevally—a fish much prized by the natives for its flavour—which grew to a great size, and weighed up to 150 lbs. Three of these *la'heu*, as they were called, were as many as our canoe would hold, and we had to stow them upright, for their width—they were bream-shaped—prevented our placing them on their sides in such a narrow space. I once suggested to Kusi that we should stow a couple of these great fish on the cane-work platform of the outrigger, where we usually carried our fishing-tackle, food, etc.

"The sharks would tear the platform to pieces, and eat us as well as the fish," he replied; and I quite believed him; for I had one day, when fishing off Cap

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Vauvillier, in company with a fleet of canoes, seen a blue shark of the girth of a two-year-old steer make a dash at the outrigger of a canoe, on the platform of which were seated two little girls, and with one vicious snap of his huge jaws break the outrigger in halves and capsize the canoe. Fortunately, the father of the children was a man of nerve, and as the shark closed his teeth on the soft wood of the outrigger pole, he leapt overboard, and with one stroke of his heavy fishing knife disembowelled the creature. There was no great "fuss" made over the matter, and the children were heartily abused for screaming. The shark was very quickly harpooned by a man in another canoe, and its huge liver cut out to be "tried-out" on shore for its oil.

In some of the streams debouching into Coquille Harbour there were great numbers of fish exactly like grayling. Some were quite a foot in length, and they afforded fine sport with a bamboo-rod. The bait used was a small piece of the tender flesh of a young coconut. Years afterwards I came across the same beautiful fish in the island of Fotuna, west of Samoa; and Father Serge, the French missionary there, told me that they would take a bait of either young coconut, or a bit of ripe mango in preference to a natural fly, or even a fresh-water shrimp. In Jamaica, as many of my readers may know, a bit of the Avocado pear is *the* bait for the delicious mountain mullet and other fresh-water fish which inhabit the rivers of the "Pearl of the Antilles."

The turtle, which were very numerous on the southern

and western side of Kusaie, were nearly all "hawk-bills," the shell of which is so valuable, and the natives' system of catching them deserves an article to itself. The ordinary green turtle, so common to the low-lying atolls of the Caroline Islands, were not often seen. During my stay on the island I managed, through my own efforts and those of Kuis and Nana, to accumulate 200 lbs. of splendid thick hawkbill shell, which I afterwards sold in Sydney to a Chinese firm for 20s. 6d. per pound.

Half a mile away from the house in which I lived was an object which aroused in me the *auri sacra fames*. It was the hulk of a small vessel, which had been buried for, perhaps, a century in the mud and sand of a bank near the mouth of a creek flowing into Coquille Harbour. About six months after I came to Leassé there were heavy floods, and an enormous body of water came down from the mountains, carrying upon it huge forest trees that had until then withstood the most violent storms. After the weather broke, and the creek was at its normal height, it was found that it had made a new channel by sweeping through a thick grove of mangroves, and it was whilst some children and I were exploring this channel that we found the hulk, which was buried up to within a few inches of the deck. From the deck itself nearly everything had disappeared, except a few of the fore'ard stanchions. The planking was covered with soft mud, but it was easy to see the coamings of the fore and main hatches, the outlines of the fore scuttle, and the companion entrance. There was a short raised quarter deck, about two feet high, and I thought her to

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have been a vessel of about 150 tons. She had probably been a barque, for the stumps of her three masts were showing; that of the mizen had for some reason been sawn across, for the top of it was quite flat. We took our fish spears, and felt down the main hold and cabin; the mud yielded easily.

Presently we were joined by a number of men, who were all astonished at the discovery, and said that they were sure that there was no one living thing on the island who could tell anything about the ship. I nodded, but said nothing, for even as late as 1820 the Strong's Islanders were notorious for their cutting-off propensities, and many a whaleship or trading vessel had been captured by them, and their crews ruthlessly slaughtered.

Aided by the village children, I devoted a week to clearing the cabin of mud by throwing it out of the two stern ports into a big pit that we dug under the stern, but discovered nothing but the ordinary cabin fixtures, and even the doors had been removed, and all the brass hinges, etc., were missing. This convinced me that the vessel had been looted by the natives; and I heard long after I left the island that the crew of H.M.S. *Larne*, in 1863, found two brass cannon, some muskets, etc., secreted in some caves near Coquille Harbour. I got a couple of lads to make a hole in the mud in the main hold big enough for one of them to reach the bottom, and a thrill of excitement went through me when he called out that he was standing on "small square things as heavy as iron." He prised one loose after some difficulty, and sent it up to me in a basket. I turned

it out on the deck, scratched the black mud off it with my knife, and found it was—a paving stone! There were, doubtless, many hundreds of them in the lower hold, where they were, perhaps, carried as ballast, unless, as I could imagine from their smoothness and hardness, they had been intended as fire-bricks. After that I did not continue my researches. I may add, in conclusion, that the vessel was teak-built, and her decks and timbers quite sound. In the course of a few months she was again covered up during a westerly gale.

I left Kusaie with a sincere feeling of regret, and was intensely pleased to visit it again in 1880.

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BILLY MACLAGGAN AND THE FIJI RAM *

TOM DENISON the supercargo once told this story to his sister-in-law who was married to his brother the banker in a one-horse country town in the far north of Queensland where she thought she was somebody I can tell you, but he told it in such a rambling incoherent sort of way that she turned down the corners of her mouth and said that he must have had very low associates in the South Seas and she would rather not hear anything about them, so I will tell it clearly for everyone sympathised with Denison on account of his bad knee and a lot of people used to come to his hotel and sit up with him all night listening to his stories about Mrs. Maclaggan and her male goat and Jimmy Lugg on board the *Rona* which was the name of Hayes's brig which everyone knew he stole from some Chinamen in Foochow.

Well this goat who was called Billy Maclaggan belonged to Mrs. Maclaggan and had caused a lot of trouble and broken people's friendships and been

* Billy Maclaggan is the famous Samoan goat whose disgraceful conduct is described in "Mrs. Maclaggan's Billy"—a story in "By Rock and Pool." (T. Fisher Unwin, London.)

taken to sea by Denison and Bully Hayes on account of his conduct and because they were kind to animals and Hayes wanted to see him fight Capelle's ram in Levuka and touch Capelle for fifty dollars as he was one of the meanest and richest men in Fiji and Frank Hussey who was Hayes's chief mate hated him like poison too for it was Capelle who put it about Levuka that he had done time in Sydney Jail for knocking a man's eye out with a belaying pin without reasonable excuse. So Hussey made up his mind also to get even with him and confided in Denison and an A.B. named Jimmy Lugg who was a little fat man with a sort of swollen face caused by drink for which he would do anything.

When the goat came on board in Samoa Bully Hayes and Denison made a lot of him and combed his hair and gave him beer to drink and let him lie on the transoms cushions in the main cabin where he would eat bananas and make grunting noises as he moved his jaws athwart-ships and looked at everyone with his green, sharky eyes which were chockful of devilment and low cunning though Hayes said when he shut them and let his beard which was very long and grey touch the deck he looked like a bishop praying to himself or meditating.

Well Denison and Hayes made no end of a fuss over Billy and they used to chuckle when they thought of what a knockout Capelle's ram would get for when he Billy Maclaggan I mean was living with the widow he nearly killed a white policeman named Thady O'Brien who was sitting up against a door half asleep. Someone

pointed him out to Billy who put his head down and went for him like lightning and there was an awful crash and the goat and the policeman and the door all fell inside the room together and cost Mrs. Maclaggan seventeen dollars, though at first she wouldn't pay it as Thady O'Brien had given the goat a mandarin orange filled with Cayenne pepper and he never forgave an injury but the Consul made her pay the money.

It took the *Rona* a week to get to Levuka from Samoa, for there was hardly any wind but Billy Maclaggan liked the voyage except for the things that Jimmy Lugg did to him, and used to lie down on the poop in the bright sunshine and watch the sailors at work and make rumbling noises and ho'd up his sinful old head for people to scratch his chin and ask him how he did, although he always looked suspiciously at Jimmy Lugg when it was his trick at the wheel and seemed to think a lot and then gaze at a number of small marks all over him which he licked as they seemed to pain him.

Now this is what was going on: Hussey the mate and Tom Denison would wait till Hayes was asleep and then entice William Maclaggan up for'ard of the windlass by showing him a bottle of beer which they put in a dish for him to drink, for, as I have said, he loved liquor. Then Jimmy Lugg the man with the swollen face would come out of the galley, wearing a white duck suit and a solar topee and looking just like Capelle who was short and fat and wore a solar topee and carried a stick, and while Billy Maclaggan was sopping up his beer Jimmy Lugg would come behind him and prod

him two or three times with a red-hot poker, and then the goat would give out a fearful yell of rage and turn round and see a man he never saw in the daytime jumping up in the fore-rigging and pointing the poker at him and the mate and Denison would take him aft again and give him more beer and stroke and say kind words to him and when Hayes wanted to know what was the matter with the goat Denison said it was nightmare and that the poor animal was just dying to get at Capelle's ram and couldn't help dreaming about it as he had enough intelligence to understand what they said. Then Hayes would tell Denison to let William come below to his own cabin where he would give him handfuls of chocolate creams out of a boxful which he had bought in Samoa for a yellow-haired girl named Daisy De Vere who was head barmaid at Joe Manton's hotel in Levuka.

As soon as Bully Hayes went on shore at Levuka he walked up to Manton's hotel where all the local aristocracy and dead-beats and men who wanted to get away from Fiji were waiting for him to sling his money about and get all the liquor they wanted. Capelle came in after a bit and then Hayes made disparaging remarks about his ram of which Capelle was very proud as he had taken a prize in Sydney and everyone in Levuka was as afraid of Capelle's ram as people in Samoa were respectful to Billy Maclaggan. Capelle who thought himself the biggest man in Fiji and put on no end of side was intensely jealous of Hayes because he was so popular and told such rattling good stories said he would back his ram who was called Duke Buckingham II. against

any goat for a hundred dollars, and there and then put down twenty sovereigns which Hayes covered and they agreed that the fight should come off at four in the afternoon on the bit of smooth ground just in front of old King Cacobau's house at Vagadace.

All Levuka came to see the fight and a lot of people bet 2 to 1 on the ram who was a holy terror and of course all the Germans were cock sure of him winning although some of them who had been in Samoa had heard of Billy, and a little before four Hayes went on shore and told the mate and Denison to follow with the goat in another boat. As soon as he was out of sight Jimmy Lugg who had the poker heating in the galley fire dressed himself like Capelle again for the last time and whilst Billy was being given a long drink of beer with a dash of rum in to stiffen him for the combat, he suddenly crept up behind him and gave the poor thing a fearful prod with it and then Billy let out such an awful roar of anguish that the people on shore cheered, and Hayes said that the goat was deadly anxious to get ashore and set to business. All this time Denison and Frank Hussey were holding Billy back by the horns and legs for he was just foaming at the mouth and green fire shooting from his eyes as he tried to get at the man in the white suit and solar topee, who was standing on the windlass threatening him with the smoking poker.

"That'll do now, Jimmy" said Hussey "he's fit enough."

It took four men to hold Billy in the boat for he was just shaking with passion and smelling strong of burnt

hair and deadly hatred, and was about one-third drunk. Denison had a bit of rope round his neck to hold him in with, and as soon as the boat touched the beach Billy stepped out of his own accord and pushed on towards the assemblage with a good heart for he knew that wherever there was a crowd of people there was drink to be had and he was dreadfully fond of liquor.

"Here he comes hurrah" cried the loafers and gentry and everybody made way for him. Old King Cacobau was there seated in a chair surrounded by his white ministers and looking very sulky for he had just been converted and baptised after forty years of man-eating and it had told on his health and just then he could smell gin all round him and wanted some badly but was afraid to ask for it as the missionary who had brought him to grace was there come to watch the disgraceful proceedings.

At last everything was ready and Hayes and Hussey and Denison stood beside Billy Maclaggan and Capelle and the ram and his backers took up a position. There was a hundred yards between them and for some minutes no one spoke and only strange rumbling sounds could be heard they came from Billy Maclaggan who was nearly mad with fury for he had just caught sight of a man in a white suit and solar topee holding a fat ram sheep by the horns.

"Are you ready?" called out Joe Manton who was a sort of M.C. and had a dirty blue rosette belonging to Daisy De Vere in his button-hole.

"All ready" replied Capelle and Hussey and about a hundred other people.

“Then ‘Go!’” said Manton.

It was a great sight. That ram just seemed to skim the grass as if he was made of feathers and Billy MacLaggan shot out to meet him (as everybody thought) like a stone from a catapult, but instead of meeting with an awful crash they only grazed each other for Billy swerved aside and let the ram smash into Hayes and Hussey and Denison and other people and he went straight on with murder in his heart for the man who he thought had been torturing him with the red-hot poker. He caught Capelle fair in the chest and knocked him backwards for about fifty yards, and then he followed him up and jumped on him and pawed him in the face with his hoofs and tried to bite and bruise and excoriate him all over and it took five men to throw him down and take him away and one of them who kicked him in the stomach was knocked down by Hussey and Hayes who was laughing so much that he could not speak made signs to Denison whose kneecap had been badly injured by the ram to take Billy on board again before he was killed and then Joe Manton said the fight was off as someone who had been injured by the ram had shot him in the forehead with a deringer pistol bullet which had sort of dazed the poor thing and he was led off the field and Capelle was taken to Dr. Brower's house and the missionary wanted the German Consul to go there and take his dying depositions but the Consul said that such an idiot as Capelle could never be killed and would not go.

About ten o'clock that night when Manton's was full

news came that Capelle was conscious and was calling for a seidel of lager, so Hayes spent half of his own twenty sovereigns on the company and Billy MacLaggan was made a regular hero on board the *Rona* but he always suspected Billy Lugg.

