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THE
HUNTING OF THE "HYDRA"
OR
THE PHANTOM PRAHU

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OR

THE PHANTOM PRAHU

By HENRY FRITH

UTHOR OF "ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND," ETC.

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CAPTAIN MAYNE REID'S JUVENILES.

THE DESERT HOME.
THE BOY-HUNTERS.
THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS.
THE FOREST EXILES.
THE BUSH BOYS.
THE YOUNG YÄGERS.
THE PLANT HUNTERS.
THE OLIFF CLIMBERS.
RAN AWAY TO SEA.
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THE BOY TAR.

BRUIN; OR, THE GRAND
BEAR HUNT.
OLD PEOPLE.
THE BOY SLAVES.
AFLOAT IN THE FOREST.
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THE HUNTING OF THE “HYDRA.”

CHAPTER I.

“JIM CROW,” THE MYSTERIOUS PUPIL.—A FIGHT, AND A WORD
OF WARNING.—A NIGHT ALARM.

“THERE is something about him that I do not like,” remarked Jenkins. “He has a surly, hang-dog expression, which with his dark skin——”

“He cannot help his colour,” interrupted Barton, “but I don’t like the fellow. He won’t be here long.”

“He’s going to the East Indies,” said Jervis. “He told ‘Crumbs’ so. Hush, here he is! Look out.”

This conversation, as nearly as I can remember it, took place, perhaps fifty years ago. It would have been entirely forgotten had not I kept a diary in which I noted daily the incidents and adventures of our life at Doctor Edwards’ Private Establishment for Young Gentlemen destined for the Liberal Professions. Doctor Edwards was extremely liberal in *his* professions too ; but his practice, if my memory serve

me, was not so much to our taste. Puddings, now, are to me a matter of supreme indifference, but in those days the "second course," as we called it, was in our estimation the first.

The subject of the foregoing criticism, who was approaching us in the playground, was a dark stripling, a lithe and wiry specimen of East Indian humanity. He had come over in a Company's vessel, the captain of which had brought him to Doctor Edward's Private Establishment aforesaid. The lad was wild, almost uneducated ; he wore long black hair, was quick-tempered, dark-skinned, and fierce. His father was supposed to be an officer in the East India Company's service, and he was destined, it was said, for the Indian Navy—an excellent organization, now, unfortunately, non-existent. But we never could arrive at the exact status of the "Captain," as he was said to be.

This East Indian's name was Kaylee, which was anglicised into Cayley, by no means a bad substitute for the somewhat outlandish surname. Being dark, our young companion was by us in the school known as "Jim Crow," to which he made no objection, which was, perhaps, as well : if he had, it would have made no difference.

From being at first an object of curiosity, the lad became a source of anxiety and almost fear. He came and went so silently, he seemed to be able to

appear and disappear with such celerity and suddenness, that he positively alarmed us in the autumn evenings. Then his English was mysterious, his native tongue, whatever it was, perfectly unknown; and when he flashed out and used some words of it, they sounded like extremely bad language indeed, though probably innocent enough. But they *sounded* fearful.

We others, about a dozen in all, sometimes as many as eighteen in the house when all the beds were occupied, had made up our minds that there was something "uncanny" in this mysterious boy. Some fellows declared he smelt of brimstone, and on one occasion we made a diligent search on his forehead for budding horns, so impressed were we that his origin was of a diabolical and fiendish nature. But we never really molested "Jim Crow" in any way; and he studied more than we did.

His dormitory was almost a museum of curiosities, and to those who were permitted to handle and examine the weapons and other specimens of East Indian art and manufactures, the room was a delight. There were clubs and "krisses," swords, and models of junks and prahus, concerning which (the prahus and boats particularly) Jim Crow would dilate with sparkling eyes. He could do a wild "war dance" with a knife; and when stripped to the waist, he performed for our benefit a "fandango," which we

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said would put the King of the Cannibal Islands in the shade could he have witnessed it.

Jim Crow could fight too. We all were learning singlestick, fencing and boxing. At the broadsword exercise Cayley astonished us, and in some queer manner of his own he once nearly killed our fencing-master by his impetuous Indian tactics. The serjeant had much ado to keep his guard, and afterwards expressed his firm conviction that "that there Indian chap was a limb of Satan and no mistake."

And so said all of us.

Cayley approached and nodded to the little group who were sitting on the grass in the playground that summer day.

"What you saying about me, you boys?" he enquired.

We were all utterly taken aback. How did he know we had been speaking of him?

"Why do you ask that, Jim Crow?" enquired Jenkins, smiling. "Are you the only object of our regard, do you think?"

"You was talkee of me. I know your eyes, your face. You not deceive Kaylee, not a bit."

"So it seems, Jim," remarked Barton. "We were talking of you, and what then? I s'pose we may speak in your royal highness's presence?"

"My father is a king in his place," said Kaylee, proudly. "I will not be insulted."

"Nobody was insulting you," replied Jervis. "We were saying you had told 'Crumbs' that you intended shortly to return to the East Indies, where I suppose you will occupy your proper position as a pirate king of the Cannibal Islands, and jump Jim Crow."

The fierce eyes flashed as Kaylee turned to me, for I, Charles Fraser, was "Crumbs," O reader—so called by reason of the softness and general pliability of my character, and (may I say?) good temper; for as Jervis remarked, "Crumbs" cannot be "crusty."

"What you tell lie for?" he cried.

"I didn't tell any lie," I retorted. "You said so. You had better mend your manners, Master Darkie!"

"Manners," he repeated in his queer pronunciation which it is impossible to reproduce. "Manners! You lie to me, small boy. Fool you are!"

"Come, Jim, no bad language," said Barton. "You must have said so. Crumbs isn't so fond of you as to invent anything to your credit, which your departure would be. You had better go!"

"Shall when I please. Ah, you small Crumb, I will squeeze you some day. Coward you are!"

So perfectly astonished was I at this attack, that until nudged by Jervis, I did not respond to the challenge.

"Go and smack his head, Crumbs; we'll see fair play. You can't stand that."

No, I felt I couldn't. Soft and yielding as was my

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nature (it is since changed), I could not endure such contumely from the dark-skinned youth. So I arose, and advancing towards Cayley remarked, as I planted my right fist in his eye,

"Take that, you son of a bamboo !"

I may state here that we had no evidence—no trustworthy evidence—that Kaylee was in anyway allied to the family of Cane, or to the Bamboo. But he seemed dreadfully annoyed when addressed as the "son of a bamboo," so we in our polite moments generally called him by that epithet. Therefore I said "Take that, you son of a bamboo," naturally.

He took it, but returned it with interest. A dazzling firework in my own eye, and a tingling of the lips, reminded me that the East Indian had mastered some principles of boxing. I stepped back—how well I remember it even now—and waited till he came on, which I knew he would do.

Yes, a rush at me. There was little time to avoid it. I braced myself up, and extended my left arm. Jim Crow ran up against it with all his force, and nearly fell ; my arm gave way, too, but the right came in sideways somehow on his ear, and the Indian dropped suddenly, as I stood more astonished than anyone else at the result.

"Settled him," remarked Jervis. "Pick the darkey up, Barton, and ask him if he wants any more British pickle for his Indian sauce."

Barton found the picking up somewhat laborious, for Cayley was apparently insensible. At anyrate he lay perfectly still, and did not move a muscle. He was breathing, we could see ; so he had sustained no serious injury from my little hands.

"He's not dead, Crumbs. You must have found a soft corner in his hard skull. How did you do it?" enquired Jenkins.

"It was quite an accident," I replied. "My eye is too bad to see distinctly. Is my lip cut?"

"A little : your eye is closing for the night, though. Put something on it, and go to your room. I will explain the whole thing to old Edwards. It was not your fault," said Barton.

Some of the others now came up, and, after a minute or two of shaking, Jim Crow sat up and gazed around in a rather wandering way. Suddenly his gaze fell upon "Crumbs"—my unworthy self—and his teeth clenched firmly.

"Wait, you ;" he muttered. "I will pay you for this!"

"Come, Jim Crow, no nonsense," said Barton, "fair is fair. You began the row, and have had the worst of it. Revenge is useless ; you must take your licking like a man."

A furious scowling look was the only reply to this conciliatory speech, as Cayley rose and proceeded savagely indoors, pushing aside anyone who happened to cross his path.

"He's in a christian temper, I must say," remarked a lad named Arnold. "What did you do, Crumbs?"

"Knocked him out of time quite accidentally; but I am glad I did."

"So am not I," remarked Barton. "He will do you a mischief if he can. You had better look out, Crumbs, or he will steal a march on you. He's a revengeful beast."

"He is, and we shall feel pleasanter when he has returned to his native mountains," said Jackson.

"Mountains! Do you think him a robber, Jacky?"

"Yes, I do. I am quite certain he is something not respectable. Do you ever notice how he reads the papers, and listens for the slightest hint about Singapore, and all down there where Crumbs' uncle is cruising; about India, and——"

"Well, that does not prove him a brigand, it rather points to his being a pirate," said Barton.

"Pirate!" echoed Arnold. "Nonsense! How can a schoolboy be a pirate?"

"All very well, Arnold, but his relatives might be pirates all the same. What is the name of your uncle's ship, Crumbs?"

"The *Narcissus*, a ship-rigged corvette," I replied accurately. "She is out in the Indian Ocean, Malacca Straits, and thereabouts."

"Pirate hunting, eh?" asked Jackson.

"Yes, I believe so. My uncle has been very active there, lately."

"So the papers say. He has captured many piratical craft, prahus and junks; and he is rapidly thinning out the Illanoon and Malay pirates, I believe. Depend upon it, Jim Crow is interested in your uncle's movements."

"Can't understand it," said Jervis. "But there may be more in him than we imagine. Shall we speak to the doctor?"

"No. Keep quiet. Let us wait and watch this fellow. I begin to distrust him. Are you thinking of going out, Crumbs—to join your uncle, I mean?"

"Yes, when I pass, which I hope to do soon. That pirate is also studying navigation, and making himself acquainted with the navy generally. He is up to something."

"Let us watch him: and, Crumbs, do you be careful. He looks as likely to stick his kriss into you as not. Now let us go in."

We all entered our schoolroom, and the majority afterwards went upstairs to tea. But the late combatants did not. Crumbs, as I happen to know, went to the housekeeper to be tended for his swollen eye; Cayley retired to his own room, where he busied himself in some preparations, the results of which became apparent later.

When the eye had been bathed and otherwise

attended to, Crumbs went upstairs quietly, and, though it was yet early, undressed and went to bed. Doctor Edwards came up, made some enquiries, and departed. Barton paid the invalid a visit also, and when he turned to leave the room again, he said—

"I say, Crumbs, old boy, I don't want to alarm you; but, were I you, I would lock my door for a few nights—*Verb. sat. sap.!*"

"My goodness, Barton, do you think that——"

"Hush! I *think nothing*. Be advised. You will soon leave us, and it is better to walk than to be carried, Crummy! Good night!"

"Good night, Barton; I will do as you say. But I think you exaggerate this affair."

"Well, you'll see. Lock your door, and lie awake if you like, but take my advice!"

He quitted the room, and ere his footsteps had ceased to sound in the corridor, I had leaped out of bed and softly locked the door. There was also a small bolt beneath the lock: this I "shot" also, and got into bed again as the clock struck ten.

One, two, three, four, and so on, I counted, and still counted, on to sixty or so—then, I believe, I fell asleep.

Something scratching awoke me—was it a rat or a mouse? I am a light sleeper, always was, and this scratching noise soon aroused me.

Sitting up, I listened intently. Somebody was

trying the handle of the door. A cold perspiration came out on my forehead. Barton had been correct in his anticipations. But the door was locked. If Cayley were the intruder, he was disappointed ; for after a few cautious turnings, and pushings against the panels, he—or whoever else it may have been, desisted—and although I lay awake for quite two hours, until daylight did appear, nothing further occurred to alarm me.

Then, weary with watching, I did not awake again until at seven o'clock the man-servant called me, and found the door locked. I got up and opened it. He seemed surprised to find it fastened, but he said nothing as he filled the bath, and when I had dressed I went downstairs, with a patch hanging over my damaged eye, to breakfast.

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS FROM HOME.—A CURIOUS VISITOR.—A NOCTURNAL
VISION.—GONE !

AFTER some sarcastic enquiries concerning my darkened eye, and a few words of rebuke from the doctor, who had been made acquainted with the true facts, breakfast was over, prayers were read, and then we had half an hour to spare before our studies commenced. This half hour we passed as we listed. The post usually arrived immediately after breakfast, and when prayers were over we separated to enjoy our correspondence and our home news.

On this occasion I had three letters, one from my father, one from my mother, and another with a very official cover, which I immediately proceeded to open. This document informed me that an appointment as cadet or midshipman had been placed at my disposal through the influence of my uncle ; and that, if I wished to accept the appointment, I ought to make my appearance in London not later than a day named, some few weeks after date.

The letters from my father and mother both confirmed the news I had separately received ; but, while

my father's communication turned on the business and practical side of the appointment, my mother's letter was full of advice and suggestions for my guidance; leaving the decision to me, a decision which my father evidently had anticipated I would make in favour of the cadetship.

These letters gave me much food for thought. Although it had always been an accepted fact that I would have to go out and join my uncle in his cruise in Indian waters, although I had been educated for the sea with a view to become an officer in the E. I. Navy, or, failing that, in the merchant service—when the actual time came at which I must make up my mind, and without very long consideration either, the position appeared serious.

My first impulse was to seek the old doctor, who, it soon appeared, had also received intelligence of my approaching move.

"Well, young sir," he said. "So you are to leave us, I understand. I trust your career will do you credit. After all, I have no particular fault to find with you. You will return home immediately, I suppose."

"No, sir. I would rather remain here as long as possible. I am very happy: you have been kind to us all, and I am not anxious to go."

This speech evidently pleased him. He smiled and rubbed his hands over each other.

"I am glad to hear that," he said. "We have endeavoured to treat you all as young gentlemen. I am glad you and the others have not disappointed us. You are not the only one to leave this half-year, though."

"Indeed, sir !" I said. "Who is going ?"

"The Indian pupil, Cayley——"

"Jim Crow !" I ejaculated. "Is he going home back to India, sir ?"

"Yes, to Singapore. He will soon sail. I had a communication from Captain Luscumbe, his guardian. But you will remain until the end of the month, I presume ?"

"Yes, sir ; there is plenty of time. I must go before the council, I believe, in London first, and be inspected and examined. Then I will return here and say good-bye, with your permission."

"Certainly, Fraser !" he answered. "By all means. Now perhaps you would like to return to your companions."

The news quickly spread, and after the morning "school" was over and books put away, many curious questions were put to me.

"And Jim Crow is going too, I hear. So you will lose two of us," I said.

"I shall be off next half," said Jenkins. "The Royal Navy is anxious to enrol me. I shall be a middy almost as soon as you, Crumbs, and we may meet in foreign parts after all !"

"What fun!" we exclaimed, and then much speculation was indulged in, till the gong sounded for "dressing for dinner" at a quarter to two.

After dinner a very curious person arrived. We were in the playground, and noticed the new arrival, a tall, swarthy individual of unprepossessing appearance, his dark hair and whiskers giving him quite a ferocious air. He was not very tall, but very muscular, and he hailed us in sufficiently good English.

"Hi, you lads. Is Mister Kaylee in your house yonder?"

"He lives here," we said. "He may be indoors now. Go up and enquire. We'll tell him, if we can find him, that he's wanted."

The man grunted his thanks, and proceeded up to the door while we watched him.

"That must be Captain Luscumbe," I remarked. "He has come for the 'pirate'!"

"He looks like a pirate himself," said Jenkins. "I wonder what he is!"

We speculated on his being the captain of an East Indiaman, but the subject dropped after a while. We ascertained that Jim Crow was to remain for a week longer, and then meet Captain Luscumbe, as he called himself.

Meanwhile certain necessary papers and remittances reached me from home, the forms required for my identification, my certificate of birth with other

duly attested information, and the doctor's report as to my health and condition were all obtained. A letter from my uncle was also sent on to me, in which he described his cruise in the Straits of Malacca, and the operations he had taken and intended to take against the pirates. "If Charles will come out I will guarantee to let him smell powder," said my uncle, referring to me. "We have some piratical fellows to deal with ; so let the boy come out to Singapore as quickly as may be, and I will make a man of him if he is worth his salt."

This was a reminder not to be neglected, and in a few days I was ready to make my first start in life. I was only fourteen, small and thin, agile as a monkey, and almost fearless. My school-life had hardened me. I was considered delicate but "wiry ;" could out-run most of my fellows, and endure considerable fatigue. In our preparations, Jim Crow was quite forgotten ; any thought of his enmity was entirely put aside. He was going too ! Even Barton's suspicions were lulled when we perceived the quiet way in which Cayley went about with his acquaintances, and continued his studies of ships, guns, and navigation at all available hours.

"I'm glad he's going," whispered Arnold. "He terrifies me sometimes. He almost looks like a murderer. His friend the captain is even worse. He comes from the Clyde."

"From the Clyde. How do you know, Arnold?"

"Oh, I know. My governor is a ship-builder there, and he intends me for the business, so he sends me some news, occasionally, and his last news is that he has built a very pretty little steamer for a certain Captain Luscumbe, who wants to carry her abroad. This vessel is intended for high speed, and if I mistake not, for fighting: she is to be armed, I believe. So much I have learned from home, by putting things together."

"Then you think this Luscumbe is not a captain in the Company's service."

"No, I think him an adventurer, and Mr. Cayley is just as bad as the captain."

"Rubbish!" I cried. "My dear fellow, you are making up a romance, a regular dramatic plot. Do you anticipate any terrible tragedy?"

"No; but I believe the fellow is a swindler: when I get home I will have a chat with the governor."

"Depend upon it, your father knows what he is about; so you needn't trouble yourself, Arnold. Now, there's the tea-bell. Come along."

Three days passed; four, five; and nothing of any importance occurred. On the sixth day, a Wednesday I think, Cayley, the "Jim Crow," was to leave us early in the morning, and in the afternoon Crumbs would appear for the last time but one at the dinner-table of Doctor Edwards.

Time was getting on. The half-year would soon be ended—in those days we broke up at the end of June, and had six weeks holidays ; not as now, three terms and unlimited holidays, and everlasting half-holidays on any and every excuse.

My last night at the school had arrived. One box was packed, my small portmanteau lay upon the floor with my clean clothes in it, everything was ready. Ten o'clock came, and we went to bed. My precious certificates, my money, my introductions to friends in London, my parents' letters, and other rather important documents, lay in the flap of my portmanteau. I locked my door, and, despite the moonlight which streamed on the white blind before my face, I managed to sleep pretty soundly.

Why I should have dreamt of Jim Crow and his revenge that night, I could not at first understand. But dream I did. I fancied I was lying in my room awake, when a shadow was thrown on the blind by the moon. I fancied the window was softly raised, and that Cayley entered noiselessly. In my dream I could not hear his footfall.

Silently he seemed to approach the bed. My face must have reassured him, for he seemed to glide away and examine my portmanteau. Then, after a search, he still noiselessly took my money and papers, and quitted the room by the window and the verandah which extended underneath. So vivid was my dream



"After a search, he still noiselessly took my money and papers."—p. 18

that I almost fancied I heard the window closed gently.

I stirred, I remember, and sat up. The house was perfectly silent. The moon shone still, but more to the right, and threw a shadow on the floor. Curious that I should have dreamt of that East-Indian enemy of mine ; his ferocious expression had almost alarmed me as he bent over me, apparently ; but the conviction that I was really dreaming deterred me from giving the alarm.

So the "pirate" passed away. He vanished from my room into the shadow of the wall, and again I slept dreamlessly.

"Seven o'clock, sir," said the servant. Up I jumped. My last day at Doctor Edwards' "Academy." The door was unlocked, and then the man informed me that Mister Cayley had departed at five o'clock, and "might joy be with him," added he, in a tone which did not betoken much good-will. No one except Doctor Edwards knew his destination, and nobody cared, apparently.

The day passed quietly until after dinner when I related my dream. The vision made considerable impression upon Barton and Jenkins, who enquired with considerable curiosity concerning it.

"Are you sure it *was* a dream, Crumbs?" enquired the former. "Perhaps Jim Crow came in to pay you out. He said he would, you know."

"Oh scarcely! I would have challenged him. Besides he could not have entered without my hearing him. Let us go up, and I will describe the whole thing, as you seem to think it important."

"Don't *you*?" said Jenkins. "By Jove, *I* do; and I should think it decidedly important were I in your case. Come along."

We three ascended. The window was open, and then Barton passed easily from my room to that lately occupied by Cayley, and back again to us; and all without any noise which would alarm anyone.

"Now you see it is quite possible to clear the verandah, and you will excuse me, Crumbs, if I say that you have been rather an ass not to have examined your portmanteau the first thing this morning."

"My dear fellow, all my things are here, quite safely in this secret flap. Look, no one can open it—and there you see the papers—Oh!" I exclaimed with a cry of anguish, "they are gone! Lost!"

"Stolen, rather. That Jim Crow, you see, has had his revenge. He has robbed you cleverly. Crumbs, you are a muff: your dream was no dream: the fellow came in. He has got your money I suppose?"

"Yes, and my father's letters, my uncle's directions, and the certificate of identity. Let us enquire where he has gone to and try to stop him."

"How can you? That electric arrangement is not

available here. We must send a policeman or write to Captain Luscumbe. At anyrate you can do nothing to-night. You must remain here, I am afraid, and go home to explain matters in the morning."

"No, I will go home instead of going to London. The doctor will advance the money. I will go and see him at once. Say nothing, you fellows: I would rather the matter did not get about until after I have gone. Promise."

"Oh, we promise," said Barton and Jenkins. "You have been nicely 'done,' Crumbs!"

"Yes, a little too much. I am as savage as a bear; and, were it any good, would smash something," I exclaimed, savagely. "I will go to the doctor at once!"

So in a very disgusted condition of mind, with a feeling of shame at being so taken in, and with a determination to be revenged some day, I proceeded to the doctor's study and told my tale. He listened sympathetically, became very angry, rang the bell, and sent for a policeman at once.

"The fellow went to Birmingham by the early coach," he said. "He will get the railway there, and probably make for Liverpool, where his uncle is. We will hear what the superintendent has to say, and then I will myself go after him. I cannot permit the matter to rest here. You must remain to describe the papers."

This I did, and eventually quitted the house some hours later than I had intended. The whole school came to see me off, for I had a chaise to drive across country to a railway station on the London and Birmingham line, near which, in Buckinghamshire, my father's house was situated.

My adventure and the robbery would have to be told immediately on my arrival. It was impossible to say what use the young thief or his accomplices might make of the letters, and of Uncle Theodore's name, for his credit was "as good as the Bank of England." He was a rich man.

So it may be imagined, I entered the train in by no means high spirits, though I was going home "for good!" I had been very stupid, and felt so ; but there was not time for much anticipation or reflection. Suddenly a grinding noise was heard—the carriage bumped—the whole earth seemed to leap up—a roar—a shower of gravel and dust—a fearful leap down the embankment—and I remember no more !

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE ACCIDENT.—CONVALESCENCE.—A VISIT TO MR. ARNOLD
LEADS TO A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

HOW I got home I cannot tell. I was quite unconscious for hours ; and, as I heard after, had a narrow escape. I can dimly recollect my return to consciousness and pain simultaneously, my poor mother, looking composed but in intense mental agony, standing by the bedside. The doctor was there too. Candles were burning on the table. So I must have been insensible for several hours.

My arm was injured, my head was bound up, and I felt dreadfully sore all over. My escape had been a marvellous one. It seems that I had been pitched right on the top of a very stout man, and my fall thereby somewhat deadened. But the poor stout farmer had died in the field, under the hedge, before he could be moved. Poor fellow ! he was a kind good man. My father knew him well.

It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the many days I passed in bed, on the couch in the room, or on the sofa downstairs when I became well enough to be moved. Weeks dragged on, and all thought of the

examination or of my proceeding to the East had been put aside. My future was as undecided as ever it had been, and no one troubled me except a strange doctor who came from the railway company. This visit I did not complain of, as my father received some hundreds of pounds—five hundred, I think—on account of my accident. This sum was funded for me at the Bank of England.

One of my most constant visitors was Katie Callenbury, the youthful daughter of our vicar. She often came to see me, and brought me many little delicacies from the vicarage. She had been a playmate of mine before I went to Doctor Edwards', and she had since formed a great friendship for my sister Emily. Katie was a great favourite—a bright, lively, dark-eyed child, with a fresh colour, and such beautiful hands that even I remarked them. I need scarcely add that I got fond of little Katie, as boys will do of young ladies who come and read to them, and spoil them when convalescent.

This is not the place to enlarge on Katie's attractions, and this is not a love-story either. We may hear more of Katie Callenbury by-and-by, but at present the robbery of my papers, certificate, and my uncle's letter, and the consequences which ensued, must be my theme. Of course, the news of my accident and my inability to proceed to the East Indies were related to my uncle ; and, as all study

was forbidden, I had little hope of being nominated a middy, or of passing the required standard of knowledge, or the medical board, for some time—and when I was likely to do so, it was expected I would have already passed the limit of age.

“It is most unfortunate,” remarked my father in my hearing. “The boy’s future is completely compromised—spoiled!”

“He might have been killed,” replied my mother. “I am sure we ought to be very thankful he has been restored to us, and is doing so well.”

“Of course,” was the reply. “But, my dear Lucy, —thankful as I am, and sorry as I am for the lad—we must remember he has to make his way in the world; and it is hard to see all our self-denial and pains thrown away. If we were rich now——”

“Oh, don’t talk like that, Frank. Poor Charlie is not to blame. He will turn out well, I am sure. Meanwhile, we must be very tender with him.”

Darling mother! Indeed you were always very loving and tender—firm and resolute withal; and we appreciated your kindness and firmness too!

“Poor old fellow,” said my father. “I am sure we will do all we can, dear. Well, now I must be off. No holidays for me!”

Here I may state, by way of parenthesis, that my father was a solicitor with an excellent practice, and

some good agencies for the resident county people. He was a man of firm, determined mind; clear-headed, staunch, and "thorough." He dealt in *facts* on every question save one. That was in the matter of "holidays!" It was a rooted fiction in his mind that he never by any chance could, or did, obtain a holiday or "get away." How he managed to go abroad every spring, and to Scotland in the autumn, with some few "business" trips of two or three days at intervals—are mysteries which, as he never "got away," could never be solved by his clerks. Yet he somehow succeeded in reaching Germany, Italy, and Switzerland; and, accompanied by my mother and Emily (my sister), devoted four weeks annually to the beauties of mount and stream and sea—the Alps, the Rhine, and the Mediterranean especially.

Mother smiled and came towards me. "Are you feeling better, Charley, darling?"

"Oh yes, mother, I want to go out—may I?"

"Wait till Mr. Richardson comes, he will tell us, dear."

The doctor came, permitted a drive, and I got rapidly well. The open air, the fresh autumnal breezes, the hot sunny days, soon set me up; and then, one well-remembered evening, came a letter—one of several—from my friend Arnold, who lived in Glasgow.

It will be remembered that Arnold had been one of

the pupils at Dr. Edwards' Academy, and that his father was a ship-builder and owner. Moreover, Captain Luscumbe, the piratical-looking person who had come to fetch "Jim Crow" away from school some few months before, had chartered a certain vessel from Messrs. Arnold's yard. Arnold, my schoolfellow, had been on the Continent for all the weeks I had been laid up, and now in September he had returned to Glasgow to enter his father's office as an assistant "cashier or book-keeper—or both as occasion demanded." So he said.

There was more in his letter than this, however. He wanted me to go down and stay at Govan, and see the shipping and the fun generally. Mrs. Arnold enclosed a note of invitation in the boy's letter, assuring my parents that she would take the greatest care of me if I were permitted to go. Father and mother consented, and in due time I was forwarded, "carriage paid," to Glasgow, N.B.

How little did Tom Arnold and I think, as we met again, that this invitation and my acceptance of it would result in the extraordinary manner it did! Had I never gone to Glasgow the evidence against Captain Luscumbe and his precious charge would never have come to light, and the "Hunting of the *Hydra*" would never have been woven into this narrative. The papers are now before me, with certain printed documents and extracts, which even

now read like a romance—but a "true romance" in most of the details.

Landed in Glasgow, I made my way by hackney coach for some two miles along the river Clyde, in which direction my friend's house lay. Those who have only seen Govan of late years can hardly form any idea of the picturesque appearance of the Glasgow suburb at the time of my visit there as a lad. The extraordinary development which the ship-building trade and its connections have brought about in Glasgow have likewise affected the formerly agricultural Govan. The quiet primitive population, the hand-weavers and spinners; the small farming operations, the tailoring, the shoe-making and coopering, have all or nearly all given way to the hammering and steaming of factory shops, the roaring of furnaces, and the clank of the engines.

"Little Govan," where the weavers once did congregate, has become the centre of a district which owes much to the great works once euphoniously termed "Dixon's Blazes." Calton Place was a rope walk. In those old days there was a ferry opposite the spot where the Gorbals church is. St. Enoch's Square was the limit of Glasgow, the Clyde ran clear, and kippered salmon was the favourite dish. Mr. Arnold said even he could remember Govan under cultivation, and in 1839 there were hand-loom weavers in the increasing suburb of "Meikle Govane."

The reason for the rise and progress of the place is "all along of the comet," as Arnold told me ; and it was not until I reached his father's house, and saw a picture of a queer little steamer called the *Comet*, which made the first steam-passage in 1812 from Greenock to Glasgow, that I understood that steam and ship-building had "made" the district. There was one man then living, and who lived for many years afterwards (he died in 1874), one man who saw Govan a primitive village, and watched it through all its many upward phases to the dignity of a town. That man was the stern and fearless minister, Dr. Leishman, the respected pastor of an unruly flock.

But these memories must cease, and the more exciting incidents connected with my youthful days be narrated. The journey was over ; railway and stage-coach had tired me. The day had nearly closed when I alighted at a house which I was assured by the paper I held in my hand, and the driver's semi-intelligible language, was Mr. Arnold's residence.

All doubt was quickly set aside by the welcome appearance of my quondam schoolfellow, who very soon put me at my ease.

"Why, Crumbs, old fellow, how late you are. Any accident on your new-fangled railway? Did the boiler burst, or did you run over a 'stoker'?"

"Neither," I answered, laughing. "The only serious delay was in your old fashioned coach, which

broke down, and nearly tumbled us all into a river, as the mail conveyance did the other day."

"Well, here you are at any rate, and I'm glad to see you. Father wants you too. Mother is quite prepared to embrace you, and Rosie will kiss you on the spot."

"She will do nothing of the kind, Master Rudeness," remarked a voice beside me.

I turned, and beheld a dainty little maiden, with fair hair and blue eyes, a saucy smile, and brilliant even teeth. A bright colour rested on her smooth rounded cheeks, and her ruddy lips were tempting as the cherry.

"I am sorry to hear it," I replied, without looking at her brother, who interpreted my remark as an answer to his, while Rose apparently attributed it to her own, for she looked prettily confused as she shook hands in true welcome to her brother's friend.

After supper we had some animated conversation concerning "old times" at school, although the days had not so long passed; and, of course, questions were asked about "Jim Crow" the queer pupil, and his uncle.

"You had him up here, I suppose?" I said. "I wish he had been arrested."

"What for?" asked Mr. Arnold, laughing. "You wouldn't surely arrest the lad for being a little darker than yourself?"

"No, but for stealing my papers, sir," I replied. "They were rather important."

"Were they, indeed?" said Mrs Arnold, a stout cheery lady; who looked at everything on the bright side; "I daresay things might have been much worse."

"You didn't tell us all this, Tom," said Mr. Arnold to his son.

"I told Rosie when I wrote from Brighton," replied Tom, "about the robbery, and the papers, and Captain Luscumbe."

"Yes, my boy, but you forget Rosie was away too, and her letter was sent on unopened."

"I forgot all about it," put in Rose. "It seemed only a school-boy freak, and didn't interest me very much."

"Wait until I write to you again, Miss!" retorted her brother. "But it can't matter now, father."

"You have rather surprised me," said Mr. Arnold, who seemed pre-occupied. "I did not take a fancy to that captain, but he had such good references and a credit on the Bank of England, that my suspicions were lulled."

"All's well that ends well," said Mrs. Arnold smiling, and beaming at her husband. "You have got your bills safe, and some of your money paid in. So even if the captain were not quite honest you have had no loss."

"Father chartered him a little steamer," said Tom ;
"and a regular clipper she is. We re-named her the
Hydra. Rose did it —shied the bottle I mean—and
I must say did it well for *her* !"

"Well, Cayley got my papers, my certificate, my
uncle's advice, and I wish I had Mr. Jim Crow here,"
I said.

"I didn't like the captain when I saw him—I told
you so, Crumbs."

"You did," assented the person addressed.

"Why didn't you tell *me* ?" said Mr. Arnold.

"Crumbs laughed at me," replied Tom, "and said
you knew what you were about—I remember his
saying so quite well—and then I had no thought
about the business. By-the-by, father, talking of
business, those bills must be sent up soon, Luscumbe's
bills on Carnegie's. They are backed by Captain
Ellerby, I think. Who is he ?"

"Some naval officer, a man well known in the East
Indies. I made enquiries, he is sound enough. He
commands—let me see—the—ah ! what is it ? The—
the——"

"Not the *Narcissus* ?" I ventured.

"That's the name, my lad," said Mr. Arnold, "I
could not think of it. I shall forget my own
name next," he added. (People always say this.)

"But Captain Theodore Ellerby is my uncle—my
mother's brother ; and he would scarcely know this



"Here, Fraser, lad, is that your uncle's writing?"—p. 33

Luscumbe, or back his bills. I know he is very particular in money transactions."

"The fact can easily be ascertained," said Mr. Arnold, who showed some anxiety, I thought. "Tom go into the office, and bring me the small cash-box from the safe, and the bill-book."

"We will clear this matter up," he continued when Tom had left the room. "If I have been taken in—but we will not anticipate evil."

"You need not be afraid, dear," said Mrs. Arnold looking at her husband with a sunny smile. "We shall weather this little storm!"

"No doubt, but there is the ship-chandler to pay to the tune of fourteen hundred pounds, besides the charter money. Well, Tom?"

"Here are the cash-box and the book" said Tom.

"Now, let me see; here are the bills. Ah! yes, this is the one, at three months, falling due in a few days. Here, Fraser, lad, is that your uncle's writing?"

I looked at the signature. "Theodore Ellerby," was plain enough, and bore a very strong resemblance to the bold free hand-writing of my sailor-uncle. But one feature was wanting in the otherwise excellent imitation. Uncle Theodore had a habit of putting a line or flourish under his signature, a small wavy curling flourish. In the centre of this flourish were three strokes, or what appeared to the unin-

initiated eye to be strokes like large inverted commas. In reality these little embellishments were the letters "R. N." very curiously entwined, a device resorted to by my uncle when a cheque by another Theodore Ellerby had been once charged against his account at the bank. This peculiarity of my relative's signature had often been the subject of our remarks at home, and I pointed out the discrepancy to Mr. Arnold.

"That is not my uncle's signature," I said. "Look, Mr. Arnold, there are no letters on the lines; the forger has merely put three strokes."

"Then it *is* a forgery!" exclaimed Mr. Arnold
"I have been nicely 'done'!"

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW SUGGESTION.—A MEETING WITH A NEW FRIEND.—CAPTAIN GARRETTSON DETERMINES TO HUNT THE “HYDRA.”

THIS announcement took us all by surprise. Mr. Arnold was reputed to be such a careful and methodical man, a person of such cautious business habits that any fraud upon him was considered impossible. He was a genial, cheerful person away from business—a bluff, good-tempered, brown-haired, broad-shouldered, independent Briton. His house was a model of a middle-class dwelling. No ostentation, no extravagance; but everything excellent after its kind—everything in its place, but all for use, and daily used. There were no “company” rooms, or “manners;” no difference was made for me—I was a guest, but treated like one of the family; and, had I wanted cigars, the cabinet was at my disposal, with every kind of smoking appliance, as freely as the writing-paper case on the opposite table.

“I have been nicely done this time,” repeated the shipowner. “‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.’ I was so sure of my capabilities that I let this swindler see my weakness.

Tom, my boy, and you, my lad," he said, turning to me—"let this be a lesson to you. Done : aye, done brown !"

Mr. Arnold had got very red while uttering this exordium and looked anything but brown—rather underdone, I thought, but did not like to contradict him, for he was so apt to "flare up," as Tom had informed me. So I merely said "I am very sorry."

"Why need *you* be sorry," he retorted. "It isn't your fault. *I'm* sorry. Emma is sorry, I daresay ; for her grand piano cannot be purchased yet. Rose and Tom are sorry, because it means to them ruin—absolute ruin."

"Absolute rubbish, papa," interrupted saucy Rosie. "You are only talking nonsense. What is a sum of fifteen hundred pounds to *you* ?"

"A sum of fifteen hundred to *me*, my simple child, is exactly fifteen hundred golden sovereigns, which took me several weeks to earn, and represent both time and money thrown away. I must pay Macdonald, of course, for the stores ; and I lose the charter money, the *Hydra*, and my self-respect ; which, omitting the latter item as a non-tangible asset, means a dead loss of several thousand pounds, which *does* matter to me, Miss Careless !"

"There, Rose, you've got it," remarked her brother in an undertone ; for he knew, as did his mother, that, although Mr. Arnold spoke in a bantering tone, he

was seriously annoyed about the *Hydra* and his losses. Mrs. Arnold with much tact said nothing. Rose kissed her father, whispered an apology, and bade us good-night with tears in her eyes. She felt she had been rebuked, and that she had fully deserved a more severe reprimand for her flippancy.

Tom and myself retired as soon as we could. By special request we occupied the same bed-room, an extensive apartment with two beds conveniently situated for conversation, and, as I subsequently discovered, most suitably placed for pillow-throwing and "bolstering." But on this occasion our school-boy proclivities were set aside. Things looked serious.

"I told you that 'Jim Crow' was a pirate," said Tom, as he proceeded to undress.

"No, Tom, you distinctly said he was a brigand. I remember quite well you ridiculed the idea of a schoolboy being a pirate. His uncle is the delinquent!"

"What's that?" asked Tom, saucily. "A new name for robber? or is it anything to eat? What a fine long, 'dictionary' word!"

"Never you mind," I said. "But I say, Tom, do you think—no it's impossible!"

"What's impossible?" asked Tom. "Have you an idea?"

"Yes, I was thinking whether we could not catch this fellow Luscumbe, and bring him to justice."

"My dear 'Crumbs,' you are soft ! Why the *Hydra* sailed three weeks ago, and may be at Jericho by this time."

"My dear Tom, steamers cannot make Jericho a port of call. Mind your geography, if you please. You might as well say Herat."

"Well the ark sailed to Ararat once. But, seriously, what do you mean ?"

"What I say, Thomas Arnold. If we could persuade your father to lend us the steamer you said he was building, but which the pirate Captain Luscumbe did not take ; we might follow the *Hydra*. Do you see ?"

"Yes, and spend five thousand pounds or more in the chase. Very like a whale ! But more like a wild-goose chase !"

"I am afraid so. But what fun it would be ; and what a pleasure to trip up that pirate. We might go out, find uncle in the *Narcissus*, and tell him all about it. You would learn seamanship and get a berth afterwards easily in some of these new steam lines which are going to run to the United States, and we might do some trading too !"

"No such luck," replied Tom. "Your idea is magnificent but it will not '*pay*.' No, 'Crumbs,' we must trust to police and information we may receive to catch old Luscumbe. Good-night."

"Good-night, Tom. Don't dream of the pirates."

Next morning little was said about the bills and the *Hydra*. Tom and I went down to the Broomielaw, and saw the shipping, already increasing, which now has raised the Clyde to the springtide of prosperity, and overflowed Glasgow. In those days the vessels were not so numerous, nor were the great yards so busy with steamers and the Clyde-built ships which are synonymous with perfection. The mighty engines which propel the ocean-going steamers had not then been attained to. Stephenson had built monster locomotives for the Great Western Railway ; but the mammoth marine-engines were only in their iron infancy. James Watt devoted himself to the low-pressure engine, as Stephenson did to the locomotive, while the name of Napier is, with others, honourably associated with the fitting out of great steamers.

As Tom and the unworthy "Crumbs," his friend, perambulated the handsome and rising city, they discussed the chances of catching the swindling captain and "Jim Crow" Cayley. The little steamer which his uncle was to have chartered, but declined at the last in favour of the larger craft, lay down the river, alongside the yard, where other and finer ships were in course of construction. We had seen her, admired her, and had decided that she was the very vessel to take in pursuit of the *Hydra*, when the time and money should be ready !

Yes ! time, money, and an opportunity were all

wanting; yet it was disgusting to think that Luscumbe and his precious nephew had got "clear away" with the *Hydra* and stores representing so much good money.

Tom and I were wandering along the Broomielaw, admiring the shipping, when a tall, dark, man stopped my companion.

"Why, Master Arnold! It *is* you, ain't it?"

"Yes," replied Tom, "it's *me*. Who are you? Not Mr.—I mean Captain—Garrettson?"

"Exactly, my young friend: Anthony P. Garrettson, late of New Orleans, trader. I'm gone on cotton. Where's your respected father?"

"In his office," replied Tom. "I have a holiday, as my friend Fraser, here, has come on a visit."

"Glad to meet you, young gentleman," said the trader. "I'm about a vessel—a fire ship—a steam thing for a cruise, I want. I'm after some more bales, not 'baccy."

"To America, Captain?"

"No, not this journey. I hear I can do a good turn eastward in the Indies, but the ship I want must be a steamer. I b'lieve they will be the great success of the century—steamers will. Yes, we'll bridge the Atlantic, young gentlemen, and cross the ocean in ten days—we *will*!" *

* Had Captain Garrettson lived till now he would have seen the passage made in a few hours over six days.

Tom laughed. "Scarcely, Captain," he said. "But come and see father. He has a beautiful little steamer for you."

"What's her tonnage?"

"About three hundred, I think. She will go anywhere, do anything but speak, they *say*, and——"

"Can't she talk?" inquired the captain, winking at me with considerable facetiousness. "If she can't talk, she's no good to *me*."

"She will be *taught*, in time," replied Tom smartly. "Taut and trim too; one to me, captain!"

"You'll do, youngster; you'll do. If your ship's as sharp as you, she'll cut ice. Taut—well—so she will be, or I'll not command her. Where is she?"

"Lying up, by the yard, down stream. Come and see her."

"Maybe she won't like visitors if she's lyin' up," said the captain provokingly. "I'll call another day when she's to home."

"Oh! she'll see you, captain, depend upon it. My father will introduce you to her. Come along."

"Business head, your friend," whispered the captain to me as Tom went on in advance. "He's a sharp lad, is young Arnold. Wonder if he'd sail with me as purser, eh?"

"He would, I daresay. He's a capital clerk, and can add up like steam."

"Can he though?" said the captain with admira-

tion. "I can't. I'm like a windlass at sums ; always having to count out loud every time I'm pullin' up the figures. I'll enquire."

We crossed the river and reached Mr. Arnold's office, which was situated near the river, not very far from his house, whence he could be fetched at any moment. He often returned to his office after the evening meal, and remained there until eleven o'clock absorbed in business, while his wife went out to friends' houses or entertained them at home. The pair perfectly understood each other, and lived in perfect harmony together, amusing themselves in their own way ; Mrs. Arnold, with her daughter, keeping his friends together, and making his house lively when he returned home, giving him a pleasant change from books, and bills, and business. Young people delighted in Mrs. Arnold, and would relinquish any engagement to attend her cheery home-like parties, where the merriest "girls and boys" were always found.

Mr. Arnold met the captain cordially.

"Come over to dinner," he said. "I am going in ten minutes. Emma will be glad to see you. Go with the boys, will you ? and we'll talk after. I've something to tell you. I've been swindled !"

"You ? Swindled ! Well, that beats ! You're too good-natured. Told ye so before."

"Wait till you hear the circumstances. I'll come

over directly. Tom, take Captain Garrettson home, and see he has all he wants. I'll not be long."

We three, thus good humouredly dismissed, proceeded down the road towards Govan, and were welcomed by Mrs. Arnold.

"So glad to see you, Captain Garrettson, come upstairs. My husband will be home in ten minutes. So pleased you've come to see us."

That was all, but it was said so heartily that it carried a whole host of welcomes. Then Mr. Arnold came in, and after dinner—an early dinner—the conversation turned on Luscumbe and the *Hydra*. Garrettson whistled thoughtfully, and said—

"Luscumbe! Believe I owe him a grudge, *and I'll pay it!* He is a regular pirate. Saw him at New Orleans, met him in the West Indies, and have heard of him at Singapore. He's an agent, a kind of help to pirates; I want him, badly. I can go for him, and I will!" .

"Did he injure your business?" asked Mrs. Arnold.

"No, ma'am, but he injured *me*—my heart. He carried away a Quadroon girl who loved me and I her—madly too. He got her away—poor child!—on pretences, and I swore I'd pay Mr. Luscumbe for that. He wasn't Luscumbe then, he was a boatswain named Kaylee."

"What!" we cried, "Kaylee!"

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"Aye, Kaylee ; a half-caste Malay, a ruffian."

"It's the same," I cried. "He has run away with the *Hydra*."

"Then give me your steamer. I'll trade down the Straits, and I'll hunt the *Hydra*, if she or it had all its hundred heads !"

"Will you, captain ?" cried Tom. "Well done !"

"Yes, my lad, and I'll take you as my purser, and your friend too if ye like. But Mr. Arnold, no more words. I'm obliged to you, a good deal ; and I'll find this skunk. So now one bumper to the success of the hunt for the *Hydra*. Hurrah !"

CHAPTER V.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.—HOW THE “PIRATE” LUSCUMBE
SUCCEEDED IN HIS AIMS.

THE enthusiasm of Captain Garrettson quickly communicated itself to all present. The hunting of the *Hydra*, as the American expressed it, was regarded not only as a duty but as an incumbent duty mingled with the natural pleasure of the chase under difficulties. We lads, who a few hours previously had no more idea of quitting the United Kingdom than we ever had of going back to school before the holidays closed, were now actually discussing the chances of reaching the East Indies by Christmas-time.

“Stop, stop; not so fast,” cried Mr. Arnold when the first chorus and chatter had subsided. “This must not be. Captain Garrettson, you cannot be serious in this proposition.”

“Can’t I?” replied the captain. “Well, p’rhaps I *can’t*, but I *am*, that’s a fact. Here’s your son, a fine lad, waitin’ to see life. Here’s his friend, wants health and strength. Here am I, boiling with volcanic revenge against a dark-skinned savage. Serious?

Why, I tell you, I'm as solemn as an owl disappointed of his Sunday dinner."

This assurance was, no doubt, the very strongest that could be mentioned. Mrs. Arnold smiled at the earnestness with which the American spoke, as she remarked—

"The boy's parents must be consulted, Captain Garrettson. It is too soon to give an answer. Wait for a few days. Meanwhile——"

"Meanwhile, I will tell you all about this business," interrupted Mr. Arnold. "Emma, let the captain light his cigar, and you, as well as the boys, shall hear the circumstances of this clever swindle. There is a romantic side to it, too, as well as its cool effrontery. Listen! Some time ago a man who appeared like a yachting captain—a dark-whiskered but not unpleasant mannered man—came to me as a broker acting on behalf of a gentleman named Ellerby, to charter a vessel for a cruise. This broker informed me that Miss Ellerby was in delicate health—that she required a six months' voyage in a small steamer or other vessel. As it happened, I had the little steamer you are enquiring for—and the re-named *Hydra*. He chose the latter ship, and gave me references which were genuine enough, for I tested Captain Ellerby's credit—found he was or had been in the navy, and might not unreasonably want to give his daughter a cruise for her health in one of the steamers. At any-

rate, this Luscumbe was so plausible, his references so good, and his bills apparently so genuine, that I made little difficulty about the vessel.

"The ship-chandlers were equally well pleased. Stores, including wine, were shipped, and paid for by a three month's bill. We had the *Hydra* overhauled in the yard, and, when all was completed and the vessel ready for sea, we shipped a temporary crew and sent her down to Milford Haven, where the men were paid by Luscumbe and sent back. At Milford coal was put on board, I hear; and, I suppose, paid for by false bills, as I was. That is all that is necessary to tell. The *Hydra* has got clear away: the dark-skinned "thief" has got a good boat with plenty of stores and coal, and may have armed his vessel by this time for service against us in the Indies, where we are endeavouring to put down the slavers."

"That will do," replied Captain Garrettson. "I do not care a red cent what his object is or where he is goin'. That man, Luscumbe, has done me a mortal injury, and has broken the laws. I am going to trade, too, in his way. I will have your fire-boat, sir. I will arm her. I will follow the *Hydra*, and I will make money, too. So, look here, no more words. Hands up for volunteers!"

Tom and "Crumbs," the narrator, at once lifted their palms, but Mr. Arnold shook his head.

"There is no hurry," he said. "It is quite prepos-

terous that Tom or his young friend can rush off on a wild-ship chase without any preparation whatever. Wait. You shall have your steamer, captain, first. We'll find the crew after."

"And the *Hydra*," persisted Garrettson. "Well, the day is drawing in. I must go back to the city. I will see your cruiser to-morrow, Mr. Arnold; and don't you attempt to dissuade me, or you'll raise Cain!"

Such a threat of resurrection quite persuaded the shipowner to be discreet, and no more respecting the *Hydra* was said in the captain's presence.

But it was otherwise with us at Govan. All the evening the chances of our capturing the dishonest Kaylee were discussed. The adventure promised well. Luscumbe had evidently mortally offended Captain Garrettson, and the latter was determined to seek the offender while doing a trade to his own advantage. Luscumbe was an adventurer of the darkest antecedents—a man of low origin, who had served in a pirate schooner, engaged in the slave-trade in the West Indies and America, and whose latest success stamped him as an individual of some business capability. His son, the child of the Quadroon girl whom he had carried off, he had caused to be educated with the view—not to become a respectable member of society, but—to enable him to hold his own in the piratical designs which his precious father intended to mature

in the congenial hunting-grounds of the Archipelago of Malaya.

At that time, some fifty years ago, the Malay pirates were giving the English and the East India Government some considerable trouble. Piratical squadrons were engaged on several occasions with Western forces which were generally inferior to the collected prahus. The traders, Dutch as well as those of other nationalities, were all desirous to put down the intolerable Illanoons. The British men-of-war were occasionally very successful in finding out the pirates ; my uncle's ship, which I have called the *Narcissus*, being so well disguised that she appeared only a merchant vessel. In one of his letters, which I have read many times, he tells my mother how he managed to delude the pirates by letting his men keep pets on board, such as monkeys and baboons. Sheep, pigs, and parrots, as well as many other more formidable animals, added to the efforts to disguise the outward appearance of a man-of-war, succeeded in rendering Her youthful and Gracious Majesty's ship as commonplace a craft as any trader. The Malays were regarded by the "Company" as pirates, because they had seized from the Siamese, our allies, and occupied, a portion of Malacca near Penang ; but the European contingent at Penang held a contrary opinion to the Company.

Nevertheless, the Tongoos who surrounded the young prince who had made the capture of the land

his predecessors had occupied, were all determined to fight. They made secret preparations. Very quickly and with much caution did they proceed. Information occasionally and at considerable intervals reached them as to the arrangements; the chief Tongoo received mysterious missives from his absent chief, who was under British care. The head Tongoo, Mahomet Said, had been informed of his prince's intended return from the mysterious retirement he had been enjoying. The Siamese, his enemies, appealed to the English. The Malays were thrust to the wall, called pirates by the East Indian Company and the Governor-General of India. The young absent prince was designated a rebel, and his capture was deemed desirable. But Abdullah was as sharp as the Englishmen, and made his preparations secretly.

The Chief Tongoo or Vizier, as we may term him, made ready during the south-west monsoon season, knowing full well that on the western coast of Malacca the weather would preclude all notions of an attack upon the country. Moreover, at that tempestuous time the Company's ships and gun-boats would not be in the Straits. Concealed in Sumatra and assisted by traders, who in a measure sympathised with them, the Malaysans made ready for the struggle, biding their time.

Still the time had not arrived. Prince Abdullah had to come first. He had been already sent for, and

was on his way. But before he arrived Mahomet Said, the leader of the Tongoos or ministers, had prepared the expedition. He and his men crossed, pulled up the rivers, raised stockades and other defences, and occupied the disputed territory north of Penang, whose capital is, like itself, named Quedah.

These preparations made, the Malays knew they had plenty of time ; for many weeks must elapse—indeed months must pass—before either their hereditary enemies or the Company's vessels could advance or attack ; in such weather hostilities were impossible.

These details will explain how it came to pass that my uncle was employed in putting down Malay "pirates," and how the situation rested. We may now dismiss the political side of the question, leave facts to be unravelled by the readers of our country's history, while we proceed with our adventures, merely stating in addition that Kaylee or Luscumbe, as he called himself in civilized society, had united with the Malays, and was ready by word and deed to assist them in their enterprises against the British, for whom he cherished the keenest animosity. This dislike, founded upon his rooted objections to law and order, as generally understood by civilized nations, was the mainspring of his existence, and he left no mode of revenge untried to "pay out" his opponents. His advice was frequently adopted by the Malay bands, with whom he thoroughly sympathized, and whom he

assisted when possible. He gave them information ; placed all his knowledge at their disposal ; purchased boats and supplies for them, as a trader ; and fought with them, when convenient, as a pirate. His disguises were many and clever ; his courage and recklessness unbounded ; his cruelty equalled his courage, and he had absolutely no scruples on any point whatever. He only wanted ambition to become a king or an autocrat : he was already a revolutionist.

Armed with money, and knowing the circumstances of Captain Ellerby's command, besides being acquainted with several Singapore merchants, and residents in Penang, Luscumbe had little difficulty in making his way in England, and thence, as a better hunting-ground, to Scotland. It had occurred to him that the *Diana* war-steamer in "the Straits" did considerably more damage, by the fears she excited by her speed and steam and fire, than the other vessels. So he conceived the idea of procuring 'a small steamer of his own and assisting the Malay "pirates" as far as it pleased him, at the same time he could prey on any country's marine, and escape punishment by eluding pursuit. With this end in view he sought Abdullah, whom he made his friend ; placed Kaylee at the school in England for a few months, while he himself made preparations ; and finally with much dexterity outwitted Mr. Arnold, of whose occupation his so-called nephew had informed him.

The plot had succeeded. The forged bills and references had played their part ; the vessel was procured ; and the unscrupulous Luscumbe—the slave-dealer and outlaw—was on his way “ trading ” to the Malayan Archipelago in his armed steamer, painted black, and ominously named *Hydra*.

We can assure our readers that there is very little fiction in this description. A ship was thus procured in Glasgow, and the Malay pirate's capture is historical, as may easily be ascertained.

CHAPTER VI.

WE ARRANGE TO HUNT THE "HYDRA."—THE "HERCULES"
BEGINS TO SPEAK PLAINLY.

"CRUMBS," said Tom Arnold, as we went to bed that eventful evening, "what do you say to joining Captain Garrettson? Will you go?"

Crumbs was silent. There were so many things to be considered. Firstly, my parents and sister; then school-finishing when my health had been restored; money; the danger of it all. These I detailed to Tom.

"Bother the danger," he replied. "There is danger everywhere, if you come to that. The funds can come out of the railway money for your accident; your parents and sister (what is she like, Crumbs?) will be glad to get rid of you, I daresay: so all your wretched objections are answered. I have spoken!"

He had: and being somewhat out of breath therewith (also in consequence of swinging his arms violently while speaking), Tom seated himself on my bed-rail and swung his legs, while he regarded me with a determined air, and gave a nod of conviction, as his eyes met mine.

"But are *you* going, Tom?"

"I am," replied the resolute youth, as he swung himself about. "I am going—seriously—going—in fact, I look upon myself as gone already. Oh!"

The cry with which he concluded was intensely comical. He had leaned back too far, and suddenly disappeared over the side of the bed. He had "gone" already.

"But your father and mother," I urged, when he had climbed up again to his perch on the head rail, "have they consented?"

"Not yet: they will though; for the 'pater' is anxious for me to go a voyage, and he can trust me with Captain Garrettson. It will be all right. Write to-morrow and ask leave."

"I will," I replied; "and now, Tom, jump off, and let me get to bed. You can turn somersaults on your own counterpane as often as you please."

Tom took the hint in good part, and retired to his own couch, whence he conversed with diligence to a late hour on the all-absorbing topic of the *Hydra*, and the way in which he would treat Luscumbe and young Kaylee when he caught them.

"I daresay you will fight the pirate single-handed Tom," I said. "You will be ready for him then, because so many years will have elapsed by that time."

"You are an unbeliever, Crumbs, and were not

these our own pillows, I would at once challenge you to make good your scoffing words with a bolster-weapon."

"I am prepared to encounter thee with any weapons," I replied, "did sleep not prevent me. Good-night, valiant pirate-chaser."

Tom responded, and at length the long discussion was hushed.

There were many conversations next day, in some of which Captain Garrettson joined. The upshot and final arrangement made was, greatly to Tom's delight, the following :—

Captain Garrettson had agreed to charter the small steamer (which he intended to arm) as a trading vessel, while he searched for the *Hydra* and his enemy Luscumbe. The steamer was to be called *Hercules*, "because," remarked the captain with a grim smile, "I'm a goin' to chop up that 'ere *Hydra*, as the great labourin' man did, and I'll burn her, maybe, as he burned the critter's neck."

"And I will help you, captain," said Tom. "Make father give me leave."

"We have already talked it over," replied Mr. Arnold, "and as you are destined for the sea, you may as well learn your business. You will have a kind teacher, and a good man to show you your duty."

"Thank ye, Mister Arnold ; I'll do my little en-

deavour to make your boy a man. Now, young gentleman," added the captain, turning to me, "what do you say to the cruise?"

"I will go, if my parents approve," I replied suddenly, "and will be as useful as I can."

"Well said, young gentleman. Write and let me know as soon as possible."

I wrote and no reply came for four days. Meantime the steamer, which was not such a *very* small one as I had imagined, was overhauled. The captain suggested some alterations, and had some defensive nettings arranged for, so that any attempt to board the ship might be the more easily repelled. Four guns were mounted on deck, one a long gun which would turn in almost any direction—a "Swivel gun," they called it. The funnel of the *Hercules* was unshipped, and fitted with a hinge arrangement, so that it could be entirely lowered on deck into bearings made to receive it. Then the vessel appeared a mere schooner, though the distance between her masts was greater than in ordinary schooners. Sails were fitted and bent; the cabins re-arranged for use; and, in short, every requirement for a cruise was attended to.

Of course all this took time. Long before the fitting-out was completed, and of course before any cargo was shipped, the expected letter arrived from my mother. It was very short, and ran thus—

"DEAREST CHARLIE,

"Your father and I have been considering your letter, and under the circumstances we think you had better return home as soon as politeness will permit. Please convey our compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, and with our united love,

Believe me,

Your fond Mother,

LUCY FRASER."

This was decided and laconic certainly. My first impression was that my mother had an idea that I was in the company of lunatics, and required the parental supervision which home alone could give. But on reading the note to Tom, he took quite a different view of the question.

"You will go, Crumbs—that's what it means. The father and mother want to talk it over, you see. I'm sorry to lose you, but we shall meet again."

Mr. Arnold said something to the same effect, and when the point had been discussed, it was arranged that I should return home the next day but one, and come back if I could in three weeks. Rose and her brother accompanied me to the coach, and I was sent on my road in the anticipation of getting the desired leave.

There is no need to chronicle the details of the conversations which were held at home. Questions were asked and answered, the doctor was consulted, and

approved of the voyage. Any settled application of the brain was deprecated. A year at sea would do me good, he said. So, with the greatest reluctance and with many tears, my dear mother gave her consent and my father concurred. Then I at once wrote to Tom, and told him the news, rejoicing.

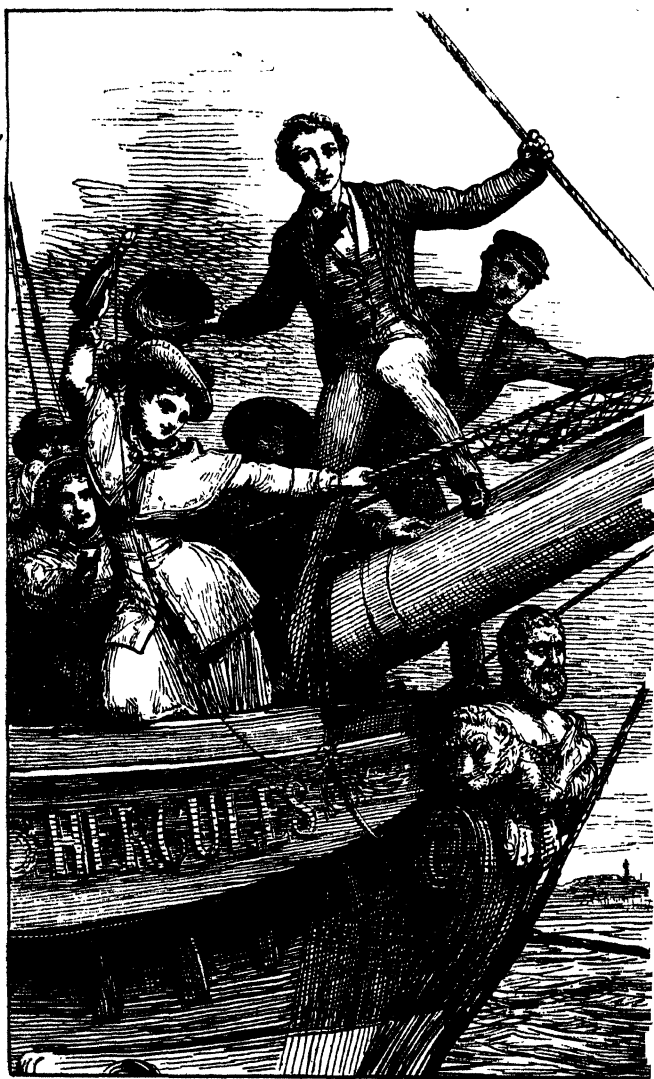
Ever since the *Hydra* had quitted England, or rather, ever since the character of her captain had been understood, Mr. Arnold had searched the papers to endeavour to discover her whereabouts, but no authentic intelligence had rewarded his diligence. The latest certain information concerning the ship which had been so cleverly stolen, was that she had sailed from Milford Haven for Marseilles. On enquiry being instituted at Milford, it was ascertained that a bill had been given for the coals. So the ship had been found and equipped for, virtually, no money payments at all—for nothing ! The *Hydra* had disappeared !

Then came news from Gibraltar. A steamer with a white funnel, and bearing the appearance of the *Hydra*, had been seen entering the Mediterranean. Signals were made for her number, but she took no heed of them. A *guarda costa* from Malaga put out after her, but in a squall the mysterious vessel escaped, and no more was thought of the matter at the time. It was surmised she had gone down to Malta, and could be followed up if necessary.

This was all we knew of the *Hydra* when the ceremony of re-naming our steamer in the river was performed. Many guests were invited, but there was no public display. The day was fine, but chilly, as we rowed in four boats to the tidy craft which was destined to be our home for so many months. My father and mother had accompanied me at Mrs. Arnold's solicitation, and Emily also came at Rose's suggestion. I wished that Kate Callenbury could have also been there, but that was impossible.

In addition to the above named, there were several friends of the Arnolds. Captain Garrettson and his chief officer, named Bone, were also present. Bone was a most curious personage, with only one eye—but such an eye! He could see as well with that—aye, see better with it than most men with two eyes—and really, according to his own account, the marvelous things he had seen, and the terrors with which, still according to his own account, such sights had inspired him, made it rather a matter for thankfulness that he had only one eye. What he might have seen with the normal allowance of vision we could only shudderingly imagine, and be thankful he remained sane.

Mr. Isaac Bone from the first attached himself to me and declared he was "real glad to find me aboard." There was a curious twinkle in his solitary eye when I flippantly replied—



"After the traditional bottle of champagne had been broken against the figurehead by my sister."—p 61

"I was not a plank to be sat on," and turned away with some importance, for I was an Ass—puffed up with the idea of cruising against pirates. Isaac Bone only grinned, winked, and expectorated over the side.

Oh the joy of that day! The quiet walk in company along the decks up and down, Captain Garrettson explaining all the time to the ladies, the ropes, stays, and even the engines. Then, while we were at luncheon, the engineers got up steam and took us for a little trip after the traditional bottle of champagne had been broken against the figure-head by my sister, to whom the naming by universal consent had been entrusted. Oh the merry, merry day we had; and as evening fell, we fell a dancing reels until the reeling quitted our heels for our heads.

"Isn't she a beauty, Captain Garrettson?" said Tom—"I told you she was."

"Yes; and you said she couldn't speak but would be taught, didn't you?"

"Yes," replied Tom. "She's 'taut' now, as you said, but she can't speak, all the same."

"Can't she?" retorted the captain. "Well, she can."

Tom laughed and said he would like to hear a ship's conversation. "It will be in private signalling, I suppose," he said.

"Oh dear no," replied the captain; "in language you will all understand."

Tom looked mystified, and just then, as some of the rest of the party approached, he imparted the captain's statement that the "vessel could talk," adding, "I should like to hear it."

"I think it is time we went back," said Mrs. Arnold. "You will sup with us, of course, Captain Garrettson? Mr. Bone, will you favour us with your company?"

"Madam, with pleasure," he replied, "I am scarcely fit for your charming society; but if you will excuse the want of—evening clothes——"

"Then we will come," said the captain. "Now, ladies, I will make the ship talk. The ceremony is over. We must return."

He blew a whistle, and in a few seconds a roar nearly made us jump into the sea; for we were outside then, and before we could exclaim, another and another until a salute of eighteen guns had been fired. Then the flags were dipped, and the steamer turned her head homewards.

"That is what I call making the ship talk," remarked the captain to Tom. "Did you hear her?"

"Yes, she is very emphatic," replied Tom; "decided in tone and loud, but I quite understood her."

"So will that traitor Luscumbe," muttered Garrettson as he walked aft.

CHAPTER VII.

THE "HYDRA" STARTS.—SUSPICION AND MUTINY.—A DARK DEED !

WHILE speculation was still sleeping on the banks of the Clyde, and before Mr. Arnold had been aroused to make enquiries concerning the conduct of Mr. Luscumbe, that individual was, like the octopus, endeavouring to shield his movements in a mysterious gloominess of his own creation.

Seated in the public room of an inn at Cardiff was a dark-featured cunning personage, anxiously awaiting some tidings. His brow was knitted into a frown ; his thick and jewelled fingers played the tattoo generally attributed to the Evil One, upon the table, as he sat staring at the wall before him."

"She will be up this evening," he muttered, "and then the last trick will be played. If the lad will only consent, we shall succeed."

A tap at the door indicated an arrival, one who was acquainted with the fact that the man was alone in the room, and knew that it behoved an intruder to be cautious ; else why knock for admittance to a public apartment ?

"Come in," growled the man in the chair. "Well?" he added as the other obeyed; "what news?"

"The vessel is entering the roads; all's well."

"That is good news. Will the lad agree to the suggestion we made?"

"Yes; for payment!"

"Certainly. We will pay him. To-morrow we will move freely. Go down to the vessel and see how she is manned. Interview the hands and ascertain what stuff they are made of. Engage the best, and the engineers."

"The best?" asked the other. "The most experienced, you mean?"

"Yes, and the worst characters. I want a crew who will obey my orders in *everything*. Then return, report progress, and assume your new character. You understand?"

"I do," replied the other.

"To-morrow your part will have to be acted fully, so be as smart as you please. We have no time to lose."

The *Hydra* had by this time brought up in fairly seamanlike fashion, and the crew were congratulating themselves upon the chances of a spree ashore, when the man we have already noticed stepped on board grandly.

"Who commands here?" he enquired, with some authority in his tones, seeking for the captain.

"I do, sir," replied an honest, kindly man, whose clear eye and ruddy cheeks gave evidence of health, good living, and good humour. "What's your business?"

"My business is sailing in this vessel. She is mine. I am the owner, and wish to see the crew paid off, unless any of them desire to remain."

There was a silence. At length one man replied for all.

"No, sir; I and my mates wish to return to the Clyde."

"Very well; you are not needed. Come to the Beaufort to-morrow, and be paid your wages. I can obtain other hands."

He descended the side and was pulled away, while the men drew lots for liberty ashore.

The reputed owner of the *Hydra* then returned to the inn, where he found the foreigner in his room. There the two men conversed until a late hour.

That morning the men who had not yet quitted the yacht brought her in to the quay, and were paid off by a dark-featured individual whom they did not know. As they were landing, the owner of the vessel, accompanied by a young lady who looked delicate, appeared on deck.

"We must wait, dear," said the owner, "till we have replaced these good fellows, who decline to ship for the cruise."

The lady said nothing in reply, and the pair departed. While a new crew were being obtained, a fresh supply of coal was put on board, and the gentleman gave his bill at three months upon a well-known firm for the money.

In three days the little steamer, which had excited some curiosity, was ready for sea. The engineers were at their posts, and the new crew, more or less hilarious, were lounging about discussing the trip. The *Hydra* steamed to Milford, where she coaled full up, and where the "lady" and the owner joined the ship. The girl was stated to be his daughter who was in delicate health, and for whose benefit the voyage had been undertaken.

So far the crew had not manifested any impatience, nor had they observed anything peculiar in the owner, and his dark-featured factotum ; but now they perceived that the latter assumed a tone of command which was unusual in an inferior. .

There was no longer any need to dissemble. The old crew had been dismissed, the new hands knew nothing of the circumstances under which the voyage had been undertaken, and Luscumbe assumed his true position, while Smith, his mate and companion in the fraud, who wrote such a nice hand and could imitate writing so well, fell back into his true position. But the lady never appeared !

Nothing occurred to alarm the men, and the *Hydra*

made her way into the Mediterranean, her white funnel pouring out black smoke at times ; but there was smokeless coal on board too. All went well, and, though the men wondered why the owner chose to carry arms and ammunition, with some cargo of which they knew not the character, "It was no business of their's," they said ; and "What was the odds, so long as you'r happy, Jack ?"

They did not put in at Gibraltar as had been anticipated, but ran past the fortress without exchanging signals. A squall arose, and when the wind had fallen, the captain, Luscumbe, himself called all hands and addressed them.

"My lads," he said, "I have a freak in my mind. You would like some employment this fine weather. So, carpenter, get out your paint pots, and let the men paint the funnel black. The white is too bright."

These eccentric orders were obeyed. In the course of the day and evening the chimney was painted black, and the boats were changed from blue to white, The name *Hydra* was picked away, and the less euphonious name of *Ferret* was inserted on all places which had hitherto borne the former title.

The men did as bidden, but grumbled. Still, as a private yacht, the ship might bear any name she pleased, or as her owner pleased. But the eccentricity of the captain did not end there. He himself took the helm

for a spell, and sent the watch down below "for a rest," as he said. With the assistance of his engineer he then put the vessel about, and, with the wind on the quarter, ran back towards Gibraltar, with all lights obscured, under sail, and easy steam.

Of course this change of direction was at once discovered, and many comments were made. The men whispered, and at length determined to ascertain where they *were* really bound for. But their curiosity was still further aroused that evening.

The Straits were nearly cleared when the mate summoned the watch, and bade them cast the jolly-boat adrift.

"Cast the boat adrift! For why?" enquired the men.

"Because I desire it. I have my orders, and obey them. Come, no shirking."

"There isn't no shirking here," replied one seaman angrily. "But I wants to know—the reason for all this hanky-panky. It's no good, mates!"

"Then you refuse to obey orders," cried the other. "Mutiny! This shall be reported. Now, men, will you act or not?"

The men looked at each other. At this juncture Luscumbe came forward from the wheel and said—

"The man who refuses to obey orders will be shot! So mind your *ps* and *qs*."

"It's no cue of mine to paint chimneys, nor to scuttle

boats, or throw 'breakers' overboard. I shipped as an able-bodied seaman, not as a mechanic or a wrecker."

"Silence," roared Luscumbe, drawing a small pistol from his waistcoat. "Toss the boat over."

The men hesitated.

"Toss her overboard : and those buoys, with the 'dinghy' and the casks."

The boat was let go and fell in the davits ; the tackle was loosed ; she turned over by design of the mate, and dropped into the sea. The same fate awaited the smaller boat, some water-casks, and other articles which bore the name *Hydra*.

"That will do," said the dark commander. "And now let me not hear any grumbling, or" (here he swore loudly) "I'll shoot the mutineer like a dog !"

"Dog yourself," muttered the brave man who had declined to cut the boat adrift. "Dog yourself. If I live, I will let the proper persons know your crooked ways."

"You *will* have it then," cried the angry captain, as he raised his pistol, menacingly.

The men were all silent as the small barrel gleamed. They were brave but unarmed men and could not have interfered if they would.

"Promise unconditional obedience," continued Luscumbe, sternly ; "or I will deliver you at the Rock as mutineers."

The men as a body acquiesced : all but two and the stalwart seaman who did not speak.

"And, you fellow," began Luscumbe, "will you promise?"

"Never," he said. "I will deliver you at the Rock first; and help to hang you. You're on no good errand."

"Then take the consequences," shouted the infuriated captain. "Die like the fool you are."

A crack—a stifled cry—the man's form fell prone on deck, and the engineers rushed up to see what was the matter.

The answer was there on deck. In the bleeding body and the blue pistol-smoke the men read the word "Murder," and two vowed revenge.

They were undecided what to do, and the watch rushed across the deck. From the cabin also the "young lady" appeared, and at once advanced towards Luscumbe.

"I did not bargain for this," she cried. "I will denounce you if you do not promise to put that man ashore. What, is he dead?"

"Denounce me! Ha!" cried the reckless man. "Who is for me, lads?"

Smith, the mate, and six or seven ruffians ranged themselves by his side.

The two other men stood beside the "lady." "We'll protect you, miss," they said.

"Disguise is useless," was the reply. "I am an English lad, bribed to personate his daughter for some purpose—I know not what. Put us ashore at once—I demand it."

Luscumbe raised another pistol, but Smith interfered.

"Come, captain," he said, "that's enough. Put 'em ashore : it's safer."

"I'll send 'em adrift in the ocean, presently," replied the captain savagely, "and let them find their way home if they can. Go below, you !"

The lad obeyed. The two men were permitted to accompany him : the wounded man was carried to his berth ; and the disguised *Hydra* made her way through the Straits into the Atlantic on her fell errand.

The next night the boy and the two faithful sailors were put into a boat with one breaker of water, and a small allowance of food, to die !

CHAPTER VIII.

THE START AFTER THE HYDRA.—A SAD PARTING.—"NURSE
BONE AND HIS PATIENTS.

THE *Hercules*, having spoken to such good purpose after her re-naming, was quickly got ready. No time was lost. Unfortunately, the *Hydra* had got clear away from the Clyde ; but Captain Garrettson had caused enquiries to be made, and as soon as he heard that no such vessel had been noticed quitting the Mediterranean, he made up his mind to seek her in that inland sea first.

"You know your own business best, captain," said Mr Arnold bluntly, "but if I were you, I would go on round the Cape, and seek your fortune in the East."

"And meanwhile the *Hydra* may be in the Mediterranean. She can't get out unless by Gibraltar, and surely some vessels will have sighted and reported her."

"Not if her captain is the scoundrel we take him for. He will find means to elude you, depend upon it. My advice is, go and beard the lion in his den—in the eastern seas."

"And that is my opinion," added Isaac Bone, winking his solitary eye in a very knowing manner. "Go east, round the Cape, Captain."

"Well, well, we'll see, shipmate. Mr Arnold," continued Garrettson, "we're all ready aboard, when can the boys come along?"

"The sooner the better," replied the shipmaster. "When a thing's got to be done, and agreed on, I say *do* it. There'll be a weeping concert, and no mistake; but let us say the day after to-morrow."

"Sunday morning. Very well. Sunday is a good starting day. We'll up anchor at noon Sunday, after prayers."

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the leave-taking and the tearful *adieux* which made us all so melancholy on the Sunday. We had prayers early, and after the men's dinner the anchor was got up. Steam had been got up before, and the vessel proceeded at half speed down the river, greatly to the surprise of many people and some ships' captains, that sabbath day.

Mr and Mrs. Arnold and my parents, with Emily and Rosie, remained on board till the *Hercules* reached Greenock. We had little inclination to look at the views of the river, so occupied were we in listening to parting counsels and good advice. Bowling Bay, which suggested Tom Bowling to Smollett, which character Dibdin afterwards im-

mortalized in the song, was passed in a mist of tears : and Dumbarton Castle, on its massive rocky foundation, received only the scantiest of remark. The autumn day was fine, but threatened rain and wind as we neared Greenock, where the actual tug of separation had to be endured.