LARSEN AND THE SAW-FISH

AT hundreds of places in London—museums, curiosity shops, and in private residences—the bills of saw-fish may be seen, ranging from four inches in length to as many feet. They are unpleasant-looking objects, even after long years of severance from the long, ugly shark-like body of the fish itself, but when seen making semi-circular sweeps from side to side with lightning-like rapidity, and with a force that would half sever a human body, the spectator can gain some idea of the enormous strength possessed by these great fish, and the danger that lies in approaching too near one, after it has been hooked, landed, and begins to “play up.”

First of all, however, the reader must not confuse the “saw” with a sword-fish—the latter is a deep-sea fish, and his sword is a long, smooth, and rounded piece of bone seldom reaching four feet in length, and his flesh is a valuable food; the “saw” of the saw-fish is a broad flat projection of intensely hard bone, slightly rounded on the upper side, tapering but little from the base to the tip, and set on both sides with sharp teeth—if they can be called teeth—placed apart from each other at regular intervals. These “teeth” are not used for mastication—but merely as knives to sever the bodies of the fish’s prey; the mouth of the saw-fish itself is not

large, and the creature can first impale and then cut up a porpoise into junks of a suitable size for swallowing as easily and adroitly as a butcher can turn a loin of mutton into chops. He is non-edible—that is, no European would eat the flesh, which smells sharky to a degree. Some of them attain a great length—16 ft. of body and 4 ft. of “saw.” One caught on the Tweed River in New South Wales was 21 ft., and had a sword of 5 ft. 3 in.; at the base it was 13 in. in width, 8 in. thick, and at the rounded tip 9 in. in width, while the teeth were over 1 in. in length and an inch apart. But I am getting away from my story.

Some years ago I sailed from Townsville (North Queensland) for Sydney in a steamer called the *Corea*. She was slow but comfortable, and as there were but few other passengers, the voyage was very enjoyable. Captain Lowry, the commander, was a true specimen of the now extinct “old sea-dog”—rough, outspoken, and terrifying in his language, which was of the most luridly appalling nature when he was annoyed; but he was kindness itself to all his passengers.

A few days after leaving Townsville we passed the mouth of the Macleay River in New South Wales, and the captain said to me—I was on the bridge looking at the coast—“See that river there? The bos’un can tell you a yarn about a turn he had there that’ll take all the curl out of your hair. Get hold of him, and say I want him to spin you the yarn.”

The boatswain of the *Corea* was one of the finest built men I have ever seen. He was nearly 6 feet in height, with enormous shoulders and a chest like a

bullock. All the other few passengers on board admired his splendid figure, his grand, erect carriage, and liked to hear his strong, deep, and cheerful voice as he gave his orders. From his bronzed and bearded face there looked a pair of the brightest, bluest, and kindest eyes that ever man possessed, and above them was a mass of the most glorious, rich real golden curling hair—such a head as a Viking of old might have had, and Larsen was perhaps of Viking blood, for he was a native of Trondhjem in Norway.

I found out that Larsen would be off watch at four o'clock, and at that hour I went up to him and said :

“ Bos'un, the captain said you would tell me something about the Macleay River if I asked you.”

After some pressing he yielded, and I will try to tell the story as nearly as possible in his own words :

“ Four years ago I was mate of a Sydney ketch named the *Prince Alfred*, carrying timber and maize from Kempsey, on the Macleay River. We usually anchored at a place called Stewart's Point, some miles from the entrance to the river, discharged our Sydney cargo of general merchandise for the town of Kempsey, which is a long way up, into a river steamer, waited for a lighter to bring down the timber and maize.

“ December of that year was a very bad month all along the coast, and on Christmas Day the *Prince Alfred*, with nine other vessels, were anchored in the river, unable to put to sea on account of the fearful surf on the bar caused by an easterly gale, which had been blowing for nearly a week, and the Macleay bar is one of the worst on the coast, even in fine weather.

"It was very wearisome. The crews of the vessels had nothing to do but catch fish, which are very plentiful, wander about the bush, or yarn with the men at the saw-mill at Stewart's Point—there was no other building or settlers for many miles.

"One day, one of the mill hands told me that there were plenty of huge saw-fish in the river, and that he and his mates often had great fun catching them at night at a place on the riverbank three miles further up. I said I would like to try my hand at it that same night.

"All right,' he said, 'come to the mill and I will give you my own tackle. It'll hold a hippopotamus!'

"It certainly was a fine line—72 stranded white American cotton, almost as thick as a small clothes line, and a hundred yards long. The hook was a small but very thick shark hook of the best steel, and had two fathoms of chain to it with swivels at both the hook and the line end—in fact, it was a proper shark line, and many a shark had been caught with it at Stewart's Point.

"At six in the afternoon I started off, carrying with me a sack, which held the big line, and a small bream line, some salt beef and bread, and a tomahawk to cut the 'saw' off the head of a saw-fish—if I caught one.

"At seven I got to the place—a sloping beach of dirty, muddy sand with a lot of dead timber lying on the bank. It was in a bend of the river where the water was very deep, and with no current. Baiting the big hook with a large mullet, I threw it out as far as I could, then made the end fast to a log—or rather a dead tree, for it

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had several branches—and spread the slack carefully on the sand so that it would not foul.

“The night was very dark, so I lit a big fire, and then—still keeping an eye on the big line to see if it moved—baited my small line and began to fish for bream. In less than ten minutes I had caught two beauties, and thought I should grill one for my supper, instead of eating ‘salt horse.’

“After the fish was cooked I threw some light logs on the fire, so as I could see the big line lying on the sloping bank, and was just beginning to eat when it moved; then it fairly flew out. I made a jump for it, tripped over a stump, and pitched right on the top of the slack. How it happened I don't know, but in an instant—so it seemed—I was dragged into the water with line round my knees and left wrist. So swiftly was I swept in and dragged beneath that I lost my breath and swallowed a lot of water. I struggled madly to free myself, but the line around my knees was knotted, and as tight as an iron band. At last, thank God, I managed to get my head out of the water and draw a breath, and at the same moment got a blow across the eyes that nearly stunned me; it was the small tree to which I had made the end of the line fast. I clutched hold of a branch with my right hand, and in the inky darkness, and as I was still being dragged along, tried to free my left, which I at last succeeded in doing, although every now and then a tug would come that would roil me and the tree as well over and over in the water. But how I blessed my stars that I had made the line fast; if I had not done so, I should certainly have been drowned in a few minutes!

"The first thought I had was for my sheath knife, which was lying beside the fire when I jumped for the line, and though I little knew it then, it was lucky I did not have it on me, for had I cut the line I should never have reached the shore, for within twenty minutes after the branch of the tree had struck me my eyes were so swollen that I could scarcely see, and the blood was pouring from a cut in my forehead.

"All this time that cursed fish was going ahead like a steamboat, and the line round my knees was causing me great pain. I tried in vain to get it clear, for I had to cling to the tree with one hand, and I could not get in a bit of slack, for the line was as taut as an iron bar. Presently, however, it loosened, just as I was foolishly thinking of putting my head under the water and trying to bite it through, and gripping it with all my strength, I managed to get in a fathom or so, and after what seemed hours—for I could only use one hand—freed my knees, and let the line go just as a vicious tug rolled me completely over again, tree and all. When I came up, spit out the salt water, and had wiped my eyes, I knew where I was, for I caught sight of the fire burning brightly away a long distance up the river, neither bank of which was visible, the night was so dark.

"By this time my senses had come back fully to me. I was feeling very funky, for now I remembered that there was a strong fresh in the river, and the shark or saw-fish, or whatever it was, was going steadily towards the bar; if I cast off the line from the tree I could certainly hold on to it, but the current in the Macleay was so strong that I should be carried out to sea, and then I

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decided that it would be better for me—almost blind as I was—to let go and swim for the left bank.

“Just as I was about to do this the line again slackened, and in a few minutes the course was altered, and I was in smoother water and out of the current. Then the strain on the line ceased altogether, and I thought the chap at the other end had freed himself of the hook and gone off. I pulled in a few fathoms of slack and then came a tug, and off we went again, but very slowly.

“I must mention that all this time a thick misty rain was falling, and there was not a breath of wind, and that I could hear the surf breaking quite plainly on the Trial Bay beach, to the south of the Macleay heads.

“Again the line slackened, and then I felt the tree bring up, and to my joy touched bottom with my feet on a bed of mud, sand, and oysters. The water was up to my waist, and as the tide was on the first ebb, I knew I was safe for another eight hours at least.

“I took a chew off a piece of soddened tobacco in my coat pocket, and began to feel better. Knowing I must be near Stewart's Point, I cooed loudly several times, but no one heard me owing to the noise of the surf. Then I carefully felt my way out from the sandbank, found deep water all round, and came back to the tree, and made myself as comfortable as I could. In three hours or so the bank was bare, and I could see a little with one eye.

“All this time the line was lying slack, but when I hauled on it the fish would give it a shake, and I felt certain also was aground, and quite near me, though not on the same bank. About two in the morning the rain

ceased, the stars came out brightly, and I saw where I was—on the left-hand bank of the river, about a mile from the mill at Stewart's Point, and amongst a lot of mud and sandbanks, and the customer who had towed me there was lying aground on a sandbank near me. He was still alive and kicking, for when I went over to look at him he was moving his tail to and fro in the mud. Between me and the bank of the river there was a deep, but narrow channel.

“Taking the end of the line, I swam across, and then hauling in the slack, made it fast round a stump that an elephant could not have moved.

“I got back to the mill before daylight, and roused up the hands, who treated me so well that at sunrise I went with two of them to where I had left the saw-fish. He was still alive, but we soon settled him with an axe, and cut off the saw. He was one of the largest ever seen—19 feet—although the saw, which was nearly a foot wide at the thick end, was only 2 ft. 6 in. long. On one side many of the teeth were broken off. I sold it to a curio dealer in Sydney, who disposed of it to Sir George Grey, the Governor of New Zealand.”

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THE COMRADES

CHAPTER I

NIGHT was fast enshrouding the island, when Tom Jerrold and his partner Kennion came out of the house, lit their pipes, and smoked in gloomy silence as they gazed out upon the darkening waters.

"Well, it's no use our grumbling, Jim," said Jerrold to his friend, a dark-faced, squarely-built young man.

"No, but it's hard that you and I should have such rotten luck, and a d——d scoundrel like Rattray prosper."

"It is hard, Jim. And if it were not for his wife I——"

Kennion gripped his friend's arm. "Ah! If it were not for her I would give the hound such a thrashing that it would make him lie up for a month. But then she would have to nurse the brute. Faugh!"

The two men had been trading in the island for over two years. They owned a schooner, which traded through the Paumotu Archipelago, and had bought a piece of land with thousands of coconut trees in full bearing, and the yield of oil from these in the first year alone more than paid for the purchase. The native family from whom they had bought it left the island soon

after the transaction for Tahiti to squander the money in the usual thoughtless Polynesian style.

For a year all went well. Then one day the *Morbihan*—French corvette—steamed into the lagoon; on board was one William Rattray, a naturalised French citizen, who came on shore, claimed the land, and produced a deed between himself and Nahi (the head of the family, who had sold it to the partners).

Protests were in vain. The captain of the warship simply placed Rattray in possession and went off on board again.

Kennion and Jerrold took the blow like men, and scarcely deigning to take any notice of Rattray, went back to their house, which, fortunately for them, was situated on land belonging to Jerrold's wife.

During the startling brief proceedings which had resulted in their eviction, neither of them had spoken more than a dozen words to Rattray. He was a big, handsome man, and always spoke with an affectation of good-natured bluntness. But men had heard a good deal of him and of his shady reputation in Fiji, which had obliged him to leave for New Caledonia. Then, a few years later, he appeared in Tahiti as a French citizen, and began trading in the Paumotu Archipelago. It was believed by the English and American traders and pearl-shelliers in the group that he was the paid emissary and spy of the French authorities at Tahiti, who were most anxious to drive all foreign traders out of the group under any possible pretext.

* * * * *

In the afternoon boats put off from the warship, and

there landed, with Rattray, a young, slenderly-built white woman. With her were two Tahitian maid-servants, and the wondering traders then saw with feelings of dismay that the boats were loaded with trade goods.

At dusk Rattray came to them, and bade them good-evening.

"Good-evening," said Jerrold coldly.

"Now, you fellows needn't look so sourly at me. You can't blame me for claiming my own land, which I bought and paid for fairly and squarely, can you?"

"What is it you want?" said Kennion roughly; "my partner and I are just about to have supper."

An ugly light gleamed in the big man's eyes, but he answered suavely:

"Well, it's this: I am willing to buy you out—house, land, and the schooner, and give you a passage to Tahiti for \$2,000."

"We won't sell," said Jerrold quietly.

"That," said Rattray, "you'll never do a stroke of trading when I once start against you."

Kennion jumped up, pointed to the door, and then spoke slowly:

"If we have to eat grass to keep us alive you'll never bluff us into leaving the island."

"Very well, then, we'll see who wins," sneered Rattray, as he rose and went out.

* * * * *

Rattray prospered. He built a house on the land of which he had dispossessed the partners, and soon after began trading and pearl-shelling through the group.

Although both Jerrold and his comrade never went near him, he persisted in coming to see them at least once a week, and on several occasions had brought his wife with him. She was a young delicate-looking Englishwoman, and had, so she told Minioa, Jerrold's wife, been married for three years. But she seldom spoke of her husband, and was evidently very much happier when he was away on one of his occasional trips; then she would come over to Jerrold's house, and spend many pleasant hours there with his wife and children.

By working very hard the partners succeeded—despite Rattray's trading opposition—in collecting about five tons of golden-edged pearl-shell, which they intended taking to Auckland to sell. Rattray offered to buy it—indeed pressed them to sell—but they curtly refused.