"I wish this 'ado' was over," remarked the captain to the wily Bone, whose solitary eye was moister than usual. Whether regret or the necessity for keeping it in check by a little extra allowance of spirits had caused this appearance in the generally dry and hardened mate of the *Hercules*, no one enquired. We were all too much occupied by our own eyes to think of Bone's solitary optic. Newark Castle and Port Glasgow were subsequently passed, and then Greenock, with its view of hills, and loch, and river, was reached.

Here the parting took place, and, as the sympathetic Bone remarked, there was "water enough wasted in crying to supply Shaw's Company for a week !" The last tears were shed, the last waves of the hand and handkerchief were given and answered ; then the captain gave the word to "go on ahead," and away we sped westward for the Firth of Clyde. As we passed Holy Loch, Bone told us about the terrible collision that took place in 1825 between the celebrated *Comet* and another steamer, which resulted in the loss of many lives.

"Rather jolly this, Crumbs," said Tom, after a pause. "Somehow I can't *quite* make up my mind that we are actually off on our trip."

"Trip!" I echoed. "Voyage, you mean. Yes, Tom, I can quite believe we have left home, and——"

"Cheer up, my lad," said Captain Garrettson, "I'm your parent for the present. Isaac, here, is a capital nurse!"

"We don't want a nurse," replied Tom with indignation. "So, Captain Garrettson, you will please not—well, I mean——"

Tom stopped in confusion, for the captain was looking at him in a quiet way which was rather discomfiting, and Bone had *fixed* him with his penetrating orb.

"You forget," he said, "that you're under my orders now—a kind of apprentice, Master Tom ; and, though I'm what they call *in loco parentis*, I ain't goin' to spoil the child by any sparing of rods ! Bone is your nurse ; and, young sir," he continued, turning to me, "he will attend to you too—you'll require him."

"I do not think so," I replied, "but you, of course, know best."

The captain grinned, and, with a nod meant to be reassuring, walked forward, leaving Tom effervescing with indignation, and ready to boil over at the first opportunity.

"Tell you what it is, Crumbs," he said, "if I'd thought Garrettson was going to behave like this, and lord it over us, I'd have seen him hanged before he had got me on board—and not then."

"Very likely not," I replied, laughing. "But, Tom, it's no use kicking. 'Garrettson,' as you call him, is the master here, and we must submit. At least I will, and save trouble."

"I would'nt be so mean-spirited, if I were you! You are soft, Crumbs! you are rightly named. Here's Bone the nurse! Ha, ha! Nurse Bone."

"Ay, ay, I'm 'Nurse' Bone," he answered good humouredly, "and let me tell you, you might have a worse thing than a Bone at your back. Bone and sinew! Bone and sinew!"

"How very *insinu—ating* you are," laughed Tom. "But we shall not require your services. What's that?" he asked suddenly, pausing.

Tom's question referred to a loud slap which shook the steamer a little.

"Oh, that's only a wave against the paddle-box," replied the mate. "Nothing at all. Wait till we get into the North Channel!"

"I am afraid I shall not be able to wait," said Tom, who had suddenly turned rather pale. "I didn't think the sea was so rough as this about here. Is it *always* so rough, Bone?"

"No, I suppose not: not *always*. I have seen it

rougher sometimes. But this is nothing at all, sir. The Channel between Ireland and the Mull *will* give you a headache with this south-east wind."

"Come along, Tom," I cried, "let us walk about."

"There's Arran yonder," said Bone, "and that's the Sound of Bute: beyond the island is Kilbennan Sound, and here——"

"Is the sound of the waves, also the rattle of Bones," retorted Tom, rudely. "I will go below, Crumbs."

So Tom, feeling decidedly uncomfortable, staggered to the companion, and made his lurching way down the stairs, while I looked at the single-eyed and unselfish mate.

"We sha'n't see him again this side of Milford, sir," remarked Bone, respectfully. "He'll be tame then. I'll tell you what it is, sir, your young friend wants a reef in his manners. He's apt to go a little 'free,' and unless he ties up his points, or hauls in a bit, he'll capsize, he will!"

"When shall we reach Milford do you think, Mr. Bone?" I asked courteously, changing the subject.

"I can't say, sir, not to an hour. Any time it pleases the captain. I should say on Wednesday mornin', myself."

The *Hercules* continued to plunge and roll more

and more as night approached, and before supper-time I began to be aware, as Tom was already aware, that Isaac Bone was by no means a bad nurse in seasickness.

CHAPTER IX.

WE ENCOUNTER THE CASTAWAYS, AND ALSO MEET WITH AN
ADVENTURE.—A NEW DISCOVERY.

"How delicious! Quite smooth water: no creaking, no staggering, no rolling in that horrible Irish Sea or St George's Channel. I don't know which we hated most." How thankful Tom and Crumbs were when "Nurse" Bone came in with a couple of nice dry cutlets and bread, with some brandy and water, and said—

"We're off St. David's now, young gentlemen."

"Where's that?" enquired Tom, languidly.

"Wales," replied Bone. "We'll run down the islands and round St. Anne's Head—and there we are, in Milford Haven."

Then Tom and I simultaneously muttered the thanksgiving recorded in the opening sentences of this chapter.

Quite smooth water, a lovely harbour, but at that time scarcely utilised. There was a certain amount of traffic to Ireland, but not much other traffic. There was coal, however, and for the purpose of coaling we had put in.

As the coal-heaving was very dirty work, the captain quitted the ship, and invited Tom and me to accompany him on shore. He wanted to make a few enquiries concerning the *Hydra*, which had put in there. Nor had he long to wait for information at this "Blessed Milford," for at the Inn whither we proceeded in company—Tom and I being rather light-headed after our nursing—Captain Garrettson obtained the clue he sought.

There were two men and a lad in the little parlour, who were the centre of a curious and attentive group of men and women—coasters and oyster dredgers, steam-ship hands and sailors, all listening attentively. Captain Garrettson pushed his way in, and heard something which made him jump, and cry out—

"Say that again, you. Say that's true, is it?"

All eyes and many looks of surprise were turned upon the American, while sundry muttered bits of advice as to "keepin' mouths shut," were tendered gratuitously.

"Trew!" replied a tall man at the other side of the circle; "in course its trew. Who are yew?"

"Time enough to know me," replied Garrettson. "What *I* want to know is, what them two know about the *Hydra* steamer, which sailed from here a few weeks ago. That's what I want."

"Listen, and you will hear something.

"And so 'ill we, which is more'n we can now," remarked a sailor. "Heave ahead, Richard."

The captain was about to retort, but the man next him put his hand on his arm, and said, "Shet up your head, or we'll smash 'im." This hint proved sufficient, Captain Garrettson listened, as did Tom and I, and heard that the man Luscumbe had tossed the two men and the lad into a boat in the open sea, because they had protested against certain foul deeds which we then only guessed at, as we had not heard the commencement of the narrative.

It was with the greatest indignation that the audience listened ; and when the lad, being called upon, confessed his share in the business—how he had agreed to go on board in disguise, to make believe he was the dark captain's daughter, who was delicate and wanted a sea voyage—Captain Garrettson offered him a high rate of wages to sail with him, and also wished to take the men.

The men refused. The lad, who had come from Cardiff, having been persuaded to leave his employers there, did not want to return thither ; so he accepted Garrettson's offer, greatly to that gentleman's delight.

"This will save us lots of time," he remarked. "Now, my lad, which way did the *Hydra* steer ?"

"She quitted the Straits, and headed for Cape Verd," replied the young man, a slim fresh coloured specimen of humanity. "But in the ocean that

savage, the captain, put us three into the boat, and let us go adrift. We had only one pair of sculls, and if the sea hadn't been pretty smooth we should have been swamped to a certainty."

"To a dead sartinty," added one of the rescued, and his mate nodded.

"We was picked up by a Liverpool barque," continued the lad, who appeared fairly educated, and spoke well. "The captain took us on board the next day after we had been sent adrift; so we didn't have to starve much, and brought us up after some beating about. We only got here yesterday, sir."

"Well, then, do you come aboard the *Hercules* yonder, by the pier. I'm huntin' that *Hydra*."

"She ain't the *Hydra* now; the devil in command he has called her the *Ferret*! picked out her name, changed her boats, thrown a lot of things overboard, and hoodwinked the crew. He's a smart villain, no doubt."

"It sounds incredible," whispered Crumbs to Tom Arnold. "Do you think it is likely?"

"It certainly seems most *unlikely*," replied Tom in the same tone; "but queer things happen at sea!" *

"It is as well to know the change that has taken place; but I have a drawing of her," replied Captain

* Those who have the patience to read to the end of this tale will see in the appendix to it the actual details of this apparently totally imaginative story.—H. F.

Garrettson. "Her lines will betray her anywhere. What is your name, my lad?" he continued, turning to the young fellow who had lent himself to the fraud.

"Benjamin Starling, sir," replied the lad.

"Well, then, Starling, you may perch yourself on my ship; but mind, no more masqueradin'! You'll likely get into trouble when your acting is known."

"That's why I ain't goin' back to Cardiff, sir," muttered the fellow. "I be ashamed."

"So you oughter," replied the captain; "and I'm glad you are. Fix yourself up, and go on board soon's ye can. I'll trust you, and we'll soon follow up the *Hydra* or *Ferret*, or whatever lastin' new name she sails with. Now, young gentlemen."

This was addressed to Crumbs and Tom, who, accordingly, made ready to depart. But they did not immediately return to the steamer, which was still coaling, and consequently dusty, but the captain did return. They wandered about, admiring the scenery; for there was little else to admire at the time, except the harbour, which has no compeers in the Old World, and no rivals in the New, if we except San Francisco and Rio.

It was a beautiful prospect which greeted the lads on their last evening in England for some time to come. The great cliffs which guard the roadstead, or rather the harbour, from boisterous winds, rise high,

and the water was then as calm as a pond. The setting sun tinted the placid sea, and flooded the expanse of the harbour with its beams. The soft-looking and undulating hills extended away for a long distance ; all was still ; no one seemed to be moving, and the dearth of wind kept the few vessels which were in the haven, motionless at their moorings. St. Anne's Head stood out boldly into the channel, and on the point great lighthouses now gleam and glitter to guide the sea-farer into the busy mercantile Milford, called, by Imogen, the "blessed ;" where are a steam-boat and railway-station, with docks and a large business population.

Tom and his faithful Crumbs were sitting on the cliff-side, watching the sunset, when a great dog came bounding and barking towards them ; not angrily, as it seemed, but still with the evident intention to attract their notice. The animal leaped from side to side, half turning round, then barking, until the boys rose, and Tom said—

"I say, Crumbs, I believe he wants us to go with him. Let us go : he's a sensible beast."

So the lads proceeded in search of adventure ; "quite like a story-book," as Crumbs remarked ; and the dog, evidently pleased, ran on in front, and then stopped ; then ran on again, and made his way down a path, a rather steep path, leading to the harbour-side, as it seemed.

Tom and his friend followed carefully, and after some slipping on the loose stones, reached a spot where, seated on the grass, was a little girl about eleven years old, seemingly suffering, and quite helpless.

"Oh dear," cried Tom, "what is the matter, little girl. Are you ill?"

"No," she answered, drawing in her breath, as if in pain; "not ill, but I have hurt my ankle, and can scarcely move my foot. I can't walk, and I do not know what to do. Oh dear! oh dear! I am in *such* pain!"

Then the little maiden, seeing help at hand, began to cry. She had not shed a tear so long as she had to depend upon herself, but the hope of rescue somehow caused her tears to flow.

"We will try to help you," said Crumbs, with much sympathy. "How did you get here?"

"Cl-cl-climbed up," sobbed the little maid.

"And where did you climb from?" asked Tom.

"The b-b-b-boat," replied the child.

"What boat?" enquired Crumbs, in vain seeking the craft which had carried the little girl to the cliff side.

"Father's g-gig," she answered. "'Neptune' and I came for a row, and the tide went out and left us. So I climbed up here to watch for the tide, and let father see me signal to him. Then I slipped and

twisted my ankle, as you can see. 'Neptune' went for assistance, but no one came till you did—I *am* so glad you came!"

"Neptune" looked from one to the other of the party, and made little bowings and barkings, with much wagging of tail to emphasise the narrative, the truth of which he endorsed. But the ankle was very much swollen, and the boys could see that the little girl was in great pain.

"We will carry you," said Tom. "I think we can manage, Crumbs?"

The girl stared at the boys, and her curiosity overcame her sufferings; for she asked—

"Is that your name? How funny!"

"My *real* name is Charlie," I replied. "Tom calls me 'Crumbs' as a nick-name. What is your name, please?"

"Sophia Rawlings," she replied very readily. "Papa commands that barque: we came from Madeira where mamma died, oh—oh, please take me to the ship. I am so tired, and feel so bad."

Tom, the decided one, immediately complied. He helped the little girl to her feet, but she could not rest on both. Crumbs then went on one side and Tom on the other, and made the girl put an arm around each of their necks. Then, supporting her with their arms, they very cautiously commenced the descent to the edge of the water, where the boat



"Then supporting her with their arms, they very cautiously commenced the descent to the edge of the water."—p. 86

was lying waiting for the tide which was now rising rapidly.

The sun had set by this time, and the daylight was waning when the trio reached the gig. It was a nice light boat, and had cushions in it, quite a private boat. Placing little Sophie on the ground, the lads took off their shoes and stockings and launched the boat. Then, lifting Sophie easily, they placed her in the stern-sheets. Neptune jumped in and sat in the bows, quite contented ; and the boys shoved out.

"Oh, how kind you have been to me," said the girl to Tom. "I shall never forget you—or you either," she added, turning to me. But Tom was the favourite already : I saw that, soft as I was.

Tom was sitting on the after-thwart, and Crumbs (myself) was pulling the pair of sculls. The girl directed me to the vessel, and as we came nearer we could perceive a man watching us with a telescope.

"There's papa," cried the little girl. "He sees us, and I daresay he is wondering why I am coming home in such state with you boys."

Neptune barked the answer to the shout, "Anything wrong?" to which Sophie answered. "Not much the matter," and I pulled as hard as I could alongside the barque.

Captain Rawlings was at the ladder as we reached it, and looked anxious.

"What's this, Sophie? Are you hurt? Tell me,

darling, at once. Who are these boys? Are you ill?"

"Oh no, papa. I hurt my ankle—you see how swelled it is, and these young gentlemen came to help me. They have been so very kind ; without them I might have died on the cliff path, papa."

"I am deeply indebted to you, my lads," said Captain Rawlings, who was a fine, tall, bronzed, broad-shouldered sailor, wearing a laced cap with crape, and a serge suit with gold buttons, with crape on his arm. Quite a gentleman ; and more like an officer in the Royal Navy than a captain of a trader. He had brown hair, and whiskers tinged with grey ; no beard or moustache, and he seemed about fifty years old.

"Now, Sophie, let me lift you, dear," he continued, as he stepped into the gig.

Tom held the boat ; I endeavoured to keep her steady ; and Captain Rawlings, taking his little daughter in his arms, carried her on deck and down into the cabin as quickly as possible. Many of the crew came crowding round, and seemed very sorry indeed that "little Missie" had met with such a painful accident.

We remained on deck, as requested by the mate, until Captain Rawlings returned ; and as we walked about admiring the vessel, her tapering spars, and trim-furled sails, we simultaneously detected an object which astonished us.

"Look there, Tom !" I cried.

"My gracious, Crumbs, do you see?"

Yes, we saw it plainly enough. It was a boat; in it was a small cask used to contain water, and on the boat was the name—

HYDRA!

Then Tom said, after a pause, during which we had looked at each other intently—

"Crumbs, this is the barque that picked up the men; Captain Rawlings may give us some information. Here he comes. Let's ask him about the boat and the men he picked up."

CHAPTER X.

WE MAKE FRIENDS AFTER MAKING ENQUIRIES.—TOM AND SOPHIE.
—THE CAPE VERD ISLANDS.—A CLUE.—MR. BONE'S BOTTLE.—
THE "HYDRA" AT LAST.

THE captain came towards us with extended hand.

"My little girl has told me all about your kindness, my lads, and I thank you heartily. Now you will remain to dinner, and then I'll send you safe ashore, and home after."

"Thank you very much," we replied, "but we must join our own vessel. Yonder steamer is our home at present."

"What, that craft?" exclaimed the captain. "She's only just come in!"

We assented; and then, calling the captain's attention to the boat, told him that our commander was in search of the *Hydra*.

This puzzled Captain Rawlings, who was not satisfied until we had also told him the whole story concerning the object and the cause of our expedition to the Eastern seas.

"Ah!" he said, "then I will keep a bright look-out for that scoundrel too. My next trip will be to the

Indian Ocean, when I have put Sophie to school," he added.

"Sophie isn't going to school," cried a voice from the cabin. The skylight was open, and the girl, who was lying on the sofa, heard what her father had said.

"Tut, tut, little self-will," replied her indulgent parent. "You must go, dear. Be quiet now, please."

Then turning to us the captain said—

"I will send you back in my gig ; or go with you to pay my respects to your captain, if you will not remain."

We declined to stay, because night was coming on, and Captain Garrettson would be anxious. So our new friend gave the necessary orders, and then we were permitted to go down into the cabin, and say good-bye to Sophie. She laughed when Tom tried to kiss her hand, which he did after the old manner, kneeling at her side, in a most deferential attitude, half in play, half in earnest.

"Good-bye, Master Tom," she said, saucily. "You need not kneel to me. I am not the young Queen Victoria."

Tom rose and shook hands, and I followed his example. As we went up the stairs, Tom whispered to me—

"Isn't she nice, Crumbs? I declare she is ever so much prettier than Rose!"

"Rose is very pretty, indeed," I replied. "But she is your sister, Tom, and—"

"Now then," called out Captain Rawlings, "are you ready?"

It was most amusing to see what deference Tom paid to the captain, and how kindly he spoke about Sophie's accident. Indeed, he seemed to take pleasure in recalling the incidents, and dwelt upon them until the unromantic father—"a man of little *real* feeling," Tom said, afterwards—suggested that he should change the subject! This hint caused a pause in the conversation, and we in silence reached the *Hercules*, which had by this time finished coaling.

Captain Garrettson was very glad to see us again, for he was afraid we had got into some mischief, and had no idea what had become of us. But he and the other captain had a long conversation about the *Hydra*. At ten o'clock we took leave of our new friend with kind messages for "Miss Sophie," which the captain promised to deliver after Tom's earnest request, at which the father smiled. At six o'clock next morning we completed our arrangements, and at seven got under way, and shaped our course for Cape Verd Islands.

These are ten in number, and readers of the classics will recognize the "Hesperides" with the orchards of golden apples, which were guarded by the ever-watchful dragon. St. Iago is the largest island, and Fuogo

is the volcanic or fiery one. We had many readings and some conversations respecting these islands, and wondered whether we should like them when we got to St. Iago. But it took us some time to get there. The Bay of Biscay was rough, and the winds were contrary. The little *Hercules* plunged and dipped deeply. Then Tom and his friend knew what the sea could do, and they lay most miserable, buffeted, and careless of life for two days, when the wind and sea abated.

We had a great wish to put into Grand Canary, but our stern commander said we must wait until we were coming back. "Business first," said he, "but I'll let ye have a look at Teneriffe, if the weather is good enough." So we coasted along the islands, but did not land, and fortunately got a good look at El Pico, as the captain said the Portuguese called the great mountain which rises like a sugar-loaf. We let the fires go out about this time, as we got into the "trades," and bowled along so pleasantly, that we were enabled to learn a good deal of the detail connected with the steamer; and I ("Crumbs") who had a taste for machinery, studied the engines and made a highly-esteemed acquaintance with them, which has continued ever since, even to old age; a friendship that may be described as rivetted by Time.

It was great fun running with the trades, and learning something of our professions. The wind is so

delightfully cool—and the animal life, the fish and birds so interesting. The dolphins and flying-fish amused us greatly, and we captured several. Away, south-west-by-south, we continued for some days until we caught sight of the Cape Verd Islands, which I have already mentioned, and we soon put into the harbour of Praya. There we picked up some news of the *Ferret*, for the *Hydra* had put in there under that name. We also received intelligence of the loss of the *Hydra* ; for a boat turned bottom upwards, some casks, and other articles had been picked up by a vessel, such *flotsam* evidently indicating the loss of the steamer. We could afford to smile at this ; but we did not enlighten the traders who had been victimized by the astute Luscumbe, though the people did not know that the bills they had received in payment for stores were forgeries. We did not enlighten them. Why make them unhappy too soon ? " said Bone.

After quitting "The Verds" we made for the Cape, and although many vessels were hailed and interrogated we received no news concerning the *Hydra* or the *Ferret*.

"It is rather curious," remarked Bone, the mate, fixing his solitary eye upon the fore-top. "It's *very* curious that we hear nothing. Some of these craft *must* have passed Luscumbe's."

"It would be difficult to do that," remarked Captain Garrettson, drily.

"Difficult to pass the *Hydra*? I can't see why," said Tom.

"No, sir, and you don't see what the captain or me means, either," remarked Bone, bringing his eye down to Tom's eyes, and glancing at them in turn. "You don't understand, young gentleman."

"I do," said Crumbs, laughing; "and I agree with Captain Garrettson entirely."

"What are you laughing at?" exclaimed Tom. "Mr. Bone, where's the fun? I can't see any joke in Luscumbe's behaviour. You are all silly, I think."

In proof of our silliness, we all laughed louder than ever; and Tom turned away in high dudgeon.

We had passed beyond the limits of the Sargasso Sea, which we had been anxious to view, but the captain continued his course. He told us, if we threw a bottle into the water near Verd Islands, that it would probably be carried by the ocean current to the West Indies direct; and that much information had been collected by the English Admiralty and embodied in a map of the ocean, entitled the "Current Bottle Chart." From this curious chart or map, the direction of the currents have been ascertained; so we learned that from the Canaries or Cape Verd Islands, any floating objects are carried to the Antilles or the Gulf of Mexico.

Then asked Tom, "But suppose we threw the

bottle into the sea near America, where would it go to—if not smashed, of course ? ”

“ It would reach Western Europe, most likely,” replied the captain.

“ That’s true,” remarked Isaac Bone. “ I’ll tell ye what I saw once.”

We all drew long breaths ; for when Bone began about his vision, we knew something large was approaching. In this case, however, I have reason to believe his statement was true in the main facts.

“ I was servin’ in the *Prima Donna* off Cape Coast Castle some years ago, and, by way of amusement, I wrote on a paper and put the paper into a bottle. What I wrote was this :—‘ Isaac Bone, Mariner, off African coast to-day, will give five shillings in English money for this bottle on shore, with an account, truthfully, of where it was found.’

“ It was done in idleness for a bet.

“ Well, we came home, and I went to stay, after several months, with my mother’s relations in Cornwall. I had some little nephews there, and one evening young Alexander comes up, and says—

“ ‘ Uncle Isaac,’ says he, ‘ will you give me five shillings ? ’

“ ‘ No, my lad,’ I said, ‘ I will not ; not yet, anyway.’

“ ‘ Well then,’ he says, ‘ you will break your word, for here is your hand-writin’ promising five English shillings to anyone who will bring you this paper.’

"Well, I *was* surprised, I can tell you. There was my writin' plain as plain—'Isaac Bone, of the *Prima Donna*.' That was me, no mistake. But I wanted to tease the lad, so I said—

"No, Alec, I didn't promise anyone five shillings for the *paper*, but for the *bottle*! Bring me the bottle, my boy, and you shall have the money.'

"Well, he posted down to the shore, and I after him. Sure enough he showed me three bits of a bottle. I remembered the square sides of it, and the neck with the big cork in it, all right.

"'There it is, uncle,' he said.

"'No, them's only bits,' says I. 'Where's the whole bottle?'

"But when I had teased him I had to pay the money. Now that bottle had crossed the Atlantic, had been carried up the American coast, and come again over to England; where, months after, it was stranded in a little sandy bight of a bay on the Cornish coast. Sounds miraculous, don't it?"

"Indeed it does," we all said. "It *is* true, is it?"

"Yes, indeed. It was right in the bight of the bay."

"Is the *bite* of a bay *dangerous*, Mr. Bone?" enquired Crumbs, innocently.

"No, but the bight of a *rope* is, young man—when applied to the back," replied the captain, laughing at the mate, who seemed stupefied by the question.

"Now, what do you say to a run ashore this evening, if we make St. Helena ?"

We gladly assented, but it was not till next day that we landed on the island. Mr. Bone did not accompany us, for he would have seen too much of it.

A great deal has been written about St. Helena, and its associations with the Great Napoleon, which need not be here repeated. It is enough to say that we landed for a while, and after a few hours' exploration, Captain Garrettson carried us off, for we had heard something concerning the *Hydra*.

This ship had met with an accident to her engines ; she had been under sail when she came in, and some days were employed by her crew in fitting her up again. But we ascertained that she had put to sea in a hurry, for some reason unknown. Whether she had any fear of pursuit we could only conjecture. She had preceded us about four days.

Under these circumstances we hurried on board without visiting the grave of Napoleon at Longwood, as we had intended. But we hauled in again to send home some letters by a vessel bound for England, announcing our position and success so far—though we could not congratulate ourselves upon much success.

Away under steam for the Cape, bowling along southward to cover as quickly as possible the eighteen hundred miles which intervened between the two

stations. Days passed, and no sign of our enemy had been discovered, until, on Sunday morning early, Bone, who was up aloft with his telescope, hailed me—

“Below there, young gentleman,” he cried. “Ask the captain to come on deck, smart,—will you?”

I complied, and Captain Garrettson came tumbling up.

“Well, Bone—any news?”

“Ay, ay, captain, a sail on the port bow.”

“What’s she like?”

“She’s a’most hull down, and very indistinct, but I can see a thread of smoke. I shouldn’t be altogether surprised if it was the *Hydra*, after all!”

The news quickly spread. Mid-day passed. We had prayers, but not much attention was paid to them. Our eyes were oftener directed to the open ports than upon our books. When prayers were finished, without a sermon on this occasion, we all hurried on deck. Garrettson took a long look at the chase.

“Well, sir?” said Bone.

“I think she *is* the *Hydra*, by thunder!” exclaimed the captain. “Clear away the long gun. We’ll bring her to, presently.”

The gun was made ready, and the men stood waiting for farther orders, as we closed upon the vessel.

“Fire a blank round or two, and run up our number,” said the captain. “We’ll soon see what he’s made of now. *Fire!*”

CHAPTER XI.

WE CHASE THE "HYDRA."—A PARLEY.—THE RESULT.—A
PHANTOM SHIP.—A NIGHT ENGAGEMENT.—WOUNDED!

BANG! went the gun!

The smoke cleared away in a moment, but the vessel ahead of us took no notice whatever of our summons. Yet she could hardly fancy the signal referred to any other ship, as no other was sufficiently near for us to parley with.

"He *won't* see us," said Mr. Bone. "That fellow Luscumbe is plotting something, be sure."

"We'll try him again," said the captain. "Signal for his number."

"Fire a shot at him," said Tom. "Pitch it into him," he added, impetuously.

"We have no right to 'pitch into' peaceable vessels on the open sea," replied Captain Garrettson, quietly. "All we can do is to find out whether he is the man we seek. If that steamer is the *Hydra*, we'll speak to the commander seriously. We must wait, my lad."

While this conversation was proceeding, the flags had been selected and run up, in accordance with the

code. The question we asked was, "Who are you?" Then we politely waited for an answer.

After a while the reply came. The flags went fluttering up to the mast-head, and we made out, "The *Indus* for the Cape."

"The *Indus*!" exclaimed Bone, in a disappointed tone. "The *Indus*. Well, that's a settler for us! Look, he's signalling again. What does he say, sir?"

By this time the crew had become considerably excited. They clustered forward, and watched the "chase" with great interest. The chief engineer also put his black and perspiring countenance above the engine-room hatch. Then he leisurely ascended the remaining rungs of his ladder, and sat down, while we discussed matters, by the paddle-box.

We made out what the stranger wanted. He asked us who we were, and "whither bound," in return for our attentions.

"What shall we say, captain?" asked Mr. Bone.

"Tell him the truth," replied our skipper. "We have no reason to be ashamed of our name. Let him know the *Hercules*."

"But suppose that it is the *Hydra*," said master Crumbs (otherwise Fraser). "Luscumbe will know us again"

"Say we want to speak with the captain; that we have a communication for the *Indus*," suggested Bone, with a grin. "That will test him!"

"That is a capital notion, Bone," said Captain Garrettson, slapping his second in command on the shoulder. "That will fix his flint. Run up the flags. Say, Mister Tommy."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Tom, touching his cap quite man-o'-war fashion.

"Listen to me, you scapegrace. I am going to make a man of you ! Luscumbe doesn't know you, likely ?"

"No : but perhaps Cayley does. Why ?"

"Because I think I will send you on board that steamer. If Cayley is there you will see him. If he is not he won't see you. If the thief Luscumbe is there, Tom, he won't know you ; anyway we'll disguise you a little ; all's fair in love and war."

"But I'm not at war with anyone," replied Tom, who did not like the idea of being disguised. "Nor am I in love !"

"Oh, Tom !" I cried, "remember Sophie !"

Tom blushed, but stoutly denied any love. "But I'll go all the same," he added.

"Then dress yourself like an ordinary seaman ; your cheeks are brown enough, but we'll 'do you up' a little older. And while I dress you I will teach you your lesson."

Tom, with some reluctance, consented ; and, while the boat was being got ready, signals were made to the so-called *Indus* to lie to, and await a boat from the *Hercules*.

The stranger did not immediately comply with the request, but after a while, seeing that our ship was gaining, the captain of the *Indus* stopped his engines, and permitted the *Hercules* to come within hailing distance.

The heavy swell rendered it by no means desirable for the steamers to lie too close; but when we got near enough the boat was lowered, and Tom, with four men, got into it.

"Shall I go with him, sir?" said Bone.

"No, thank you, 'Nurse,' I can do very well without you," replied saucy Tom. "I shall not be long."

"Look here, Master Tom Arnold," said the captain. "Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut. If you are satisfied that that ship is the *Hydra*, don't remain on board. You know her well. I believe she *is* the *Hydra*, but of course I can't say for certain. Make as much haste as you can, for I don't like the look of the sky, and evenin' falls quick in these latitudes."

"All right, captain," replied Tom, laughing.

"And you, men," continued Garrettson. "Be sure you don't let yourselves be fooled. At the first suspicion of anything wrong do you come away, mind. If they worry you I'll send a shot into them."

The boat pulled away. There was no great distance to go. The other vessel had remained perfectly still

until our steamer had stopped, but a glance at the paddles showed she was forging very gently ahead of the boat, and thereby increasing her distance slightly. But the motion was so little that no notice was taken of it. Our engineer had banked his fires, and steam was no longer escaping.

"We must be drifting," said Bone, after a pause. "We wasn't a cable's length from that steamer when we stopped, and the boat hasn't reached her yet !"

"She's coming round towards us," said Captain Garrettsen. "The boat will board her on the star-board side."

"Just keep your eyes on her, Master Fraser," said the captain to me. "Bone, come into the cabin : I want you for a minute or two. It's all right enough."

The men, seeing the boat pull round the chase, took less interest in her movements. They separated, and all but the watch returned below. The engineer came on deck, leaving the stokers in charge. But I (Crumbs) kept watching the steamer ahead.

She was quite still except for the regular roll of the sea ; and we fancied it would be a matter of some difficulty to board her. The engineer came near me after a while, and I said—

"Mr. Neil, do you know why she keeps her paddles moving ?"

"To keep her 'way,'" he replied. "We are doing the same just enough for steerin' ; no more. We've

slacked down the fires for a while, though, and have'n't much steam for going."

"Doesn't it strike you that steamer is going ahead of us!" I said, after a pause.

"No, sir—not much; the boat is in tow still, you see," he replied, as he turned away.

For a few minutes nothing happened to cause us any anxiety. Tom had reached the deck, and had waved his hand as a signal that all was right; at least, so I interpreted it. He was received by the captain, apparently, and when I had seized the telescope, I perceived him to be a small, sandy-haired individual, who was extremely polite, and invited Tom into the cabin. He accepted the invitation, and I then, of course, lost sight of him.

We could not see the boat, but after a while it returned without Tom, who sent back a message that "all was right," and, "would the captain send the other captain a bottle of champagne in return for a fowl," which they brought back.

The captain laughed, and said—

"I suppose the skipper and master Tom are making friends."

But the reply he sent with the bottle was, "Come back as soon as you have had your glass of wine."

The boat again pulled alongside, but the engineer of that vessel was evidently tipsy! Three times did the men pull close, and three times did the wheels

revolve after the crew had laid in oars, and of course they were left astern. At length they grappled the side, and subsequently were invited on board by the mate.

The afternoon was by this time waning, and Captain Garrettson shouted to me from the cabin to hail the stranger and call Tom on board again.

This I did, but got no reply. We waited and hailed again.

Suddenly the boat was cut adrift from the stranger, and in another moment she was at full speed rushing ahead.

For a while I was so astonished that I could not give the alarm. The watch did, though ; and Captain Garrettson, with Bone, came hurrying up. But what did they see ?

One by one the four sailors who had formed the crew of the boat, were taken up by the men on board the stranger craft, and tossed in quick succession into the sea, which was rapidly darkening in the suddenly fading twilight. We waited, speechless, for the appearance of poor Tom, but he was not sacrificed in that way.

The captain quickly recovered his presence of mind.

"Load the bow-gun with shot, and bring him to ; aim at the paddles !" he shouted. "Man the long-boat and pick up the men in the water. Look sharp : there is no time to lose !"

Those orders were immediately obeyed, The boat

was launched ; the gun was loaded and fired before the men had been recovered. Another shot, and another was sent after the treacherous *Indus* (or *Hydra*, as we now believed her to be), but to no purpose. She drew rapidly away, and the rolling of the vessels made accurate practice extremely difficult.

By the time we had picked up the men and got under steam again, darkness had set in ; and the chase was quickly out of sight. We hoped, by driving the *Hercules* at full speed, that we would overtake our crafty antagonist : but she gave us the slip completely.

Darkness fell, and the wind rose. With the wind rose the sea, though the roll had been quite enough for young—heads, let us say. We had put all lights out, and were keeping a strict watch for other vessels, because we might easily run into them, or they into us. But we saw no lights whatever.

“ The fellow has got right away,” remarked Captain Garrettson ; “ and has taken our friend Tommy with him. Poor lad : I hope he won’t come to any harm. We should have been more on our guard, Bone.”

Mr. Bone made no answer. His eyes were fixed upon the water upon the port bow.

“ Look yonder, captain. Look ! ” he cried, in a terrified tone. “ See ! it’s the *Flyin’ Dutchman* ! ” he shouted.

Several of the men heard him, and started forward,

Showing against the horizon in a ghostly manner, such as the phantom ship has been represented as behaving, the hull of some vessel was distinctly visible. She carried no lights, and the rushing noise of the waves as they were ploughed up by her cutwater and curled under her forefoot was the only sound audible.

"Starboard," shouted the captain. "She'll cut us in two. Starboard your helm, man!"

He rushed aft, and whirled the wheel in the required direction. The steamer's head went round, and, being then before the wind, she ran well on the waves, which came curling aft.

The phantom vessel surged by some distance astern, and, as it passed, a sheet of flame burst from the side. A roar—our mizen-topmast fell over the side—the shrouds and stays and halyards all entangled in the wreck.

"By the everlastin' Jingo," roared Bone, "it's that pirate Luscumbe. He has found us out."

"Fire!" shouted the captain. "Give it to him."

The guns had been shotted when the chase had commenced at nightfall, and in a few seconds a broad-side of three was discharged along the line of foam and light which indicated the track of the treacherous Luscumbe.

A crackling sound was heard, and a cry as of a wounded man.

"Well done, lads!" said Captain Garrettson, who

was an old hand at manœuvring. "Round we go—full speed, Neil—now another."

Three more guns and the long 32 on the foredeck made themselves simultaneously audible; and as we lay down for fear of reprisals, a shower of grape-shot or some iron hail of that kind came singing through the rigging, and pounded our broadside.

"Blaze into him, my boys; blaze into him; fifty dollars to the gun which wipes him out. If we could only see him!—" exclaimed the captain.

We fired again, and again the shot came hurtling along. Two men were hit by splinters; and the funnel banged loudly as a shot glanced off it, only just touching it, fortunately. By the flashes of the guns our men could just distinguish the position of the enemy, as we called her, and when we fired our captain gave orders to stop the engines and wait.

This ruse was successful. More flashes told us the enemy were firing some yards ahead of us. Not a shot came over nor hit us. Our gunners then discharged their pieces, which were inferior to Luscumbe's apparently, but a cry told us that the shot had taken effect.

Our congratulations were short-lived: a terrible rushing and tearing and crashing succeeded. A splinter knocked over the man at the wheel, and striking me on the head inflicted a severe but not necessarily dangerous wound. It was quite enough

for me, however, and I fell backwards bathed in blood—my senses reeling—to the deck.

"He's killed for certain," exclaimed a voice, which I recognized as Bone's in the silence that ensued after the crash and quiver of the guns. Then I fainted, supported in the arms of faithful "Nurse" Bone.

After that I remember nothing distinctly, I have a confused recollection of lights in my eyes, and of being bathed and bandaged, and of feeling as if I had a cramp in my neck and shoulders. The pain kept me alive, I believe. But the events which immediately succeeded the engagement are a sealed book so far as I am concerned.

Some time must have elapsed since my wound had been dressed, for the candles were extinguished when I again languidly opened my eyes. Daylight filled the cabin ; and I was able to distinguish the sound of voices, so I concluded, and correctly, that I wasn't quite dead—not killed after all, as Bone had feared.

CHAPTER XII.

A SCALP WOUND.—THE "HERCULES" IN A CRITICAL CONDITION.
—A STRANGE ACCIDENT AND ITS EXPLANATION. — THE
"HYDRA" IN TABLE BAY.

"HE'S all right, is'n't he, doctor?" said Captain Garrettson, as he leaned over my cot. "I say, Munford, there's nothing *very* serious the matter, is there?"

"No," replied Dr. Munford, a young man who had been walking some Scotch hospital, and had come to test his theories at sea. "A scalp wound. He'll do well enough. A little blood-letting won't hurt him."

"Well, I'm glad he's pretty sound. We've had a nice time of it. Three men wounded—one seriously."

"Very seriously," put in the doctor calmly, as was his wont. "Bad case!"

"That's as bad as he can be, short of death," continued the captain. "Here's this lad knocked out of time; Tom Arnold taken off; four men nigh drowned, and the ship pounded like a—like a—like *anything*," concluded the puzzled commander, who for once seemed at a loss for an appropriate simile.

"Well, we can't help it," returned the phlegmatic

Munford. "There's no use in crying over spilt milk. We expected knocks some time, and this fight is about as broad as it's long—an equinox in fact. Luscumbe's got as good as he gave."

"It's no joking matter," replied the captain. "I've sent the carpenter to sound the well, for between you and I—"

"*Me*, please," interrupted the quiet doctor.

"Well, I meant you. I said you, didn't I?" asked the captain reddening.

"No; you said 'between you and I.' You mean you and *me*. It's only a question of grammar," he replied, laughing. "Go on ahead."

"Blow your English grammar! Can't a man talk *American* without being brought up all standin' by a young whelp of a surgeon, who don't know a—"

"A captain from a gentleman. Oh yes I do, Garrettson; and between you and *me*, we needn't fight about such a small matter. I'm sorry I offended you. There! Come. This is no time for chaff; you are quite right. Who's that?"

The captain shook hands with his usually reserved medical associate, and turned round. The new comer was the carpenter.

"Well, Thomas?" inquired Garrettson.

"There's a sight o' water in her, sir; and she leaks like a sieve. We're caulkin' all we can, and Mr. Bone he's workin' the pumps. But she's takin' it in fast!"

"Good Heaven! Thomas, you don't mean to say there's danger?" cried the captain. "Let me see."

He hurried from the cabin, when Doctor Munford came to my cot, and felt my pulse; then touched my head, and stood looking at me.

I was partly conscious of this attention, and tried to smile. But I suppose my smile only contorted my features, for the doctor bending down inquired—

"Are you in pain, my lad?"

"My head is very, very bad," I replied; "and my neck seems quite useless—as if I had no neck."

"Ah, you'll get over that very soon. Do you feel as if you could move about?"

"No, indeed," I replied. "Must I move?"

"We shall know in half an hour," replied Doctor Munford coolly. "We may have to cut and run. Your friend, the *Hydra*, has riddled us; and there's a hole 'twixt wind and water. But we needn't cry out before we are hurt."

"There's not much use in crying out afterwards, doctor," I replied, with a sickly smile. "We will hope for good news."

The report brought by the captain was not so unfavourable as at first had been apprehended. The injuries were serious, but not fatal, as the doctor would have phrased it. Captain Garrettson had discovered that the wreck of the mizen had been swinging backwards and forwards against the side, and had

exposed the seams. The waves then washed the oakum out, and the frame became leaky, as a matter of course.

The shot had assisted this process materially, but the injuries were not so bad as had been expected, and the captain had every hope of being able to make the Cape without further accident. We had tarred canvas and hides stretched across the leaky portions. Fortunately the pumps remained serviceable, else our danger would have been imminent.

The weather became worse as we neared the Cape of Storms, and the rolling of the *Hercules* was tremendous. The men had cleared the wreck, and made the ship look quite respectable again by the time I came on deck once more. Captain Garrettson determined to refit at Cape Town, but the condition of the vessel, and the adverse weather, our small supply of coal, and the danger of driving the steamer hard through the water, detained us considerably longer than we had anticipated.

One night the whole ship's company, from the captain downward, were startled by a tremendous shock, which shook the steamer violently from stem to stern. The engineers stopped the machinery; the captain rushed on deck, where the one-eyed mate was in command, equally puzzled with everyone else to account for the extraordinary concussion.

"What's the matter, Mr. Bone?"

"Can't say, captain. We're steerin' our course right enough. We've hit a volcano, I expect, and had a little explosion!"

"Nonsense, man," cried the captain; "we must have run down something. Did you observe anything, Martin?" he said to the look-out man, as he walked forward.

"No, sir, not a blessed thing. There was a kind of a rushin' noise, and then before you could say 'Jack Robinson,' the blow come. It was a hard one—like as if we had run on a rock—that's what it was like to me!"

There are no rocks in the Atlantic above water about here," replied the captain. "I am afraid we have run down a boat."

"And not hear the men squeal?" said the mate. "Very like a whale," he muttered.

"That's it," said the engineer. "You've hit it!"

"Hit what?" asked the captain, while Bone, no doubt, looked pleased, only we could not clearly distinguish his features. "Hit what? We know we've hit *something*!"

"A whale!" replied the engineer. "We've run on a sleeping whale, and shocked him, as well as the *Hercules*. That's all it is, captain."

The captain, however, was not satisfied until he had had another examination made of the well. But no water was making forward—all seemed tight and

sound. So the engineer's explanation was accepted as by no means an unlikely one. But the crew declared the "ship was bewitched." The wounded men fostered this idea, and declared they would never see land again. "Never no more," they said.

"Rubbish," retorted Bone. "Keep quiet."

The steamer proceeded, and after a day or two, we longed to see our adversary again, in Table Bay.

"There's one consolation," said Bone, "we are almost sure the *Hydra* will have made for Table Bay, and we shall fall in with her there."

"Having *fallen out* with her a few days ago," I replied.

"Glad you're better, Mister Fraser. Now if Mister Tom were here, we should have a fine joke, I daresay. Poor Mister Arnold !"

The time was dreadfully long. Day after day passed, and we never sighted Table Mountain ; and our anxiety concerning Tom Arnold was increasing as time passed. Poor Tom ! We missed him very much ; and his cheerful jokes were more appreciated in his absence, I may confess, especially by the unocular Bone.

"There's something wrong with the steamer, sir," said that astute individual one morning to the captain. "We ought to be in Table Bay by now, and here we are scarcely out of 33° south yet. The *Hercules* is bewitched I think, after all."

"Call the engineer," said Captain Garrettson. "Tell him to come to me."

Mr. Neil came immediately ; we were on the quarter-deck as the learned man approached.

"Mr. Neil," said the captain, "Mr. Bone and I find the steamer is making little way. Can you account for it? The weather is moderating—are the engines working properly?"

"Yes, Captain Garrettson, they are ; not at full power of course, but moving properly."

"Then you cannot account for our slow progress?" continued the captain.

"Not unless the bottom's foul, and it can scarcely be that ; and she isn't water-logged, is she? Remember that whale!"

"Mr. Thomas reports all taut about her," replied the captain. "Have we any man, Mr. Bone, who could dive under the keel, and have a look at her?"

"There's Poulton ; he's been accustomed to diving in the Indies, he tells me. He could go down for a minute or so I daresay, sir."

"Let him be told. The sea will be calmer to-morrow. We will have a look at the bottom. Meanwhile get ready to careen her over a bit ; have the guns shifted, and get her up a little."

The sea abated, as the captain had foretold, and next day—the calmest we had had for some time—the *Hercules* was hove down a little, so as to expose

one side considerably. The man who had consented to dive made ready. The only fear he had was about sharks. But the captain had provided against that contingency by stretching a sail between two boats, and sinking one end with round shot, so that the canvas formed a complete screen for the sailor on the starboard side. A good look-out was kept meanwhile, but there was "no fear," Bone said.

The man stripped and got into one of the boats. Then he plunged in and disappeared. We fancied he had been under water a tremendous time; but it was only a minute and a few seconds when he reappeared at the boat's bow again.

"Well, Poulton," cried the captain, "any news; what's wrong?"

"There's something under the forefoot," replied the man. "I can't quite make it out. Shift the sail forward, and I'll go down again."

With some considerable difficulty the heavy sail was dragged forward, and after some delay, the man dived again.

This time he seemed absent longer than before, and when he came up, his face betrayed the greatest astonishment. We all rushed to the side to hear his report, which he gave in the following terms.

"No wonder she wouldn't go! You never saw such a thing in your lives, I'll warrant. A sword-fish has been and spiked a small whale, and pinned him

against the false keel. You come down and see them, captain !”

We were all greatly interested ; and the mate at once proposed to go and see this extraordinary fish. So he dived with the sailor, and both returned to confirm the news.

Then means were taken to disencumber ourselves of our unwelcome attachment. But it was by no means an easy matter. The “sword” had to be sawn asunder, for this instrument of offence could not be extricated, notwithstanding all attempts to haul its late possessor away. Both animals were dead ; the cetacean was not a large specimen, but the sword-fish was a fine fellow. They had been fighting, we supposed, and the whale had come too close to us, and met his fate by being pinned against the vessel. Unfortunately the biter was bitten too, and in killing his intended prey, he, “like vaulting ambition,” went a little too far, and died in the hour of his triumph.

After this excitement the *Hercules* proceeded at a better speed, and in less than two days sighted Table Mountain.

“Hurrah !” cried Bone ; “now we shall have news of our *Hydra* ; and if we meet, my friend Luscumbe and I will have a little account to settle on shore or afloat.

The cry “Land ahead !” was welcome to all. The wounded plucked up their courage again, and came

on deck. Those who had declared the ship was bewitched, and who held to that opinion, began to think they had been wrong. Table Bay was before them ; a strong breeze aft ; the steamer was making good way, and in a few hours she came to an anchor in safety, before nightfall.

Next day the captain determined to go ashore and make inquiries. We were all astir early, of course ; and Bone, who was bent on vengeance, had been attaching a telescope to his eye since daybreak, in his anxiety to ascertain whether the *Hydra* was lying in the haven or in the offing.

"False Bay is about his place, the villain," muttered the mate. "But we'll have a squint for him ; and by the living Jingo, *there's the Hydra or the Indus as sure as my name's Isaac Bone !*"

CHAPTER XIII.

FOILED A SECOND TIME.—THE DUTCH MERCHANT'S TALE.—LUSCUMBE THROWS OFF THE MASK.—OFF AGAIN.—THE "PHANTOM PRAHU."

THE announcement that the *Hydra* was actually in the Bay was quickly made public in the steamer, and everyone came clamouring for a look at her through the glass.

"I don't think that needs much consideration. I intend to board her at once, and meet the scoundrel face to face. Then we will talk of what's to be done. First and foremost I want Tom Arnold."

"Yes, that's our first duty, I suppose," said Bone. "We must find the young gentleman or we'll kill Luscumbe."

"There is no use talking, Bone, let us act. Here is the *Hydra* at last. Come with me, doctor, please. Bone, man the pinnace; let the men arm themselves, but show no weapons. Put a few cutlasses in the boat under a cloak, and let the pistols be loaded."

"May I go, Captain Garrettson?" I cried. "I want to see Tom."

"No, young sir, remain where you are," said the

doctor. "You are better quiet. But we'll send for you, or send Tom Arnold to you, the first opportunity. So be content."

I was not contented, but had to submit. The boat pulled away leaving me with the remainder of the crew, Mr. Neil being in charge.

"Well, sir, so we've found the *Hydra* at last," he said, as I leaned gazing over the taffrail at the mountains which protect the shore, and between which Cape Town is built. The town lies in the valley between these Table and Lion Mountains, and was then defended by a castle. When the southeast wind blows here the harbour is safe enough, but let the north-easter arise and Table Bay is anything but pleasant. The tremendous rollers sometimes cause the yard-arms of ships to touch the water on each side. Cape Colony is too well-known to need any description, here, of the successive ranges of mountains, on the high summits of which snow is visible, which divide the Cape Colony into belts of plain or cultivated land running parallel with the coast. The autumn and spring-time are pleasant enough, but summer is very hot, while winter in some parts is extremely cold.

Gazing at Cape Town, which was then by no means the prosperous place it has since become, Mr. Neil addressed to me the remark which I have transcribed above—"So we have found the *Hydra* at last."

"There's many a slip between us and that ship, Mr. Neil, and I am not certain yet. Just take the telescope and say what you think. I can't see anyone on board."

"No more can I, sir," returned the engineer, with the glass still to his eye. "I can see the pinnacle making for her, but no one takes any notice."

This looked suspicious. But, when the boat pulled alongside, a man came and accosted the captain. We heard all these particulars afterwards, so I may as well set them down in order here.

The captain, it seemed, demanded leave to go on board, and wanted to see the captain.

"There is no captain," replied the man. "I am in charge. What's your business?"

The man was a Dutchman, and after some considerable argument, interlaced with several British and foreign expletives, it was ascertained that the vessel, the *Indus*, or *Hydra*, or *Benton*, as her latest name was, had arrived four days previously with a cargo of coffee, which had been sold with the vessel, all standing as she was for about twenty thousand pounds. The vessel was injured by some shot, and the commander told a tale concerning an attack by a British ship, which took him for a pirate in the night, and had fired into him. The merchants had bought the coffee, which had been obtained they knew not whence. There it was, good and in condition for the market. That was the whole story.

"Yes," said Captain Garrettson; "but what has become of the commander and the crew? They have kidnapped a boy from our vessel yonder, and we intend to punish them."

"The captain, with all his crew, sailed in a small vessel the day before yesterday. She is a splendid boat; a kind of piratical craft she looked; such as one might expect to find in the eastern seas—a long low-hulled schooner, which can sail on a wind like a knife-edge. It's my impression, sir, that the vessel came here to meet this *Benton*, or *Indus*," concluded the man.

"Has that strange vessel been here long then?" inquired Bone.

"Yes, off and on, for some time. They transferred the guns and stores and ammunition into her, and then put this ship into an agent's hands. She was sold yesterday to my employers, and we shall have her employed as a trader. She had the machines in her too you see."

The party had been wandering about the deck while questioning the man in charge, and from the description, and the evidence of an engagement, Captain Garrettson and his companions had no doubt that the vessel was indeed the *Hydra*, which had been kidnapped so cleverly, and then sold with a cargo of coffee, procured most likely at Santos on the way out.

With this intelligence they then rowed ashore, and

interviewed the firm of Dutchmen to whom the steamer had been sold. Garrettson and the doctor both represented that the vessel had been made away with from England. They said the captain had no right to dispose of her. In fact, that virtually she belonged to them as the representatives of the Scotch firm.

But the merchants who wanted a steamer, then quite a novel vessel in those waters, declined to accede to any terms. "You have your own steamship—you seek a vessel named the *Hydra*. Our vessel is the *Benton*, quite a different one. Gentlemen," concluded the Dutchman, "you will not succeed—your *ruse* is extremely clever, but on your peril you will board my ship."

"Besides," he added more calmly, "you do not want the vessel, but the late captain. He has sailed—I know it—for the east—for Mauritius and Batavia—you will not find him here. His men, his guns, his lad——"

"His lad!" exclaimed Bone.

"Yes—a lad he had always with him—he is gone too. The boy was unhappy——"

"Go on, please," interrupted the doctor.

"The boy was in sorrow—he tried to run away—he did hide, I was informed, but he was captured, and he was flogged."

"Flogged!" shouted Garrettson. "Flogged! Tom Arnold! are you sure?"

"I am not sure; but he was a nice English boy."

"I do not know his name," replied the Dutchman, kindly enough. "But we saw him carried on board by the swarthy captain."

"'Tis the same," exclaimed Bone. "His name's Luscumbe—or Kaylee."

"Kaylee," replied the merchant, "is like the name. There was another lad, the son of the captain apparently—but we did not inquire much. We purchased our cargo, and the vessel, cheaply. She is a nice ship—she has machines in her; and will serve us well. But you cannot have her. No!"

"Which way did you say she went?" asked Bone. "To Mauritius?"

"Yes;" replied the merchant, still in his broken English. "Yes; and Batavia. I know that is their intention. Do you refit here? My partner, he will help you. So will I. We can treat your vessel well. Shall it be so?"

"Let me see," mused the captain. "How long is it since the vessel you mean sailed?"

"Two days ago. We concluded our bargain the night before. She was made over to us yesterday by contract. The other ship, the low schooner—sailed early; and was soon out of sight. She darted away like Vanderdecken's ship—'A Phantom!'"

Well, I suppose we must let you refit us, Mynher," said Captain Garrettson. "But we are in a hurry. We'll warp her in as soon as we can."

"I will send and see what is required, to save you time," replied the friendly little man, "and do you come here to dinner at noon; we will then see what can be done. Yes; you will? Good, I will send."

Then the captain returned and told us all about his interview with the old Dutchman, and concerning the *Hydra*.

"We must write all this down to Mr. Arnold, but say nothing about Tom. We have hunted the *Hydra* to death—lopped one head off at any rate."

"Three, I should say," remarked Doctor Munford, quietly, "The *Benton*, the *Indus*, and the *Hydra*, count three. We can claim *some* credit."

"Yes, Captain Garrettson, and here we are in Table Bay—without Luscumbe, and Tom lost! Are we to go home?" I asked, mournfully.

"Go home! My good boy, we have only *got half way*! That ruffian is a pirate—a true pirate; he is on his own boat now, and will appear in his true character! But whether he commands the *Hydra*, or the Phantom Ship, I'll catch him! I've sworn it, and, as soon as we're ready, we'll be off for Batavia, and the Pirate Isles. There! That's my determination. So now let's have some 'breakfast,' for I'm hungry."

We were all glad that the captain was so undaunted, and the men gladly made ready to overhaul the vessel. So well did all hands work ashore and afloat that we were ready for sea in four days. We had determined

to leave the two more seriously wounded men behind, and Captain Garrettson having paid them liberally, and secured them a passage home, gave them letters for our relatives, with a promise of a present when handed to his agents.

This matter arranged, he was fain to ship two new hands recommended to him by the Dutchman, and another extra whom the "care-taker" of the *Hydra* specially advised him to take, as he was a good pilot and knew the Indian Archipelago. The fellow was at first disinclined to ship, but he consented at last, and by the middle of December we got away and rounded the Cape on our way to Batavia in search of the "Phantom," as the doctor had named Luscumbe. From that day the pirate schooner was known by the name of the "Phantom Prah," and a nice time she gave us !

CHAPTER XIV.

WE SAIL FOR BATAVIA.—CHRISTMAS ISLAND.—A TERRIBLE AND MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT ON BOARD.—WHO IS THE TRAITOR?

CAPTAIN GARRETTSON had determined to proceed as directly as possible from the Cape to Batavia ; for he argued, "Luscumbe ain't so likely to show his figure-head in a British port as in a Dutch one."

"So, lads, we'll run for Batavia ; then to Singapore and Penang. If we can't get any information there, and if you'll stand to me, we'll search the Sulu Archipelago, and raise Cain in the Celebes."

Whether the raising of Cain—a very favourite threat with the captain—raised any hopes of a sugar plantation, or the idea of the sweetness of revenge in the minds of the crew, this deponent sayeth not. Certain it is that the men thus addressed gave three cheers for the captain, and declared their readiness to succeed or die in finding Tom Arnold, his captors, and the "Phantom."

So when letters had been written home, and the two packets sent away by the captain with enclosures for us and others, we steamed off past Mauritius, bearing south-east by south.

It would be easy, and perhaps instructive, to give the details of the transit across the ocean which occupied us several weeks. When near St. Paul's Island a tremendous storm came upon the poor *Hercules*, which weathered it, however, but with considerable difficulty. As soon as we were able to lay our course again, we saved our coal as much as possible, and, in the beginning of the year (1838), we got into the south-east trades once more, and reached Christmas Island some time after Christmas. We had few adventures during this long run, but we kept up our spirits by acting charades, which the doctor wrote for us. Some of the men sang songs and danced. We had two excellent fiddlers amongst the crew, so the time passed pleasantly enough, although occasionally we felt the monotony which is inseparable from all long voyages : ours had lasted already, without our seeing land, for more than a month, the distance to Christmas Island from the Cape being reckoned about 4,700 miles.

This island is so called because it was discovered by Captain Cook at Christmas time in 1777. Young readers may perhaps not remember the circumstances of, and the great explorer's experiences connected with, the discovery. When we were sailing across the ocean, we read up Captain Cook's travels, and amused ourselves by recounting his adventures. Bone also took me in hand, and taught me a good deal. We all

missed Tom very much. Many plans were suggested for his recovery, but they were all futile, for we could do nothing until we had obtained some traces of the pirate schooner, or *prahu*, as we called it.

Christmas Island lies high, but there was nothing to detain us after we had sent out a boat to search the low point, and endeavoured to ascertain whether there were any traces of the pirate. We fancied he might be lying hidden there ; but we found nothing. Fortunately the weather continued fairly fine while we remained there.

Our captain could find no soundings, although he paid out a hundred fathoms of line. The island supports some very lofty trees, but we did not go much ashore although much tempted to do so. Our attention was so occupied by a most mysterious incident which occurred just after we arrived, that all else was soon put out of our heads by the conjectures to which the discovery gave rise.

The doctor was fond of shooting, and often knocked over some new specimens of wild fowl or other curiosity of animal life ; for, like many other medical men, he was a naturalist, and had a little museum in England, two rooms in his house being filled with specimens.

While we were lying off Christmas Island, he fancied he would find something worth killing for his collection ; so he asked the gunner's mate to procure

him a few rounds of ammunition, which was always kept in the gunner's charge. We called our second mate the "gunner."

The gunner's mate was not just then at liberty ; so the captain sent Bone for the powder and shot, and I followed to see the magazine. In two minutes the mate opened the door, saw me, and then came running up as fast as he could, his solitary eye aflame, as if he had been insulted—"blown up," perhaps, is the better simile under the circumstances.

It will be remembered that when I had descended, *I was behind "Nurse" Bone as he went down, and he saw me as he opened the door.* He started, and shut it quickly.

"For anysake, captain, come down into the magazine," he cried. "There's treachery aboard!"

"Treachery!" exclaimed the captain, "where?"

"Lord only knows!" replied the mate, who was actually trembling in his eagerness. "Come down, captain. Doctor, will you come too?"

Bone was swinging his lantern to and fro. The keys of the magazine were rattling in his hand against the lantern, as he gazed from one to the other in his alarm, and fixed his eye on me.

"Why, this looks suspicious," said the captain, as he prepared to follow the mate. That something serious had happened, he guessed, but he took things quietly. Anything connected with the magazine *was* serious!

The mate hurried down, followed by the captain and the doctor. I stayed too, being as anxious as anyone to see what was the matter. Bone opened the door carefully, as if he were afraid of the magazine exploding; and, without entering, pointed to a train of powder which had been laid to one of the casks, and, connected with this, lying upon a hide, which had evidently been placed there for the purpose, was a fuse, unlighted as yet, but ready to be fired at any moment!

This discovery made even the doctor turn pale. He was generally considered superior to every exhibition of feeling, except an occasional laugh, which was emitted as it were under protest. But on this occasion he was fairly thrown off his balance.

"The diabolical scoundrels!" he muttered. "Hanging would be too good for them."

Captain Garrettson exclaimed "Great Jehoshaphat!" twice. He looked at Bone searchingly, then at the doctor, and at me. Then, with much deliberation, he took off his boots, and asked Bone for the lantern. By its assistance he first examined and removed the fuse; and took up the powder which had formed the train, very carefully. There was a good deal of it, which he swept into a small heap, after sending me for a feather brush which was in his cabin.

All this time he said not a word; and would not permit anyone to approach the door of the magazine.

Whatever he thought, he kept his opinion to himself ; and it was not till he had personally examined the contents of the magazine and brought out the powder and shot which the doctor required, that he gave us any clue to his thoughts, beyond the exclamation "Great Jehoshaphat !" aforesaid.

"Come into the cabin," he said, at last. "Come all of you ; and mind, Master Fraser, not a word of this, or I'll scarify you : I will, by gosh."

The captain's face was enough. It did not need any interpretation. "Cain" had been raised, I could see, and no trifling would do.

I promised faithfully ; and then the captain said—

"Now, Bone, who is it, think you ?"

"Can't say off-hand, captain. Can't think yet."

"And you, doctor ?" said Garrettson again.

"It would be easier to say who didn't do it, than to say who did," replied Doctor Munford.

"Well, who *didn't*, then ?"

"You didn't ; I didn't ; none of us four did. The officers and engineers couldn't. It was one of the foremast men, and very likely the gunner's mate."

"Higgins, you think ? Well I don't. I think it, was"

He paused ; and looking round the cabin said, in a low tone—while Bone, with his single eye gleaming, listened intently—

"It was that skunk at Cape Town, who was on

board the *Hydra*. I remember he came down when the magazine was open, and searched around, I daresay. Did any of you see him inside? Did you, young Fraser? you were bid to look about you there, I remember."

I confessed I had seen the agent, if he were the agent of Luscumbe, wandering about while the *Hercules* was under examination; but I had not seen him enter or approach the magazine, nor could he have remained inside at any time without being discovered.

"Ah, you can't tell what these villains may do. He was a great deal too officious, was that man, and if it wasn't for losin' time, I'd go back and skin him alive!" exclaimed Captain Garrettson.

"Then you are satisfied he is the man?" said Bone.

"A'most certain. Who else has been inside, 'cept the 'gunner' and his mate? and I'd trust either of them. Now, let's call the men aft, and give them a talkin' to."

"I wouldn't, not yet, captain. Leave it to me. I think I can manage this," said Bone. Don't *say* anything, don't *do* anything yet."

The captain again gazed searchingly at the mate, whose eye quailed not, though he was greatly agitated—very much so for him.

"Very well," replied Captain Garrettson. "You

may go, Fraser, lad ; and do a little studyin'. The magazine is safe now, at anyrate. You may as well learn something."

"Yes," added Bone. "If I may say so, young master here is idlin' about a good deal too much. He'll want all he can learn when we get into the Archipelago, I believe. I'll *learn* you something when I have time."

"Do, Bone ; teach him what you can. We'll make a man of him yet. Now, lad, be off."

I closed the cabin-door, and proceeded to the small space, which could hardly be called a cabin, which Tom and I had shared. Alas ! Tom was now in Luscumbe's hands, and treachery had overtaken us in the *Hercules*. A fearful deed had been anticipated by the merest "accident," as I had fancied. Now I have lived long enough to know that in the World of Providence there are no accidents nor "chances." We are guided by an unerring Hand, steered straight through the maze of shoals and quicksands and rocks of life, by the Pilot we profess to trust. If we do, and let Him keep the helm, we shall sail safely. If we take the wheel ourselves, we meet with "accident" and disaster, from which He alone can rescue us—after all.

Bone did not interfere with me farther, and of this I was glad. He suspected me too, I fancied ; else why had he watched me so ? why had he threatened—

it was *threatening* to "learn" me something? His manner was odd. He trembled. I had noticed him start when he perceived me near the door of the magazine! I had observed that he immediately closed the door, and hurried upstairs to tell the captain of the fuse and the train, before I had time to say anything about them, even had I observed them, I was not near enough to perceive the nefarious arrangement.

A terrible idea flashed into my mind. WAS BONE HIMSELF THE TRAITOR?

"Heaven forbid," I muttered to myself. "He *couldn't* be such a villain!"

"Who can't be a villain, Master Fraser, sir?" said a familiar voice, in what I fancied was a mocking tone.

I turned—and standing behind me, with a peculiar smile on his face, was Bone himself.

"I've come to learn you your lesson," he said.

Then I shivered. Did he mean any more than he said?

I could not decide. What the captain knew or fancied, I could not say. But that day Bone merely "learned" me some "navigation."

CHAPTER XV.

THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.—WE APPROACH JAVA.—MEW ISLAND.
—ARE ATTACKED BY THE ORANG-UTANS.—A PISTOL SHOT.

THE discovery of the atrocious powder-train was not mentioned to the crew. The captain, I believe, thought he could the more easily find out the delinquent by close observation than by demonstration. He kept the secret: so did we.

We were approaching Java, and I must confess that I thought much less of the chances of being blown up than I did of witnessing the beauties and grandeur of the Indian Islands, or Archipelago, for the islands are innumerable. Whether the main islands ever formed part of a continent, which may have included New Guinea and Australia, we need not discuss. The mountain range would lead us to believe that Sumatra, Java, and Borneo, were (and might be again, easily) connected and continental. But we need not here enquire whether the land was upheaved or submerged; we know it is all very volcanic, and we may, without straining probability, assume that the Indian Archipelago was at one time a portion of the Asiatic Continent.

The first thing that strikes the observer, and which impressed us powerfully—those of us, I mean, who had never previously visited these regions—was the abundant vegetation. No one who has not seen tropical countries such as these, can at all appreciate the marvellous fecundity of the vegetation on the Archipelago. The cause is not far to seek. The sea freshens up the plants which grow in a fine, “fat” soil, and the atmospheric influences combine to produce the greatest results. The vegetation is certainly “a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.”

But it is not only the actual botanical specimens, the luxuriance and the novelty of them, that impress the voyager. Here the peculiar mingling of land and water; the islands and the long “passages;” the strait, the bay, and the verdant land in such close juxtaposition and great variety, give one a new impression of delight. In a few hours we may endeavour to reckon up the points of verdant coral—they are nothing else—the islets, the islands; and give up the counting in sheer weariness. The number of islands is marvellous, their green dress is more marvellous still. The lagoons are like mirrors, edged with a circle of white; the smaller islands being oases of green in a desert of water, flecked by cloud-shadows and rippled by the welcome wind.

These sights are in themselves sufficient to inspire one with the bounty of nature, and its beauty. Its

grandeur is not forgotten : huge mountains clothed with timber, grand peaks tossing their heads to the sky, and vomiting smoke at times to remind us that Pluto lives below the green-clad mountain, or lurks in the umbrageous ravine.

That he does so exist, history has made us aware ; and it is not so long ago that Sumbawa was devastated ; but every year the volcano makes itself heard, and intrudes on the notice of the native, even if the fiery god do not fill the forests with lava, and rain ashes upon the towns. Everything pleases, and, in his natural condition, while unaccustomed to the amenities of "civilized" life, we do not believe "man is vile." No ; while living quietly and in his own way, the Malay certainly was not then vile or unruly. A heathen ? yes—but in many ways, in his native sobriety and modesty, for instance, in chastity and domestic virtues—the heathen would give some Christians "points," and beat them.

The Malay is exceedingly undemonstrative—though he is as ferocious as (and runs a-muck like) a wild beast—having a perfect contempt for life. Yet, with these attributes, he is most polite, obliging, and if treated with consideration and kindness, a true adherent. He is especially careful never to offend, he will not interfere with anyone, and does not like to be interfered with.

If abuse or bad language be applied to the Malay,

he resents it, and it will in time drive him to madness and revenge. It is stated as a fact, that there are no *true* Malay words of an immoral or injurious meaning. The Malay, in this and other respects, is superior to his Asiatic brethren. In fact, when a Malay is treated properly, he is docile, obedient, industrious, and faithful; a splendid sailor also. When he is treated like a brute or a savage, he develops the temperament of the lower animals.

Thus we may perceive the contradictory reports of the Great Malay population of the Archipelago to be both true in a great measure. The Malay is cruel and will commit crimes, but rarely will he deny them, or lie "through thick and thin" to cover his crime. Being very taciturn, he will brood over his wrongs, and, like more civilized individuals, when he broods he seeks revenge; and, in his case, the revenge is "murder."

Malay fathers are very kind and indulgent—perhaps from indolence: they are devoted husbands, and expect great attention from their spouses. Females are never educated. They do a great deal of work, as do all Mahomedan women, but they are more considered by Malay men than by any other Mussulmans. The children have no games of their own; they do no work, imitating their fathers in this respect, and many other respects, from an early age.

Some other characteristics of the race, with those of the Dyaks, will appear as we proceed.

The impressions of a modern traveller are worth quoting, as giving a later account of this people.

"The Malays undoubtedly must be numbered among civilized peoples. They live in houses which are more or less tasteful and secluded. They are well clothed in garments of both native and foreign manufacture; they are a settled and agricultural people; they are skilful in some of the arts, especially in the working of gold and the damascening of krisses; the upper classes are to some extent educated; they have a literature, even though it be an imported one; and they have possessed for centuries systems of government and codes of land and maritime laws, which, in theory at least, show a considerable degree of enlightenment."

They are, as already stated, Mahomedans; their colour is "an olive-tinted reddish brown." They have "broad and slightly flat faces, high cheek-bones, wide mouths, broad and shapely lips, well-formed chins, low foreheads, black eyes, oblique, but not so much so as the Chinese. . . . The men are not handsome—the women are decidedly ugly." *

But we had not reached the Malays yet. As these words were originally in my mind, the voyage to

* "The Golden Chersonese."

Batavia had not been accomplished, but we were delighted with the prospects of its speedy fulfilment.

Batavia is the capital of Java, which we British restored to the Dutch in 1815. It is the largest of the Sunda Islands, and is separated from Sumatra by the Straits of Sunda. The island is divided by a mountain ridge running from west to east, the northern slope being low and swampy. The south coast is bounded by cliffs. The town from the sea had an imposing appearance, but on nearer approach traces of decay were visible, partly in consequence of the migration of the inhabitants farther inland, only the business portion of the city being even now near the harbour: the dwelling houses are two miles away.

We reached the bay, which is wide and deep, at a very convenient season. The wind was beginning to blow from the east, and the "fine" monsoon was setting in. The rainy monsoon, which ends in April, was nearly over; there were already indications of fine weather, for we had had gales and heavy rain, with thunder and lightning at times, but on the west side of Java there is rain all the year. We now perceived why Captain Garrettson had not hurried after the "phantom cruiser." He knew the wet season in the Indian Archipelago would be very injurious, and he took things as easily as circumstances permitted. We had had rather a knocking about, and we made for Batavia to recruit a little.

I was particularly observant of Bone all this time. Was it possible that he was the delinquent in the powder business? My suspicions had certainly been aroused, and I fancied both the captain and the doctor had some misgivings concerning him. It was bad enough to have to contend against open enemies, but the suspicion of a "snake in the grass" was a most uncomfortable feeling.

It was towards the middle of March that we sighted Java, some 100 miles or so to the eastward of Java Head, and kept along shore, working by the charts. We anchored at night, and kept a close watch. We obtained supplies from a village one day, and found the people very polite and kind. But Captain Garrettson did not trust them; so at night he hauled off, and anchored under Mew Island in the Straits of Sunda. The island appeared uninhabited, but we found reason to change our opinion.

Before we had quitted England, Captain Garrettson had made himself acquainted with the circumstances connected with the chase and capture of some bands of pirates, which even then infested these seas. We had heard of the attack on the *Lady Grant* brig, two years before, in the Straits of Malacca, by the pirate prahus. The narrative which our captain related to us revealed how the five prahus, flying the black flag and full of men, came up with the brig at midnight in a calm, but were beaten off. We had

heard how the boats of H.M.S. *Rose* had encountered swarms of pirates off the Dindings. We knew the *Wolf*, the *Zephyr*, and the *Diana* (steamer) were hovering about : that the *Narcissus*—my uncle's ship—was very active in the Straits. The pirates were particularly bold just then, and “swarmed” on the island of Timor. The last news we had concerning them was that a boat had been captured with some Dutchmen and officers in it. The Illanoons had plundered the crew, leaving them quite naked ; and it was only on the payment of an enormous ransom that the men were at length released, after enduring a horrible captivity.

A fleet of thirty prahus, we had read, was, at the period of our arrival, scouring the seas off the coast of Borneo and up to Mindinao. We might at any moment sight a hostile fleet ; and if only two or three of these vessels attacked us, the encounter would be very sanguinary. Still the captain thought he could depend on our crew, which numbered forty, all told ; with this number, and our British pluck, Captain Garrettson and his American associates were much pleased.

Matters, therefore, promised to be exciting. The guns were loaded and pointed ; the men were daily practised at quarters, and at resisting an enemy ; “for,” said our captain, “since Luscumbe has turned pirate, I’ll turn pirate-hunter. If we can capture a

few prahus the English will acknowledge our claims. In any case, my lads, we'll defend ourselves to the last ! ”

Mew Island is a small spot, and gave us quiet anchorage. Nothing was stirring. The vegetation at the western extremity of Java is luxuriant, and sufficient to conceal an enemy. Night fell and the watch was set.

The little steamer was anchored at some distance from the black-looking trees, which melted into the jungle ashore. It was by no means a nice place, and the curious cry of some bird did not tend to raise our spirits. In fact, I have reason to believe that even Captain Garrettson was nervous, because he determined to keep watch all night, himself.

I could not sleep. The silence was most oppressive. We were in a kind of lagoon ; the great trees shaded the water ; there was no noise, and the least sound was audible in the stillness. At length I became nervous. I fancied something was about to happen, and I dressed again (for our costume was very simple in those latitudes) and crept bare-footed on deck. The stars were shining brightly, and there seemed to be some faint light from them, but the eyes were hardly assisted by it.

I crept up the companion, and stood on deck in the gloom. On the land-side, the tall form of Captain Garrettson was faintly distinguishable. He was lean.

ing against the bulwarks, either listening intently or thinking. I was about to approach him, when I noticed a moving dark object on the deck.

What was this? It was not a man surely. No man could have gained the deck from the shore. Hush, what was that? The faint creaking of a bough was heard. I looked up: another dark object was in the act of passing from the tree to the steamer. *It*, whatever it was, dropped, and came stealthily along the deck, very slowly and cautiously. It was followed by another of the same species as stealthily as the first.

Pirates, I thought, and at once attempted to give the alarm. I say "attempted," for at first my tongue clove to my mouth, which felt dry and parched. I could not articulate. Had my life depended upon my speaking at that moment, I could not have done so. The pirates advanced—three, four, five, six of them.

Then I uttered a yell that would have awakened the Seven Sleepers. I said nothing; I couldn't; but I screamed, and made the forest ring again.

Captain Garrettson turned and saw his adversary, He drew a pistol and fired. The watch were already hurrying up. But as they met their enemies they recoiled. The invading party were not pirates. They were large orang-utans, fearful monsters of a most terrible and ferocious aspect in the star-gleam and lantern light!

The men who would have faced a battery recoiled from the attack of these horrible creatures. I rushed down and confirmed the alarm which the report of the captain's pistol had already given. Seizing a pistol I hurried on deck preceded by the doctor. Bone was already there on deck and fighting with the apes.

These enormous animals inhabit the districts which are low-lying and swampy, particularly when the trees form a virgin forest, and where the oranges are unlikely to be disturbed. They generally return to the marshes or swamps at night, and sleep in the nests they have already prepared. They are tremendously powerful, their arms being very long. Why they had come on board we did not know; there was nothing to attract them; and the orang does not generally quit his couch before daylight.

In a few moments the men and the beasts were struggling furiously on deck. The reports of pistols were frequent, but there was danger in every shot not only for the orang-utans, but for ourselves, so great was the struggle. Two men were badly hurt by the animals, which lacerated them severely. But—after a sharp encounter, in which I took no personal part, for I was afraid—the fierce brutes were all slain, and the men breathed again.

But where was the orang which I had first seen crawling towards the captain. He had approached

alone, and in a different manner. He was wriggling along the deck. The captain had fired at him, and killed him perhaps. At any rate, he was not to be found. I had counted six, including this first animal. Five lay dead ; shot or killed with cutlasses ; but the sixth had escaped. This was curious.

Three men were injured seriously ; two merely scratched. One of the wounded trio was the man who had come aboard at the Cape, the stranger ; and he, curiously enough, had been *shot through the shoulder with a pistol-bullet !*

Very strange this : who could have been so reckless as to fire at him ? The bore of the pistol would tell perhaps.