Their little schooner at this time was lying on the beach nearly a mile distant from the trader's house, being overhauled for the long trip to New Zealand. Kennion and Jerrold were away at the end of the lagoon, buying hogs, fowls, and turtle for the voyage.

One day towards sunset, it began to blow a half-gale from the westward, and Jerrold's wife knew that the boat would not return that night, as it would be too heavily laden to attempt to beat across the lagoon, especially in such wild weather.

Just before supper Rattray and his wife passed the house, and Minioa told them that her husband and Kennion would not return till about noon next day.

“Would you like my wife to keep you company to-night?” said Rattray suddenly.

"Yes, indeed," replied Minioa, wondering that the man—whom she strongly disliked—could be so gracious to her.

Mrs. Rattray first went home to get her husband his supper, and then returned with her two Tahitian servants.

"I hope you won't mind their sleeping here to-night," she said hesitatingly, "but I was rather glad when my husband told them they could come with me."

Minioa was pleased to see her countrywomen, and they all had supper together, Nellie Rattray's pale face brightening up as it always did when her husband was not present. At nine o'clock they were all sound asleep, and the house was in darkness.

An hour or so after midnight, whilst the gale was still raging, and the plumes of the forest of coco-palms were swaying and thrashing wildly to its violence, they were suddenly aroused by the excited cries of a number of natives calling to Minioa to open the door. She sprang to her feet, and pulled back the bolt.

"Look, look!" they cried, "the ship is on fire, and all but consumed!"

Her heart sank as she saw the reflection of the blaze showing dully through the vista of the coco-palm boles; and, hastily dressing, she was soon running along the beach, assisted by the natives, sobbing as she ran.

Nellie Rattray and the two girls, after lighting the lamp to comfort Minioa's children—who had awakened terrified at the noise—and bidding them to not move, were just about to follow, when one of the girls placed her hand on her mistress's arm.

"Lady, art thou ill? thy hands are shaking."

"No, girl; not ill of my body, but sick in my heart. So let me stay here with the little ones, for I cannot face the storm."

So they left her to weep in the quiet sitting-room.

"He must have done it," she cried aloud in her shame, "else why did he insist on the girls coming away with me!"

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CHAPTER II

As, on the following day, the two traders stepped out of their whaleboat on to the beach, and silently regarded the heap of ashes and twisted ironwork that represented all that was left of the *Lucille*, something like tears came into their eyes, and Jerrold sighed heavily as his wife placed her face against his bosom and wept. Then Kennion, with an ugly look on his dark, handsome features, turned to the mate of the vessel, a sturdy old Norwegian, and asked him how and when the fire broke out.

"God knows, sir. All I know is that I was aroused by two of the native crew yelling in my ears that the ship was on fire. I rushed up on deck, and saw that she was ablaze from one end of the hold to the other. In another ten minutes, sir, she was alight everywhere below and aloft, and then the few kegs of powder in the cabin blew up and finished her soon after."

"Thank Heaven we did not put the pearl-shell on board before we beached her," said Jerrold to his wife and Kennion, as they were trying to eat something after they had returned to the house.

As they were discussing the future, Ena, one of Mrs. Rattray's servants, came in and asked if Minioa would come to her mistress, who was very ill.

"Where is her husband?" asked Minioa, as she rose to put on her hat.

"He hath not yet returned from Vana, whither he walked last night," replied the girl.

"Oh," said Kennion to his comrade grimly, "that accounts for his not coming here to condole with us. But what the deuce took him to Vana on such a night?" Then turning to Ena he asked her why her master had gone away (Vana was ten miles from Rattray station).

"He hath a boat there on the beach, and feared the storm might break it. Those words he wrote in a letter which my mistress found when we returned home after the ship was burnt. He left early in the night."

When Minioa returned she said gravely, "She is better now, but she hath wept much, very much, and she trembles without ceasing."

"Looks like fever coming on, Jim," said Jerrold. "You might go and see her. You're a good fever doctor."

"Very well—if Minioa will come with me."

The storm had ceased, and the placid waters of the lagoon lay shimmering under the tropical sun as the man and woman walked quickly along the beach. Rattray's house was quite apart from any native dwellings, and as they reached the gate they heard his voice speaking in tones of savage fury.

"Your brain is affected, you fool!" he cried; "and, by the living God, if you ever say such a thing again I'll crush the life out of you. See!" and then came the sound of his heavy footstep, followed by a low moan of terror.

Kennion ran to the door and threw it open. Mrs. Rattray was half-sitting, half-crouched up, on the sofa, with Rattray holding her wrists, and shaking her to and fro.

With a curse he released her, and turned to Kennion, with a face inflamed with fury.

"What do you want here?" he said hoarsely.

"We heard your wife was very ill," replied Kennion, eyeing him contemptuously, "that is why we came."

"Then you can go away again."

Kennion took a step nearer to him, and then said in a low voice:

"Very well, but before I go let me tell you this: If your wife were not here, and in such a prostrated condition, I would pound that fat face of yours into a pulp. But I'll do it some day."

Then without another word he walked out, followed by Minioa, leaving Rattray alone with his wife, who had fainted in Ena's arms.

CHAPTER III

It was within two days of Christmas, and all the occupants of Jerrold's house were deep in slumber, when Ena stole softly through the open door—the night was hot and windless—and aroused Minioa.

“Bid the two white men arise quickly, and come with me. Haste, haste!”

With bared feet the traders followed the lithe figure of the girl to a clump of pandanus trees, under which Nellie Rattray was standing. Her voice trembled as she greeted them.

“I have come to tell you something of importance,” she said, as her voice gained strength, “but first of all tell me if you can start in your whaleboat for Nihiru within an hour or two—before my husband does.” (Nihiru was a small island thirty miles away.)

“Yes, easily,” they replied together.

“Then do so,” she returned eagerly, “for there is a large Russian barque on shore there, abandoned by her captain and crew. A boat with four sailors in it reached my husband's place two hours ago. They told him that the ship, which is quite new, and has a general cargo from San Francisco for Auckland, ran ashore on the reef two days ago during a rain squall. The captain, seeing a number of natives approaching, became

terrified, believing that they were savages, and he and his crew hastily took to the three boats and steered for Tahiti. This one with the four men became separated from the other two, and managed to reach Raroia tonight. The natives brought them to my husband, who is very jubilant, for as the ship has been absolutely abandoned by everyone, he says he can legally take possession of her."

"So he can," cried Kennion.

"Now I must leave you," and again her voice trembled, as she held out her hands to them, "my husband has done you very bitter wrongs. . . . I will tell you all some day. So hasten all you can, as he leaves at daylight, taking ten natives to help him float the ship again. . . . Good-bye—and God speed you."

* * * * *

Long before the unsuspecting Rattray, with his boatload of natives, had pushed off from the beach, Jerrold and Kennion, with their party in two boats, were halfway to Nihiru; and when dawn broke a cheer burst from them, as they saw lying on the reef a large barque with all canvas set, and standing almost upright. Half an hour's pull and the boats were alongside, and the white men on deck engaged in making a hurried examination of their prize. The first thing they did was to try the pumps—to their intense satisfaction only bilge water came up.

The vessel, though in nine feet of water, was still aground, but the tide was rising, and with it came a gentle swell over the reef. As quickly as possible, aided by the

willing natives, a kedge was taken out, and every preparation made to warp her over the inner side of the reef into the lagoon.

Then, just as Rattray's boat came in sight, the ship began to move under the steady strain put on the hawsers and aided by her own canvas. Foot by foot, and yard by yard, her keel crunched through the yielding coral, and she slid gently over the ledge of the reef into the lagoon; the kedge was slipped, and the *Nadiejea* with the same canvas under which she had run ashore was slipping through the water at four knots, toward Raroia.

"Look, Tom," cried Kennion, pointing to Rattray's boat, which was now less than half a mile away, almost right ahead, "he's lying-to on his oars—waiting for an interview us."

He brought the ship up a point, and then, giving the wheel to his old Norwegian mate, went to the signal locker, and took out J and K, and bent them on to the halliards in readiness to run up when they were abreast of the boat.

Rattray, with black rage in his heart, was standing up, the haft of the steer-oar in his hand. Unable to speak, he glared wildly at his hated rivals, who were standing beside the helmsman. Then, when within fifty yards of the boat, Kennion stepped to the rail, and said mockingly:

"Good-day, Mr. Rattray. You are a bit late. Sorry we can't bring-to, and take you on board, but we want to get our ship to anchor before dark. Do you see our house flag?—J and K."

Ratray made no answer—only stared at them like a madman.

* * * * *

Nellie Ratray was with Minioa when the *Nadiejeda* let go her anchor in front of the partners' station, and when they came on shore she met them with outstretched hands, and a smile lit up her pale face.

"I am so glad," she said. Then she paused, and her eyes filled with tears. "I am afraid to go back to him. He will kill me."

Then Minioa turned to her husband. "Tom, that man is a devil. He gave the Nahi people two hundred dollars to swear that he had bought the land first from them, and that then they had falsely again sold it to you. . . . And it was he who set fire to the *Lucille*—"

Jerrold's face whitened—"Is it true?" he said to Mrs. Ratray.

"Quite true," she said brokenly. "I will tell you how I learnt it all—the knowledge of his wickedness was killing me—but I am not strong enough now."

* * * * *

Kennion, towards dusk had, with a number of well-armed natives, gone on board the barque, for he and his partner knew not what fresh villainy Ratray might attempt; Minioa, Nellie, and Jerrold were sitting on the verandah, talking of the bright future before them, when they saw Ratray come towards the house. He was walking slowly, with bent head, and both hands in his coat-pockets. Minioa rose swiftly and went into the house, returning in a few moments.

At the gate Rattray stopped, and his wife shrunk behind Minioa, whose right hand, hidden in her dress, held a heavy Colt's pistol.

"I have come for my wife," he said in thick, husky tones, as, suddenly throwing open the gate, he sprang towards them with a revolver in each hand, but as he raised his right and aimed at Jerrold, Minioa's pistol rang out. He spun round, and fell on the gravelled path, face downwards, dead!

* * * * *

The *Nadiejeda* was a thousand miles on her way to Auckland, and Jerrold and his comrade were pacing the after deck, smoking their pipes in the early morning air. Minioa and Mrs. Rattray were below with the children.

"Jim," said Jerrold presently, "she's a prize, isn't she?"

"She is," replied his partner absently. "I wonder how long I must wait before I can decently ask her if——"

Jerrold laughed loudly—"I meant the ship."

"And I didn't."

And then the two men shook hands.

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AYESSE OF MANGA REVA

RANDALL AYESSE, the trader on Manga Reva Island, came to his door and looked out upon the broad lagoon at the *Sadie Revere* sailing in through the passage between the lines of roaring surf. He was a handsome, sun-burned and grave-faced man of about thirty years of age, with deep-set kindly blue eyes that, however, could yet become hard and stern when occasion demanded, and in Manga Reva in those days death ran side by side with the daily life of the white trader, and many a savage native had learned to his cost that "Randall the Silent," as he was called, was not a man to be threatened or imposed upon. Yet from one end of the Paumotu Archipelago to the other there was no white man so respected as he. Unlike all the other European traders and pearl divers, he had not married a native wife, even though Mahia, the handsome daughter of Raō, the chief of Manga Reva, made no secret of her admiration for the well-favoured, quiet-spoken trader, and Mahia was a great match, for Raō was a wealthy man, owned a fleet of pearling luggers, built for him in New Zealand, and every year sold many thousands of pounds' worth of pearls and pearl-shells to the French trading ships from Tahiti, or to Ayesse himself. But neither to the fair-

skinned Mahia, nor to any other of the many beautiful unmarried girls of Manga Reva would the quiet trader vouchsafe so much as a glance. During the three years he had been living on the island his life had been in marked contrast to that of most white men—loose living, or licence of any sort was not only abhorrent, but impossible to him.

Once at the Café Palais in Papeite town (Tahiti) he had been "chaffed" by a number of fellow-traders, who asked him if he was qualifying for a missionary. He stood it very quietly and good-humouredly, for he was used to their rough witticisms, and knew that no affront was intended, but when Charley Rous, an American pearl-sheller, who had taken more liquor than was good for him, insinuated that he was a hypocrite, his manner changed, and he abruptly asked Rous what he meant.

"Take it any way you like," was the answer, "and don't put on any of your high-and-mighty British style with me, or you'll run up agin suthin' that you won't like."

There was a dead silence, as Ayesse rose slowly from his chair, and Rous's hand went quickly to his hip pocket; but it was seized by another trader.

"No, no, none of that, Rous," he cried; "it's a dirty Yankee trick to draw on a man you well know never carries a pistol when he's in a town and among white men."

Ayesse looked at him with eyes aflame, but not a word came from his lips as he beckoned to Rous to come outside to the courtyard. In an instant the café was alive with subdued excitement, as the group of traders went

into the courtyard, and formed a ring round the two men.

Half an hour later Rous was under the care of two French military doctors, who told him that he would be able to leave the hospital in about ten days, and Ayesse went quietly to his room, changed his clothes, returned to the other traders, played a game or two of billiards, and said nothing about the encounter beyond remarking that it was time Rous had a lesson.

* * * * *

As he watched the *Sadie Revere* entering the lagoon, Manuel, his head boatman, a stalwart Manga Revan, came up.

"The boat is ready, master."

Ayesse nodded, and putting on his wide-brimmed Panama hat walked down to the beach, stepped into his whaleboat, and taking the steer-oar, bade the crew give way. A quarter of an hour later he was alongside the schooner, just as she swung to her anchor.

Throsby, the supercargo, was in the main cabin, ready to go on shore when the trader descended; the two men shook hands warmly.

"How are you, Ayesse? Everything going on all right at Manga Reva?"

"Everything. And you?"

"Oh, I'm AI. We had a glorious run down from Auckland—ten days. I've letters for you," and Throsby took a packet from his pocket and gave it to the trader, who smiled slightly, as he slipped it into his own.