Bone shook his head very sadly, and looked at the doctor, who extracted the bullet after a while. The bullet corresponded with the bore of the captain's pistol.

This was the first link in a very important chain ; and when I told Mr. Bone what I had seen, he answered—

“ Just you wait, sir ; we'll have the whole business cleared up, by-and-by.”

Then he winked his solitary eye, and began to chew tobacco.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE QUIT THE ORANG ISLAND.—A FLEET OF PRAHUS DISCOVERED.
—CONSULTATION.—A CHASE.—ON THE REEFS.—DISASTER.

FROM that time forward, I ceased to suspect Mr. Bone, and I burned to beg his pardon for the injustice I had done him. I did not dare to do so yet. Nevertheless, my feelings had undergone a complete change towards him.

We threw the carcasses of the orang-utans overboard and steamed away for Batavia, which is situated on the north-west of the Island of Java. The dead bodies measured only four feet on the average, but in the gloom and excitement the apes appeared about six feet high. The tremendous stretch of their arms is well known, as the apes touch the ground with the extremities of the fingers when standing upright ; so a full-grown orang-utan, say four feet, or a trifle over that measurement, in *height*, will be able to extend his arms about seven feet six inches.

It will be at once perceived, then, that the orang-utans are not monsters in stature. Nevertheless they are formidable antagonists, and, as many of our men said, they "fought like Trojans." The struggle was

undoubtedly severe while it lasted ; and I shall not readily forget the swaying forms, the discordant cries, the reports of the pistols, and the exclamations of rage and disgust of the men. The deck was not pleasant to look upon at daylight, but it was speedily washed down and swabbed.

This adventure determined the captain not to anchor just under an island again ; and, when the men had breakfasted, the anchor was got up, and we steamed slowly for Batavia. But we were not destined to reach it immediately.

Scarcely had we cleared the island and taken our course in a northerly direction, than the look-out man hailed the deck, and reported a fleet of small vessels to windward, coming down with all speed. Captain Garrettson immediately ascended the rigging, and took a good look at the approaching prahus, for such we felt convinced they were.

At once there was a commotion on board the *Hercules*. Bone personally examined each gun, and saw that the ammunition was ready. The men clustered on the forecastle, and even the engineers came up to have a peep at our enemies.

"Shall we fight them, captain, or continue our course ?" asked Bone.

"Let them alone," replied the captain. "We can do as we please. We didn't come out here expressly to fight pirates. We came to trade, and find Lus-

cumbe. These fellows are probably Illanoon pirates, or Sulus."

Mr. Bone stared at the captain : so did the second mate ; and the former said—

"And you'll let those rascals go by without a shot?"

"Cert'n'y, if they don't molest us. Let well alone!"

"Well, I declare," muttered the mate. "There will be no fun after all."

"There will be no fun if we are captured," said the captain, somewhat sternly. "I will fight, Mr. Bone, when there is a necessity for fighting. But I'll not risk my little steamer in an aimless encounter with savage pirates for appearance' sake. I value my own life and the lives of those with me too highly. I'll do my duty when the time comes, Bone, depend on that."

Bone felt a little abashed by the tone in which Captain Garrettson spoke to him. He touched his cap in a formal manner and turned away.

The captain continued : "You see, we can catch these fellows at any time, or we can avoid them. Our present object is to make Batavia, and refit a bit. Then, if we can gain no intelligence of the 'Phantom,' we'll go up to Singapore and Penang. We shall meet plenty of piratical craft in these waters. I will keep my course, and if they attack they will repent their temerity."

The *Hercules* was accordingly kept under easy steam, neither seeking nor avoiding an encounter. All were prepared for the fight, and the pirates on their part kept just a respectful distance. We counted five large prahus of great beam, and with sharp bows which enabled them to cut through the water with great celerity. The complement of men carried in each prahu must have been quite a hundred. The upper portions seemed made of bamboos, the hull looking as solid as oak or teak. They were all under sail, but we knew from reading and experience that each prahu could pull about forty oars or "sweeps," and that two men were told off to each sweep. By means of these oars, the pirates can easily overtake a sailing vessel in a calm or light breeze. They could perceive the *Hercules* was one of the new "fire" ships, of which they had already had some experience in the form of the *Diana* which had lately been placed upon the station, and which they feared.

It therefore seemed as if discretion were the better part of pirate valour, though the Illanoons certainly did not attempt to escape. We continued our course, and the prahus followed at a respectful distance, evidently watching our movements.

"If we were a sailing-vessel only," remarked the doctor, "we should have been attacked before this."

"Yes," replied the captain. "By-the-by, how is

your patient, whom I so unconsciously wounded ? is he progressing favourably ? ”

“ He will live long enough to be hanged,” replied Dr. Munford. “ I never attended such a perfect scoundrel. He is an ungrateful hound, too, and swears at me when I probe his wound.”

“ Perhaps you gave him an extra prod,” suggested the captain, smiling.

“ I will not deny that I am not *too tender* with him,” answered the man of medicine. “ He is such a brute. I suspect——”

“ Hush ! ” interrupted the captain. “ Little pitchers have long ears.”

This remark was perhaps intended for me, so I turned round, and as I did so my sharp young eyes caught a glimpse of some black specks on the golden water, all lighted up by the morning sun. The glass was levelled in a moment. Yes ; there they were—four more prahus beating to windward, and so it seemed as if they would cross our course. The pirates to windward had evidently become aware of the proximity of the other squadron, for some flags went fluttering out—others were already flying from the prahus to leeward. If these two parties united in an attack upon us, the issue would be serious.

“ Keep her going,” said the captain ; “ we will not hurry ourselves. The breeze is freshening, and if

these fellows to windward mean mischief, they can easily come up with us."

"We sha'n't reach Batavia for a week at this rate," said the "gunner," the second mate, to Bone in a low tone—but I heard him.

The breeze *was* freshening indeed. More than that, a black cloud was approaching, and a squall was evidently on the way from the south-east. No one minded it, and the prahus managed to preserve their distance to windward, while those to leeward came nearer and nearer. Then they stood off again, and then again approached, keeping out of gunshot very cleverly, yet quite ready for a dash upon us. Bone kept urging the captain to chase the prahus, and the second mate joined in his entreaties.

Thus the day passed: we proceeding all the while steadily up the straits, attended by the pirates at a respectful distance. As the day waned, the captain suddenly changed his course in compliance with his officers' importunities, and bore up towards the pirates to leeward.

They wore round and fled before the wind, as hard as they could go.

"Full speed," cried the captain. "We'll end this game once for all."

The engines increased their revolutions; the foam flew from the paddles. The sky became concealed by the smoke—the dark cloud had extended itself all

along the horizon in the south and west by this time. The sea was getting up, and the chase proceeded.

The water was at length covered with foam ; the waves on the port bow seemed choppy. The prahus fled for dear life, and steered a rather sinuous course which our helmsman followed. Mr. Bone went down to look at the chart, and when he came up, he said—

"Mind your eyes, quartermaster, or you'll be among the reefs. Yonder islands, towards which the prahus are making, must be coral banks, and we shall find ourselves in a tight place, maybe."

Men were then stationed aloft to give notice of any change in the colour of the water which would indicate a shallower sea. The small coral points are difficult to distinguish when the waves are breaking, but the shoals or banks can be perceived.

"We will give up this chase," said the captain, at length. "I wish I hadn't listened to your persuasion, Bone. We shall find it difficult to avoid the reefs in the night-time."

"Let us give the fellows a shot, anyway," said the mate, who knew the men were burning to have a "brush with the pirates. Give them the contents of the long gun, captain."

Garrettson after a while consented, and the gun on the forecastle was discharged at the nearest prahu, which, with dark sail and a number of "sweeps," was

darting rapidly through the water, some hundreds of yards ahead.

The shot fell short, struck the water, and bounded up again three times, till it sank beyond and on the leeward side of the prahu, not very far from another boat of the little fleet of pirate craft.

Mingled with the report of the cannon was a curious scraping noise, which few people paid attention to. But scarcely had the result of the shot been noted, and satisfaction expressed at the aim of the gunner, when a bump nearly threw us all down : then a tremendous blow came upon the forepart of the steamer, and the foremast shook perilously. The funnel fell to one side, but fortunately did not come down on deck ; smoke and steam escaped in volumes. The engines were at once stopped—confusion for a moment reigned supreme !

Then the captain cried, "Steady all—Mr. Thomas, go below and see what is the extent of the injury. Man the boats. Let your steam off, Mr. Neil. Mr. Bone, see that arms, ammunition, and provisions are placed in the long boat and gigs. Pack up your traps, men, and take your cutlasses. The *Hercules* is a gone coon !"

The captain's orders were quickly obeyed. The carpenter reported a hole in the bow, "as big as the paddle-box," through which a coral rock was protruding. There was no immediate danger of the

vessel sinking, but she might slip off and go down during the night when the tide rose. So all hands made preparations for taking to the boats and escaping !

Whither ? The pirate prahus were sailing around us, and besides the prahus only small wooded islands were in sight. The prospect seemed anything but cheerful, and night was rapidly approaching. So were the pirates !

CHAPTER XVII.

A LULL BEFORE THE STORM.—APPEARANCE OF THE PIRATES.—THE FIGHT.—MR. NEIL'S "STEAM GUN."—VICTORY !

THE time for preparation was not too long for us, but all hands worked with a will. We had to crowd a number of articles into the boats with us. They would scarcely accommodate the officers and crew ; for the captain had shipped a full ship's company to aid him, and we numbered in all about forty, including the wounded, who had to be attended to. We were afraid the poor *Hercules* would be lifted with the tide and go down bodily. But as the night wore on, and she did not move, we became easier in our minds.

Nevertheless we did not relax our efforts. The boats, four in number, were launched and laid alongside. Stores, arms, and ammunition were handed out, and put on board each one, as directed by Captain Garrettson. A spectator might have thought that we were organizing a pleasant little excursion instead of endeavouring to save our lives, so quietly and with such discipline were the captain's orders carried out.

"This is a bad business, captain," I heard the

doctor say to our commander ; " a very awkward business indeed."

" Yes, sir," replied Garrettson ; " it ain't altogether cheerful, I must allow. But we have our lives, Mr. Munford, and while there's life there's hope."

" But the pirates. Look at those prahus. We shall have them down upon us as soon as night falls—and then——"

" Then, God help us," muttered the captain, as he turned away and proceeded to inspect the boats.

The pirate prahus, which had approached us at first, had stood off again, and were now apparently waiting for us to put off, so that they might attack us in detail. Allon board the poor *Hercules* were extremely anxious as night fell, and we prepared for action.

The wind had died away, and the sea was like a mirror. So long as the light lasted, the clouds were reflected in the glassy water. The spars and stays and ropes of the *Hercules* were all defined in the water as clearly as above it. The funnel, like a miniature " leaning tower," gazed reproachfully at itself in the still ocean.

After dark the stillness was even more remarkable. The men ceased to work, but none took rest or slept. Every man was armed, every gun was loaded. The long gun forward was depressed in order to sweep the decks of any approaching piratical craft, which, in the

pitchy blackness of the night, would be heard before they were seen ; or, if distinguished, only made out at first by the ripple of phosphorescent light under the bows and beneath the counter.

Supper was served. All hands remained on deck except the crew of the pinnace, who pulled almost noiselessly around the ship, patrolling the ocean and ready to give the alarm. But no alarm came—no pirates were heard or seen, no darkly looming prahus came crashing into the chains or tearing down our taffrail. Opinions were divided concerning the bravery and the designs—or even the character of the Malays.

“May be they are only traders, and we have been peppering innocent people,” hinted the carpenter.

“Nonsense,” retorted Bone, who was irritated because he was conscious that by his impetuosity he had hastened, even if his advice had not directly led to, the catastrophe. “Nonsense, man : who ever heard of peaceful Malays sailing in such prahus as them ?”

“Well, I suppose peaceful Malays do exist, and can sail on the sea as well as ourselves,” replied the man of wood. “We ain’t much different from pirates ourselves, I guess !”

“Pirates !” echoed some of his audience with supreme scorn, and with sundry expressions concerning the ultimate future of pirates generally.

"Ay, pirates! Ain't it piracy to go chasing and firing at innocent vessels, which never didn't do us no harm nohow," exclaimed the negative carpenter. "Ain't it like pirates to——."

"Silence," cried the captain. "Put a stopper on your jaw, Thomas. You'll have had quite enough of pirates afore morning. Listen! I do believe they're approaching. Hist!"

We all listened intently. A faint sound of splashing was heard, and at the same time I distinctly felt a tremulous motion of the ship.

"Captain Garrettson, the steamer is lifting to the tide. I felt her shake," said I.

"The tide is past its flow," replied the captain. "You must have imagined the motion, my boy. Go below, Fraser," he said very kindly. "Get under hatches, and keep out of danger. I promised to keep you out of harm's way, and this is what's come of all my promises."

The captain seemed to be quite affected, but I couldn't distinguish his face clearly. I took his hand and said—

"Captain Garrettson, we don't blame you—who could? I must take my chance with the others. I'm not afraid. There!" I cried suddenly, "didn't you feel *that*?"

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "I did that time."

The captain walked forward as he was speaking,

and hailed the pinnace, which quickly came alongside.

"Come on board," he said to the second mate, who was in command. "Have you noticed any sign of listing in the steamer?" he enquired in a low tone when the sailor had reached the deck.

"No, sir!"

"Well, just pull round and see. Keep your eyes open, and listen with all your ears. I'm not easy about those prahus—nor this calm—nor even the coral rock."

The second mate went as he was bidden, and made an inspection. "All right, so far as the rock is concerned," he cried. "Hullo! here's a pirate-prahu—look out, mates."

Through the darkness the vessel came, and crashed into the devoted *Hercules*, almost as soon as the second mate's warning reached the deck.

"Repel boarders," shouted the captain. "Mr. Bone, you know what to do. Take your men, and bring the pinnace alongside too. Now, men, one cheer for England, and another for the 'Stars and Stripes;' and we'll go to work."

The men cheered the valiant American. Mr. Bone gathered the party he had been instructed to head, and such was the discipline enforced that they were quickly in the boats and over the side. As they pulled away another prahu came sweeping down, and almost immediately boarded us.

It was fortunate, as we quickly perceived, that the pirates to leeward had not also come up with us, or we must have been overpowered.

Captain Garrettson issued his orders boldly and rapidly.

"Give them the long gun!" he shouted. "Let them have it. Fire away. Now, lads—steady: here they come. Load again—smart, my boys. Fire!"

A blaze of musketry succeeded, and once more the long gun carried death and destruction amongst the pirates, who clustered thickly on the fore-deck of the first prahu.

Another party were below manning the foremost guns, and two discharges sent the shot tearing through and through the second prahu, but the pirates were not daunted.

Kriss in hand, disdaining our fire-arms at close quarters, they leaped on board, or climbed up like cats. Our men received them with the bayonet and cutlass. I was at first only a spectator from behind the injured funnel, in ambush, unseen. I could not at first summon courage to mix in the fray. The pirates were probably surprised to find us in such force, and ready to receive them; but they never flinched.

Doctor Munford stood concealed near me, a little in advance, shooting calmly at the active Malays as they climbed the bulwarks. At every crack of his rifle a man fell. I could stand it no longer; his ex-

ample fired my blood ; and, quite ignoring the danger, I grasped a loaded musket from the array of guns and pistols placed ready on deck, and fired.

A man fell ! I had killed a fellow creature !

I had no time to think any more about it. I saw the black form fall on deck, stretch out its arms, and lie still. The combat continued. Garrettson was encouraging his men, and I loaded my musket again, quite forgetting the three other loaded muskets in the rack beside me.

Crack went the doctor's rifle. Down fell another black man, shot through the chest, true as a line to the heart. The doctor had not studied anatomy for nothing. The pirates feared the funnel and the steam, and came not near us yet.

To this fear of the "devil" in the ship we owe our lives. The Malays regarded the steamer with great awe and envy.

Mechanically I fired again, and was reloading when I perceived three men clear the bulwarks on the port side, where the second prahu was, and rush along the deck. Doctor Munford also saw them, then three, and two more. Resistance was hopeless now.

Crack, crack, bang ! Three dusky forms were down gasping out their lives, and then a lurid light fell upon the scene. The first prahu was in flames.

A loud hurrah succeeded. A cheer from the water

answered it. Bone was behind the pirates now, and attacking them in rear.

"Hurrah, hurrah !" we cried.

A smart volley of musketry resounded from the boats, and called the attention of the pirates to their vessels. Captain Garrettson and his party, rather diminished now by wounds and death—for three fine fellows lay dead, and several were wounded—continued to fight lustily, when another prahu was seen approaching.

The doctor, calling to me and two men who were attending to the wounded, rushed aft to the guns. By the glare of the burning ship we could see the new enemy distinctly. She carried a number of men, who were packed in pairs, pulling the heavy sweeps. Three officers stood, surrounded by men with match-lock guns, on the high poop deck. Three brass swivel-guns were visible on each side. The prahus which had attacked us had also swivels, smaller ones, but had not used them, evidently wishing to capture the "fire-ship" uninjured.

"There is no chance for us now," exclaimed the doctor, "but give them a pill, men. I will pick off that big fellow on the upper deck. Fraser, shoot you straight, and get his friend. Hullo! what's that?"

A rushing, furious, roaring sound. A loud hurrah, which told us our men were getting the best of the

encounter. We had no time to watch events. Crack went the rifle.

The tall man staggered, and fell. His friends were stooping to raise him up, utterly surprised, for the prahu was beyond the reach of their small arms. The men stopped pulling for an instant, and then the large gun on our quarter was discharged with fearful effect.

A perfect lane was made by the ball as it tore its way from stem to stern, decapitating six men, and otherwise killing five more as they sat.

"Bravo!" cried the phlegmatic doctor. "Now, Fraser."

I aimed from a safe place, and fired. The kneeling man on the upper deck fell dead. Then the killing mania rose in me, I loaded, and fired. The prahu discharged her brass guns, and we heard the shot singing over us. Another discharge from the quarter guns, and all the men threw down their sweeps.

"Victory!" shouted the doctor.

"Victory!" was echoed from the forecastle.

Both prahus were burning now: many men were struggling in the water. Bone and his men had boarded the second prahu, and had driven the crew back—fifteen men against fifty, but with better arms, and equal determination. Then came the rushing sound which finished the battle. What was it?

The engineer had with his mates been very busy

for some time after nightfall in fixing a new nozzle to the damaged escape-pipe. They had shut off, and kept the boilers full of steam, and banked the fires. When the pipe was ready they went on deck, and the fighting soon commenced. The new pipe as well as the old one stood at an angle, and when the alarm was given, Mr. Neil, with much ingenuity, fitted to it a flexible tube, which elongated it considerably.

He and his mates had taken their share in the fighting, but when matters looked serious he had spoken to Captain Garrettson, who, after a while, pretended to retreat with his men.

Calling to them to follow him, the captain retreated aft to the tottering funnel. After a pause the pirates rushed on, and then came Mr. Neil's triumph!

As the Malays came on sure of victory, a burst of roaring, scalding steam darted full in their faces. They stopped, some fell on the slippery deck, and others turned back in time from this weapon, new in warfare. The crew did not mind the steam; and, rushing on their foes, drove them overboard, shooting and bayoneting all within reach. The deck was cleared in a few minutes by Neil's "steam gun," as he called it afterwards.

Our victory was assured, for a while at any rate. We had a short time in which to take breath and reckon up our losses.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAPTURED BY THE PIRATES.—BOUND TO DIE.—THE MALAYS CHOOSE
A VICTIM.—RUNNING A-MUCK.—THE VOLCANO EXPLODES.

THE doctor, who seemed quite as pleased to shoot Malays as to slaughter partridges, continued his fancy shooting for a while with wonderful success. To him, Captain Garrettson, and Neil on board, and to Bone afloat, the victory was primarily due. The men under their respective commands behaved splendidly, but suffered severely.

We had a big "butcher's bill" for so short an encounter: The whole affair did not occupy fifteen minutes, although it takes so long to describe, yet in that time we had five men killed, or who died of their wounds soon after the action, and about fourteen wounded. This was a heavy percentage of our force, and we were still in a most precarious position.

When the prahus had burned to the water's edge, the glare which had shown us our losses was withdrawn, and we prepared to quit the poor disabled *Hercules*. The boats had been sheltered under the stern and were still all serviceable. So long as the light had lasted we continued to keep watch on the

remaining prahu, and we fancied we distinguished another vessel coming up.

Captain Garrettson had hurriedly issued his orders. Though wounded himself (his arm was bleeding from a deep cut from a kriss, and he had a severe contusion on his shoulder), he continued to give his orders clearly. The dead bodies of our comrades were reverently consigned to the ocean; the wounded were cared for as well as circumstances permitted, and were placed in the boats astern; and then the directions for retreat were issued.

"As soon as ever these old junks are burned out," said Captain Garrettson, "get away. You have all arms and ammunition. I will remain, with some volunteers and the pinnace, to make believe. There, I believe the old ship will sink under us."

The trembling of the vessel, which had been noticed before, was then even more distinctly perceptible. We all experienced it, and we wondered at the peculiar motion. But it was speedily forgotten in the excitement of volunteering to remain with the captain. The doctor wished to do so. So did I. Bone and all the petty officers did so, and the best men. The last man to hint at remaining was the suspected individual whom we had brought from the Cape, and the captain accepted him.

Five seamen, the captain, Neil, and the Cape man remained. We all were obliged to shove off. The

moment the fire was extinguished we hurried down, and, embarking rapidly, pulled silently away, with muffled oars, on the course agreed upon beforehand, towards Singapore.

Our departure had been so sudden that the pirates did not notice the boats. They were concentrating their attention on the steamer, which they evidently considered a valuable booty.

The boats had hardly got out of sight when the third prahu advanced, and those on board gave them a warm reception from the guns; but as soon as the vessel got within hail the Cape man darted overboard and swam towards the leading prahu, calling to the pirates as he did so.

He swam slowly, and with only one arm available, but they understood him. His object was clear—to betray us and our plans into the enemies' hands.

"I wish I had had the doctor's rifle," Captain Garrettson used to say when relating the incident. "He would never have reached the prahu alive."

The eyes of the men were opened, and they perceived what a viper they had been nursing in their midst. Foiled in his attempt on the captain's life, the man felt he must be discovered ere long. So he took the readiest method to join his acquaintances, or at any rate the best means of avoiding any awkward questions.

This incident was enacted so quickly, that the men

on board had scarcely time to fire at the fugitive. Guided only by the sound made by the swimmer in water, the men fired, but missed in the dark. The wretch would now tell "of the nakedness of the land," and all hopes of defending the vessel were put aside.

Indignant at the desertion of the man, the captain, perceiving that any further resistance was hopeless, bade the men retire to the boats. This order they performed very quickly. The brave captain then, knowing the guns were loaded, slewed them round and fired them at the approaching prahu, with very considerable effect, if the screams and cries which succeeded the successive rapid discharges could be accepted as confirmatory evidence.

Then, lighting the slow match which communicated with the magazine, Captain Garrettson descended the side, and the boat was rowed in the direction of the others.

It seems that our captain fancied that the pirates would be too pleased to gain possession of the ship peaceably, and would not attempt pursuit of the boats ; but there were other prahus yet unaccounted for, and we might have met with them, had we escaped.

Our captain's surmises, however, were unfortunately unfounded. The prahu, it seems, passed by the empty steamer after finding we had departed. They found and destroyed the fuse, and then, with all their sweeps

out, came after us, searching the sea to find us in the darkness.

As day was breaking, we, of course, became visible to those on board the prahu, and she came after us. The day was hot and sultry even in the early hours. Not a breath of wind ruffled the ocean. The captain's boat was the first captured, and the occupants, having been hauled on board, were bound and left, for the time being, to themselves.

The long-boat, the jolly-boat, and the gigs were then successively overhauled. We were all dragged unceremoniously on board, and, with our legs tied together, thrown down on the lower-deck. The prahu then turned and made her way back to the *Hercules*.

The other prahus had quite disappeared, so the pirates who still survived, or who were unwounded, had all the booty to themselves as they fancied ; but, scarcely had the breeze sprung up, when the remainder of the fleet came round the point of a coral island. They had waited for daylight to navigate the shoals.

"If they'd only leave us our lives," muttered an American—one of our crew—"I would soon get out o' this knot."

"How?" I inquired, in the same low tone, as I lay helpless, staring at the brilliant sky, "How would you manage it, Conroy?"

"Are you there, sir? Well, I hope you're more comfortable than me. How would I manage it? I'd wriggle out quick enough. When I saw their game, I stretched all my muscles out and swelled myself like a turkey-cock. So, when they tied me as tight as they could, I wasn't over-pressed. I'm pretty easy now, and, when they're fairly occupied, I will have a try."

"We might release the others, Conroy."

"Yes, sir; and, please the pigs, as Murphy says, we'll do it."

"It's mighty few pigs 'ud be plazed among such haythens as thim," replied Murphy, who lay near.

"But, Conroy, asthore, can ye do the thrick? Just give me a lump of a shillalah in my fist, and I'll turn a few of thim Malays to salt junk."

"Hush! here they come," whispered Conroy.

The Malay who was in command came and saw that we were all secure. Behind him, a free man, stood the villain we had shipped at the Cape. He was evidently in accord with the pirates, who made him serve as interpreter. The men hissed at him, and called him opprobrious names as he passed. He retaliated with kicks and equally insulting language, until he struck a wounded American—a friend of Conroy—who called out—

"If ever I gain my liberty, you villain, I'll give you something for that. You cowardly brute!"

The Malay commander grinned when he perceived his new ally ill-treating the prisoners.

The day was broiling hot. We were suffering intensely from thirst. Our lips were parched and cracked ; our throats dry and stiff. You will hardly credit the fiendish malignity of the deserter. This man, knowing how we were suffering, brought water to us, and, when we were about to drink some, spilt it upon the deck before our eyes.

"That will do you good," he said. "But it's nothing to walking the plank : and that is what you will come to."

"Devil," exclaimed our captain, "what injury have we done you, that you should torture us like this ? Leave us to die in peace, if we must die."

"Injury, you say. You and your nations have done harm enough. Your American and English ships have ruined my trade : your sailors killed my wife and children with their great guns—your people have burned my home in the Islands. Do you think the outcast Spaniard has no feeling for his children or their mother ? Ha ! you shall see. I vowed to fight English to the death. I took service with Captain—the Signor Luscumbe—he swore with me. We will make you walk the plank."

This tirade was uttered with deadly spite and evident hatred towards the two nations which had been so successfully employing their cruisers to

put down piracy and lawlessness in the Indian Seas.

Captain Garrettson quailed not for an instant. He only said—

"Is that scoundrel Luscumbe here, then?"

"I expect him about here soon. He tricked you nicely. He carried off your boy, captain; and pretty nearly sunk you all. He hates the very name of British and American—he hates all Europeans, and would exterminate them if he could. Your turns will come."

The taunting tone of the renegade was almost more irritating than the words he used. Conroy muttered to himself vengeance. Bone, who had heard something of the conversation, remembered the magazine; and I thought of poor Tom!

The pirate craft had all assembled now, and what our ultimate fate would be none of us could divine. We anticipated slavery among the Dyaks or the Sulus unless a man-of-war picked us up. These Malays might make us "walk the plank" into the sea, and even fire at us as we marched to our death; or they might compel us to run a-muck over the deck while, with drawn krisses, they hacked the flesh from our bodies.

That something more than ordinary was in contemplation we could perceive. Death, or even a more cruel fate as slaves, awaited us. The day wore on,

and, even in the prahus, we could feel the vibrations of the *Hercules* as she lay still fixed upon the rock.

The Malays were so much occupied looting the *Hercules*, that they paid no more attention to us than if we had been dead. The wounded—both their own men and ours—they had already thrown over-board to die ; and we shuddered at such savagery. As night came upon us torches were lighted, and the glare gave an unearthly appearance to the scene.

Some ceremony was about to be performed : we were not left long in doubt as to the nature of it.

"You will draw lots," hissed our tormentor, the renegade. "Lots, all of you, for the game. We shall have a-muck on your ship's deck!"

The horror that possessed us as this cruel mode of death was announced to us is quite beyond description. To die so far from home was bad enough ; but, to be hacked to pieces with long knives—cut, and stabbed, and notched by such fiends as our captors—was a death from which the bravest shrank ; and we had many exceptionably brave men in our ship's company.

The lot fell upon Murphy the Irishman. Poor fellow ! He said not a word when the fatal news was announced to him. The sun had set a fiery red and his last day was done. He cared little for death in the abstract, but his brave soul shrank from this mode of torture.

Conroy the American nobly volunteered to take his place. "I've neither chick nor child nor parent living and few friends — Pat, I'll go instead of you."

"Indeed, an' you won't, God bless you for it all the same, Timmy. Bedad, ye won't. One hack will settle me intirely, but you'd take a lot of killin'. Good-bye, boys. Am I shakin' or is it the prahu?"

It was the prahu: the mysterious trembling was becoming more pronounced, but the Malays scarcely noticed it.

Armed men, with torches of some resinous wood, stood at intervals along the deck of the *Hercules* to prevent the unhappy victim finding a merciful death in the ocean. All round the ship were stationed the blood-thirsty crews, some hundred and fifty or more men. Each man was armed with a sharp knife. Of this weapon he was only to use the point as the victim rushed past. By degrees the poor wretch would be sliced to death or burned with the flaming torches with which many of the Malays, besides the guards, had provided themselves.

We were all speechless with horror as poor Murphy was led away, and were left to our own devices, bound and helpless spectators of the horrible tragedy.

The Malays were all intent on their victim, and paid no attention to the heaving ocean which rolled beneath us in a very sudden and alarming fashion.

We noticed it, but the proceedings on board our late ship soon claimed our undivided attention.

Murphy was conducted almost naked to the fore-castle, where the renegade stood to taunt him. We could fancy him telling him his impending fate.

Conroy was struggling desperately with his bonds all this while. We were virtually unwatched.

The renegade looked in Murphy's face and said something, at the same time striking him.

Murphy, though only one arm was free, swung round suddenly with all his force and struck the renegade Spaniard a fearful blow with his clenched fist. The man dropped as if shot, while the Malays applauded after their fashion.

The "game" was ready. The sportsmen on the steamer grasped their knives. On board our prahu *Conroy was free*. He had wriggled from his cords and had crawled across to cut the captain's bonds, when a Malay lad left to guard us attempted to give the alarm. In a second Conroy plunged his knife into his breast, and loosed the captain with the insanguined blade.

The two crawled rapidly about, and before the Malays directed their attention to us under the bulwarks we were nearly all free.

The "muck" had just commenced: the victim had already dashed down the deck once, when, as we were espied moving, a tremendous heaving of the sea set

adrift, but nearly overturned, our smaller craft. The coral rock on which the *Hercules* was fixed soon afterwards opened like a pit, and a storm of fire uprose, mingled with stones and water, and the debris of the steamer. Fortunately we had been carried off by a wave !

The prahus were lifted by the outburst and dashed into the tempestuous sea like chips. One boat was overturned. We were nearly all flung into the raging ocean : the great wave passed on, and left us floating amid the spars and planks, the falling stones and sheets of fire of the insular volcano whose repeated warnings we had disregarded !

Of the *Hercules*, of the Malays, and alas, too, of our poor friend Murphy, not a trace could be found beyond the broken fragments and the charred timbers of the ship. The bodies had sunk in the incandescent sea !

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BIVOUAC.—APPEARANCE OF THE “PHANTOM.”—A RESOLUTION.
—CHASED AGAIN!—“SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS!”

WE had great reason to be thankful to the earthquake wave which had carried us for some distance away from the actual volcano which had burst out. Many of us had been flung into the sea, and had some difficulty in reaching the prahu, which still floated right side up. In time, nearly all were rescued, or saved themselves.

Such phenomena as this outbreak are by no means uncommon in those volcanic regions. The rock had become an active volcano. The *Hercules* was gone, and nearly all on board of her were dead—some were simply drowned; a few were killed by the falling stones and *débris*.

Self-preservation is the first law of Nature. We acted upon this maxim, and voluntarily mustered on the high poop-deck of the prahu, astonished to find ourselves there at all, after so many perils. But the muster was small, indeed! The captain, the doctor, Mr. Bone, were the only ship's officers, as we designated them. Mr. Neil and three stokers came

crawling up. Conroy and eleven of the crew were, with myself, all the other members of the party who had survived. Twenty people only remained out of the forty-and-one who had quitted England. Surely such a disastrous voyage had seldom or never been attempted.

The prahu was still water-tight, and in sailing condition. Our boats had suffered. Two were still quite dry, the stores which we had placed in them, the arms and ammunition, had all remained packed as we had left them, when captured by the prahu. These boats our captain immediately secured ; they were all that remained of his investment in the *Hercules* steamer, of Govan, N. B.

A dull apathy succeeded the anxiety and terrors we had all experienced. We had so lately tasted the bitterness of death, that the remaining prahu with its reduced complement of men—the few who had not been on board the *Hercules* at the time of the eruption—gave us no uneasiness. They hauled off out of reach of the volcano, which continued active, and when the wind rose, the prahu sailed away towards the northern islands into the darkness.

The question then arose, "What were we to do ?" There could be but one answer—Rest.

If ever repose was needed, it was by our party that night. After such a day of misery, a few hours' sleep was absolutely necessary. With some difficulty we

raised the mast and sail ; then steering wide of the volcano, but within the radius of its lurid glare, we reached one of the neighbouring small islands, and landed.

A meal eaten and our thirst assuaged, we all felt better. Sleep soon invaded us, and, without considering the possible consequences of discovery, we all threw ourselves upon the ground, and slept profoundly. The captain did warn us that these islands were probably the rendezvous of the pirate fleet, but he spoke to "adders," who would not hear the voice of reason. Somnus was our sovereign, and we obeyed him.

At least, the majority did. For my own part, I only dozed at intervals ; sometimes I lay wide awake with eyes staring intently across and upon the sleeping crew. In one of these wakeful intervals, I perceived Bone move and then sit up. I knew it was Bone, for he had kept near me all the evening : a kindly good man was "Nurse" Bone.

"Bone?" I whispered.

"Yes, Mr. Fraser."

"Can't you sleep? Are you anxious?"

"No, not overmuch," he replied. "I've been sleeping, for I have been dreaming I saw that vessel of Luscumbe's, which we used to call the "phantom prahu."

"You didn't really see it, did you?" I said

anxiously. "It can't be like a prahu, so you couldn't have mistaken ours for it."

"No: I saw what I thought was the *Phantom*. It was a raking schooner, a long bow, black hull, and it seemed to pass by there. Look yonder! Sure enough, there it is!"

I looked, and in the dim, dawning, grey light on the north-eastern horizon, the low, black hull of some vessel was just perceptible.

"She must have passed these islands. What a merciful escape we have had. Ten hours ago we should have fallen into his hands, and all been dead men by this time."

This reference to our late companions made us both silent. We gazed, without speaking, at the schooner, which was not far off. She seemed cruising about with no definite object in view. Perhaps she was expecting the *Hercules*!

Alas! the *Hercules* will never rise again. The *Hydra* has been his death, or I should have said her death, perhaps.

When the captain awoke, we told him what we had seen, and with his pocket-glass, he made out the schooner plainly. The light was increasing fast; and it became necessary for us to seek the shelter of the trees.

But the prahu? Should Luscumbe—for we did not doubt he was in the schooner, which tallied so

well with the description we had had of her—should Luscumbe perceive our craft, all hope was over !

We could do nothing, however, but wait beneath the shelter of the trees, and keep watch : we could cook no food, for the smoke would instantly betray us. Our breakfast, therefore, was not very luxurious.

After our swim and our meal, we watched again, and speculated. The volcano had subsided, the smoke and flame had quite disappeared. A gentle breeze ruffled the ocean. Day grew apace, and then, as the noon turned to afternoon, the schooner starboarded her helm, and bore away eastward.

We all breathed more freely.

"Now, lads," said the captain, "we must be off. This prahu will carry us out of these dangerous latitudes. We'll bear up for Singapore, and go up the Malacca Strait after, if I can find a ship."

"We may encounter the *Narcissus*," I suggested.

"Aye, Master 'Crumbs,' are you there? Well we may—and if we do, we'll turn pirate hunters with the British—unless there's an American about."

The schooner being hull down in the offing, we went on board our boat and bore up for Singapore.

It was an anxious time ; we met with several vessels, prahus ; but many small trading craft fled away on our appearance ; others took no notice of us, perhaps thinking us friendly associates, *i.e.*, pirates like themselves.

On the third morning Bone came to the captain, who was eating a hasty meal, and said—

"There's a large ship to windward, sir."

"Overhauling us, I suppose, Bone?"

"Yes, sir. Might be a man-of-war, but I can't make out her bunting yet."

"Well, Heaven, grant she is one of our cruisers, or a Britisher. We'll then get rid of prahus. I feel like a dog with a kettle to his tail."

Bone's solitary eye twinkled again, and he said—

"Yes, captain, this isn't a nice kind of ship. It ain't, and that's a fact. Come out and have a look at the vessel."

The captain came as requested, and after a very brief inspection, proclaimed to the crew that the ship to windward was an English man-o'-war. Likely your uncle's *Narcissus*," he said, turning to me.

"I hope so, captain," I answered. "He will assist us. My uncle is a very kind man, and always ready to help any one. I remember him very well."

"Perhaps he does not remember you, though, young man," remarked the doctor, who was on the poop-deck, while the men were all forward. "If he takes you for somebody else, it will not be so pleasant."

"Oh, he wouldn't hurt a fly, Doctor Munford," I exclaimed.

"I'd rather not be that fly under a British captain's

thumb," said Captain Garrettson. "Those gentlemen can squeeze hard, if all's true."

"Captain Garrettson, I am sure you will find my uncle most kind and considerate. I venture to say he will carry us to Singapore, and treat us most handsomely."

"Well, we are not very handsome at present," remarked the captain. "None of us have much to boast of over a scare-crow. We are, no doubt, most respectable, but unshaven and half naked as we are—grimed and weather-worn—were we not English and Americans, upon my veracity, we might be taken for pirates."

"And in a pirate craft, too!" added Bone. I am glad Master Fraser's uncle is not a hasty man, nor apt to judge by appearances."

"He is a little hasty at times, Mr. Bone, as all gentlemen are," I remarked a little loftily. "But he is free from prejudice!"

"Dear me, doctor," said Bone, as he turned away. "How some ducks swim!"

"Well, here comes your worthy relative, and he's signalling to us. I wish we could answer.—I say, gently there, old hoss!"

This remonstrance was called forth by the appearance of a round puff of grey smoke, which issued from the ship's side. A ball skimmed over the water a few yards ahead of us, and the "boom" of a heavy gun came to our ears almost simultaneously.

"Take in sail and lie down," cried the captain, as he waved his hand, "This uncle is somewhat hasty, after all, I am afraid. Here's another visiting card!"

Another shot came hurtling along, and plunged into the sea beyond us.

"Hang your uncle," cried the doctor. "He'll kill us first, and apologize after. Look out!"

CHAPTER XX.

A MEETING.—THE “NARCISSUS” TAKES US OFF.—REFITTED.—IN
A TIGHT PLACE.—CLAW'D OFF, AND CLUB-HAULED.

THERE really seemed some probability of the doctor's words coming true. Captain Theodore Ellerby was an excellent officer, no doubt, and only doing his duty in attacking suspicious prahus. Nevertheless, we all came quickly to the conclusion that a *little* less zeal in the performance of his duty would have endeared him to us still more.

We hauled down our mast, and lay like a log upon the water, waiting until the energetic *Narcissus* had come within close range. Her ports were open, her men at quarters, her officers at their stations, and the redoubtable captain on the quarter-deck.

A boat, half-filled with men, armed with pikes, cutlasses, and pistols, shoved off from each side of the corvette, which mounted eighteen guns, and was square-rigged—that is, ship-rigged. She looked very pretty, I thought; and very terrible with her carronades showing their angry muzzles, all ready to bark and bite at the shortest possible notice.

"Prahu ahoy! who are you?" cried the officer in charge, for he had perceived our white faces, and knew we were not Malay pirates, at any rate.

"English and American shipmates," replied our commander. "Who are you, and by what right have you fired into us?"

"You'll soon see the right, my fine fellow," replied the midshipman. "Give way, men. Rowed all," he cried, after a pause.

The boat-hooks soon brought the well-steered boat alongside; the other, commanded by a mate, who was, of course, the senior, came up almost immediately, and the latter officer took the lead.

"Now, sir," said Garrettson, boldly, "what do you want?"

"Who are you?" was the reply, if reply it can be called.

"If you will answer my question first," said the undaunted American, "I think we shall understand each other better. You have fired on me and my men; I am an American, as you see—independent—the others, with a few exceptions, are Britishers, all peaceful traders——"

"Teach your grandmother to suck eggs," was the polite rejoinder. "I want no palaver. There is His—I mean Her—Majesty's corvette *Narcissus*. We will blow you out of the water if you're not civil."

"Is Captain Ellerby on board?" I enquired of the midshipman, who was somewhat older than myself.

"What the (something or other) does it matter to you whether he is or not?" said the middy, with much energy of expression.

"A curious lot, these Britishers," remarked Bone, who was vainly endeavouring to get both officers in the focus of his solitary optic at once. "Queer lot—you asks 'em a question, and I'll be hanged if they don't ask you another!"

To the midshipman's question I replied as politely as I could—

"Because he happens to be my uncle, and will smarten you up when I report you, as I shall."

The face of the middy at this answer was a study. Astonishment, incredulity, and anger, were all evident. My impudence, as he termed it, with more energetic expression, was such that the propulsion of my person by his and others' feet from an unmentionable locality to one of the outlying districts east of London, was only a foretaste of the treatment which my exploded "cheek" would receive from the captain of the *Narcissus* and others. I was cursed—I regret to write it—cursed in such vehement terms that the mate of the war-ship, himself no mean linguist, actually told his junior to "belay all that on service."

A gentle reminder in the way of a kick on my legs

was the revenge which the brutal young midddy took upon me—a captive. But as the worm is said to turn and bite the steel-shod heel of the navy who treads on him too often, so I, poor "Crumbs" turned, and with a well-planted blow, knocked Mr. Midshipman down, flat on deck !

The *Narcissi* (as I may call the members of the crew who had boarded us) grinned, and on the whole seemed pleased with this demonstration. But the mate collared me at once, and, while protecting me from the angry blows of the infuriated midddy, had me tied and thrown unceremoniously into the boat alongside.

"Now you," he cried rudely, addressing Captain Garrettson, and, at last, the captain replied. After some parley, the first boat was sent back in charge of the midddy, when the pinnace was returned for the "prisoners."

Meanwhile I lay bruised and very uncomfortable beneath the thwarts of the boat, and my own thoughts were not a whit more pleasant than my position. The mate was incredulous concerning Captain Garrettson's narrative, backed as it was by Bone and the doctor. But when Doctor Munford produced his diplomas, and gave evident testimony to his identity, the mate, whose name was Stone, began to abate something of his assumed cynicism, and thought proper to listen to the captain's explanations.

"It's all very well ; it's all very well ; but the tale is a little *too* probable. A slight touch of the uncommon in it now, would be easier to believe than your everyday narrative."

He fixed a glass in his eye as he spoke, and looked very knowing. He spoke in a somewhat nasal, drawling way, which was considered "dry" by his friends, and simply exasperating by his enemies. A bright pair of eyes, fair beard, and high forehead were Mr. Stone's claims to talent. He was known on board, we afterwards discovered, as the "sea-lawyer," and a good fellow, for all his assumed cynical tone.

We were soon under weigh, and the prahu being emptied of anything valuable, was set on fire as a piratical craft, and burned quickly to the water's edge. The dry bamboos soon kindled into a blaze, and we watched the flames running along the deck and lapping at the lowered sail.

Before the destruction was complete, we had gained the deck of the *Narcissus*—a motley crew we were—dirty, ragged, and tanned. Had Mr. Molloy wanted a "vagabond" at that time, which was impossible for him to want, as he had not been born, he could have had his choice.

"Send these people aft," was the lieutenant's order.

"These people" were sent aft, my limbs having

been considerably unbound to enable me to proceed with the rest.

Captain Ellerby, my worthy uncle, was on the quarter-deck. The first lieutenant was beside him, and other officers were at a little distance, all anxious to see and hear as much as possible. The capture of an undoubted piratical craft manned by a white crew was an event which does not often happen in a life-time; and much curiosity was aroused on board.

"Now, sir," said the captain, addressing *our* captain; "what have you to say?"

"A good deal," replied Garrettson, stoutly, "you've bombarded our prahu and burned her: but for all that, though you nearly killed a few of us, we are glad to find ourselves under the British ensign."

"And the British captain," muttered one of the Englishmen.

"We claim your protection, Captain Ellerby, and here is one who demands it."

"Demands it, does he? Who are you, youngster?"

This *brusque* question was addressed to me, and I truthfully replied—

"Your nephew, Charlie Fraser, Uncle Ellerby."

"My nephew! Fraser? My sister's son. Impossible!"

"It may be impossible, captain," remarked Garrett-

son, "but it's quite true, for all that. This is your nevvv, sure. We sailed from the Clyde last autumn, and have come out on business partly—partly to pay off a scoundrel afloat."

"We generally pay off the men ashore," muttered Mr. Stone, who was near me. "So you're not a liar after all, cub?" This was to me, if you please—to me, the nephew of the captain!

"No, blockhead, I am not!" I retorted in the same tone. But there was no time for more of these polite remarks, for the captain beckoned to me.

"Come here. Is this true, youngster? Where are your credentials? I haven't seen you for years, and your present appearance is not prepossessing."

"No, Uncle Theodore, I know. But I declare to you, I am your nephew Charlie. Do you remember giving me this?"

I held up a pencil-case he had brought home after one voyage. It was of East Indian design, and had a yellow stone at the base, engraved, with a serpent's head on it.

"When and where did I give you that?" he asked.

"In our avenue, at home, on my birthday, six years ago; and you also gave me half-a-guinea."

"I don't remember that part, but you are right about the other. Well, my lad, go below. Let them see what can be done. Come, Mr. Stone, cannot you

and your messmates rig out my nephew here till we reach Singapore ? ”

Mr. Stone advanced, touched his cap, and said that he and his friends in the midshipmen's mess would be delighted to have me for a mess-mate.

“ Is there anything the matter with your eye, Mr. Stone ? ” enquired the first lieutenant, as the captain proceeded to question Dr. Munford ; “ you have a bit of glass in it, I think. Go for the surgeon, Mr. Parker, if you please.”

“ Thank you, sir, it is better now,” replied Stone, as he pulled his glass away. “ It's a very transparent offence, sir, and not intended to deceive anyone.”

“ You may go below, Mr. Stone,” said the lieutenant, “ and take care : you have a glass too much already ; you set a bad example. It is a most short-sighted proceeding,” he muttered. “ You may go below now, Mr. Stone.”

Stone laughed, touched his cap, and saying, “ Now, cub ! ” pulled me after him down the hatchway to the midshipmen's berth.

There I found two other middies, who stared at me and my conductor.

“ I say, Stoney, whom have you got there ? ”

“ The captain's new nephew,” replied the mate, grinning, “ and we have to rig him out. Can anyone lend him a suit of slops ? ”

“ We can make him a powder-monkey ! ” said

the other. "Have you no clothes, What's-your-name?"

"No; except what I stand in. My name's Fraser."

"Well, then, Fraser, we'll see what we can do," he said kindly. "Poor beggar!"

Thanks to this young gentleman, I was soon in a position to make my appearance on the quarter-deck, where, as the day was closing in, I found my uncle and the first lieutenant chatting, as the *Narcissus* bowled along towards Singapore.

"Ah, Charles!" exclaimed my uncle. "Feel better, eh?"

"Yes, sir," I replied respectfully, for I felt that an uncle at home, and an uncle in command of a corvette on service, were two different men.

"That's right, my lad. I will talk to you by-and-by. At present we have something else to think about."

I wondered to what he alluded; for there was no vessel in sight—no cloud in the sky to attract attention. There were occasional flashes of lightning in the south-east; but these, of course, would not have alarmed the captain and his officers.

After a while I met some of my former associates. Captain Garrettson in an old uniform coat looked as big a man in every sense as the captain. The doctor was clad in linen clothes, and looked as cool as a white cucumber. The men had been well-received

forward, and the *Narcissi* were listening with considerable interest to the narrative which our fellows were giving them with whatever variations fancy dictated at the moment.

When Captain "Uncle" Ellerby had finished his confabulation with his lieutenant, he came to me and enquired how in the name of wonder I had managed to come out in a prahu.

"Come into the cabin, Charles," he said; "and will you come too, Mr. Garrettson?"

We went downstairs, and there we told my uncle all the circumstances connected with Luscumbe, and why we had come out; our adventures in the prahu, and our determination to hunt down the "*Phantom*."

"Luscumbe—Kaylee"—mused my uncle. "Yes, I remember the scoundrel. I will keep my eyes open for his schooner. I expect to get orders at Singapore, Charles, and if you like, you may remain with me. Mr. Garrettson, you will go your own way of course?"

"Yes, captain, I contemplate seizing this Luscumbe. He has kidnapped our young friend, and I am responsible for *him*, remember. It may be ultra-royal in a republican, a member of the greatest republic, captain, that ever was created. But I'm goin' to do that thing! I'm a fanatic on this; and would hold up my arm till it withered, like the well-meaning Indian devotee, sir, to save young Arnold! Yes, sir."

A whistle from above broke suddenly the silence which succeeded the captain's firm declaration.

"I must go on deck," said my uncle, rising. "Mr. Garrettson, you may be of use here. You had better remain where you are, Charles."

The captain hurried on deck while he was speaking, followed by Garrettson, and, at a more respectful distance, by me.

The whole face of the sky had changed. A big black cloud came sweeping along at a terrific rate, obscuring the daylight and rendering the whole scene darker than the darkest night. The sea had risen suddenly. When we went below the waves were ordinary waves, but when we came up again they had increased and multiplied as if they intended to subdue the earth when they reached land. If the billows continued to increase in this ratio during the next hour, we ran a good chance of being "pooped."

"We must get her head to wind," muttered Garrettson; "as we go we shall run on some of those reefs."

"What do you say?" enquired the lieutenant.

"I said we had better run a bit close-hauled and then lie to. There's some coral banks about yonder; and in the darkness we may strike on them."

"No fear of that," replied the other; "I am going to reef and let her drive."

"I'd lie to, was I you," replied the American. "Put

in your storm stay-sails and ride it out. You've room enough. Run, and you'll likely run ashore."

But the captain and lieutenant thought differently. They furled and reefed and ran before the wind in the darkening day, when suddenly the look-out man shouted—

"Land on the port-bow. Land abeam!"

"Keep her head up, quarter-master—up with her," cried Captain Ellerby to the officer at the wheel.

"Helm's down most she can, sir. There's a current setting us in, I think—or the wind has headed us a bit."

"We shall never weather that reef," muttered Garrettson. "We're driving on that island. Hum, I told ye so!"

"What will become of us?" I asked in a terrified whisper of Garrettson.

"Depends on your uncle. If he's a man and not above takin' a hint from one who's sailed these seas many a year, he'll do now what he should never have been in a position to have to do—he'll claw her off this lee-shore and run to windward—if he can!"

It was apparently no easy matter to claw off. Sail after sail was set—a most dangerous but equally necessary proceeding. To get round and away in time required speed, and speed could only be obtained

by canvas. The helm was put up, the corvette careened over and rushed along furiously.

The captain went down to consult the charts : but I understood that the land on our lee was not laid down. The sea was wide and open for miles on paper.

"Some eruption has done this. These volcanic islands are for ever cropping up," remarked Bone. "But I think we're out of our reckoning altogether."

Bone was partly correct, the current had carried us farther than the captain had calculated. We ought to have had a few miles more room to run.

"This is going to be a memorable night," remarked Garrettson to the doctor.

"It won't last until morning for us," replied the man of medicine. "We are on a dead lee shore. If we can weather the point ahead and get round this island, well and good. But I doubt it!"

The night passed in storm and tempest. The good ship staggered many a time, and flopped into the sea with a crack which seemed to shiver the masts. The guns had been well secured, or they would have gone through the lee ports or the side of the corvette, and then nothing could have saved us. The fearful wash and rush and roar continued all night, and when day dawned we had at any rate held our own, but the position was extremely perilous.

The wind was coming over the low point of coral rock. We seemed to have run into a kind of bay ; coral ridges on each side, and an island, round which a fearful surf was beating, on our lee. The question was, could we weather the point to windward, or wear round on the other tack before the easterly wind.

The captain decided to wear, but the waves were so tremendous that he was persuaded not to try the experiment. There was scarce space.

"There is another way," he said. "Get out the anchor and bring her head to the wind."

This was done. The steersmen—there were four—put down the helm as directed. The corvette "luffed" slowly into the wind, staggering and plunging fearfully. Suddenly she was checked by the anchor, which had been let go, and strained at the cable awfully.

"She will turn over," I shouted, as the wind came down. The yards had been braced round before this, of course, and the great sails were beating the beautiful vessel, channels deep, into the raging sea.

A flash of liquid fire ran out of the ship forward. I fancied the magazine was going to explode ; but nothing happened. The *Narcissus*, free again, tore along the sea on a more southerly course. The "flash of fire" was the cable rushing through the hawse hole ! We were saved !

"She'll do now," muttered Garrettson. "We are making good way. Your uncle's no sojer, master Fraser!"

We weathered the reefs. The hurricane abated. The fearful sea went down. We then resumed our course; and after a while—during which nothing eventful happened—we ran one fine evening in early June into Singapore Roads, and made our number to the Government House Signal Station.

CHAPTER XXI.

SINGAPORE IN 1838.—THE ORIGIN OF THE CHINESE JUNK.—WE LAND AND VISIT A BUNGALOW.—A TERRIBLE SECRET.—CAPTURED!—MR. STONE'S IDEA.

SINGAPORE! What volumes could be written of that now thriving colony ; but Singapore, at the time of which I am writing, when I paid my first visit to it in the *Narcissus*, nearly fifty years ago—in 1838 it was—was not the same as now. We must remember that steam navigation had not yet penetrated into Eastern waters then. Sailing ships rounded the Cape, there was no Suez Canal and Red Sea and overland route in those days. The East India Company had its war-ships in the Red Sea, and Her Majesty's vessels assisted them at times in the suppression of piracy. But even then Singapore was a considerable place. Sir Stamford Raffles was the founder of it. There is a river or creek, on each side of which were the warehouses and emporiums, but the merchants lived away from their places of business, in cooler latitudes, on the hills, or away in the plain country.

Business seemed the ruling passion in Singapore.

The motley inhabitants, clothed in the costumes of nearly every nation under Heaven, and many varieties of native races, were and are to be found in Singapore. Chinese, Siamese, Japanese, Indians, Arabians, Jews, Europeans, infidels and heretics, jostle each other, or pass in the sampans flitting from ship to shore, or from shore to ship. All kinds of produce find here a market, all kinds of trades here find an asylum. Junks, prahus, sampans, and European craft, lie in great numbers in the roads, and ply for hire!

Oh, those junks. Of all vessels which I have seen since, or have ever seen, the real Chinese junk, with its single eye painted on it, to let it see when it goes to sea, is the most curious. The utter and absurd astonishment and vacancy of that eye no one but a Chinese can represent. With their cables lying on the water round them, the long pennons or streamers flapping from the mast-head, their odd shape, their bright colours, and above all the vacant, almost threatening eye,* when you look at it long, these Chinese junks form quite a feature of Singapore Roads.

Then the small boats; the flying sampan, propelled not pulled—for the eastern boat-men, like the pleasure-rowing Italian and Swiss confraternity, *push* their oars not *pull* them—the prahu and many less-

* No reference to my friend Knight's excellent book.

known craft of all sizes and descriptions, which dart about as quickly as, or even more quickly than, our man-o'-war gigs—the Chinese boats like baby junks, slipper form ; for all Chinese naval architects build their boats on the slipper not on the clipper principle. How this came to pass, a legend which I heard from my uncle in one of his leisure moments may explain.

Naturally I was wondering why the Chinese had built their vessels in such an extraordinary manner, when all other nations designed and built fast-sailing ships.

"My dear Charles," said my uncle, "did you never hear how the Chinese became imbued with the idea of the model junk? No? Well, then, I will tell you. Many hundred years ago a Chinese boat-builder begged the emperor to sanction a model for future ships. The model was something like our boats, with sharp bow and a good keel. But the emperor, a strong conservative, as all Chinese are, would have none of it. 'Take it away!' he cried in anger. 'If you want a model for our celestial shipping in future, take that! My orders are that in future ages all Chinese vessels shall be made after this pattern.' He cast his slipper at the boat-builder, who ran out.

'The man was astonished. He looked at the emperor, and saw him wink with one eye at his Grand Vizier, and heard him say—

'And precious funny sailing there will be in those vessels ; oh, Fahn See!'

"The ship-builder went home," continued my uncle, "and when he had finished his slipper craft, he painted the Royal Eye on the bow of the ship to illustrate the expressive wink of the Ruler of the Celestial Empire ; and that is the reason why the Chinese junks are always like slippers, and have an eye painted on the bow."

I laughed at Uncle Ellerby's story, and then he offered to take me ashore with him. This offer I was delighted to accept. He had to go up to Government House to call upon Sir Samuel Bonham, who was the Governor of the Straits. He lived on the top of the hill.

"Perhaps you would rather remain and have a look at the town, Charles?" said my uncle.

I replied that, if he did not mind, I would rather stroll about with the middies, and see something of the place.

"Well, don't get into mischief, that's all. My young gentlemen are rather fond of a lark, and there is liberty ashore for all who are not on duty, and who have money to spend. If you remain on board you will see some work. Have you any money?"

"No, Uncle Theodore."

"Then I will give you some. By the way, you may as well get some clothes. Send Mr. Stone up here, Mr. Parker—if you please."

I noticed that Captain Ellerby was always

extremely polite, and might have stood as the model for the celebrated admiral who held—

“ . . . that on the seas
The expression ‘if you please,’
A particularly gentlemanly tone implants.”

Mr. Stone, without his eyeglass, made his appearance on the quarter-deck in a few minutes, and touched his cap.

“ Mr. Stone, I have selected you to go ashore with my nephew, for a while, as I believe you to be steady and possessed of common sense.”

Mr. Stone bowed, and was obliged to the captain for his good opinion.

“ You will assist my nephew in a few purchases, I hope, and accompany him through the town ; but you must avoid all appearance of offence ; and in bargaining for goods be firm.”

“ Firm as a rock, sir,” replied Mr. Stone.

I smiled, and Captain Ellerby bit his lip.

“ Very well, Mr. Stone,” he replied, “ I depend on your discretion and steadfastness. Remember,” he added with a faint smile, “ a rolling stone gathers no moss.”

We both stared in wonderment at the captain, and then with two beautiful and dutiful smiles lighting up our handsome faces (we have altered a good deal since that time), Stone and I and the eyeglass pro-

ceeded on shore with the captain, who kindly gave us passage in his gig.

We landed and walked along into the business quarter. The town is divided by the creek I have already mentioned ; one side being commercial ; and here at that time the bustle and running to and fro, the jostling and energy, were almost as great and inconvenient as in Fleet Street between one and two o'clock, or in the neighbourhood of the Mansion House, London, at almost any hour. Such a scene can, however, never be witnessed in London City. Here in Singapore were various nationalities, all hard at work, struggling for precedence—half-clothed coolies, greasy Indians (Hindustanees), Arabs, Parsees, Dutch residents, English business men, English sailors, English middies, Armenian Jews, Jews who were not Armenians, and Armenians who were not Jews ; porters working hard ; coolies with hot faces ; Hot-tentots with cool skins ; Siamese not twins ; half-castes and others, yelling over bales and boxes and barrels, shouting to clear the way and incontinently blocking it themselves : all bent on the great worship of Mammon as represented by the Almighty Dollar ; and driving the hardest of bargains, in an atmosphere of noise and smells which were almost enough to knock any ordinary person down.

But oh, the opposite bank ! Compared with the business quarter this was Paradise ; and though the

comparison in this case was "odorous"—as Mrs. Malaprop has it—it is not unfounded. The contrast was so great; the calm and quiet so striking after the bustle, the heat and the smells of the bazaars, that we felt charmed. So quiet, so pretty, and so warm, that we felt tempted to go to sleep under the green trees, amid which the merchants' houses are built, bungalows in their own compounds; and no display of force anywhere, except an occasional gleam of scarlet, which indicated a Sepoy whose masters kept him simmering in the sun.

We made our purchases and sent them by a ship's boy on board the *Narcissus*. We then climbed a hill in the direction of a shaded bungalow. We had some fruit with us, the day was broiling hot, there was no wind, and the restful silence of the place induced us to lie down near the verandah of the bungalow, which was apparently uninhabited. The blinds were closed, and everything was at rest but the insects.

Stone and I ate our fruit and chatted for a while; enjoying the view of the Roads, and speculating upon the *Narcissus*, which looked very trim and clean, with her yards squared to an inch. There were specks visible on the masts—these were men scraping them. There were other specks on the hull—these were the painters with their pots of white and black paint, "pointing" or picking out the ports and accentuating

the contrast of colours. The decks we were sure were being "holystoned;" and the whole vessel put into apple-pie order by the first lieutenant, who, as Stone informed me, was a "whale at clearing up."

By this time I am afraid we had become very drowsy, and felt inclined to indulge in a nap. I am sure I did, and when I opened my eyes again, I found Stone fast asleep. Then I heard voices, and one of the voices made a remark that made me start.

"We must tell Luscumbe," the voice said. "This English war-ship will change our plans."

Tell Luscumbe! Then the owner of the bungalow was in league with the pirates! I wished to waken my companion, but I was afraid he would exclaim and spoil the situation.

So I raised myself upon my elbow, and gazed round the corner of the verandah, keeping well concealed all the time.

In the room were two men seated at a small table with papers before them. Both were dark-featured men; one wore his hair long, and both were smoking, and occasionally drinking. They were *déshabillé* and quite at their ease: their conversation was at times as free as their costume was easy.

"Where is he now?" enquired one man in broken English—a Dutchman he seemed.

"Round the Island. He is coming down the

Straits by Penang soon : there's a fine fleet of them expected. Luscumbe will make a good thing for us, Mynheer."

"He is a gut man," assented the Dutchman. "We will dhrink his health. So. Now to business."

They were silent. Very cautiously I awoke my friend Stone, and whispered to him that there were men about. "Enemies, I think," I added.

"Let us be off," he whispered. "We have no business here, and your uncle, the captain, will kick up a jolly shine if we get into any mischief. Let us be off."

Easier said than done. To be off meant to go past the windows, which had before been closed but were now open. The sun had gone off the side, the sea-breeze was just moving the trees, and the inmates were enjoying the cooler air. But we must pass them to gain the town.

"Here goes," whispered Stone. "I will go first, and mind you watch me. I can crawl like a tiger."

No doubt Stone fancied he could imitate the graceful approach of the feline he mentioned ; but I am bound to confess, that in his uniform and eyeglass, anything less like a tiger than Stone I never saw. He may have resembled a page-boy, and perhaps he meant that two-legged "tiger." But I didn't laugh
n, I can assure you.

The middy began to crawl along the verandah as far above the level of the men's vision as he could. He had easily ascended ; but he had to pass over the room, and descend on the other side. Had we attempted to escape by the grounds we should have been "spotted" at once—not like the feline race at all—and treated to stripes much more in keeping with Stone's hastily assumed character of the tiger.

My companion, being the heavier and bigger, had concluded, with real generosity, that if he could escape observation, I could. We arranged that if he were captured I was to dart away and escape down the hill and give the alarm. We were so firmly convinced of the desperate characters of the men that we expected no quarter should they capture us.

We clasped hands, Stone and I ; and he, with his eyeglass firmly fixed in his "ocular," ascended the verandah quietly. Then the tiger-play commenced. Cautiously, and with extreme lightness, did he proceed ; and without more than bending the roof he reached the farther side, telegraphing something to me which I could not understand, but interpreted it as a caution.

Then he beckoned to me, and slid down the verandah. I peeped round my corner and perceived him on the slope of the hill in perfect safety. There

was, I am now fully convinced, no earthly reason why I should not have darted along the verandah past the window, and joined Stone again ; but this enterprise at the time seemed so daring, and the men seemed so reckless, that I thought it better to follow my friend's example.

Contrary to general experience the ascent of the verandah was the easiest portion of the undertaking. The first steps counted as nothing ; *ce n'est que le dernier pas* in this case, for the descent was on the slope and a leap was necessary. Nevertheless I determined to climb, though, like Walter Raleigh of cloaked memory, I feared to fall—and——

Of course I did ! A more unlucky fellow there never was ! In my younger days, at home, I could never have luck. If I climbed a tree, a branch would surely break at the critical moment, though (perhaps because !) ten lads had passed in safety ahead of me. If any one wanted a plank to give way they would send me over it ; and I was fatal to ice ! It was certain to break and let me in. The same misfortune attended me in after life : the only bank I ever invested in behaved like the ice of my youth—broke and "let me in !" And so on.

With such a fate as this can any one wonder that, as soon as ever I attempted to pass across the verandah, it broke ? I was in no way surprised when I came to think upon my luck. I was

frightened—astonished for the moment, I confess—but it was after all so very much the usual condition of things, that the uppermost thought was, “Just my luck !”

Here there is a fine opening for a dissertation on luck as compared with energy and application, but I forbear. The verandah gave way with me, and I hung with one leg through the roofing ; caught in a trap.

The two men rushed out, cigars in hand, to arrest the eaves-dropper—and surely never was the term more applicable. I was caught in the act, and in the roof, simultaneously ! There I was, how came I there ? Climbed up ? Yes. What had I heard ? Nothing !

“Nothing. Don’t believe it. Kill him !” said the darker of the two dark men.

I can afford to treat this matter pleasantly now, as I sit by my fire-side and recount the memories of many years. But think of the circumstances ; the surroundings then : I was tolerably scared, I can assure you—and “Crumbs ” was as dust before the men.

“Kill him ? What for ?” enquired the other.
“What are you doing here, boy ?”

“I came to see the view : and fell asleep. When I awoke I saw you and tried to escape—I was afraid—in a strange place——”

"Then you were not listening. You didn't hear what we said?"

"Not all, certainly," I replied after a pause.

"Not all. How much then?"

"Not much. Only some general talk about pirates."

"Who are you?"

"A ship-wrecked boy from England. Waiting for a ship—or a passage."

"Go and hang yourself!" replied the darker man. "Go along. Quit!"

I quitted: and in five minutes was down the hill and in Stone's welcome company.

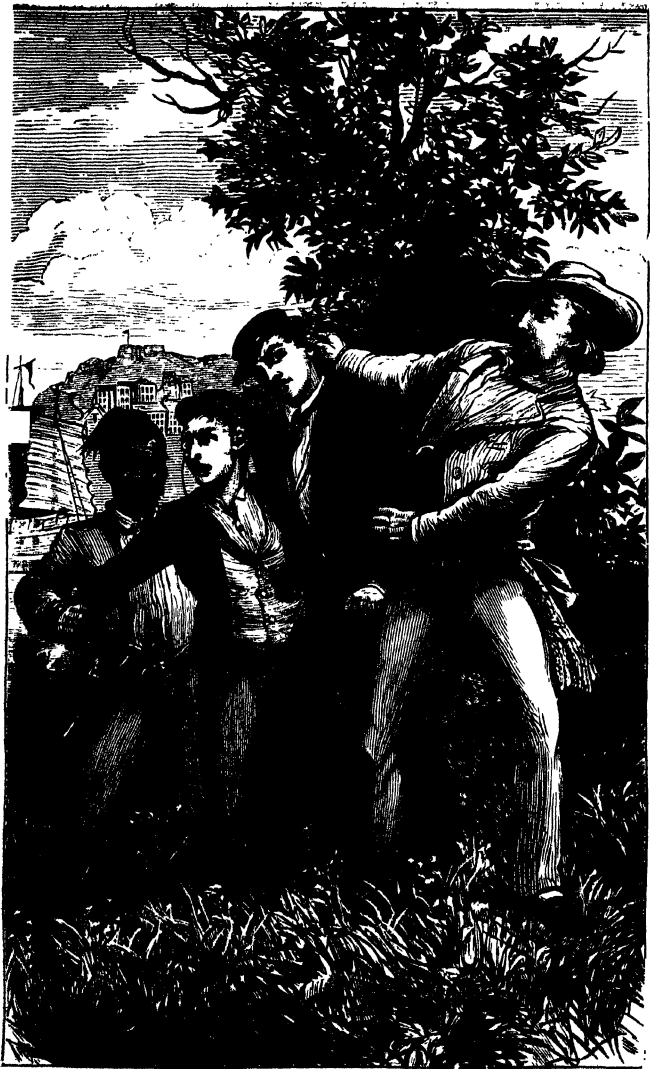
"They are pirates," I said. "They mentioned that scoundrel Luscumbe. They will do mischief yet. Let us hurry on!"

"Yes. Let's," replied Stone. "I wouldn't fall into the hands of such rascals for a hundred dollars. We will give the alarm. Come along."

"We have not done with them yet," I remarked. "They are evidently in league with Luscumbe. If we could only make them prisoners, we could do a big bit of business. The *Narcissus* will help, and we'll go for them, Stone."

"We will," replied Stone. "Confusion to all the pirates. Particularly Luscumbe & Co. We'll see them again!"

"So you shall," retorted a deep voice. "Ah, young



“Then, without any explanation, the two pirates led us back to the house by the ears.”—p. 217

men, you have been playing the spy, have you! Obadiah, catch this young Ananias. Hold him!"

The Dutchman did as requested. He collared me tightly.

We turned to regard our captors, and I at once recognized in our captors the two men who had caught me in the verandah.

"Your precious lives shall pay for this. You belong to that ship yonder, the man-of-war. What is her name? Speak."

"*Narcissus*," we shouted—for the answer was absolutely shaken out of us. "*Narcissus*."

"That vill do," said the Dutchman. "You shall remain here for de bresent. All's vell!"

Then without any explanation the two pirates led us back to the house by the ears—an unpleasant manner of conducting anyone—and when we arrived there they locked us in a small room in which there was only one little aperture for light and air.

"Here's a pickle!" I exclaimed. "Just my luck."

"Why didn't you mind the rotten plank? I told you plain enough," said Stone. "You've done it this time! But let us see whether we cannot escape. This is a nice place, but rather monotonous. Hush, and let us think."

We did. Nothing occurred to us for a while. At length Stone said—

"I've got it. It's all right. Now if you stir till I tell you I will brain you where you stand!"

Need I add that I remained as dumb as a rat, while Mr. Stone unfolded his plan. It was a desperate alternative, but no other presented itself.

"Listen," said he. "This is my idea."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PIRATE AT HOME.—TOM ARNOLD IS THREATENED.—A FRIEND IN NEED.—TRICED UP.—GALLANT BEHAVIOUR OF LAKE.—A TRAGEDY.

IT is a long time since we have heard anything of Tom Arnold ; and, as it will help to clear up any uncertainty concerning his fate, I may in some degree anticipate his own narrative. He eventually gave us a full, and, as we have no reason to think otherwise, a true account of his sojourn on board the *Hydra*. Certainly some of the facts related were rather startling ; but pirates *do* do some very extraordinary things. I am bound to add that Mr. Luscumbe or Kaylee in no way fell short of the traditions of his class.

It will be remembered that Tom Arnold quitted us for the *Hydra*, and subsequently sent for a bottle of champagne, which he received with a message from Captain Garrettson requesting his return. Instead of returning to the *Hercules*, Tom was spirited away by the revengeful Luscumbe : with the results of this act we are already acquainted. This chapter will, we hope, bring the motives and actions of the *Hydra* and

her consort the *Phantom* before our readers ; and we can resume the main lines of our narrative at the next junction.

Tom told us that he was most politely received by the captain of the *Hydra*, or the *Indus* as he then called her. The champagne was opened ; Luscumbe took a glass or two.

"Well," said he, "and so your skipper is on the look out for a pirate, you say ? There are no pirates here, young sir."

"Of course not," replied our Tom, cautiously.

"Then why did your skipper fire at us ?" inquired the dark captain of the *Indus*, sternly.

"Merely to 'bring you to,' I suppose," said the lad, who was feeling uncomfortable ; for, as he afterwards said, "there was something in Luscumbe's eye which meant mischief."

"I will go now, if you please," concluded Tom.

"Oh, do not leave us yet!" exclaimed the captain. "We cannot spare an old friend. My nephew will be delighted to see you again."

"Your nephew !" cried Tom, in amazement, partly real, because he was rather taken aback by the captain's recognition and suspicion.

"Yes, my nephew ; do not you remember your friend Cayley ! Dear me !" exclaimed the captain, in pretended astonishment ; "I fancied all you English schoolboys were friends after leaving school."

"Yes; but not with cads and thieves and swindlers!" replied Tom boldly, but rashly.

"Indeed, Mr. Thomas Arnold!" sneered the man. He touched a bell, and a sailor appeared.

"Send Lake here, and my nephew!"

The sailor disappeared. In a few moments a tall sailor, and sure enough, Kaylee (or Cayley), too.

The captain whispered a few instructions to the sailor, the results of which were the throwing overboard of the boat's crew, and the abrupt departure of the *Indus*, as already related in a previous chapter.

Tom said he heard the struggling, the splashing, and the orders given to go on; but he was so occupied by his own private business, that he had no leisure to attend to anything else.

"Jim Crow" entered immediately behind the sailor Lake, and while Luscumbe and he conferred, "Jim Crow" stared at Arnold. Tom looked at him in return, with the greatest contempt, but made no sign of recognition.

"Here, lad," said Luscumbe, addressing his dusky relative. "Here: see yonder English boy."

Cayley nodded. "Arnold," he said.

"Yes, Arnold!" replied Tom, mockingly.

"What does he want here?" was "Jim Crow's" next question.

"What does he want? He wants you and me, who

he says are robbers, pirates, and cads. We will teach him manners first, though."

"Do you call me a thief and a robber?" asked Cayley, walking up to where Tom was standing.

"Yes, I do," replied Tom. "You stole my friend's papers and money, and that man there is a pirate and a forger—a swindler!"

"Do not mind me," remarked Luscumbe, with a ferocious grin, which displayed his cruel white teeth. He did not smile—his lips drew back from his teeth, as if the muscles of the mouth were tightened at the sides. It was a kind of "bull-dog grin," as Tom described it.

"I will pay you out," replied Cayley. "You are in our power, and a nice life you'll have of it. Robbers, eh? Take that! Thieves, eh? Take that! Swindler, eh? Take that! Pirate, eh? Take that!"

At each repetition of the words "Take that!" the younger ruffian aimed a blow at poor Tom, who made a good defence, though he did not retaliate. He was afraid to provoke Luscumbe.

But when "Jim Crow" seized a rope's end, and at Luscumbe's instigation commenced to thrash his former school-mate, Arnold's patience gave way. Like the Irishman, who declared he was "quiet until roused," Tom could put up with a good deal; but he drew the line at rope's-ending, even amidst enemies, and unassisted. The first blow had descended, and

the second was about to fall, when Tom, seizing a glass, hurled it at the head of Cayley.

The missile cut into his temple, and "Jim Crow" was immediately covered with his own blood. Luscumbe rose from his seat, and drawing a pistol, presented it at Tom, and fired. Then without waiting to see the effect of his shot, he caught his nephew, and endeavoured to staunch the bleeding.

Tom said he lay on the floor, afraid to stir. He had seen the pirate captain seize his pistol in a blind rage, and had immediately dived under the cabin table. There he remained uninjured, but quaking with fear. Lake and another sailor came hurriedly into the cabin when the pistol had been fired.

A few words explained matters, and "Jim Crow" was led away to the individual who acted as surgeon, a broken-down medical student, who, with talent enough to sweep the prizes of his profession from the board, had permitted his fondness for ardent spirits to bring him down to the condition of the needy adventurer and unscrupulous intriguer he was.

He had studied in Edinburgh, but his unfortunate propensity compelled him to leave it without his diploma. Notwithstanding the kindness of a gentleman at whose house he used to visit, notwithstanding the true charity of that gentleman's Glasgow and Edinburgh acquaintance, young Cobbetts had slipped through the pale of respectable society, and shuffled

away to London. There he attempted something but failed. He went to a street accident so tipsy, that the poor patient, a woman, died, and Master Cobbetts narrowly escaped the law by flight. After that he prowled about, occasionally putting pen to paper, and vending quack medicines for a bare subsistence. In the low haunts of the East of London he had met an African "trader" in human flesh. This man shipped Cobbetts as a doctor, and found him apt when not intoxicated. Then the "doctor" met Luscumbe, and consented to sail with him. But he hated his life, he hated himself, he hated his employer, and the people he was obliged to associate with. His punishment had begun. At thirty years of age he was already in torment.

O, Phil Cobbetts, some day I may write your biography, and the telling of it should be a warning to those who in these happy-go-lucky days are inclined to "let things slide," and think they know better than their elders. . . .