"I saw Miss Shannon only a fortnight ago," said

Throsby, a "fine-looking" man with Jewish features, as he pushed a box of cigars across the table to Ayesse and called to the steward to bring them something to drink, "she's looking splendid—just splendid! By Jove, old man, I envy you your future wife! She and the three Miss Fallons are called 'the four beauties of Auckland.'"

Ayesse again smiled and nodded in his quiet way, and just then the captain came below.

"Hallo, Ayesse! How are you? Going on shore with Throsby?"

"Yes, as soon as he is ready. Won't you come, too? My boat is alongside, and we'll have dinner at six. Roast pigeons, captain. I know you can't say 'no.'"

"No, I can't. But we have half a dozen boatloads of trade goods and stores to land for you."

"To-morrow will do. There is no other trader on Manga Reva to worry me, so the natives never try to rush me into opening my new 'trade' the moment the cases are landed, by threatening to sell their pearl-shell to another man."

Throsby laughed—"That's the only way, Ayesse. Never give in to a native. I never do."

"No," put in the captain sarcastically, "you never do—not even when you know you're in the wrong. And you're too quick with your hands when you lose your temper. Some of these days you'll get a knife into you."

The supercargo squared his broad shoulders and laughed contemptuously. He was inordinately proud of

his abilities as a fighting man, and fond of displaying them upon the slightest pretext.

* * * * *

Six months before there had been a "difference" between the supercargo and Randall Ayesse, and their friendship of two years was all but severed. Throsby had, in a burst of ill-temper, struck Manuel.

"Don't strike a man of mine, Throsby," said Ayesse, "or you will never put foot in my house again. Manuel is a native, but because he is one don't imagine that you can hit him. You are too fond of that sort of thing. If there is any knocking out to be done on this station, I can do it—I won't have you or anyone else interfering with my people. You don't understand the language, though you think you do, and you—not Manuel—were at fault."

Throsby's face darkened, and he took a step forward towards his friend—then he stopped and held out his hand with a smile, apologised, and said that he should be sorry to lose Ayesse's friendship over a native. But from that moment he hated him.

Still, in his treacherous heart, he meant what he said—that he would be sorry to lose his friendship. For the unbounded confidence which the trader had placed in him was particularly valuable to him, and the younger man little dreamt that under Throsby's bluff manner and *bonhomie* there lay the deepest, blackest treachery.

* * * * *

For two years Throsby and Ida Shannon—the woman

who Ayesse believed loved him—had systematically robbed him. When he had sailed from Auckland to engage in trading and pearl-shelling he had said to her as he bade her good-bye, "I won't come back to you, Ida, for three years. I know of a lagoon in the Paumotus where I believe I can make a small fortune in that time. There are beds of golden-edged pearl-shell there that no one but myself knows of, and if I have any luck at all I ought to be worth some thousands in three years or so. You see, dearest, besides the pearls and pearl-shell I shall have a trading station as well, and that will bring me in something. But the pearling business is the thing for making money. And when I have £5,000 I think it will be time for us to be married, and I'll give up the South Seas. I've spent fifteen years there, and although I love the life, I love you best, and the place will know me no more when I have that money."

And Ida Shannon's deep blue, long-lashed Irish eyes were filled with tears when she said farewell. She really believed she loved him, but did not know herself—did not know that she was as unstable as water, and as fickle as the wind. Her mother, an utterly selfish, pleasure-loving woman, who had ruined her dead husband through her wild extravagance, was the last person in the world on whom the upbringing of a girl with the temperament of Ida Shannon should have devolved. Without an atom of inculcated principle to guide her, and with a shallow-brained, frivolous mother, whose one thought was dress and gaiety, and whose most serious effort in life was the evasion of her debts, it is no wonder that Ida

at twenty-three years of age was, in a sense, no better than her parent.

But Randall Ayesse loved her passionately. He knew nothing about women. His wandering life for over twenty years had yet left him in many essential things as unsophisticated as a lad of fifteen. Mrs. Shannon he believed to be a generous-hearted, impulsive woman, devoted to her daughter, and a model mother in every way. He was proud to lend her money when she one day told him she was pressed for want of it. And when he told her he loved her daughter, she had cried and said it would be hard to part from her darling Ida, and that she would retire into some religious sisterhood to end her days after the marriage. He believed her, for she had the art of speaking brokenly, amidst suppressed sobs.

Throsby was his friend. It was through him that he met Mrs. Shannon and her daughter, and that always made him feel grateful to the handsome, burly supercargo. He never dreamt that Ida Shannon and the man who professed to be his friend were lovers and had deliberately set themselves to deceive and plunder him almost from the very first.

In the hands of an unscrupulous, strong-willed man like Throsby, Ida Shannon was as wax in the hand of the moulder. Whatever affection she had in her nature was perhaps given to Ayesse, but she was too pliant to and too terrified of Throsby to halt in the path of deceit. Her mother's influence, too, was as fatal as Throsby's.

* * * * *

Within two years after he had landed at Mangereva, Randall had done well—principally out of pearl-shell and pearls. During this time the *Sadie Revere* had made five voyages between the islands and Auckland, and Ayesse had entrusted his friend Throsby with the disposal of the pearl-shell, but the pearls, which were worth £3,000 locally, he sent to Ida (also by Throsby).

“Keep them till I return, dearest,” he wrote. “When we are married we will take them to Europe, where they will bring us double the price we could get for them anywhere in Australasia.”

Throsby always sold the pearl-shell for him advantageously, and, at his (Ayesse’s) request, placed the money to the account of Ida Shannon in an Auckland bank.

“You see, Throsby, old man,” he said one day, “I have not a single relative in the wide world, and I may die or be killed any day, and as I have made no will, Ida and her mother will be all right, and there will be no beastly interference by the Curator of Intestate Estates, or any other legal shark. And it’s awfully good of you, old man, to do all this work for me. But another year or two at this game will give me all the money I want—in fact, the place will be worked out, as far as pearl-shell goes, in another ten or twelve months.”

“That is the longest speech ‘Randall the Silent’ ever made!” said Throsby, with his hearty laugh, as he slapped Ayesse on the shoulder. “By Jove, Ayesse, you are a good fellow! Mrs. Shannon told me that you lent her a couple of hundred pounds three years ago, and that she has not repaid you yet.”

Ayesse, knowing that Throsby was an old friend of Mrs. Shannon and her daughter, did not resent Throsby telling him this, and merely muttered something about his having no use for the money, etc.

* * * * *

After dinner the three men—Revere (the skipper of the *Sadie Revere*), Throsby, and Ayesse, sat on the verandah of the house, which stood in a grove of orange and lime trees, encompassed by a forest of graceful screw-palms. Before them lay the sleeping lagoon, shining bright under myriad stars.

“I’ll have a stroll through the village, I think,” said Throsby, as he lit a fresh cigar. “It will help to digest the three pigeons I have eaten.” Ayesse nodded a smiling approval. Captain Revere, a little, grey-headed man of sixty, said nothing as he puffed at his pipe. Then, as soon as Throsby had disappeared, he turned to his host, and placed his hand on Randall’s knee.

“Randall, I’ve known you for ten years—ever since we first met in Fiji. And you know me, don’t you, my lad? And you know me to be a straight man—a man who would not do a dirty trick even to a nigger?”

“I know you to be Tom Revere, and everyone knows Tom Revere as one of the straightest men that ever trod a deck.”

“Thank you, my lad,” and the old sailor’s eyes glistened, and then laying down his pipe, he looked into Ayesse’s steady grey eyes.

“Randall!, my lad, I am going to tell you somethi:

that will hurt you—something that perhaps I should not tell you if I were like most men. But I think I ought to tell you, for poor Sadie” (he spoke of the dead daughter after whom his ship was named) “loved you although you never knew it. And it’s a horrible, cursed thing to tell you—but now that that scoundrel has gone——”

“Throsby?”

“Yes, Throsby; he’s a scoundrel and traitor, and I will tell him so in front of you when he comes back, if you wish. I have hardly spoken to him on the voyage down. He brought you letters from Miss Shannon, did he not?”

“Yes.”

“Did he tell you that he had seen Miss Shannon?”

“Yes, he told me that he had seen her a fortnight ago.”

Revere sprang up from his chair. “The sweepstakes! The villain! Randall, he and Miss Shannon have been meeting day after day for two years past, whenever the *Sadie* was in port. And when she came on board the schooner to give her letters to you to Throsby, I saw Throsby take her in his arms and kiss her. I was in my cabin at the time, and saw it all.”

Ayese, with agony at his heart, flipped off the ash from his cigar.

“You are quite certain, Revere?”

“Dead certain. The steward will bear me out. He heard them talking. . . . And, Randall, my lad, you’ll hate me now for what I am saying.”

"No, Revere," and Ayese put out his hand. "I am a man."

"Well, Miss Shannon and Throsby spoke in French, and my steward, who is a Martinique nigger, heard them, and told me what they said. . . . Randall, my boy——"

"Go on, Revere, I'm not a child."

"Well, they spoke of the time when they would get your last consignment of pearls and pearl-shell. Throsby, who seems to do all your banking business, said that you could work on 'for another year or so.' Then he and Miss Shannon could skip to Europe."

"'Skip to Europe.' Just so, Captain Revere," said Ayese quietly, "'skip to Europe.' Well, I'm very much obliged to you for the information you have given me. Dead certain about it?"

"Yes; my wife could tell you more than I know about Miss Shannon and Throsby. She has seen them together time after time."

"My fault," said Ayese gravely. "I had no business to stay away from her so long. I think I had best get to Auckland as soon as I can."

"Decidedly I should. But the *Sadie* has only just begun her cruise, and we shall not be in Auckland for five months yet."

Ayese, who seemed buried in thought, nodded. "I know that. The cutter will do me. I'll take Manuel."

"It's a long voyage for a five-ton cutter—2,500 miles."

"We'll do it easily. I'll wait until the schooner leaves, then I'll start. Don't let Throsby know of it."

"Of course not. I'll be glad to see the scoundrel brought to book, and I'm sorry that the girl——"

"Oh, don't worry over me, Captain. I'm not made of jelly, and will get over the matter all right. Now let us talk about something else."

* * * * *

Two months later, when the *Sadie Revere* returned to Manga Reva, Ayesse's station was shut up, and the natives told the captain and Throsby that he had gone to Tahiti in the cutter, and would be away a month. Throsby cursed him beneath his breath, for he had counted upon getting at least another thousand pounds worth of pearls from him.

"I suppose he has left the keys of the shell-house with you, Raō?" he said blandly to the chief.

"Yes," replied the chief quietly, in English, "but there is no pearl-shell in it. He loaded the cutter with it—to sell at Tahiti."

Again Throsby cursed Ayesse, and old Revere was delighted to witness the expression on the traitor's face.

"Queer of him to act like this, isn't it?" said the supercargo. "If he had left the shell for me, I could get him much more for it in Auckland than he'll sell it for in Tahiti."

* * * * *

But the cutter never reached her destination, and when, after some months, the *Sadie Revere* arrived at Auckland, and Captain Revere found that Ayesse was missing, the white-haired old skipper shed tears for his friend.

A week later he came home one afternoon, his florid face white with rage.

"What is it, Tom?"

"Throsby and Miss Shannon were married yesterday, and left this morning for San Francisco in the *Zealandia*. The villain! The manager of the bank told me that a few days ago Ida Shannon and her mother came to him and drew out every penny that was to her credit—nearly £5,000. The Shannons and Throsby between them have stolen over £8,000 of a dead man's money. May Heaven's curse rest on them!"

* * * * *

A new supercargo took Throsby's place, and one evening, as he was dining with Revere and his wife, a knock came to the door, and "the dead man" walked in.

"I'm not a ghost, Mrs. Revere," he said, as he shook hands. "We lost the cutter one night on Tubuai Island; had to stay there for four months. Then the *Downtless* came along and gave us a passage to Auckland. We only came in an hour ago, and I came straight to you." He spoke in his old, quiet, unmoved manner.

Revere took him aside, and told him about Throsby. He listened in silence.

"It can't be helped," was all he said. "I must start afresh. Will you lend me £200?"

"Five, if you like, my dear lad."

"No, £200 will do. And I'll be glad if you will take Manuel back to Manga Reva with you and put him in charge of my place."

"And you?" cried the old man in dismay, "aren't you coming too?"

"No, not with you, but you will see me there some time within twelve months. I'll have a cruise about of your money before I settle down to work again."

Revere there and then drew a cheque, and Ayesse bade him and his wife good-night, and went quietly away. The next morning he was on his way to Sydney to catch a P. and O. steamer for London. He knew he should find Throsby and his wife in Paris, for Id Shannon's one engrossing thought had been to live in the gay city.

* * * * *

In less than a year the *Sadie Revere* came to an anchor in Manga Reva lagoon for the third time since Ayesse had sailed with Manuel in the cutter, and again Ayesse stood in his doorway, watching.

"Well, here I am again, Captain," he said, when Revere came on shore. "How is Mrs. Revere?"

The old man wrung his hand again and again. "Randall, my boy, I am pleased to see you again. And you look well—you have got over it?" and he gazed into the trader's deep-set, blue eyes with a fatherly interest.

"Quite. And so has Throsby."

The old man raised his right hand questioningly.

"I made him fight—I shot him in Paris eight months ago."

"And she——"

Ayesse threw out his hands.

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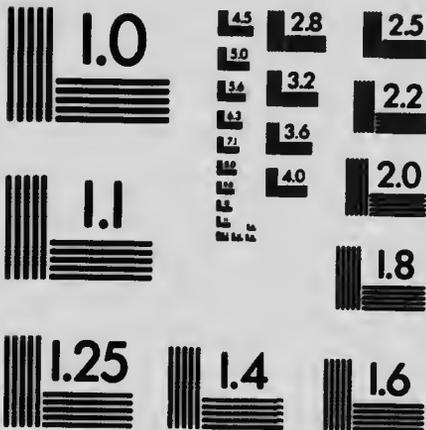
Ayesso of Manga Reva

friend," and he drew the captain of the *Sadie Revere* to a side-table, "here is a magnum of the Widow Cliquot which I brought all the way from Paris—to drink here with you."