To this doctor was Cayley intrusted. The injury was more terrible to see than to suffer. The bleeding was soon stopped, the wound was dressed and strapped, and then "Jim Crow" claimed his revenge. Where was the culprit ?

Bound hand and foot, and tied like a dangerous dog to the cabin-table, face to the floor.

But Cayley's desire for revenge had to give way to

the exigencies of the situation. Captain Garrettson, having picked up his men who had been thrown overboard, gave chase. The speedy *Hercules* was driven over the darkening water. Night fell, and all lights in both vessels were extinguished.

Then Luscumbe conceived the idea of doubling upon his enemy. Lying like a log in the cabin, Tom Arnold heard all the orders given to run down and attack the *Hercules* in the darkness. Lake had eyes that rivalled Mr. Bone's favourite and single optic. He managed to make the vessel out; the *Indus* kept her company at a distance, and when all were ready, guns shotted, men at their stations, the revengeful Luscumbe darted suddenly at the *Hercules*, and got a warm reception too.

The duel in the dark continued for some time. Tom chafed and struggled. No one minded him. The crew of the *Indus* fought bravely, and many a shot was received in return. One took two men from the wheel, and carried them and the spokes overboard. A cry of vengeance rose—it was heard on board the *Hercules*. Luscumbe had the guns double-shotted, and discharged at short range into the heaving black spot which rose and fell upon the rolling ocean. That broadside settled the engagement. The *Hercules* ran into the darkness, and as the steering gear of the *Indus* was temporarily disabled, Luscumbe could not follow her.

Finding his own crew and vessel in a bad condition, he concluded to run for the Cape, and it was on the way thither that Master "Jim Crow" Cayley had his revenge on poor Tom Arnold.

The Captain and men of the *Indus* were too busy repairing damages, and the doctor was too busy binding up wounds and attending to contusions, &c., to permit of any particular notice being taken of Tom for a whole day. But when the excitement had worn off, and "Jim Crow," who had with much discretion kept out of the engagement, and the track of shot, had regained his usual sulky, revengeful temper, he bethought himself of his revenge.

Ah! He rubbed his hands and came into the cabin, where still tied, half-starved, and utterly miserable, lay Tom Arnold in a fainting condition.

"Here, get up!" cried Cayley, kicking the prostrate form of his old school-mate. "Get up. Do you hear?"

Tom heard well enough, but he was so completely wretched, and careless whether he lived or died, that he made no answer.

"Come up, you beast!" said the cheerful Cayley. "Come up, you sulking brute!"

But the animal addressed did not stir, and Cayley finding that Tom, his intended victim, could not possibly stand up, the half-caste very considerably cut the cords which bound his arms to the leg of the

table, and bade him stand up, or "take the consequences."

Tom, with numbed limbs and blanched face, obeyed. He was trembling from weakness, a sign which Cayley interpreted as an evidence of fear.

"Now then we will see who is a robber and a thief, Master Arnold."

"You are," murmured Tom. "You and your pirate uncle."

"You will change your note presently, when you find the cat-o'-nine tails swinging over your back," replied "Jim Crow," grinning in the anticipation of gratified revenge.

"The cat-o'-nine tails!" replied Tom in a weak voice. "It can't hurt me, I shall be dead first."

"No, you won't. We do not intend to kill you, that would be murder on the high seas. You see, we are merciful, although we *are* robbers, and pirates, and cads."

At each epithet Cayley gave his helpless victim a blow on the cheek, or a kick. Tom was too weak to do more than attempt to parry the attack. "Jim Crow," secure in his strength, continued his abuse, and was proceeding to even a more energetic display of his authority, when the doctor entered suddenly.

"Hallo! what are you about?" he said.

"What is that to you?" retorted "Jim Crow."

"A good deal. This lad is a prisoner, is he? Very

well, then, leave him alone. He is ill, I must look after him. It's that much to me."

"You will do no such thing. You are under my uncle's orders. This fellow is a spy, and shall be treated as one. He is going to be flogged for treachery. Don't you interfere, doctor."

"Flog him by all means if he deserves flogging; but don't bully and torment him. He is half-dead as it is. Hand me that bottle!"

He indicated a bottle of brandy, which, with others, stood, or rather, reclined in a "japanned" receptacle which was in those days used to bring up wine from the cellars of houses, and may be in use now, for all I know.

"Leave the brandy alone," replied "Jim Crow." "You have had enough already, I daresay."

The doctor looked at him with an expression which, bold as Cayley was, struck him dumb. Then approaching the young man, the doctor took him by the collar, and led him to the door. He pushed him out, and then returned to Tom.

"Drink a drop of this," he said, kindly, "not much; I know its insidious qualities. Drink a mouthful. There, that will do. So they are going to flog you?"

"So that young brute says."

"Ah, then, I'm afraid he'll do it. He is a perfect fiend when crossed. Luscumbe is bad enough, but I'll

be hanged if his nephew is not worse. You must make up your mind for a flaying."

"Oh, can't you help me?" cried poor Tom.

"Dare not. Why, they'd shoot me in a moment. What have you done?"

"Nothing," replied Tom.

"That isn't much. But I always said the same when I was a lad. Come, tell me the facts. You see I'm rather independent here. I *can* do many things, and *do* many things that others cannot, because I am the doctor. Speak up!"

Then Tom in as few words as possible, hastily told him the facts as requested.

"What's your name?" asked the dilapidated doctor.

"Thomas Arnold," replied the lad.

"Arnold—Arnold," mused the man. "Ay, I knew an Arnold myself once, in Glasgow. He was a ship-owner or something of that kind. He did me a good turn once. I wish I had taken his advice."

"He is my father," exclaimed Tom. "Yes, it is true—Arnold of Govan."

"Ay, ay," replied the medico. "That's the same man. Your father! you can't mean it; not the brat called Tom, who had a sister named Rose?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Tom, "I am he. But I don't remember you."

"Glad to hear it. I wasn't over respectable, I

daresay. My name is Cobbetts. But never mind, I remember your father and mother. They were more than kind to me, and I will protect you if I can."

Tom had only time to mutter his thanks, when Luscumbe and Cayley entered.

"What's this, Mister Doctor; I hear you have turned my nephew out of my cabin?"

"I did, because he was ill-treating a defenceless lad. Justice is justice."

"Well, we can't have this again, mind. Here, Smith," he cried, calling up the companion, "rig a grating—or get the lashings, they'll do!"

"You are not going to flog the man?" said Cobbetts.

"No, not a single man. But Cayley is going to thrash that spy yonder. Bring him on deck."

"He can't bear it at present. You'll kill him," said the doctor, as the deck was gained.

"Well, what matter? A mouth less makes no difference, does it?"

"There have been trials for murder on the high seas, and in this lad's present condition, I would not answer for his life, if you flog him. Wait until you leave the Cape."

"I won't," cried Cayley. "Trice him up!"

"Up with him," cried Luscumbe, grinning. "Now Smith, Lake, do your duty."

Smith, the brutal mate, had no objection in life. He grasped the lad, and soon had him triced up to the rigging. Lake would not interfere.

"Now then," said Cayley, turning the cat-o'-nine tails round in his hand. "Stand aside you. I'll show you some sport!"

Poor Tom's back was quickly exposed. His face was as pale as death. He seemed only half conscious of the ordeal.

"Do it at your peril," he heard the doctor say. "Captain Luscumbe, you're responsible, and had I known your character, I would never have joined this curséd ship."

Luscumbe walked away, and descended to the cabin. He perceived it was unnecessary cruelty. The "cat" whistled round Cayley's head, and in another second would have descended on the bare white shoulders, when Lake rushed up and said with an oath—

"Come, Mister Cayley, if ye wants a back to bite, take mine. Fair is fair. Don't go and flog a dying lad like him. Come, now."

A murmur of applause from some of the other men arose; they agreed with Lake.

"I will flog whom I please. I am the lieutenant here, and do you mind your business, or you will be triced up too."

"Better me than him!" muttered Lake.

"Stand aside," shouted the furious Cayley, "or I'll make you."

He flourished the "cat" again, and in his rage struck Lake across the face with it.

Three livid weals stood out on the sailor's cheek, but the man said never a word. He made one step forward and knocked the young half-caste down ; then before he could be prevented, wrested the "cat" from him, and dealt him four or five fearful strokes across the neck and shoulders.

Then he flung the instrument overboard ; and, well knowing what his fate would be, leaped after it into the ocean, and with it, sank to rise no more !

"Brave fellow !" muttered the doctor. "Now for my patient !"

He turned to Tom, who had seen the last act of the tragedy. But he had fainted !

CHAPTER XXIII.

APPEARANCE OF THE *PHANTOM*.—TOM ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE.—THE
PIRATE IN HIS TRUE COLOURS.—“WALKING THE PLANK.”—
LOST !

NO one made the least effort to save the bold sailor Lake, who had voluntarily perished in the manner described. Smith, the mate, had such a calmly cynical contempt for human life that he would scarcely have thrown a rope to his brother, and as he was rather jealous of Lake he was not at all likely to help him.

But the condition of Cayley demanded some attention, and as the doctor seemed to be more interested in the fainting Tom Arnold, Smith, with the assistance of a sailor, picked up the half-caste youth and found him in a bad way. The terrible “cat” which he had destined for his enemy had been employed with considerable effect. The skin was completely cut from the neck and jaw and throat. The lash had whipped round the neck and inflicted some ugly wounds.

Cayley did not faint, he only used some bad language, but made no attempt to move until Luscumbe came on deck. The pirate—for he really was a pirate

—glanced round and seemed to comprehend the situation at once.

"Where's the doctor? What is the meaning of this? Who has dared——?"

"Lake dared to thrash him, sir," said Smith, as he answered the half-pronounced inquiry. "Lake used the cat, captain; and he and it are overboard."

Luscumbe stood silent—a fiendish light in his eyes. He gazed round evidently in want of a victim. None appeared. The men were all silent and respectful in their terror, for the captain when aroused was indiscriminate in his wrath.

His gaze at length, after a scrutiny of all the ship's company, fell upon the doctor, who was just then coming up the companion stairs. Here was the very person, the mainspring of the whole business! The scape-goat had been found.

"So, Mister," exclaimed Luscumbe, "you have been aiding my men to mutiny. Now, I'm captain of this ship, and I'll be obeyed. Smith, stand forward. Didn't this man aid and abet Lake? No prevarication, Yes or No?"

The doctor looked quite unconcerned, but his heart was beating fast. He glanced at the captain, and then turned resolutely towards the crew, but said never a word.

A pause ensued, in which had the scene been enacted on shore the beating of the men's hearts might

almost have been heard. They were all anxious: ruffians though they were, they were not so cold-blooded as their grim employer. Besides they respected the doctor. He always treated them well, and kindness is never thrown away. It may be forgotten, but will return to mind after many days.

Luscumbe's right hand was clutching his ever-ready pistol. Smith perceived that on his word depended the doctor's life. They were near the Cape. There they could arrange matters perhaps. The crew evidently sided with the doctor; and Smith—albeit perfectly callous, for he would not have been sorry to have got the doctor out of the way—feeling the influence of public opinion, said, in reply to Luscumbe's demand,—

“No, captain, he ain't to blame!”

Luscumbe replaced the pistol in his belt. “It's a good thing for you, Mister,” he answered. “Now, men, no nonsense. We have a fine vessel at the Cape awaiting us. We'll tranship there and have a gay life in the Archipelago.”

Then grog was served out, the men, even the waverers, perceived that there was more to be gained by remaining with their captain than by quitting him, and Cobbetts himself, although fully determined to befriend Tom Arnold, was obliged to submit.

Matters were in a rather unsatisfactory condition on board the vessel when the Cape was sighted. As the

Benton, as she was now re-named, approached, a strange schooner which had been perceived in the offing bore down.

"Strange sail to windward, captain," reported Smith, with a look of intelligence.

"Where away?" inquired the captain, with a responsive nod, as he adjusted his glass.

"On the weather-bow, sir," said the look-out man. "She's bringing up a breeze with her—a schooner, she is; lying low; as raking a craft as ever I did see."

The men, who had clustered forward, were watching the stranger with some anxiety. They knew they were in a suspicious craft themselves, and were bound on more than suspicious business; but they nevertheless did not altogether relish the interference of such a vessel as the stranger appeared to be.

"A long, low-lying 'snaky' schooner as ever I see," remarked the look-out man. "She carries metal, too, or I'm a Dutchman. Seems to me she's a dangerous customer, captain."

"We need not mind her," replied Luscumbe, "she will not attack us. Hoist the flags, Smith, you know the numbers I mean."

"Ay, ay," replied the mate as he went below. In a few minutes he re-appeared with an armful of bunting, which he proceeded to bend on to the signal "halyards." Up went two parti-coloured flags, and

underneath was a black one. A jet-black square flag. The pirate's ensign !

The approaching schooner was watched with anxiety, and the mate remarked—

“ It's time she showed her colours. Ah, there they go. All right, captain, it's the *Phantom* ! ”

The schooner whose rapid sailing powers had gained her the name of *Phantom*, a name which most people would at once have bestowed on her at first sight, and on which the crew of the *Hercules* actually fastened instinctively after hearing her described, approached with the swift gliding movement which characterized her. The motion was most peculiar—we say it advisedly—for certainly no other vessel that we ever saw so completely bore out the idea of gliding over the water as the *Phantom* did.

She was beautifully fashioned—her sharp bows, smooth black sides, with no visible ports, her clean sweep of counter and delicate-looking raking masts seemed specially adapted for speed and secrecy. She rose on the waves as lightly as the gulls, and dipped again with a graceful “ curt'sey ” movement which was fascinating. She never seemed to roll, but she cut through the small waves and climbed the big ones with an undulating gracefulness which can only be compared to a swan's progress.

At least that was the impression we of the *Hercules* formed of her in Eastern waters when we encoun-

tered her subsequently to the events I am now describing.

"It's the *Phantom*, sure as fate," responded Luscombe, with a glance at his precious nephew, Cayley. "Now," he whispered to him as he ranged along-side, "we must be firm. This is our chance."

The crew still seemed undecided what to say concerning the vessel which was bearing down rapidly. But her appearance soon confirmed the suspicions of those who could afford to entertain any. In half-an-hour the schooner hove to, and sent a boat on board the steamer, which was leaking badly by this time.

Luscombe met the officer who came up the ladder, and took him into the cabin. No one except Cayley was present at that interview.

"I'll get rid of the ship and coffee," was all the captain was overheard by the mate to say, "and you will take us off."

"Agreed," said the man, a dark and forbidding-looking individual, who scowled at the crew of the *Benton*, the new name of the *Hydra*.

The men returned the gaze, and were rather undecided concerning their future.

Greatly to the astonishment of all on board the steamer, save the captain, his nephew, and Smith, the truculent mate, the schooner wore round and beat off again to windward, while the *Hydra* made her way to the Cape.

There some business had to be transacted. The coffee was disposed of, the steamer sold as she floated, and by the time the arrangements had been satisfactorily completed with the Dutch traders, who made no inconvenient inquiries, the *Phantom* was again sighted.

It was while Luscumbe and Cayley were occupied on these transactions that Cobbetts came to Tom Arnold, and said—

“Now’s your chance, youngster. Cut and run!”

“Cut and run!” echoed Tom. “Run away here.”

“Yes, are you stupid? Don’t you know the class of men you have gotten amongst? Don’t you know that the schooner is a pirate ship, that Luscumbe is a villain—perhaps a murderer; a ruffian who has delivered himself body and soul to the devil to do mischief, and revenge himself on all white men with white hearts. If you don’t know this you are a greater fool than I thought you.”

Tom did not acknowledge the implied compliment. There was no time to bandy words. He was perplexed and anxious, nervous and dispirited.

“Why do you remain?” he asked. “Come with me, doctor. Let us cut away together!”

Cobbetts shook his head mournfully but decidedly.

“No, lad. There is no turning for me. I have

made my bed, as the phrase goes, and must lie on it. I dare not return to England, and—well, there is no use talking. You may get away while Luscumbe and the other ruffian are ashore. Go."

Tom decided to take this advice. Then his friend said—

"You may have to swim a bit. Can you?"

"Not very well," replied Tom, modestly.

"Then look you here. Here's a belt which I made in case of accidents. It is full of air and lined with cork-strips. See, it is pretty long. If you bind this round your chest you will be able to float at any rate. Nothing can sink you so long as you keep your lungs full, but you might shout and go down if you hadn't the belt. Come, strip!"

"But," began Tom, "you may want it, and——"

"Strip, I tell you. Upon my conscience, you are the most difficult boy to deal with that I ever saw. Hang it, don't be such an awful Ass as to remain here and have your throat cut."

Tom Arnold was convinced. He quickly put the air-belt on, wrapping it round his chest and loins, for it was something like a huge bandage. He felt very uncomfortable, and looked very stout with his additional clothing, but he took the doctor's advice, and kept only a loose jacket on over his coloured shirt.

"Now, when you see a chance, drop quietly out of

this port and swim ashore. Here are a few dollars for you. Go to the Consul, tell him your tale, and then you will be safe. Good bye."

Tom and the young doctor clasped hands. The latter said, after a pause to listen,—

"No time like the present. It's near dark—all is quiet. I'll drop you down gently, Tom. God help you. Go. There, steady ; are you right ?"

"Yes, thank you a thousand times. I will be back in the morning with soldiers and deliver you !"

"Heaven help him !" muttered the young man, as Tom dived with a gentle splash. "If Luscumbe sees him, he is lost. This was his only chance."

The doctor proceeded on deck to ascertain whether any one had noticed Tom's departure. No one took any notice of the fugitive. A ripple, which showed phosphorescent in the gloom, alone indicated to the watcher the direction taken by the swimmer, and Cobbetts was filled with alarm.

"The light will betray him," he muttered. "If by any evil chance Luscumbe is coming back, poor Tom is a 'dead mutton.'"

The kind-hearted doctor waited for some time, and then neither seeing nor hearing anything to alarm him, retired to his berth, where he indulged in some tobacco and a quantity of ardent spirits, which induced imbecility and sleep.

"What fool y'am," muttered the man, as he fell

back in his berth. That he was a foolish fellow none could deny—a more than foolish fellow.

The commotion consequent upon the return of Luscumbe half-an-hour or less after the doctor had fuddled his senses, did not disturb him. He slept soundly, if not calmly, and was only aroused by the arrival of the black schooner, into which Captain Luscumbe was busy transferring his crew and personal effects.

The *Hydra*, *Indus*, or *Benton* was sold, with her damaged hull and her machinery, her cargo and her fittings, "as she stood," for £20,000! A good bargain for a man who had obtained her by fraud and forged acceptances. Luscumbe and Smith were in high glee.

"Now, doctor, rouse up, we're going to give you a new berth. Look alive."

The unfortunate young man did not look very much alive as he crawled up the stairs; he scarcely had recovered the effects of his potations.

The crew grumbled. Some openly resisted. The black men—cut-throat rascals most of them, quickly bound the malcontents, and threw them into the boats gagged and helpless. Luscumbe, Smith, and their associates now appeared in their true colours. Resistance was vain. It was sink or swim, and

Luscumbe had no fear of the authorities now. He was in his element.

The men were transferred rapidly—prisoners and free men. There was no skulking permitted. Drawn cutlasses and pistols were very strong arguments; and promises of gain were so lavish, the pay offered so good, the actual gold-coin displayed, as earnest of future wealth and wages, so bright and tempting, that all but two men agreed or were disposed to agree to ship in the *Phantom*, which was very short-handed just then.

"Thank Goodness, Tom Arnold has escaped those ruffians," muttered Cobbetts as he turned aside. He stopped suddenly in his walk, for there amidst the "prisoners," the declared but now wavering malcontents, was the boy.

"Tom!" he exclaimed; "did they catch you, lad?"

"Yes," murmured poor Tom. "The brute Luscumbe picked me up in his boat as he came off. I was near land, but I am always unlucky."

"I'll help you, lad—depend on me—I'll get you off. Hush."

"Will you, by ——!" exclaimed Smith the mate as he grasped the doctor's shoulder. "Will you! Not so fast. We can dispense with you now, I think, Mister. Here, captain, this is the man who helped the runaway."

"I thought your finger was in the pie," replied the ferocious captain, with an oath. "Bind him."

Before the doctor could resist, his arms were seized ; he was securely bound and thrown on deck with the others.

"And this for my sake !" thought Tom. "He will be punished too."

Meanwhile the preparations had been nearly completed. The schooner had made signals for the boats to return, as a large ship—man-o'-war or an East Indiaman—was rising in the western horizon. So the piratical craft bore off, and stood out before any official on shore could reach her.

The wind unfortunately fell light, and the *Phantom* did not make way as quickly as her commander wished. Night fell, and then the prisoners were unbound and brought aft.

"Now men, choose," said Luscumbe, "death, or freedom and lots of money and enjoyment. Wealth and Beauty may be yours. Come."

After a parley, and seeing the captain was quite determined, nearly all the men agreed to his terms. Two only refused. "They shipped to trade, not to become pirates," and they swore at the captain roundly.

"Pirate !" he repeated. "Pirate ! well, you'll have a taste of pirate fare. Rig a plank forward."

A grin appeared on the dusky faces ; Cayley alone ventured to remonstrate.

"Go below or overboard," was his uncle's pleasant rejoinder to his pleading. "Put the doctor and his cub with the party. Now then, forward."

In vain the men struggled ; in vain they appealed for help.

"Unbind their arms," said the captain. "Let them have a swim for it. The sharks will have a better chase."

The men who rigged out the plank got out some spars, and, unseen by the captain, an English sailor canted them ready to fall overboard, a chance for his shipmates. No one thought of the big ship which had been seen at sunset.

"Now retract or go !" shouted Luscumbe.

The man addressed looked at the pistol and the plank. He said nothing, but aimed a terrible blow at the captain, who staggered under it.

"Tie his arms," he roared.

But ere the command could be obeyed, the man walked quickly to the end of the plank, which dropped, and he fell into the sea.

Another splash was heard—a plank overboard. Then the wind carried the schooner past the spot, and all was still.

Another unfortunate man was at once sent to his account, and, crushed beneath the keel, never rose again. Then came the doctor's turn.

"You traitor!" hissed Luscumbe. "You are only getting your deserts."

"I am," replied the young man, calmly; "but I thank God I can pray for His mercy even now, and I can forgive you; you are not doing me so much harm as you think."

"Canting fool," muttered the mate. "Go on!" he exclaimed, "and here, take your brat with you."

He caught up Tom Arnold as he spoke, and heaved him overboard clear of the ship. The doctor made a grip at the mate, and collared him with the frenzy of despair as he witnessed this deliberate murder.

"Pull him off," roared the mate. "He's mad!"

Luscumbe, who was the only one inclined to interfere, had quitted the fore-castle. The black men grinned; the Europeans made no sign; but their glee turned into admiration or consternation, according to their temperaments, when they beheld the young doctor drag the stalwart mate after him to the end of the plank, leap overboard, and disappear with him in the rising waves which beat upon the *Phantom*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I ESCAPE FROM THE PIRATES' CLUTCHES.—A FORTUNATE MEETING.
—THE SKIRMISH.—A DISCOVERY.—ON BOARD AGAIN.

"LISTEN," said Stone. "This is my idea."

My readers will remember that Stone and I had been captured by some individuals and placed in durance vile, when my companion had devised means of escape.

The room in which we were incarcerated was almost unfurnished, and about the dimensions of a pantry; the solitary window, which was only just within reach, had no protecting bar, and through that window Stone had designed that we should take our departure.

He unfolded his plan. We were to rush to the *Narcissus*, explain the matter, and attack the pirates! The only flaws in this excellent programme were—

- (1.) We could not reach the window without help.
- (2.) Only one could squeeze through the casement.
- (3.) The present locality of the pirates.

In the most courteous manner I ventured to point out these objections to the "Stony One," and after

some rude remarks about my "confounded cheek" he condescended to consider my objections.

"Well, then you must go. I will help you through the window. Once out, you can make for the ship. Tell the captain I am here, and tell him all we have discovered concerning Luscumbe and his *Phantom*. Let your uncle 'go for her' at once, if he will, and never mind me. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes," was my reply. "But I do not like leaving you alone. I would much rather remain with you, Stone."

"And do you imagine I intend to lose such a chance of promotion?" he said.

"Promotion! What do you mean?" I asked in astonishment.

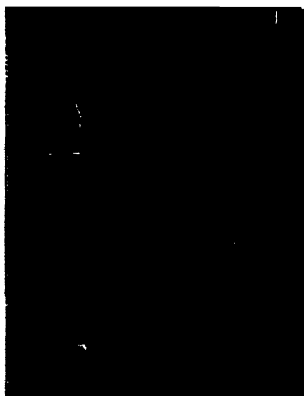
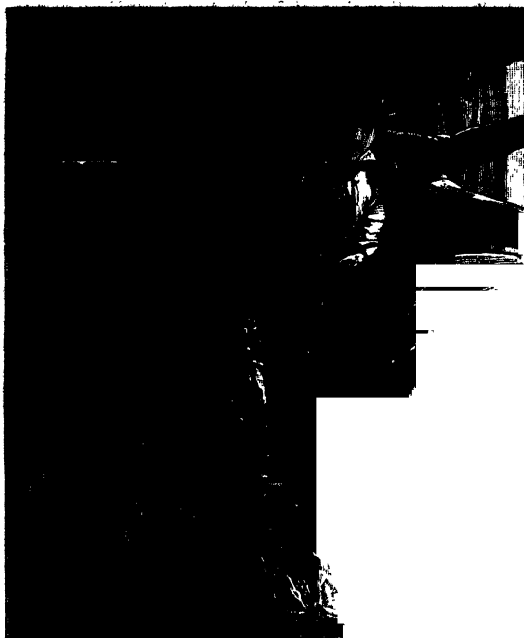
"Don't you see? Why, if I save you—the nephew of my respected captain, he cannot avoid recommending me for my promotion at once. Bravery—self-denial—all humbug—self-interest it is—and I have no other interest in the Service."

"Mister Stone," I replied, "you will excuse my speaking freely, but I don't believe you."

"Never mind. I intend to save you, and get my step. Hoist up. Come, stand on my shoulders. There you are—nicely. Can you get out?"

"Yes; there is a fall, though," I whispered.

"You must risk it. This is no joking matter, after all, Fraser. Come back as quickly as you can, turn



"I managed to wriggle out legs foremost."—p. 249

out this nest of hornets, and set me free. Good-bye !”

“Good-bye,” I whispered in return. “Oh, Stone, if anything should happen to you! *Can't* you come too? Let me try to pull you up.”

“Why, I could never squeeze through, silly. No, run away. I am grateful all the same. They won't hurt me. Remember the proverb, ‘You can't get blood out of a Stone.’ Begone quickly, or I will drag you down. It's getting dark: be smart.”

Perceiving that the mate was determined that I should escape, and believing as he did that there was not room for him to squeeze through the aperture, I managed to wriggle out legs foremost; and, after a pause, in doubt as to where I should fall, let go my hold, and alighted safely on the ground. I was free!

“All right!” I whispered, trusting that my comrade would hear me. No answer came, so I turned and crawled, snake-like, around the bushes down the hill, fearing every moment to hear the crack of a musket or perhaps the baying of dogs after me.

But nothing disturbed me, although the darkness rather confused me. My course I knew was down hill, and keeping the path I reached the entrance. It was closed; the palisades were unscalable—too high and smooth to climb! Here was an unexpected check.

Again and again I endeavoured to find the gate by which we had entered the grounds. There is some mistake, I argued; the entrance is somewhere else; and so I crawled along as silently as possible until I perceived lights in the verandah of the house. Then I turned and fled blindly along as straight as I could go in winged terror.

Such was my haste that I dashed against the palisade before I could stop my downward rush. It gave way, and in a moment more I was in the road by which we had come up. By some extraordinary piece of good fortune I had hit on the gate in the dark by following the pathway we had ascended. But how I passed the place in my round I did not pause to consider.

The night was clear and dark, and as I proceeded into the town I could see the lights on board the vessels, and here and there a twinkling in the houses. But I met no one on my way, and how to make anyone understand that I wanted to go on board the *Narcissus*, I did not know, even if I met a native boatman.

Suddenly I heard the tramp of men. An armed party was advancing. I could perceive the swinging lanterns, and occasionally, as I paused in doubt whether to go on or retreat, I caught the gleam of arms reflected. Then I perceived the men were commanded by a man in uniform, and I leaped to the

conclusion that my uncle, Captain Ellerby, had sent the party to search for me and Stone.

As they came near I stood in the centre of the path, and was almost immediately challenged. I replied in the usual terms, and then the ship's lanthorns were held to my face, and I was recognized by the junior lieutenant, who was in command of the party.

"Hullo, youngster : you've set us a pretty dance. The captain will give you six dozen at the gangway for this. What has become of Stone ?"

"He is a prisoner in a house yonder ; I can take you to it. We were only in the grounds——"

"Only where you had no business to be. The captain is in a pretty way, I can tell you. He will send Stone to a court-martial, I expect ; and, as to you, by Jove he'll flog you."

"I am sure he will not. Stone sacrificed himself for me and helped me out. Come. This is the way."

We turned into the grounds occupied by the bungalow, and perceived that lights were still burning. The Dutchman had not yet retired.

The lieutenant lost no time ; and, having posted his men conveniently, knocked loudly for admission.

The man who opened the door started back when he perceived the British uniform, and loudly demanded our business.

An interpreter who had come with the sailors explained that the master of the house was wanted. "The Dutchman," I added—and the interpreter repeated the words.

The servant retired ; and, in a few moments, the lieutenant was ushered into the room which opened to the verandah. I followed closely. Three sailors also entered.

"What is the reason of this intrusion?" asked the Dutchman.

"We come to demand the release of an officer in Her Britannic Majesty's service. You have our messmate here, and if you do not at once release him, we will compel you to do so."

"Indeed," replied the Dutchman with a glance at his companion, and a movement of the hand which did not escape the lieutenant, who said—

"Stay where you are. The house is surrounded, and my men will think nothing of shooting you. Will you release our messmate? He has done no harm."

"There is no one here. The lads have gone. We dismissed them : they had no business here."

"That is false," I said, darting forward. "You shut us up in a small room, and I have escaped. My friend is still there. You are in league with the pirates, and that villain Luscumbe."

Quick as thought the dark-featured man—not the

Dutchman—drew a small pistol, and, without the least regard for the consequences, discharged it at my head.

By what I considered the merest chance, I had stepped back, or rather stepped aside, when I finished speaking. The ball crashed through the bamboos, and fell harmlessly in the garden.

Before anyone could interfere, the Dutchman rose and rushed to the verandah to escape. But the sailors had by that time recovered their astonishment. Three pistols were immediately discharged : one brought the Dutchman on his knees, the other struck the shoulder of the piratical-looking individual who had fired at me ; and the third bullet found a billet in the thigh of the same gentleman, who fell heavily to the ground as he was in the act of firing a second time. His bullet passed through the ceiling, and remained aloft somewhere.

In three minutes all was confusion. The sailors who had been posted in the garden rushed in from the open air, while some fierce-looking Malays, armed with krisses and short knives, came in from the corridor. Between these opposing parties, Gibbons, the lieutenant, stood boldly, facing the Malays, who were ripe for mischief.

At a few words from the interpreter they paused, and waited for commands silently. Jack's blood was up too, and the men demanded leave to "tackle

them there heathen" at once. But Gibbons, thinking more of Stone than anyone else, merely drew his men up, and told the interpreter to bid the Malays surrender, or he would command his crew to fire.

The men waited boldly before complying with the order. They had evidently no wish to leave without encountering the Orang-puthis, or white men ; but the persuasive muzzles of the muskets and pistols appealed to them very strongly. The pirate's body guard surrendered ; they were all pirates, but by no means unamiable creatures, and permitted themselves to be disarmed by the sailors.

The Dutchman and his friend were all this time *hors de combat*, guarded by two armed sailors, and bleeding profusely. We did all we could for them, and, eventually, two rude litters were constructed, upon which the wounded men were placed and carried into the town.

While the litters were being prepared, Gibbons and I, having obtained the necessary keys from the unwilling Dutchman, proceeded in search of poor Stone ; whom we found in what he playfully called the "Stone Jug," very miserable for all his pluck.

"I fancied something had happened," he said. "When I heard firing, I hoped some one had come

to my assistance. Have you hanged those two ruffians?"

"No: they are wounded. And, after all, you know, Stone, I am by no means certain that we are in any way justified in doing all this. You and this Fraser come into a private house and listen, unintentionally I admit, to certain people—the owner and his guest. They naturally resent this conduct, and then we have a row. We might have come off badly."

"Captain Ellerby will be rather savage, I am afraid," replied Stone. "But, as far as these pirates are concerned, I am quite easy. We have authority to hang them—haven't we?"

"Yes; and that black fellow fired first. Yet we are running a risk."

"Let us look at the papers there. They will prove something," said Stone. "My belief is, the fellows are not worth thinking about."

Mr. Gibbons examined the papers with the aid of the interpreter. Some of the documents were in English!

"Are these Dutchmen pirates, Lao?" asked the lieutenant.

"Touhan," replied the interpreter, "they are even worse than the Malays—worse than Sooloo men. The Malay man is brave and true—like the English Orang-puthi; but the Holland white man is treacherous and false. Malay *hate* him."

"The worthy Lao is probably correct," remarked Stone. "Look here! These papers will convince you. Here is the whole plan of Mahomet Ali's campaign; and our blockade is well known. See! These pirates are sharp enough."

This discovery was important. The intentions of the British to blockade the coast and force the Malay leader to capitulate were well-known to these men almost as soon as the captain of the *Narcissus* had received his instructions. We learned this and much more. We found that stockades had been constructed at the river entrances. "Gingals" had been mounted on shore to defend the landing-places; and so important did Gibbons consider the information, that he carried away the letters for the inspection of Captain Ellerby.

"Out of evil comes good, Stoney," remarked Gibbons. "You and your young friend got into mischief; but I think, after this discovery, the captain will let you off easily. Come along."

We then quitted the house which had been such a place of torment for us, and, escorted by the sailors, who surrounded Stone and me as if we were criminals, gained the landing-place and found the pinnace waiting.

"I wouldn't be in your skins!" whispered the midshipman in charge. "No; not for the whole of Queda."

This was very consolatory. The boat was pulled rapidly out to the *Narcissus*, and in a few minutes the lieutenant summoned me and Stone to the captain's cabin.

CHAPTER XXV.

WE BLOCKADE THE COAST.—THE "RUBY."—A QUFER CREW.—
A NIGHT WATCH.—THE BOAT: WHOSE BOAT?

CAPTAIN ELLERBY received us with a semi-sarcastic welcome, but he was not afterwards unkind. I told him boldly the circumstances of the case, and how Stone had permitted me to escape while remaining in durance himself. My uncle smiled; but when we presented the papers we had found he was surprised, and ordered us to our berths while he perused them.

Next day there was bustle and confusion on board. The prisoners were handed over to the civil authorities, and it became evident that the *Narcissus* was preparing for service. My uncle sent for Captain Garrettson and Bone, who had remained on board, and had a long interview with them. Garrettson had managed to procure a good but small craft, heavily armed. With this he intended to trade: his crew stuck to him, and with them and Bone he seemed ready to do anything.

"I've got my money to make, and vengeance to take. So I'll go for my enemy," he remarked. "Now, Mister Fraser, what do you say? Will you

sail with me, or remain on board this vessel with your uncle, the captain ?”

“If my uncle does not mind, I will remain with him,” I replied.

“Then that’s settled,” continued Garrettson. “You will have a nice time here, I am sure. Captain Ellerby, sir, your most obedient !” We then quitted the cabin.

Bone saluted, fixed his solitary eye steadily on me and whispered, as we got on deck—

“Mind Tom Arnold. Don’t you forget *him*, I won’t.”

I blushed. I confess I had forgotten him. Poor Tom !

“Mr. Bone,” I said, “I am much obliged to you for reminding me. I will not forget, and if we do meet the *Phantom*, you shall hear of it. What is the name of your new vessel, Captain Garrettson ?”

“I’ve called her the *Pilgrim*,” replied the captain ; “and for the reason as I believe she’ll make good progress. So ‘adoo.’ Mind your P’s and Q’s, my lad ; you’re on board a man-o’-war now, and goin’ to be a middy, I hear.”

“Did Captain Ellerby tell you so ?” I enquired, eagerly.

“Yes, sir. He’s got to look after you, it seems ; so he prefers getting something out of you in return. Good-bye, shipmate : we’ll meet again some day.”

My old friends shook hands with me, and went ashore. Somehow I felt as if I had done wrong in remaining on board the *Narcissus*.

But I had not much time for reflection. The first lieutenant directed me to accompany the purser on shore, so as to provide my uniforms and kit at one or other of the numerous stores where everything could be procured. The ship's tailor would make up the garments, and then I would have become a full-blown midshipman on my uncle's nomination. As it turned out, one of the lieutenants was going home invalided. So promotion was temporarily made, and I filled up the vacancy in the midshipman's berth. Stone was made acting lieutenant, pending confirmation of appointment by the senior officer on the station.

Then came news which confirmed the intelligence we had gathered from the Dutchman's papers. We were going to blockade the coast of Kedah (Queda), in conjunction with the Siamese troops, and conquer the Malays.

The general situation has already been explained. The *Narcissus* had put in to Singapore in order to make the necessary preparations. Penang was named as the rendezvous. The British and Company's gunboats, with the corvette and her boats, made a very imposing flotilla. The *Narcissus* really had the lead in all this blockading, and much fun and adventure

were expected in our chasing of the Penang pirates the friends of Mahomet Ali and his associate, Luscumbe.

If Luscumbe had succeeded in bringing out his steamer we should have had more trouble. I say "we" now, because I was on the books of the *Narcissus*, and claimed a share in her adventurous undertakings. But of course all these arrangements and preparations took time. We sailed to Penang and back to Singapore during the summer months, and it was not till November was approaching that the real energetic business of dispersing the Malay pirate fleet—some forty prahus—was entered upon.

The selection for the commands of the boats was soon made. Greatly to the delight of the officers it was stated that each one chosen would be in command of a little vessel, or a ship's boat, so that the *Narcissus* would be at liberty to cruise up and down while the boats searched the rivers, creeks and islands. Stone had the command of a gun-boat, lugger-rigged; and, to my intense delight, my uncle permitted me to accompany my friend in the *Ruby*, for so she was called.

"What a lark we shall have!" whispered Stone to me, as we anchored off Kedah one fine day in December. "If we don't have some fun, my name is not what it is. The *Ruby*, Lieutenant Stone commander—beautiful!"

"Which, the *Ruby*, or the other Stone?" asked a cheeky midshipman.