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THE STORY OF THE "LATELLA"

EARLY one morning, the few native inhabitants of Suwarrow's Island—a low-lying, palm-clad atoll in the South Pacific, situated in lat. 13° S.; long. 163° W. observed a large cutter, under very shortened canvas, beating up to the lagoon. Putting off in their boat, they boarded the vessel, and to their astonishment found that the crew consisted of but one man—a short, sturdy-built young fellow of about twenty-eight years of age who was delighted to find that his visitors all spoke English, and that he had at last, after fearful experiences, reached a haven of safety.

The eleven natives who comprised the population of Suwarrow were engaged by an English firm (who were also my employers) in Samoa in diving for pearl-shells in the lagoon. They all came from the neighbouring island of Manahiki, and had been but four months at this isolated spot when the stranger arrived. They brought him safely to anchor, and during his stay treated him with the most unbounded hospitality, simple as was their fare; and, a few weeks later, two of them, at his urgent solicitations, agreed to help him to sail the cutter to Samoa, where he wished to hand her over to the British Consul, or to any English warship that might happen to be there.

The Story of the "Latella"

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A week later the cutter arrived safely in Fagaloa Harbour, on the island of Upolu, on which, at Apia, reside the European population of Samoa. I was then in Apia, doing shore duty, as the vessel of which I was supercargo was on the beach undergoing repairs. Fagaloa is only half a day's journey by sea from Apia, and as soon as the news of the cutter's arrival was known, I was sent up to take charge of her, and bring her to Apia. I started in a well-manned whaleboat, and in six hours was at Fagaloa, and on board the cutter. The white man shook hands with me, and soon told me his story, which I shall endeavour to relate as nearly as possible in his own words. He was, I may mention, a native of Jersey (Channel Islands) and was named Henry Lefrançois, spoke both English and French, was remarkably good-looking, and of a very powerful physique. Although of French name, he was an Englishman to the backbone, and had sailed in English ships from the time he was ten years of age. (He afterwards settled in Hawaii, and won the liking and respect of both the native and European population for his sterling, straightforward character, courage, and all-round manliness of disposition.)

"This cutter," he said, "is the *Latella*, of Honolulu. She is a centre-board vessel of ninety-five tons, almost new, and belongs to Mr. Pritchard, of Honolulu" (Hawaiian Islands). "She was fitted out for a trading voyage to the islands to the south—Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji—and has now under hatches a cargo worth two thousand dollars—principally hardware, and arms and ammunition. When we sailed from Honolulu there

were nine people on board—the captain, whose name was Pritchard, but who was no relation of the owner myself (I was mate), the boatswain, who was a Swede named Johnsen, four Hawaiian sailors, and two passengers named Just and Cooper, who were going to set down as traders either in Samoa or Tonga—anyway, that is what they told the owner and Captain Pritchard, and I saw them pay the latter their passage money—\$100 each in gold.

“The skipper gave them a receipt, and then took their money and put it in the safe which you see there. When he opened the door of the safe Cooper and Just could not help seeing that it was nearly filled with boxes of money—principally Chilian and Mexican dollars—about \$3,000 in all, which was intended for cash buying of pearl-shell. Just as he was about to lock it, Cooper, a little chap with a broken nose—asked him if he would take care of his money, and gave him \$500 in twenty-dollar American gold pieces, and some silver, and then Just, who was a quiet-looking chap, about my own age, said he had \$700 in silver, which he would also like the captain to put in the safe, and opening one of his boxes which, with other luggage, was on deck, he came back with a bag of silver coin, which poor Captain Pritchard counted out on the cabin table, and then locked up the safe with Cooper’s money.

“They both seemed very decent men, and although I didn’t like the looks of Cooper, I did those of Just, who was, I think, an American; Cooper told us that Johnsen (Cooper) was a Swede, and a little while later I heard him conversing in Swedish with our boatswain Johnsen.

"The cabin, as you see, is a large one for a vessel of this size, and has six bunks," and he pointed them out to me. "The boatswain and I and Just had those on the starboard side, and the skipper and Cooper two on the port side, leaving one vacant; the native crew, of course, bunked for'ard.

"One morning, two days after we were clear of the land and steering S.S.W. for Samoa, I happened to come below for some oakum. I was barefooted, and so made hardly any sound. Cooper and Just were seated at the cabin table, and were looking at what I could see was a brand new chart. They seemed somewhat disconcerted, and Just said, 'Oh, Mr. Lefrançois, we were just looking at this chart before giving it to the captain; we bought it in Honolulu, thinking he would like it; it is the very latest one, and only came out last year.'

"In an instant my suspicions were aroused, for I felt that he was lying. Why should they buy a chart for a man who, three days previously, had been an utter stranger to them?

"'Oh, yes,' I said quickly, 'he'll be glad of it, I'm sure. The one he has is about six years back.'

"I must tell you that before I came below, the skipper, the boatswain, and I were all up for'ard, very busy at caulking the deck around the galley, where it leaked, and I had seen our two passengers sitting on deck—a few minutes later I saw that they had gone below. No doubt my appearance surprised them.

"I got the oakum, and then I went on deck, remarked carelessly to Cooper that the glass was falling and bad

weather coming on, and the skipper wanted to get the caulking over as soon as possible.

“ ‘Why, we can lend a hand,’ said Cooper eagerly.

“ ‘All right,’ I said, and I got a couple of caulking irons and mallets for them, and in a few minutes we were all at work together.

“ ‘Captain,’ I said, ‘Mr. Just, here, has bought the latest chart for you—No. 187.’ The captain said I was much obliged, and I felt that Just was sure that he believed his story. Some hours passed before I had a chance of telling the captain of my suspicions. He agreed with me that it was a very unlikely thing for a man to buy a chart for a stranger. ‘At the same time,’ though, Harry,’ said the poor fellow, ‘we have no right to suspect them. Look how they have trusted me with their money. How do they know but that I might be a villain, and capable of murdering two men even for a few hundred dollars?’

“ ‘True enough,’ I said; ‘but their placing their money in your safe might only be to blind us. And they now know two things—that you have a lot of money on board, and a valuable cargo as well.’

“ So we agreed to keep a quiet watch on them, and took Johnsen into our confidence. I am sorry now we did so, for he at once became scared and nervous, and I firmly believe that Cooper and Just noticed his manner and thought we suspected them, and resolved to act quickly.

“ The four Hawaiian sailors were absolutely trustworthy as far as their fidelity to Pritchard went, and therefore he and I talked more freely to them than we did to Johnsen. Pritchard, who spoke Hawaiian like a native

of the country, told them that he would give them arms and ammunition, which he would expect them to use in defence of their own and our lives if necessary; and whilst he, Cooper and Just were at supper, I took four Evans's 16-shot magazine carbines—44° calibre—into the f'c'sle, and put one in each of the sailor's bunks. They '(the sailors)' knew how to use them. Trust a Kanaka for that.

"About ten o'clock that night it was very squally and rainy. It was my watch on deck. One of the two natives on deck was at the tiller, the other was sheltering under the lee of the galley. The captain, boat-swain, and passengers were all below, and, I supposed, asleep.

"By six bells the squalls became so violent that I had to call the other watch to help reef the mainsail. Then I went to the tiller, leaving the four hands to attend to the big sail, which is an awkward customer to handle in dirty weather. They couldn't manage it somehow, and as I was bawling at them for being such duffers, Cooper came on deck in his overcoat.

"'Oh, come aft here, one of you, and take the tiller,' I called out to the men; 'you're all about as strong as a sick hen.'

"'I'll take it, Mr. Lefrançois, if you like,' said Cooper.

"'Thank you,' I said; 'I don't want to call up the captain and bos'un if I can help it, but those fellows will never get that sail reefed if I don't help them.'

"I had scarcely turned my back on him to go for'ard when I fell unconscious upon the deck. He had shot me in the head. Look here."

Taking off his hat he showed me two newly-healed scars—one on the back of his head, the other over his right eyebrow.

“The bullet, luckily for me, struck me obliquely, went half round my head along the skull, and lodged over my right eye. How long I lay unconscious I don't know, but I do remember after a while hearing the mainsail ripping and flapping and tearing about, and the voice of Just saying something to Cooper. Then I was lifted up and slung over the side. That saved my life, for the shock of the cold water instantly revived me, and I had sense enough to at once swim clear of the cutter's counter, for she was rolling and pitching about tremendously, and the mainsail and boom were banging about from side to side, and the vessel going astern. In about five minutes I had hold of the chain bobstay, and knew that I should not drown anyway, though every now and then I was soused under the water as the cutter's bows rose and fell.

“I held on for nearly a quarter of an hour—it seemed years to me—and knew that the mainsail and boom had at last been secured, for the vessel became steadier and rose easily to the sea, and I knew that she was hove-to.

“Very carefully I raised myself and peered over the bows, holding on to one of the bowsprit guys. Not a soul was on deck, and the tiller was lashed a little to port—Cooper and Just seemed to know the *Latella* as well as the skipper and I did. In another minute I was on deck, and down into the f'c'sle. The slush lamp was burning just as it had been left when I had called the other watch.

The Story of the "Latella"

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The first thing I did was to offer a silent prayer to God for my escape. Then I took one of the Evans's carbines, saw that it worked properly, and waited for daylight. That all the ship's company had been murdered I felt pretty certain.

"I got into the most for'ard of the four bunks and lay down, facing the scuttle so that I could see anyone descending and get a pull on him. I was raging with thirst, but did not dare to go on deck for a drink from the scuttle-butt which was right aft, lashed to the rail, near the tiller.

"Daylight came at last, and then to my great joy I saw a basket full of oranges in one of the bunks on the port side. Ah, sir, I thought it was heaven as I tore one open and drank the juice! I think I must have had a dozen before I was satisfied. Then, with the precious Evans in my hand, I went on deck into the galley, on the after side of which was a small port from which I could see anyone coming from the cabin.

"I had not long to wait. Cooper came up first, cast a glance up aloft, and then along the deck, looked at the tiller lashings, and was presently joined by Just, and then they both came for'ard together. I suppose they intended to light the galley fire, and make some coffee. I took aim at Cooper and shot him through the stomach, and as Just slewed round and sprang towards the cabin—for his pistol, I suppose—I took him fair and square in the back, and broke his spine. Cooper staggered to the rail and tried to stand, but presently he dropped in a heap; and Just, lying on his side, held up both hands.

“I went up to them in turn, and asked them where they were hit. Cooper could not answer, but Just said, ‘My backbone is broken.’

“After seeing that neither of them had a pistol, I left them, went into the cabin, and found both the captain’s and bos’un’s bunks empty. Then I came on deck again.

“‘For God’s sake give me a drink of water,’ cried Cooper. Just said nothing—he merely looked at me in an unconcerned sort of manner as if nothing mattered to him.

“‘Where are Captain Pritchard and the bos’un?’ I asked him.

“‘Where we thought you were—at the bottom of the sea,’ he answered.

“‘And the natives?’ I cried, ‘did you murder them too?’”

“‘Yes, yes, we did,’ moaned Cooper; ‘I’ll make a clean breast. But for God’s sake give me some water.’

“I went to the scuttle-butt, filled the dipper, and came back to him and let him drink. He asked me if he was mortally wounded. I told him that I did not think he would last half an hour, for the bullet had gone clean through him. I never saw a man’s face go like his did—it made me almost pity the wretch.

“‘It was Just that led me into it,’ he said. ‘We came on board to get the cutter and clear out with her, and sell the cargo in the Carolines.’ Then he begged for more water, which I would not give him until after he had told me how the captain and bos’un were killed.

"They were, he said, stabbed through their hearts by Just as they slept. Then he (Cooper) came on deck to kill me, Just threatening to shoot him if he refused. After I fell, he and Just ran forward and shot two of the Hawaiians; the other two ran aloft, and were also shot. Then, after the mainsail was secured, all the bodies, including myself, were thrown overboard.

"In about ten minutes after the second drink of water which I gave him, Cooper died. I carried Just on to the after-deck, and made him as comfortable as I could. He lingered on until nearly ten o'clock, then died without saying a word.

"Twenty-three days after, without seeing any other land—although I tried hard to make Palmyra Island, where there are some white men living—I sighted Suwarrow, and found that by good luck I had struck just the right place. And now here I am, and the cutter is safe and sound, and I'm dreading the letter I shall have to write to poor Mrs. Pritchard in Honolulu."

TRINCOMALEE

CHAPTER I

TRINCOMALEE was considered one of the best and most solvent sugar properties in North Queensland, and it had apparently survived the crash, when, owing to bad seasons and the dearth of labour, nearly all the small estates and many of the larger became hopelessly insolvent, and passed into the hands of the various banks or the Receiver, and desolation and the silence of the bush reigned where once had been the whirr and crash of machinery, and the bustle of human and animal life.

But there were a few people who knew that the owner of Trincomalee was in a "tight place," and among them was his only child, his daughter Frances, and, of course, the Major himself.

It was nine o'clock in the morning, and Major Rodney was reading his weekly budget of letters. He was a handsome, red-faced, white-moustached man of about sixty, and as he read his features flushed deeply with anger, and he swore beneath his breath. His daughter, who had finished her breakfast, was standing at the French window of the room, looking out upon the waving expanse of cornfield, wondering whether her father would, as usual, grumble to her for the next hour

over his correspondence. She knew him so well now—since her mother died and after three years at home—and had now become somewhat apathetic. Not that she was deficient in affection for her father, but it was latent, and he never tried to rouse it into activity. He had treated his wife in just the same way as he was treating her—with lazy tolerance, and as a being who was a useful adornment to his establishment. When she died Frances was eighteen years of age, and visiting some relations in Victoria. Major Rodney sent for her, complimented her upon her appearance and resemblance to her mother—whom he had already forgotten—and let her assume the entire domestic responsibilities of Trincomalee, entertained his surrounding neighbours as of old, and thought he was doing all that a man could do—“in his position and with his anxieties.” The girl would often smile somewhat bitterly to herself when he spoke of his anxieties in connection with the situation of the estate—his anxieties had never prevented him making a long and expensive journey every year to Melbourne to see the Cup run for, and to lose thousands of pounds that ought to have gone to the upkeep and restoration of the plantation.

Presently the Major pushed away his letters and turned to his daughter.

“Are you going out, Frances?” he asked.

She came over to the table and sat down again. “Not if there is anything I can do for you.”

The ex-soldier looked at her for a moment ere he replied, seeking for words. Her quiet grey eyes met his steadily. She was not pretty—she knew that herself,

but her face and figure was one that most men turned to look at when she passed them either in the crowded streets of a city, or riding along a lonely bush road. Steady, unflinching grey eyes they were; calm, self-reliant, and matching well with the somewhat pale face and wavy brown-red hair.

The Major hummed once or twice, as he balanced his knife carelessly in his hand, and then looked away.

"No, there is nothing to do. Are you going for a ride? If so, I'll join you."

"I was going to the river with 'Tommy Tanna' to shoot some teal."

"Then do so, my dear, by all means," he said affably, as he rose and gathered up his papers, "but take care of yourself. I'll be back here at lunch-time, and . . . and, oh, there is a matter upon which I wish to talk to you most seriously. We can leave it until then."

"Why not now, father? The teal can wait."

"Oh, well, I'll walk down to the river with you. I can talk as we go along."

In a few minutes they started, preceded by a stalwart young Tanna native—one of the field labourers—carrying the young lady's gun, his own, and some cartridges, and the inevitable tomahawk. The road from the house to the great river was bordered on each side with mango trees in full bearing, interspersed with many-hued crotons, and although there was but little breeze, the path was very shady and soft to the foot, for it had rained heavily throughout the night. Suddenly Rodney threw away his freshly-lit cigar, and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"I had a letter from Dr. Maesmore this morning. He has offered to lift this infernal mortgage on Trincomalee."

Miss Rodney raised her brows. "I am surprised at that. He is the last man I should have dreamed of coming to your assistance. I wish it were anyone else."

"Why so?" said her father sharply; "what is wrong with the man? What cause have you to dislike him?"

"He has asked me to marry him. I, too, had a letter from him this morning, and read it before you were up. Here it is," and she handed it to him quietly.

The Major read it. "It is a splendid offer, Frances. He will make you an excellent husband. Why didn't you tell me of this sooner?" He now spoke with a pleased inflection in his voice.

"Because I felt ashamed and disgusted. He is over seventy years of age, has grown-up grandchildren, and only seen me to speak to three times in his life."

Major Rodney's eyes blazed with anger. "Do you mean that you refuse the richest man in the North?"

"Certainly I do, father. But pray do not think that I want to pose as a persecuted heroine, dad, for I can go back to Aunt Caroline."

Her coolness angered him terribly. Then all his selfishness came to his aid, as he almost gently begged her not to see him ruined.

"Six thousand pounds I must have, Frances, within three months, and he is willing to lend it to me."

"Yes—if I marry him."

Rodney was silent; then he turned to her once more
“You surely will not see Trincomalee taken away
from us?”

“Father, it is no use asking me to marry that old
man. I would do much for you, but not that. I know
it is not an unusual thing for a woman to sacrifice herself
—but I cannot. And I will not.”

“Have you been fool enough to pledge yourself to
any other man?”

“No,” was the prompt answer; “if I had, I should
never have concealed it from you; and look, father, I
have £2,000 of my own coming to me in June under
mother’s will. Will that help you?”

“No,” he said gloomily; “your paltry £2,000 would
be of no use to me.” Then, with anger-whitened face
and inflamed eyes, he turned on his heel, and left her.

CHAPTER II

SOME tears dimmed her eyes as she turned and watched her father's erect, soldierly figure stride along the mango-bordered path, and she began to follow him. Then she stopped. He would only greet her with a fresh outburst of anger.

Calling the Kanaka boy, she took the gun and bag from him, and told him to get the punt, which was moored in a little backwater formed by a branch of the great river. The boy trotted off, and the girl sat down on the bank to await his return, and try to forget the scene that had just occurred.

Ten miles away from where she sat were the muddy shores of a wide bay, into which, through many shallow, sandy channels, the river debouched to the blue bosom of the Pacific—a dark, lonely, and forbidding coast, densely covered with stunted mangrove scrub, the home of fever, and the haunt of the loathsome, mud-loving alligator.

“Tommy,” she said, as the boy came with the punt, “you take your gun and walk along bank about water-holes, and make duck fly over tree-top to river. Now, don't you shoot at white cockatoos, Tommy, and waste cartridge.”

“No fear, Missie,” replied the lad—“me savee. Me only shoot him black duck, wood-duck, and teal.”

Miss Rodney nodded, and telling him that she should drift along the river to a point about a mile further down, where there was a good landing-place, she stepped into the strongly built punt—or rather scow—pushed off, and pulling a little way out, so as to pass clear of the hanging branches of the great *ti* trees which lined the bank, let the little craft drift.

Less than ten minutes passed, and then from some deep, tree-fringed water-hole on the bank Tommy's gun sounded, and a flock of purple-brown wood-duck whirred out, just giving her time to get in one barrel and drop two of the birds, which fell almost on top of her. Quickly picking them up, she again seized her gun and let the scow drift on.

Presently the Kanaka, who was carrying a duck, appeared, and called to her not to drift too far out in mid-stream, as there were several shallow rocky bars there with "very strong fellow water" (current).

"Oh, go on, do, you silly boy!" she cried angrily, as a number of black duck flew past her so suddenly that she lost her shot. Tommy promptly vanished.

Half an hour later she had in her ardour as a sports-woman forgotten the conversation with her father, for as she drifted further and further down, she found she was getting so many teal and wood-duck that most of her time was spent in picking up the dead and wounded birds—the latter giving her considerable trouble. Tommy had evidently pushed on ahead, for the report of his single-barrelled muzzle-loader sounded fainter and fainter. Then she heard it no more.

"I expect the greedy fellow has lit a fire somewhere,

and is just now devouring the half-raw breast part of a duck," she said to herself, with a smile. Then as the sun was now becoming very hot, she laid down her gun and rested, letting the wide, flat-bottomed scow drift as it liked along the high, verdured river-bank.

* * * * *

But Tommy had not succumbed to gluttony on this occasion. He had just emerged from the bottom of a deep, sandy gully, and clambered up the steep sides, when a strange but cheery voice hailed him from the grassy bank, and bade him come up.

"Whose 'boy' are you?" asked a tall, bronze-faced man of about thirty. He had just dismounted, pipe in mouth, and was leaning with one arm on his saddle, letting his horse feed with trailing rein.

"I belong Missa Rodney, Trincomalee," replied the boy, with a grin. Then he suddenly recognised his questioner. "Hallo, Massa Maesmore! Don' you 'member me—Tommy Tanna?"

"Why, so it is," and Harry Maesmore good-naturedly shook hands with the young Kanaka, whom he had last seen two years before; "how Massa Rodney, Tommy?"

Tommy said that his master was well; and then added that at that moment Miss Rodney was near them on the river, duck-shooting, and that he was to await her a little further down.

Maesmore was at once interested. He had never seen Miss Rodney, for when he had visited his old uncle, Dr. Maesmore, he had not remained long enough to make the Rodneys acquaintance—for Trincomalee

was sixty miles away from his uncle's cattle station. But now he had a reason for desiring to see her—and being a blunt, outspoken man, he determined to frankly tell her—and her father as well—what that reason was.

Leading his horse, he followed the black boy down the bank to the spot where the young lady was to land and had just pushed aside the thick branches of a *ti tree* for his horse to pass under it, when there rang out a woman's scream—a scream as of one in mortal agony or deadly terror.

“Tommy! Tommy! Oh, Tommy, for God's sake Help me!”

Dashing out into the open, Maesmore and the boy saw a sight that for a second or two froze the blood in their veins—twenty yards away the scow was stranded on a sandbank, and Frances Rodney was despairingly raining blows with the barrels of her broken-stocked gun upon the huge form of an alligator, which had thrust its hideous head and shoulders nearly half-way into the scow, and had either seized her by the foot or the lower part of her skirt.

In an instant Tommy raised his gun, and a second despairing cry—half moan, half shriek, burst from her. “Shoot, Tommy, shoot!” but Maesmore knocked the weapon up just in time, and then sprang in, followed by the brave Kanaka, who most fortunately had stuck his tomahawk in his belt.

Shouting their loudest, they swam madly to the girl's assistance, just as the alligator, releasing her skirt, seized the gun-barrels in his awful jaws, and with a savage

shake tore them from her hands and sent them flying into the river, and then, raising his body, struck at her vindictively with his right paw. At the same moment almost, Maesmore, standing on his feet in the yielding sand, seized the monster by its hideous throat, and then began an awful, silent, and mighty struggle.

Turning upon Maesmore, the creature planted its fearful claws deep in his shoulder, and tore him down to his waist, and then as the valorous Tommy, raising his arm, plunged the hatchet up to the head in its belly, round came the black-serrated tail with a vicious snap, and down went poor Tommy over on his back. But only for a moment or two did he disappear in the swirl of muddy foaming water. Staggering to his feet, he reached Maesmore's side.

"Move one hand away a bit, or I might cut it," he gasped, and, as Maesmore, streaming with blood from neck to foot, obeyed him mechanically, the brave lad struck blow after blow deep into that cruel throat. A torrent of blood gushed out, and then the great bony mouth opened to its widest extent, and the foul yellow teeth snapped together again and again as the dying monster beat upon the water with its tail.

"Now, Tommy," panted Maesmore, as tearing the creature's left claw from the gunwale of the scow in which it was embedded, he exerted all his remaining strength, and succeeded in turning the brute partly over on its back, and Tommy, his white teeth set hard, struck at its neck again and again till the head was all but severed from its shoulders.

Not knowing whether Miss Rodney had been mangled

by the alligator, or had simply fainted—for she lay with her upturned face in the stern of the half-filled scow—when the rescuers succeeded, exhausted as they were, in getting the craft to the bank, lifting out the unconscious girl, and placing her on the sand. Here in a little while the doctor came to, and then Tommy, scorning his injuries, mounted on Maesmore's horse and galloped to Trincomalee for assistance.

* * * * *

Nearly a month had passed, and Harry Maesmore, now quite recovered from his encounter, was talking to Major Rodney, who listened to him with downcast eyes.

"It is very generous of you to do this for me," said.

"I am a fairly rich man," said the young squatter with a smile; "I would not have asked Frances to marry me had I only been moderately well off. And surely you of all men should be the one to whom I could offer a loan."

The selfish father was touched deeply, and showed it.

"I did not know, as true as I am a living man, that your uncle was wrong mentally."

"Has been for a year past. All of us know it—our neighbors only suspect it. And so that was why I rode two hundred miles to tell you the truth. I was fool enough to think that you——"

"Might have been criminal enough to let her, or force her to, marry a lunatic. No, thank God, I should have stopped at that."

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"Oh, well, I came very opportunely. By the way, you'll let us have Tommy Tanna?"

"Of course. Frances asked me that an hour ago. She has just gone to visit him in his hut."

"Then I'll follow her. She might be thinking of taking him duck-shooting again."

LIDA

RESTIAUX and his wife Lida were seated together under a clump of pandanus trees, looking seaward at a large barque which was beating up to the island against the strong south-east trade wind.

"That's the *Armagura*, sure enough," he said, gloomily, as he watched the approaching vessel with a dulled anger in his eyes. "In two hours she'll be at anchor—and then that fellow Hermann will be here with his books, take stock, and fire me out of the station as if I were some old gin-drinking beach-comber."

The woman—she was a Colombian creole with big dreamy eyes, and about five-and-twenty years of age—placed her small shapely hand on her husband's arm.

"How much do we owe him, Harry?"

"Nearly two thousand dollars—the brute."

"And how much have we?"

"A little over a thousand, and the stock is worth—that is to me—about two thousand more. But the fellow has his knife into me, and means to use it. He will demand two thousand dollars in cash—and then take possession—cash, stock, and house, and turn us out. If it were not for the boy I would not mind so much,

although I hate the thought of our having to go into a native house."

"Come back home, Harry," said Lida quietly, "we have two hours before us, and I must get our things all ready."

Restiaux bent down and kissed her upturned face. Then in silence they walked back to their house, which faced the lagoon. An infant of three years of age was playing with a native nurse on the verandah.

* * * *

Three years before Restiaux, then the master and owner of a fine trading schooner, whose sailing port was Apia, in Samoa, had come to blows with Hermann over Lida, and Hermann, as he lay on the ground, had drawn his Derringer. It was promptly kicked out of his hand by one of the men present, and for a long time afterwards Hermann was cold-shouldered by the rough traders and storekeepers. They all knew that Lida Milne had been engaged to Restiaux for nearly a year, and that Hermann—in Restiaux's absence—was continually annoying her by his attentions. She was governess to the children of a German planter in Samoa, and had met Restiaux in Sydney. Her father and mother were both dead. The former—a merchant captain—had been lost at sea, and her mother died when she was fifteen.

"You see, Mr. Hermann," said "Charley the Russian," the proprietor of the leading saloon in Apia, as he was attending to Hermann's injuries, "you have not been playing the square game. Miss Milne and Harry Restiaux——"

"Shut up, you hairy-faced baboon!" growled the wealthy owner of the *Armatura*. "I've had a doin' but I won't be lectured by anyone. Mind your own business. But I'm sorry, all the same, that Restiaux and I had such a turn up."

The latter portion of his remarks were intended for dissemination. He hated Restiaux most savagely, and meant to have his revenge. And ere long he saw a way to gratify it.

Three months after Lida and Restiaux had been married, the *Hirondelle*, Restiaux's schooner, ran ashore on the coast near Apia, became a total wreck, and her owner found himself penniless.

The first man to call and sympathise with him was Hermann, to whom he had never spoken since their "difference."

"Look here, Restiaux, won't you shake hands with me? I had too much to drink that night, and deserve to have the life kicked out of me for drawing on you when you had bested me. But, 'honest Injun,' I don't remember anything that happened after you gave me that last knock-out."

Restiaux put out his hand. "Don't say another word to Captain Hermann. I've forgotten all about it. Oh, here is my wife."

Hermann, with drooping eyes and black hatred surging in his heart, rose quickly and bowed, hat in hand.

"Mrs. Restiaux, will you forgive me? Do, please. Don't send me away like a whipped hound. I've suffered enough in my own estimation already."

Lida looked at him steadily. He had once told

her that no man on earth but himself should be her husband, and she not only disliked, but mistrusted him.

"If Harry is willing, Captain Hermann, then so am I," and she took the hand he extended to her.

"Now, look here, Restiaux, old fellow," said Hermann with bluff good-humour, as he resumed his seat; "what are you going to do now that the *Hirondelle* is gone?"

"Don't know. This & we'll go to Sydney, where I shall get another ship—at a screw of £20 a month," was the frank reply.

"Nonsense! Come in with me. I have a rattling good trading station in the Marshall Group with a fine house, and, as you know the natives do *own* there, you are just the man I want. . . . Now, don't think I am entirely unselfish in this matter, Mrs. Restiaux, for I'm not. Your husband is the one man who can make 'Karolin' pay. And I'll give you all the trade you want, Restiaux, and won't worry you for repayment. Now say 'yes,' and don't think of Sydney and all that bosh of getting command of a trading vessel—it wouldn't be fair to your wife. You couldn't take her to sea with you."

His frank, outspoken manner had its effect, and Lida forgot the savage brutality of his manner a few months before, when he had urged her to throw over Restiaux and become his wife. But after he had gone, and she and her husband were sitting together on the verandah of the "Tivoli" Hotel and looking upon the placid waters of Apia Harbour, she shuddered slightly as she

saw the clear-cut spars of Hermann's barque silhouette against the sea-rim beyond.

"I never can like Captain Hermann, Harry," she said, "and although he has acted generously to you I can't help my suspicions. And I don't like the name of his ship—*Armagura*—bitterness!"

"It is only the name of an island in the Tongan group, Lida, which was named 'Bitterness' by an old Spanish navigator, who hoped to find water there. All of Hermann's three vessels are named after islands."

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For the first half-year all went well with Restiaux, and he made money; then an opposition trader landed on the island, and undersold him to such an extent that instead of making, he steadily lost money; and Hermann suggested that he, to cut down expenses, should send Lida to Samoa for a year or so, as the German planter's wife would be delighted to have her back again. But Restiaux suspected, and refused, and then Hermann's manner changed, and he hinted that he could not afford to carry on a station that was not paying.

One day, as Restiaux and Lida were entertaining the master of a trading vessel which had called at the island, the latter, who was an old friend, said:

"Look here, Restiaux. Do you know who Magee is?" (He spoke of the opposition trader.)

"No. He's a stranger to me. I see him occasionally, and although he's ruining my business, I bear him no ill-will. Every man for himself in the South Seas."

"Of course. But Magee isn't trading for himself. He's on a salary, a salary paid him by Hermann. You may well look surprised, but it is a fact. Hermann is a double-dealing hound. Try and get clear of him!"

Lida clenched her hands, and her black eyes gleamed.

"What can his object be, then?" said Restiaux. "As you know, he is carrying me on. Why should he put another man here to undersell me?"

Captain Evers looked at Lida steadily, and then answered slowly, "I don't exactly know. But I do know that he is an unprincipled, double-faced scamp, and a man who never forgives. And you gave him a 'bad bating' once. You have perhaps forgotten that—he hasn't. Neither has he forgotten why."

"Thank you, Evers," said Restiaux quickly. "I begin to see now."

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The *Armagura* had anchored, and Hermann and Restiaux were going over the latter's books. Lida was seated on a cane lounge near by, apparently interested in some letters which Hermann had brought her from Samoa. But with a wild fury in her heart, she was listening keenly.

"Well, it's a bad business for both of us, Restiaux," said Hermann, as he leant back in his chair, and, crossing his hands behind his head, puffed meditatively at his cigar. "This fellow Magee seems to have cut you out entirely."

"Yes," replied Restiaux quietly, though he was longing to take the man by the throat and strangle him, "he has exactly the same kind of trade goods as mine, and yet he sells to the natives at half the price I can afford to sell at and leave a reasonable margin of profit."

Hermann looked upward and stroked his coarse chin as if in deep thought. "Well, it can't be helped, I suppose, but of course it is of no use my carrying on this place at a loss. At the same time you are not to blame. Now, how would you like to go to the Solomon Islands? I intend opening some stations there, on one of which you can do pretty well. Of course, you could not take your wife there—the climate is too bad."

"Oh no, Captain Hermann," said Lida, laying down the paper she was ostensibly reading. "I could not possibly go to the Solomons."

Restiaux looked at her in astonishment, for he well knew that she would not hesitate to accompany him; but something in her eyes told him to keep silent.

"Just so, Mrs. Restiaux," said Hermann suavely. "But your husband, being immune from fever, will be all right."

"Which island do you propose?" asked Restiaux.

"Well, I was thinking of putting you on Buka. Do you know the place?"

"No, I don't."

But he did know it—knew that even for the Solomon Islands it had an evil reputation. Four white men

in succession had been killed and eaten there. Still, he would wait and see what Hermann would say next.

"Now I'll close this station up and Mrs. Restiaux and the youngster can come on board, and I'll land them at Samoa where, as you know, the Rasmussens will be overjoyed to have her back. Then I'll take you on to Buka. Will that suit you?"

"Yes, very well indeed," said Lida quickly.

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At dusk Restiaux took a boatload of trade and household effects on board the barque, leaving Lida alone. Hermann had gone to Magee's house—"just to have a yarn with the fellow," he had said.

At seven o'clock he returned.

"Is Restiaux back?" he asked.

Lida smiled sweetly at him in a way she had never smiled before—"Oh no, I don't expect him back until about ten o'clock. Sit down, won't you, Captain Hermann? Isn't it a lovely night? So calm and quiet!"

"Delightful, but not enough breeze."

"There is always a strong sea breeze at the place we call the 'Look-out,' about a quarter of a mile from here. Do you know the place? There is a grove of pandanus palms there."

"Would you care to come so far?" asked Hermann, speaking in a low voice.

Lida dropped her eyes for a moment or two, then raised them again.

"Yes," she said hesitatingly, "I would enjoy it much, but, but——" and she stopped.

"But what?" queried Hermann, still lowering voice.

"The natives are such gossips, and——"

"But there are none about now," said Hermann eagerly. He judged all women by the one standard now felt that she regretted having refused him years before.

"No, I expect they are all at supper now," she said, "but still, I should not like anyone to see us," again she lowered her eyes, and seemed to hesitate.

Hermann bent towards her and took her hand, let it lie in his unresistingly, then she spoke in a whisper. "Let me go on first. I will meet you at the 'Lookout.' Don't make any noise, please. I'll see if my little boy is asleep with his nurse."

Entering the bedroom she stepped up to her dressing-table, opened a drawer, and took out her own Smith and Wesson pistol, and placed it in her blouse. Then, throwing a light shawl over her head, she stepped down the steps into the thick garden, and then she appeared along the track through the silent forest of palms. Hermann watched her with eyes aglow. He waited ten minutes, then followed her along the narrow darkening path.

* * * * *

Half an hour later Lida walked swiftly into the house. The lamp was burning brightly, and the house was still. She opened the bedroom door, and awakened the nurse.

"Where is Captain Hermann?" she asked.

"I know not, lady. I did not hear him enter the house."

"Thou sleepest very heavily for so young a woman. He was here but a little while since, and said he would wait whilst I walked to the beach to see if the boat had returned. Didst thou not hear the sound of a gun?"

"Nay, lady," said the girl sleepily.

Shortly after nine Restiaux returned. Lida met him at the door. She was very pale, and her voice trembled.

"Is Captain Hermann on board?" she asked.

"No, he is on shore."

"He was an hour ago, and was waiting for you. I went to the beach to see if you were coming. When I returned he was gone. What frightens me is that while I was sitting on the beach I heard a shot."

They waited till ten o'clock, and then Restiaux summoned a number of natives, who, with lighted torches, set out to search for the missing man. Lida remained in the house—waiting and listening.

An hour passed, and then came the sound of many naked feet, and the glare of torches, and eight or ten natives headed by Restiaux, and carrying the body of a man, came slowly through the garden, and placed their burden on the verandah.

Lida stepped out—"What is the matter, Harry? Is that Captain Hermann? Is he hurt?"

"He is dead! He has shot himself through the heart. We found him lying on the path. That was the shot you heard. His pistol was lying near him.

is exactly the same make as the one I bought for you Sydney."

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Long months afterwards, when Restiaux said to his wife, "It's a curious thing, Lida, that that pistol yours has never turned up."

"Someone must have stolen it, Harry," she replied as she quickly lifted her boy up in her arms, and pressed her lips to his cheek.

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THE RECRUITERS

ONE evening I was discussing with the captain of a Holyhead-Dublin steamer the relative merits of the principal malt products of Scotland and Ireland, when a fat man, with "sailor" writ largely on his clean-shaven, rubicund face, came to the cabin door and asked in a rich brogue if he might come in. He was hot and flustered, and yet smiling.

"I see ye don't remimber me," he said, "I saw your bag wid your name on it in the companion, and I sez to the steward, 'Is the man that owns that bag aboard?' 'He is,' sez he. 'Thin tell him,' sez I, 'that a mahn that knew him in the islands nigh on tin years ago 'ud loike to spake wid him.' 'He's wid the captain,' sez he, 'have yez a card?' 'I have not,' sez I, 'but ye tell him that Terry Hanlon——'"

I jumped up and shook hands with him. "Why, Terry, old man, I didn't know you—you have grown so fat and have no beard now. Sit down. Captain P——, this is a very, very old friend of mine. He was mate of the barque *Meteor*, when I was recruiter. We made a good many voyages together when we were in the Kanaka labour trade in the South Seas."

"'Nigger catchin' an' slavery,' the parsons called ut, sir," said Mr. Hanlon, whose voice was somewhat husky,

as he shook hands with the captain and then sat down, casting a casual eye at the decanter and glasses on the table; "but me friend can tell ye that we trated the more like pares av the rellum than savagerous cannibals that 'ud ate ye without salt."

"I believe you," said P——, taking a glass from the rack; "help yourself, Mr. Hanlon; crossing with to-night?"

"I am that. Your good health, captain; your good health and proshperity to ye. I take it kindly av ye to be so considerate av me, in your own cabin, too. O dear, I've had a weary time in the thrain from London."

Then he turned to me and gripped my kneecap with his huge hand. "'Tis a quare wurrlid—a quare, quare wurrlid. Nivir did I think we two 'ud ivir meet again."

We rapidly exchanged our experiences since we had parted in Levuka town in Fiji ten years before, and I learned that my former shipmate was now a married man, and the proprietor of a thriving hotel in County Wicklow. He had been to London to see a sister, and was now returning home.

"D'ye moind that divil av a Proctor?" he said to me, as he put down his glass.

"Indeed I do, Terry. And do you know that he is still alive and 'going strong'? I saw in a newspaper last year that he had got into trouble with the French people in New Caledonia for smuggling, and was put in prison."

"Prison! Sure he's the man that 'ud enjoy a prison."

Ah, he's a great wee mahn is Proctor, wid his wooden leg—and a bad, bad mahn in some things, when his timper was up, an' his fingers gripped his Winchester; but a braver mahn nivir drew breath. As for Marina, the Portugee, he was the two ends and bight av a rogue, and was born dishonest. He couldn't help it—'twas the nature av the little baste. Ah, they were a quare pair, indade."

I turned to the captain and explained—"Proctor, Marina, and I were all employed as recruiters in the Kanaka labour trade, and, although in different ships, we often met at various islands. I was on the *Meteor*, of which Mr. Hanlon here was mate. Marina—who had once been a street-conjurer in Naples—had a glass eye, Proctor a wooden leg, and both were decided characters, and known all over the South Seas."

"Sure ould Nick touched 'em wid his forefinger on their foreheads when they were born," broke in the ex-mate; "d'ye moind the time at Mutavat, when Captain Niebuhr and yersilf lost fifty dollars to them?"

"Tell me the yarn," said the Holyhead skipper; "it's refreshing to hear a new story that doesn't come from a London music-hall, or from the unsavoury *répertoire* of a commercial traveller."

"Well, it's rather a long yarn, and is only one of a score about the two worthies. But, first of all, I must tell you that long before Proctor came into the 'labour' trade, he had made himself famous in Fiji by killing a chief of notoriously evil repute, who had tried to murder him under circumstances of the greatest treachery. To duly impress the chief's subjects, and

also to make certain of his man, Proctor loaded a whaler's bomb-gun with a heavy charge of powder and two pounds weight of iron nuts and nails and lead slugs, walked into the chief's house, and, hotly upbraiding him for his treachery, literally blew his head off. By a miracle he succeeded in escaping to his boat and getting away, after shooting dead with his revolver three of his pursuers."

"And had he then a wooden leg?" inquired the steamer captain.

"Yes, and a very good one it was—and is still, I suppose. I have seen him running almost as fast as his anatomy was as complete as yours or mine. He lost his leg at New Orleans during the Rebellion—he's a Southerner—when in command of a river gunboat, whose decks were protected from rifle-fire by a line of cotton bales ranged along her upper deck. One day, however, a Federal shell dropped inboard and poor Proctor found himself minus his left leg, which was taken off below the knee. When Richmond fell, and the war was practically over, he came to Samoa, where I first met him in 1870. He was appointed 'recruiter' to the *Niuafoou*, and I to the *Meteor*, and we met very often in the Solomon group and in the New Hebrides. He was not very particular as to the manner in which he obtained his 'blackbirds,' provided he did obtain them, but once his 'cargo' was on board, and under surveillance, he treated them well enough. But I'm running away from the Mutavat affair.

"We, in the *Meteor*, were at anchor in Luen Bay, New Britain, wooding and watering for the long beat

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The Recruiters

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back to Samoa against the south-east trades, when both Proctor in the *Niuafou*, and Marina in the *Iserbrook* brig, made their appearance together, and brought to quite close to the *Barque*. Proctor was annoyed at finding the *Meteor* a 'full' ship—I had ninety-eight 'recruits' on board, whilst he and Marina had less than twenty each. Then, too, he had lost some of a boat's crew, who had been cut off and slaughtered by the natives at Bougainville Island, and this had not improved his temper. Marina also had had bad luck in losing a white sailor in a brush with the natives, and five of his 'recruits' had jumped overboard one night, and swum on shore. He was a little undersized Portuguese with a bad reputation—in fact, he would stop at nothing in the way of 'business,' and for this reason he was never a welcome visitor to the *Meteor*, for although we were all employed by the same firm, neither the captain nor I liked the man. Many years before, when engaged in a Paris hippodrome, he had lost an eye, and had had it replaced by an artificial one; and in addition to this he also had three or four extra ones made (later on) by someone in Melbourne. These extra eyes were of the most absurd and grotesque combinations of colours; one, for instance, was of a bright yellow, with a flaming carmine-hued pupil; another was an alabaster white, with a tiny green pupil about the size of a large pin's head; and another—the most terrifying of all—had three differently-coloured small pupils set in white. These extra eyes he used occasionally for either amusing his friends or frightening the natives; and he frequently boasted that his head was more sought after by the natives

of the Solomon Islands than that of any other white man in the Pacific, and that he was able to get more 'blackbirds' than any other recruiter, through his curiosity in natives desiring to come into personal contact with the man 'who could change his eyes.' Then, too, he made use of them in another manner, which helped to fill his pockets—he was supposed to have great *mana* (occult powers), and did a thriving business by selling rubbishy little wooden dolls, whistles, charms, etc., to the natives who believed that the articles were impregnated with Maria's *mana*, and possessed all sorts of power, such as ensuring a good crop of yams, producing rain, giving immunity from poison, and ensuring longevity, etc. There was scarcely a *gamal* house in the northern New Hebrides that did not possess one of his nonsensical things which was treasured with other objects of veneration in the *gamal* house, and as he would accept nothing under half a dozen hogs or £5 worth of pearl-shell or ivory-nuts for a toy that had cost him a penny or twopence, he did remarkably good business.

"The noble pair remained on board the barque for an hour. Proctor asked me if the *Meteor* had called at Mutavat, a big cannibal town about ten miles distant from the west side of Kabaira Bay. I said no, and that furthermore, even if I had wanted to fill up the ship, I would not risk going there with such a weakly-manned vessel as ours (we had a third of our crew down with fever). 'And, anyway,' I added, 'what is the use of anyone going there? No labour ship had ever tried Mutavat yet. The harbour is chock full of reefs and tide rips, and if a ship once got ashore there, she would

be rushed by the niggers, and all hands on board would have their throats cut in no time. No white man that ever put foot on shore at Mutavat has returned to his ship—he went into an oven and came out in cooked sections.’ Then I named three well-known instances.

“Marina grinned contemptuously—he was as plucky and as cunning as a wild-cat, although such an anointed little cut-throat—and Proctor chawed his cigar meditatively.

“‘Well, sonny, I mean to get at least five-and-twenty sturdy buck niggers from Mutavat in two days from now,’ said the American.

“‘And I as many, too,’ said the Portuguese. ‘Por Dios! Here am I two months out from Samoa with only seventeen measly-looking, scaly New Ireland niggers on board, while you, only a month out, have ninety-eight. I’m not going to let you be cock-of-the-walk in Samoa if I can help it.’

“‘Oh, well; I wish you both luck,’ I said; ‘but I’ll bet you each twenty-five dollars even money that you do not get half a dozen natives from Mutavat between you, except that you, Marina, play one of your many little tricks, which will one day land you in a place where the crows can’t peck at you.’ Then Niebuhr, the skipper of the *Meteor* (a smart young German), backed me up and made the same bet as I had.”

“You know that poor Niebuhr was lost at sea, three years ago, don’t you, Terry?” I inquired of our visitor, who was now placidly stretched out at full length, having collapsed owing to the “tadious journey from London.”

He partially roused himself, and opened one eye in a half-hearted manner. "They were that, indade—pair av out-an-out divils. Sure, when I said good-bye to Alice Brennan, fifteen years ago on ould Dargle Bridge I niver thought I'd come achrost such a man. Fifty-two pound ten shillings that leg cosht him . . . and sure Alice will give ye both a welcome wid a heart an' half. There's not a finer woman annywhere in County Wicklow. I moind me the time—ah, but ye're dish-cussin' somethin' private I'm thinkin', so I'll no intrude on yez." And he went to sleep again.

"The two recruiters bade Niebuhr and me good-bye and went off to their respective ships, which soon afterwards weighed and stood away across the bay to Mutavat. Early next morning, having finished our wooding and watering, we sailed, and two days later at sunset, the wind having failed us, anchored under Cape St. George, at the south end of New Ireland.

"Soon after daylight Niebuhr aroused me. 'Here are the *Iserbrook* and the *Niuafou* letting go almost alongside of us.'

"I went on deck with him, and looked at the two vessels. The *Iserbrook*, as I have mentioned, was a brig, the *Niuafou*, a big lump of a fore and aft schooner. Both Proctor and Marina were on their respective after decks, and they and their captains who were with them began to 'chaff' the *Meteor*.

"'Say now, you two fellows, what about that bet?' cried Davidson, the German-speaking 'Blue-nose' skipper of the *Iserbrook*. 'Come on board and see a hundred and twenty of the degraded, cussed cannibals

residents of Mutavat—male and female. We have fifty-eight here, and Proctor has sixty-two on the schooner. Come aboard the schooner and have some coffee.'

"Niebuhr and I—believing that they were only fooling us—had a boat lowered, and went on board the *Niuafou*. Proctor, a short, square-built man, with reddish hair and deep-set hard grey eyes, met us at the gangway and shook hands.

"'Look down there,' he drawled, taking us to the coamings of the main-hatch and pointing down.

"We looked down, and saw on the 'tween decks a sight dear to a recruiter's heart—sixty or seventy stalwart natives, some squatted on their hams, smoking or chewing betel-nut most contentedly, others lying asleep on their mats. All around them were their weapons—spears, jade-headed clubs, etc., together with coils of *dewarra* (the native cowrie money of New Britain), and their other belongings. They were the wildest, most savage-looking type of the Melanesian savage I had ever seen, and their placid and contented demeanour astonished me.

"'Just look at those three fellows over there,' said Proctor in his lazy, yet fascinating drawl, 'they are eating New Zealand tinned beef, and think it's a tinned man, on account of the yellow fat.'

"'However did you manage it?' I exclaimed. 'Why, they are all as quiet as lambs. I've never seen such a thing before! And then you have left them all their arms too! That isn't safe.'

"Proctor smiled. 'They're all right, sonny. Every one of them has been deadly seasick, and so I didn't

bother about taking away their weapons. And they would be sick again before long, and then I get their fighting tools away. Once we are out of sight of land, they would be too scared to do anything except to cling to me. Now, come below and I'll tell you how Marina and I made the *coup*."

"In the cabin we were joined by Marina and Davison, and whilst the steward prepared an early breakfast Proctor told his story."

* * * * *

"As soon as we got abreast of the village, and dropped anchor, we were surrounded by over a hundred canoes, most of them carrying from eight to a dozen natives. Marina and I had spread about a hundredweight of fine red beads all over the decks of the brig and schooner, and we invited the natives to come on board and help themselves. Man, you never saw such a rush! They clambered up over the side, and tumbled over each other in their eagerness to get the beads, bawling and yelling, and shouting like forty thousand starving tiger-cats, as they swept up the beads in their filthy hands, and either put them into their betel-nut baskets or thrust them in handfuls into their mouths until they could disgorge them later on. Then I brought up a tinful of red and blue beads and slung them carelessly down upon the main deck from the break of the poop, and Marina did the same on board the *Iserbrook*. The yells of delight were enough to burst the universe; and when I told them that the ships had come from an island to the south, where the beaches were composed of red and white beads, they nearly went mad with excite-

ment, and hundreds of them clamoured to me to take them there.

“‘No,’ I said, ‘I cannot take so many, for our two ships are small; but I will take sixty of you in this ship, and sixty can go in the other ship. But you must pay me something for taking you to the Island of Beads, and bringing you back to Mutavat. What will you pay?’

“In five minutes they agreed to give me two thousand black-edge pearl shells and a hundred green turtle, which I knew I should never see, and did not want to defraud them of, considering that I was not bringing them back to Mutavat, and that every living soul of them meant a hundred dollars bonus to me, as soon as I landed them in Samoa. But I said that that would do, but I would only take strong young men and women—one hundred men and twenty women. Then Marina came on board with his ‘usual’ glass eye, which he took out, pretended to throw overboard, and replaced it by the bright yellow one with the red pupil. The Mutavat niggers looked at him with open mouths.

“‘We two are magicians,’ I said, ‘nothing can hurt us. We can take out our eyes or our teeth; we can shake off our legs or our arms, and new legs and arms will grow; we can live under the sea and become fish ghosts. We have a great *mana*. If a man draws bow upon us the arrow passes through our bodies, and then returns to the Bowman and pierces his left eye and brain so that he falls dead.’

“As I spoke, Marina unshipped his yellow eye, and shipped the white one with the green pupil, and a

quavering chorus of wonder came from the man-eating crowd as he took the bright yellow eye, polished it with his red silk handkerchief, and threw it apparently nowhere, though it really went up his sleeve.

"There was one particularly saucy young buck—one of the three that you saw eating tinned beef in the 'tween decks just now—who sneered at my palaver, and asked me, point blank, if I was willing to let him send an arrow through me, and said that he would take the chance of it coming back upon him.

"'No,' I said, 'you are too fine a man to waste your life from a feeling of vanity. My *mana* is too great and strong, and so I take pity on you. I could now, by touching your nose with my finger, turn your face into the face of a hog, and make your body into the body of an eel. But as you are such a well-set-up young man, I will overlook your insulting remarks, and spare you the ignominy of being turned into a pig-eel.'

"He looked at me for a moment, half-doubtingly.

"'One of my legs is tired,' I said, 'take hold of my left foot and pull it off'; and I put out my foot to him. He took hold of it very gingerly.

"'Pull, you frightened coward,' I said, 'pull hard; or I'll turn you into a pig-eel!'

"He tugged, and as he tugged at my boot, I touched the catch spring of my wooden leg, and away came the leg, and the buck went over on his back with my leg in his hands. He gave one terrified yell, and in another ten seconds had leapt overboard, and was swimming ashore. He came back half an hour later with his two brothers, to show them the wonders. By two o'clock

we had made our pick, and had all the recruits we wanted from Mutavat, and in another hour we were away."

" "You had luck, Proctor, great luck."

" "Yes, I guess we have had luck. Now, all Marina and I want is to pick up about fifty Solomon Island niggers on the way back to Samoa. We can play them off against these New Britain cannibals if they turn rusty."

" "Proctor," I said, "it is rank kidnapping, and you will get into serious trouble."

" "Just you go slow, sonny, and don't let professional jealousy warp your limited intelligence and over-quick judgment. You know, as well as I know, that in three years these howling cannibals will be half-civilised, and not half of them will want to leave Samoa at the end of their term. I think that us nigger-catchers deserve well of the world, instead of being cried down as monsters of iniquity."

" "Proctor," said Niebuhr, as he twirled his thick yellow moustache, "you will be hanged some day."

" Niebuhr and I paid our bets, bade Proctor and Marina good-bye and a safe passage to Samoa, when Marina asked us to wait a few minutes.

" "Just watch me play a bit with these people," he said, showing his white teeth in a cat-like grin.

" Two women were sitting on the main deck, smoking bamboo pipes. Marina bade them stand up. Rolling the sleeves of his pyjama jacket up to his shoulders, he held up his arms and outspread his hands in the usual conjurer style. Then he asked the women if they would

like some red beads for necklaces. They grinned and showed their black, betel-nut stained teeth, and Marina, with a swift movement, placed his hands (now closed) on one of the women's woolly head, and in an instant a stream of beads came trickling through his fingers, fell over her naked shoulders, and rolled down upon the deck; then he performed the same trick with the other woman, as a long-drawn *D-a-a-r-r-e-e!* of wonder burst from the watching natives.

"Both the brig and schooner carried their 'cargoes' safely to Samoa without any trouble arising; and a few months later I saw these New Britain cannibals at work on the big German plantation at Mulifanua. They seemed quite contented, and were less ferocious in appearance. Of course, Proctor and Marina each received the usual bonus—twenty dollars a head."

* * * * *

"What a pair of beauties!" said the Holyhead skipper, as he rose to go on the bridge, leaving me to arouse the now loudly-snoring Terry Hanlon.

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