"Both," replied the acting lieutenant. "And let me tell you, youngster, that it's against the articles of war to chaff your superior officer—do you hear?"

"Yes, Mr. Stone," replied the youth demurely. "I will be cautious in future. I only asked for information, and you snubbed me at once!"

"In other words, you asked for bread and he gave you a stone," remarked another. "Most un-Christian conduct, Stoney!"

"Gentlemen, do not distress yourselves. Such remarks as these deserve punishment. If it wasn't that I am only a mate in fact, I declare I think I should be angry with you. But," he added, smiling, and thinking they might misinterpret his serious manner, "you are all such good fellows that I vote we have a bottle of rum, and wet my commission."

This proposition was agreed to *nem. con.* and some considerable uproar ensued, upon which the first lieutenant sent down a request for "less noise."

"Can't you say how much?" asked one of the messenger. "We can't measure such an intangible thing as noise."

"No," put in Stone, who felt some responsibility in the matter, "but we *can* regulate our spirits. Caterer, you may remove that rum—I think we have had enough."

This prudent counsel was followed. Preparations were continued, and in a couple of hours I found myself with Stone on board of the decked and lugger-rigged gunboat named *Ruby*. She was about fifty feet long, and carried thirty men and officers including a native "serang," a rank which tallies with the warrant-officers, and an interpreter, for the crew was composed of Malays. Some of these men had been pirates, but had for the time being eschewed their former evil ways, and taken to pirate-hunting until the exigencies of existence compelled them once again to return to the favourite occupation of larceny on the high seas.

Stone had been labouring diligently to master the Malayan language; but, as his first few attempts were greeted with intense surprise, and had no effect, unless the compassionate look in the eyes of the natives was caused by extreme pity for his apparent imbecility, the new commander addressed the interpreter, who told the swarthy and picturesque crew something which made them cry out, "Ya, yāh," like so many "niggers."

Whatever the sentence was—Stone's was a complimentary one—the men seemed pleased, and made obeisance, headed and moved thereto by the *serang*, who, I learnt subsequently, was the boatswain.

We then inspected the "command." The men were attired in showy head-dresses; a garment which is

termed the "sarong"—a kind of plaid of native manufacture composed of cotton—covered their bodies. Their legs and arms were bare, dark, and muscular. The faces in many cases were not unpleasant in repose, but some looked very dangerous; they all seemed utterly careless and most reckless, but they had an excellent idea of discipline; for they obeyed orders with alacrity. The rapidity with which we got under weigh and pulled towards the coast argued well for the future. They all wore the terrible kriss, a most effective weapon in the hands of a Malay, as well as small knives for close fighting. We had two guns on deck, one an eighteen-pounder on a traversing carriage, and the other a brass gun astern, which could be slewed round on a pivot, if necessary.

"Well, Fraser, what do you think of this?" asked Stone, as we picked up our rice that evening for supper. I may state that curry and rice was our fare, varied occasionally with fish and such few other eatables as we could procure.

"Oh, splendid!" was my reply. "We are sure to find some pirate craft, and then we'll chase her, I suppose."

"Rather!" was Stone's reply. "We must keep a close blockade here; and mind, whenever you see any boat or prahu, report it instantly."

This I promised to do, and the night passed without any alarm. The river was three-quarters of a

mile from us, and the country beyond was mountainous ; but near the coast there was only jungle so thick that it seemed possible to proceed along the tops of the trees.

Our occupation was varied by some few amusements on shore, such as bee-catching, crocodile-hunting, and bathing from the beach. But of the enemy we saw absolutely nothing, until one evening when I was on watch.

The sun had set, and the night mists were rising in ghostly fashion, sweeping across a smaller river, to which we had, by orders, transferred our attentions. Up this stream was a village, we were told, but owing to the stakes which had been planted across the mouth of it, the *Ruby* could not force an entrance. So we lay off, until the evening, believing the blockade was secure.

As I kept my gaze fixed over the side on the open space which reflected the light of the tropic night-time, I distinctly saw some round black object cross this streak and go up on the tide. A man swimming, I thought ; then another black object, then another, and another.

I immediately ran down to inform my senior officer of what I had seen ; and he came on deck at once. He sent for the interpreter and the boatswain, and told them the facts.

“The pirates have quitted their vessel and are

swimming up stream, to land out of our reach," suggested the boatswain.

"Where do you think the prahu is?" enquired Stone.

"In the jungle—there are many channels—we may search without success for days."

"Let us try, at any rate," said Stone. "Sweeps!"

The "sweeps" were got out, and the swarthy crew, in no way annoyed at being disturbed, pulled silently towards the jungle. We threaded many a channel, as silently as we could, but found nothing. Then we came to a place, in which it was impossible for the *Ruby* to proceed.

"Lower the boat," said Stone. "I will go and search in her. Come, Fraser. What is yonder?"

We stooped and stared with all our might. The object was a boat—a true European boat. Some piratical craft was here—that much was certain.

"Man all the boats," said Stone. Then the boatswain gave the order: three light craft were hoisted out—sampans in speed, canoes in lightness—and some dozen of us proceeded to inspect the strange object; for a European boat in such a locality *was* a strange object.

We were not long in arriving alongside the boat, which proved to be a gig, with all her oars in her, and—what we were rather surprised to find—a man fast asleep in the stern-sheets.

"Take him on board," whispered Stone. "We will see what he is like in the morning. Is he dead?"

The individual, whoever he was, was quite passive, and made not the least resistance in our hands. We were in the act of trans-shipping him bodily, like a bale, when one of the Malays uttered an exclamation, and dropped the shoulder of the man, who had hitherto appeared quite insensible.

The fall released the "corpse," for we had fancied he was dead; and then we perceived that the Malay was bleeding. He had been stabbed! Stabbed by the man who seemed dead.

The body of the man, thus released, dropped quickly into the water. The sea closed over it, and we saw it no more.

We had the boat, though, and on it was painted a "death's head and cross-bones" in white on a black ground.

A pirate, certainly. But not an eastern pirate. Could it be the *Phantom's* gig?

CHAPTER XXVI.

BREAKING THE STOCKADE.—UP THE RIVER.—ALLIGATORS.—THE VILLAGE.—THE BURNING JUNGLE.—THE ATTACK ON THE *RUBY*.—AN ANCIENT ENEMY!

THAT was the question which framed itself in my mind ; and I fancied Mr. Stone had some ideas concerning the gig, although he did not at first communicate them to me. Then, who was the man who had stabbed our Malay? The whole event was so mysterious, and had occurred so quickly, that we may be excused for not immediately following it up in our amazement.

Mr. Stone soon made up his mind, though. He returned to the *Ruby*, and ordered an advance up the river. This could not be effected just then, because the stakes by which the entrance was defended protruded above the surface of the water. The serang came up and said—

"Touhan, the stockade across the river is thick. We cannot pass it. The water is low now, but, even at high-tide, the *Ruby* will scarcely float over!"

Stone paused a moment in thought. Then he said—

"Haul the gun-boat alongside the stakes. We'll pull them up when the tide rises."

While I was wondering how our men would succeed in extracting the stakes like so many teeth, the boatswain had carefully hauled the *Ruby* up the estuary, and laid her alongside an irregular row of thick stakes with cruelly-pointed ends, which would have pierced any ordinary timbers if we had crashed into them.

But we did nothing rash. Under the directions of Mr. Stone the men lashed the gun-boat to the stakes all along her broadside. Then, setting a careful watch to ascertain if any boats came down, we all awaited the rising tide with some anxiety. The events fulfilled our young commander's expectation. As the flood-tide rose, the *Ruby* of course rose with it; and, in an hour or two, the stockade was virtually inoffensive. Before high-water nearly all the stakes had been torn from their muddy bed; and, as the water ebbed, they floated away, leaving the way clear for us.

By this time it was quite daylight, and we had an opportunity of seeing what the little river was like. Our prospects were not cheerful. Great mud-banks lay on each side; and, on these banks, lying where the retreating tide had left them, were alligators, of considerable size and most unpleasant aspect, basking in the sun's rays with open mouths, as if to get all the air they could. It was all they did get, for they made.

no attempt to gain the stream for food ; but no doubt at night, at high-water, they had had supper:

Mr. Stone would not permit us to fire at them, for, as he observed, "If you hit them you cannot hurt them, and you may give the alarm to the pirates who are up the river, We will proceed on the flood, and endeavour to obtain some fresh water, as our supply is very limited."

This want of water really was the only serious obstacle against which our expedition had to contend. There were certain islands on which wells were dug, but the water we thus obtained was "brackish," not fresh. Sometimes only salt water was found after much trouble. Under these circumstances such a departure from the coast became necessary, and we prepared for our expedition.

We had not gone very far when to our astonishment we caught sight of some houses—"mat-houses" they are called, I believe. The river wound through jungles lined, as many are, with cocoanut-trees. Near the collection of primitive dwellings was a clearing for rice cultivation, and here we looked for water.

We were quickly perceived, and several men (Malays), with whom we were supposed to be at war, came down in a most trusting manner to see what we wanted. We were on our guard against treachery, however, and did not encourage the advances of the

men just then. Nevertheless, they permitted us to land and to carry our casks to the wells without any evil demonstration.

"They are certainly an amiable crew," remarked Stone, who was superintending the operations. "But Fraser, my lad, keep your eyes open, and your ears. There may be a snake in the grass."

"There are several yonder," I remarked shuddering. "I saw five or six dead ones just now, and the serang says they abound here."

"I do not mean reptiles," replied Stone. "I mean some of these pirates. Do you see those sampans yonder? I will wager there is a prahu hidden in the jungle. I will call our serang. He has good eyes and may discover something."

But the serang quite failed to distinguish anything. Moreover, he declared that these Malays were disposed to be friendly, and would by no means behave treacherously.

As we did not intend to remain, we got under weigh again on the ebb-tide. Somehow, our progress was extremely slow; and the eight miles or so which we had thought so short a passage in the morning, appeared at least sixteen in the dark.

We had proceeded very cautiously about half-way, when a sudden bright light, close ahead, alarmed me; for I was on the look-out. The light extended into a glare—the glare to a conflagration; and, in a few

minutes, with a rapidity which is almost indescribable, the whole belt of cocoa-nut trees which lined the little river was ablaze on both sides of the stream !

Stone had been correct in his anticipations of treachery. I called him immediately.

He came quickly on deck. The serang was there already, calling our enemies "pigs" and their parents "dogs," with all the fervour of the true follower of Mahomet.

"What shall we do?" I asked. "If we return we shall be left high and dry. If we go on we may be burned or blown up!"

Before anyone could answer we heard the sound of oars—a boat was approaching—a prahu perhaps. We hauled in as close as we could round the bend of the stream and waited. The men were called to their stations; the guns manned; and all preparations made for the anticipated encounter.

But our consternation was great indeed when, at an exclamation from the interpreter, we turned and perceived behind us the mat-houses on the hill enveloped in flames. This fire soon extended, and urged by the land-wind, drove down the river with fearful rapidity.

Assailed in front, threatened behind, our position was no pleasant one. We were obliged to leave our shelter under the bank, for grass, trees and shrubs were as dry as tinder. Then the tops of the cocoa-

nut trees ignited, and the waving, burning leaves had a weird effect in the darkness. The sound of oars approached us—so did the fire. We had to sheer off again ; but, to our dismay found that the *Ruby* was aground on the mud, and that our fate was sealed !

While we had been dodging the approaching prahu, we had not calculated upon such a sudden fall of the tide. The fire was licking up the grass and leaves : our awning would surely catch soon ; our masts and sails would follow, and then we should be a wreck !

Stone never lost his presence of mind for an instant. He gave his orders with a coolness which was admirable and exemplary. Every precaution was taken to reduce all inflammable gear ; and, on the other hand, to repel the prahu. We had now no doubt that some pirates had sacked the village, and their adherents near the coast had accidentally fired the jungle.

Fortune favoured us. The fire advanced, but we had sheered off a little, and, luckily, the *Ruby* fell over to the centre of the stream, away from the fiery trees which were waving and flaming like so many torches overhead.

"We are safe, Stone !" I cried. "We are safe !"

"From fire," he said. "Here come the pirates."

Two boats, pulling rapidly, suddenly darted at us, one from each side of the river ; and, by the glare, we

could perceive a third approaching against the ebbing tide—a long-boat full of men.

"Give that boat the bow-gun," cried Stone.

The Malays yelled "Ya, yah," and pointed the piece from the sloping deck, on which footing was difficult. A six-pound shot went out with a rush and a roar: four oars on the stroke side were shorn off clean, and the boat began to drift back again.

"Well done!" shouted Stone. "Mind the others."

All the crew had seized muskets and pistols as well as their krisses and dirks. We poured in a volley, to which the boats' crews, being engaged in pulling, did not respond. The boats were close astern, and out of our broadside range for a moment, when the interpreter and the boatswain, with simultaneous impulse, rushed to the carronade, and discharged it just as a fusilade was opened upon us by the third boat, which had "swapped" oars, and, with half her usual number, was again approaching.

The carronade did immense damage. The shot completely destroyed one boat, which, in another minute, grounded on the mud, and remained there with a large hole through her timbers. Four men were cut to bits in her; the others, some wounded, commenced to fire at us, but, getting down into the soft and yielding ooze, they soon directed all their efforts to save themselves.

Two of our crew were already wounded. Stone

was bleeding from a flesh hit ; but, as yet, there were no other casualties. We had, however, stern foes to deal with, and they came boldly on, one on each side.

We received them with a volley which did some execution, and then they reached the *Ruby* and climbed up her sides. Here the Malays fought like demons. Each man had wrapped his sarong on his left arm. In his right-hand he flourished the fearful kriss ; in his left he clutched a dagger. The pirates came bravely to the fray, but were warmly received. I saw two heads "sheared off" like turnips, and they rolled upon deck, while the trunks fell heavily into the mud to feast the alligators.

In the glare of the burning trees, the aspect of the fray was awful. We cut and slashed for a few minutes, without aim, at the wretches who came recklessly to death. Our men fought like tigers, and positively revelled in it. They had apparently no fear. Several of them were wounded by pistol shots : three were killed near me.

The boatswain stood beside me, and saved me more than once from a wound. But I cut and hewed at the men bravely, knowing I could not retreat ! The serang rushed forward and seized a tall man who was advancing, fighting boldly, across the deck from the upper side. He was bare footed—bare headed. I uttered a cry—a scream which pierced the din of battle.

The man paused just for the tenth of a second, as it seemed ; his arm just fell an inch from its guard. Our serang dashed in, and, with a single blow, clove him through the neck to the breast-bone. He fell heavily. So did I. I must have fainted with horror and surprise, for the man whom I had at that moment recognised was the fellow late of the *Hydra*, Luscombe's lieutenant, who had shipped with us, and tried to blow up the *Hercules* !

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MALAY PRAHU.—THE BIRDS'-NESTERS.—AN EXPEDITION.—THE
ESCULENT SWALLOW.—THE CAVERN.—A CATASTROPHE.

THE engagement was over when I recovered my senses and found my head bandaged up. Then I perceived that my supposed faint had been really due to a wound on the head which had felled me, but which, in the surprise caused by the discovery of Luscumbe's lieutenant, and the excitement of the fray, had passed almost unnoticed. It was not, therefore, so very severe, but it would serve, as Mercutio might have said.

Stone was somewhat anxious concerning me, and I was particularly touched by the attention and condolences of the serang and the Malays generally.

The "little master" was the object of many inquiries, and in a few days I became well enough to go on deck and enjoy the air, for the cabin was close and stifling to me.

That afternoon we made a capture, an insignificant one it is true, but it led to an adventure, and, what was equally welcome, some birds'-nest soup, which proved very acceptable. This soup is by no means

unpalatable, and the manner of our obtaining it may be interesting to any who know not the way in which it is collected

We were searching diligently for the traces of our piratical enemy when we noticed a prahu under the lee of the land. Stone at once gave chase and rapidly overhauled the suspicious craft, which, however, made no attempt to escape.

We soon came up with her, and found the master of the prahu was a trader in succulent birds'-nests. It then appeared that the rocky islands, some with cliffs of considerable elevation, were the resort of hundreds of the well-known "*Hirundo esculenta*," the existence of which I had scarcely credited when at school. But here was an individual who was proceeding to collect them for sale in China, where they are highly esteemed.

"Is this fellow honest?" enquired Stone of the boatswain through the interpreter.

"Yes," replied the serang. "He will take us to the cliff-nests, and you can see how they are taken, only I would not advise your attempting to pick them."

"We may as well run down," said Stone. "Besides, from the cliffs we may obtain a view, and pitch upon the *Phantom*."

Orders were given accordingly, but the wind fell most provokingly, and we were only able to crawl

along with our sweeps, aided occasionally by a puff of wind. Of course this, as it proved, was all the better for us. Had we hurried on to the islands we should not have seen what we subsequently *did* see. We grumbled, of course, but we did not know what was good for us. Do we *ever* know that?

Observers of the manners and customs of the *Hirundo esculenta* state that it feeds at night, and this is probably true, for we saw them in the evenings, or perhaps in the very early hours of the morning, darting over the water, but they never appeared to catch anything; there certainly was nothing visible, not even insects. They build in the dark caves, or almost inaccessible crevices of the rocks, placing their curious spongy-looking nests (which resemble large spoons, cut in half lengthways, in shape) sideways against the rock. These nests adhere to each other, and at a distance do not resemble birds'-nests so much as pieces of coral.

The bird itself is small, brown above, white beneath. The nests are composed of a curious glutinous substance, like very small strings of macaroni or vermicelli, crossed and recrossed.

We waited in the *Ruby* until the men in the prahu thought fit to land. They went in a party carrying ropes and spikes, of which I demanded the utility.

"They fix them in the ground," replied the

interpreter, "and let themselves down by those cords."

"Then, if the cords break, they are killed," I said.

"God is great!" was the satisfied reply of the Mussulman.

"Do many men die this horrible death?" I inquired, after a pause.

"Two out of five is the average number," said my informant, calmly. "The men are starting, Touhan, they have landed on yonder beach."

We had the sweeps out in a moment, and followed them in shore. But it was by no means such an easy matter to accomplish. We had not much difficulty in reaching the land, but when we had landed the trouble consisted in proceeding. The Malays, who were leading, had to cut a path at intervals through the thick, rank vegetation which bordered the island.

"Where are these nests?" we inquired through our interpreter.

"Beyond the jungle at the other side across the island."

"Then," exclaimed Stone, "why on earth don't we pull round, and save all this walking? It is not the nicest journey I have ever undertaken, and I think I feel snakes."

"Plenty snake," remarked the interpreter cheerfully. "Oular, big."

"Oular," we understood, was the Malay for serpent, and we did not feel quite so happy. For my own part I was glad we had come, even under the existing circumstances. I wanted to see the nests, though I confess the walk was anything but easy. The ascent was long and tiring; the boulders awkward to cross; the holes deep; the brushwood thick. There was no path, and I pitied the poor Malays who had to go through such obstacles as these—obstacles which bruised our limbs, tore our clothes, and rendered us liable to snake-bites—all of our curiosity.

But at last we reached the summit of the rising ground, and then we discovered why it would have been useless for us to have come round in the boats. The cliff was sheer two hundred feet and more from the beach, and the only method of viewing the nests was to lower ourselves down by the ropes, and swing backwards and forwards into the caverns or holes in which the swallows were to be found.

The view was extensive in front: other small islands and strips of ruffled water between: some prahus in the distance too. We took note of these, but I kept a particularly good look-out for the pirate schooner, the *Phantom*, which I was certain was in the neighbourhood, concealed somewhere amongst the islands.

While we were scanning the horizon and ex-

aming the islets with a telescope, the Malays were making ready to go down and collect the nests. Their proceedings interested us greatly.

We now perceived the uses of the spike which each man carried, and of the torches which we had noticed. The former were driven into the ground, and the ropes secured to them: the latter were to illuminate the dark recesses in which the edible birds'-nests were to be found.

The Malays were not particularly well-disposed towards us, and our interpreter perceived this. He suggested to Stone that we should retire and leave the men to their own devices, but the young commander determined to wait a while. Seeing that we were obstinate, the natives repeated a prayer for safety—a preparation for their work which none omitted—and then threw a bag and a torch over their shoulders, where they hung suspended as their owners were hanging by the ropes from the summit of the cliff, swaying on the fretting cords, which looked as if they might part at any moment.

I advanced and looked over. The men were swinging in and out to explore the dark recesses. Just underneath was a thick growth of brushwood within some dozen feet of the shore, on a ledge; and it seemed to me that one man had lowered himself over that place so that if he should fall he would

alight in the bushes unhurt. In this conjecture I afterwards ascertained I was wrong.

"Come along, Fraser," cried Stone at last. "We must return."

"In a minute," I replied. "I want to see these nests. I will rejoin you if you go ahead slowly."

A Malay was coming up with some nests, and, in my secret heart, I had determined to go down with him. A few pieces of money would satisfy him : we could descend and return in ten minutes. So when Stone turned away with the interpreter, I waited with impatience the ascent of the Malay.

The man wriggled up with wonderful agility ; and, in reply to my signs, and some displayed currency, permitted me to see his "catch." The nests were by no means inviting-looking objects in the bag, but, when they had been cleansed and placed in water, no doubt they would be worth the money which the Chinese connoisseur is ever ready to give for them.

The eyes of the natives glistened when I handed him the money ; and, when I subsequently, with many signs, proposed to accompany him down the rope, he smilingly assented with a nod, and fixed the spike more firmly into the ground, at the same time securing the knotted rope.

There was no time to lose. My curiosity and love of adventure prevailed over prudence. I quite forgot

whether the rope was strong enough to support two people; and, as the Malay had apparently no misgivings, I entertained none. He went first, feet foremost over the cliff, and, when he had got some distance down, I followed, letting myself slide along in the ordinary way easily and without any giddiness.

The Malay was awaiting me on a ledge at the mouth of a dark cavern, from which a twittering and screaming arose as soon as the torch was lighted. A number of swallows came flying out; and, as we entered the din was awful—something indescribable. The usual twitter of the swallow is not a very ear-piercing sound, but when some hundreds of twitterings of terrified and angry birds are multiplied to infinity by the echoes of a cavern, the noise becomes unpleasant, and, finally, almost deafening.

The birds kept this up steadily, and then, as we advanced, noisome bats began to wheel around our torch. I got nervous, for it might easily happen that, in defending oneself from the near approaching bat, one might topple down off the ledge and be killed.

At length we got into a wider space, and saw many nests, some new and white, others old ones. I had had quite enough of this, and was about to make my way back again, when I perceived I was alone!

Alone in the dark cavern; the torch had been

stuck in a cleft of the rock ; the Malay had disappeared.

Why had he thus deserted me ? Did he wish to kill me ? He had seen my money. Perhaps he had gone to summon his friends, and I was an intended victim !

Seizing the torch I made the best of my way out of the cave, along the treacherous ledge to the spot where the rope was hanging—a frail rope too, which had chafed on the edge of the cliff too much already. Could we trust ourselves to this cord ? I doubted it !

The Malay was a traitor, then ? No : when I reflected that he had left me the torch and the means of returning—the rope—I confessed to myself that he must have had some other motive for his disappearance.

I waited. At length he appeared descending with some canes in his hand. Then it occurred to me that he had quitted me in order to procure these wherewith to construct a rude ladder, in order to reach the nests in the cavern. I had wronged the poor, untutored one, and determined to think better of these Malays in future.

I turned towards the cave again. Suddenly I heard a cry, then a scream of mortal agony. I looked back and perceived the unfortunate Malay flying downwards into space, the broken rope in his hands, the canes on his back !

Fascinated, I gazed. He disappeared in a second, crashing through the brushwood into the sea at the foot of the cliffs. In a moment more his dead and mangled body was a mere plaything for the leaping waves—a dinner for the monsters of the deep.

And I? There was I, cut off from all human succour, standing on the ledge unnoticed and alone!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A TERRIBLE SITUATION.—ALONE ON THE CLIFFS.—STARVATION !—
THE DOOMED BARQUE !—NO HOPE.

THE entire helplessness of my situation suddenly flashed into my mind ! Here I stood alone, out of the ken of all mankind. The surviving Malays had probably filled their bags, and when they returned and found that the rope had parted at the edge of the cliff, they would accept the decree of Providence as Mussulmans do, and go home without taking any trouble to look for the body of their friend. (Why should they ?) As for me, they would believe I had returned to the *Ruby* : when Stone heard their story he would no doubt cause a search to be made. But he would recognize the hopelessness of it from the first. A broken rope off that cliff meant instantaneous death in the ocean, even if the fall itself did not kill the unfortunate adventurer.

So I reasoned, and the more I did so, the more helpless I perceived my condition to be. Food I had none, unless I could gather and devour the nests which hung above me. Besides, the night was approaching, and all hope of rescue would fade away

then. Even if Stone sailed or pulled round the island and discovered me, how could I reach the sea beneath, or the cliff above? It was most improbable that the *Ruby* would come round before mid-day, and then I might not be in a condition to reply, or to perceive signals. To cling to a ledge of rock for a dozen hours was a perilous experiment. Dizziness, faintness, or fatigue might deprive me of the means of self-preservation, and my senses might give way.

This last supposition seemed to me so terrible that I determined to set about something by which I could occupy myself, and yet keep up my strength. The first necessity of existence was water, and of that I could perceive no indication whatever.

Being without my torch, which was, of course, by this time extinguished, I had no light to assist me in entering the cavern. But I made my way to the entrance and got inside, where I managed to knock over a swallow with my knife. The poor little thing fell with a faint twitter, and in a few minutes I was surrounded by other swallows which seemed to imagine I was as edible as their nests, for they came and pecked at me in a very hungry and determined manner.

But, nevertheless, I held my prize, and retreated to the exterior ledge where I could seat myself. The attacks of the "esculents" were so continuous, however, that I was obliged to move again, and it was not

until I had thrown away the dead and bleeding swallow, that I was delivered from the persecutions of its relations.

I made a note of the direction in which the bird fell, however, and determined in my own mind to devour it, unless assistance arrived. If I could find water, the place would not be so utterly hopeless for me.

Darkness came on, and nothing could be seen or heard but the restless birds, the rushing sea, and the rising wind. I managed to crawl into the cavern, and, there, fairly worn out, went to sleep, notwithstanding the birds which seemed very restless and continually rushing in and out.

As the first day-beams struggled through the darkness, I arose, faint and somewhat stiff, to seek water. I was parched with thirst, and had no idea but to drink. For some time I examined the rocks, and then I thought of the dead swallow for breakfast. But there were many others alive. Famishing, parched, and desperate, I drew my knife again, and when an opportunity offered killed another swallow and sucked the warm blood from its throat. I could not eat it raw, but I had a flint and steel, and hoped to make a fire if I could cut the brushwood.

This I attempted to do, and crawled along the cliff on my bare feet to prevent myself from slipping. I

reached the larger ledge, and to my great delight, found a portion of the broken rope. By this, perhaps, I might descend the cliff to the beach, for there was a strip of beach visible at low-water. By it, too, I could reach the *Ruby* when she came round. This discovery comforted me.

Feeling very much like Robinson Crusoe, whose adventures I had read many times, I returned to the bird's cavern, and piled in it some dry brushwood: after many efforts I succeeded in kindling a fire, which emitted a good deal of smoke. This disturbed the birds, and caused several to fall suffocated. These I secured, plucked and roasted—or rather burned—for food. After I had had a meal I felt more composed.

The loneliness of the situation did not seem so oppressive after my breakfast, and feeling decidedly braver and better, I set out again to explore and climb down the cliffs. I calculated that if I could work around the island I should be more likely to fall in with some of our boats. All the while I was wondering why Stone did not come round. Perhaps he had been suddenly called away, and after a search, finding the rope broken, he had given me up for lost. Nothing more likely.

So I wandered on, crawling cautiously down where I could, and clinging to terrible places with the most insecure footing, of which I then thought nothing.

Now I should turn pale at the sight of them. But I went on, until suddenly I slipped, and fell. Most providentially, the distance was not great, and I tumbled with my head resting between two rocks so fairly, that had I fallen ten inches on one side, or less on the other side, I must certainly have been killed on the spot.

There I lay, shaken indeed : bruised, but with no bones broken, on something soft which had saved my life, or at any rate, my limbs. As soon as I could move, I arose and found the soft thing was the body of the Malay who had fallen there, and had been cast up by the tide.

By the time I had recovered myself, I was in a sad condition. Bruised and scratched, my clothes in rags and stained with blood, my cap gone, my feet bare, without any sensation in them ; a burning sun, a worrying thirst, and a gradually impending feeling of despair settling down upon me. Was I doomed to die in this desolate fashion ?

For a little while after this, I think my brain must have been affected ; for I have no recollection of anything until I can recall the fact of my being some considerable distance from the point where I had fallen. The sun was behind the cliff, and I was sheltered in a measure from the heat ; the tide was advancing, but I was standing on a ledge licking water from a rock.

To this day I cannot explain how I gained that ledge on an apparently flat rock, down which a tiny stream of fresh water was slowly trickling. I was holding my lips to the rock; a few drops occasionally fell upon my forehead and eyes. Oh! it was indeed delicious. I gripped to the ledge above with my lacerated fingers—I was only supported by my toes on a tiny step—the water fell into a crevice beneath, some six feet from the shore, and never reached the beach.

In my delirium I must have climbed up, and recovered my senses when my lips touched the water.

But I had found water, and that was the *desideratum*. Henceforth I felt I could wait with patience until a sail appeared. I had my knife and tinder-box: I could make a fire, and call attention to my situation at night. I still had a dead swallow in my pocket, so I could not *quite* starve, but the weather did not look inviting.

Several prahus passed, but I did not make any signal, for fear they were pirates. Once or twice I noticed trading vessels, and as night drew on, I fancied I discerned the dark low hull of the *Phantom* making her way towards a large merchantman in the offing.

I was now quite anxious. The schooner came nearer and nearer; and in half-an-hour I recognized



'I gripped to the ledge above with my lacerated fingers.'—p. 292

our deadly enemy, the pirate craft which had done so much damage and had so defied us. Oh, how devoutly I wished that the ship in the offing might prove to be the *Narcissus*. If my uncle came within range, I was sure his guns would soon give an account of Luscumbe ; and—Tom Arnold—what of him ?

The schooner seemed uncertain concerning the character of the approaching ship, and came in shore so as to lie unperceived against the background of the island. Then she would rush out and fasten upon her antagonist like a bull-dog, if she proved a peaceful trader.

The vessel came nearer, and though the light was fading, I could make out, in the gleam behind her, that she was a barque, under all plain sail, making her way steadily along, apparently not minding the schooner which was lying in wait. That the latter vessel had determined to attack her was evident. I lay concealed watching her every movement, and longing to give the advancing vessel a hint.

She was an English barque, too, and sailed splendidly. A trading vessel, unarmed, I supposed—what chance had she with her crew against such a horde of ruffians as the pirates under the half-caste Luscumbe ? None, alas none !

My heart beat fast as I perceived that the schooner

was making ready to run out to meet the fated barque, which so unsuspectingly held on her way. Oh, how I prayed for the *Ruby* to arrive. If Stone only knew of this. Could nothing be done? Nothing!

CHAPTER XXIX.

RESCUED.—EXPLANATIONS.—THE PIRATE AND THE BARQUE.—
A RISKY VENTURE.—TOM ARNOLD AGAIN.

THE breeze began to freshen as the sun went down, and very soon darkness had fallen over the ocean. The last I could distinctly see of the schooner was that she was skimming along on the starboard tack, evidently with the intention to cut off the barque, which, unconscious of her doom, was proceeding steadily along.

In vain I strained my eyes in the direction of the chase, and sighed deeply, not only for the gallant barque, but because of my own position. I was safe so far, and had escaped the pirates, who I knew would be too busy to notice me ; so I kindled a small fire, and essayed to roast my poor swallow.

Scarcely had I commenced my unpalatable meal, when I heard the sound of paddles. A canoe was approaching, and must be close in shore. Rising, I hid myself to reconnoitre. I was certain the newcomers had seen the fire, but I trusted to the intervening rocks to shelter me from their gaze. In five minutes the sampan came rapidly ashore, and from

my hiding-place in a cleft of the rocks some feet up the cliff, I perceived the "loom" of two individuals. But who they were, of course I could not even conjecture.

They were speaking, but their words I could not catch. Suddenly a shout was raised, and I heard an English voice cry out—

"Fraser, ahoy! Where are you?"

The reaction was so sudden, it made my heart thump so that I could scarcely breathe, and it was not until the call was repeated that I could respond.

"*Ruby*, ahoy? Is that Stone?"

"Hurrah!" cried the men. "Yes, where on earth have you got to? Come here, you young scamp," added Stone in conclusion.

"I'll come down to you," I cried, half wild with joy at my unexpected deliverance. "Wait a second!"

Their astonishment at beholding me approach within the limits of the fire-light was extreme.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Stone—for it was he, accompanied by the interpreter and the serang, who had landed. "Great Heavens! what have you been about?"

"About dead by this time," I replied, with a sickly smile. "I am so thankful you have come round. I don't think I could have lasted another day here."

"Well, you are a nice article, I must say," when he had turned me round and round, as if about to start me upon a "blind-man's buff," with the usual formula concerning the animals "in my father's stable." "You are a precious looking midshipman. Why, nobody would hire you even for a scarecrow as you are!"

"I am not ambitious," I replied. "Let us get on board, I have news for you."

"News! From this desolate spot! Have you been printing a gazette, or what?" enquired Stone, laughing.

"No; no nonsense. Really and seriously, the *Phantom* schooner is close by, and after an English barque. There!"

As I spoke a flash was visible, and in a few seconds afterwards, the boom of a gun was borne across the water, faintly, but distinctly, to our ears.

"This looks like business," remarked Stone, while the serang and the interpreter seized the paddles, and dashed through the waves to the gun-boat.

Then Stone and I had a few minutes to ourselves. He began with—

"My good young friend, you have made a pretty fool of yourself this time!"

I was penitent, and not disposed to argue the point; so I merely replied, after listening to the guns—

"Then I have suffered for my folly, pretty well, I can tell you. I am very sorry, and think you a Trojan for coming to look for me."

"We couldn't let the captain's nephew be lost without an effort, you know," replied Stone drily. "Indeed, the Malays have been the prime movers in the affair ; not but what I am heartily glad to see you alive and kicking. There's another gun. We must hurry out."

"How did you come round to the very place I happened to be ?" I enquired.

"I will explain," replied the lieutenant. "When we had reached the foot of the hill, we, of course, found you had not arrived. So we waited a while. But as you did not appear, I feared you and the Malays had got into a row together ; so I hurried up again, and did not bless you either, over that path, my lad. I had the interpreter with me, and two of the men. We met one of the other birds'-nest collectors, and he told us you and his companion had descended the cliff. We hurried to the place we had left you, and to our dismay—you being the captain's nephew, though otherwise of no consequence—found the rope broken ; and then we feared the worst. We cried out and made as much noise as we could, but to no purpose. So we had to return in great perplexity, as you will understand ; for I knew I must report you missing——"

"Being the captain's nephew," I remarked.

"Precisely," continued Stone. "So we went on board, and found the *Ruby* ashore on the ebb-tide. This was pleasant. We had to wait till the flood made again, and then we were to leeward, and had to pull round, for I had conceived the wild idea that you might have fallen into the bushes and be lying wounded on the beach below. The other nesters had disappeared, or we could have gone over the cliff after you with their ropes. But we saw your fire as we crept cautiously round, and after a while came in. You know all now."

I thanked Stone heartily, and bade the interpreter tell the serang how pleased I was with their efforts and those of the men, to all of whom I promised a reward—a statement which was received with great favour, and warm oriental acknowledgments on behalf of the Malays.

We had by this time neared the *Ruby*, and I gave Stone an outline of my adventures, and more particularly of the appearance of the *Phantom* and of the barque. The flashes of the guns and the distant "booms" which came up to us, told us that a fight was proceeding, a condition of things which our crew had already recognized, for they had made ready for warfare, and for immediate sailing to the scene of the engagement.

The reports of the cannon had by this time become

more frequent, and louder. This increase in the sound we knew was caused by a shift of wind, so we had now to work somewhat to windward, while the vessels were making a running fight of it. The barque was resisting bravely.

We soon had a rattling breeze, which we trusted might last till daylight. All lights were "dowsed," the guns got ready, and into each carronade was put a piece of pork as a charm, to make the shooting effective. Stone rather derided this moral "sighting," but the serang fully believed in the virtues of the pig, so we bowed to his prejudices.

"Take in a couple of reefs," said Stone at length, when we had been dashing along tacks down, sheets aft, and all made snug, as we were plunging through the waves, which had risen to considerable dimensions. We darted along in a perfect cloud of spray, phosphorescent under the counter to a degree that we were afraid would betray us. More than once the sheets were let fly as a heavier gust than usual heeled us down, and the seething, brilliant foam boiled under our lee, very near the bulwarks of our little craft.

We were coming up with the chase hand over hand. The excitement was tremendous. We had had a good meal, and every man was ready to do his utmost. By the time we were nearing the schooner, the sky began to show faint tokens of day, and the

breeze of falling as the sun rose. So we shook out the reefs, and darted along as merrily as ever. The first intimation of our next proceedings came from Stone.

"See," he cried, "the pirates may try to board the barque in boats, as they don't like the English broad-side at close quarters. Lie to a minute, they will not notice us yet, I hope—as we are on the darker side—and a mist is rising too.

The sail was lowered, and the muffled sweeps got out, ready to advance. We then lay silently upon the dark water. "Come," said Stone, "let us reconnoitre."

We stepped noiselessly into one of our sampans, and made out the loom of land on the starboard beam. The *Phantom*, as we could tell from her guns, was attempting to drive the Englishman ashore, but was afraid to come to close quarters, until the barque touched bottom. Drifting with the falling wind, we made out that the pirate's boats were all launched, the night-glass showed us the preparations for boarding.

Now and then a shot was exchanged, and the British barque seemed well handled, though somewhat crippled. The *Phantom* had also suffered. The foretopmast had been shot away, and by the severance of the main gaff the "standing" rigging had received injuries as well as the "running gear."

We paddled back to the *Ruby*, unperceived. Then we were made aware of the departure of the boats, and at once hauled up to board the pirate schooner.

It was a bold manœuvre, but was worth trying. We could leave to the barque the duty of repulsing the boats, which were full of men, and so our work would be comparatively easy. Orders were issued accordingly, and as we came up with all speed and ran alongside the schooner, the surprise and consternation of the few pirates remaining on board were tremendous.

At the same moment we were perceived by the boats and by the Englishmen on board the barque. They raised a cheer, and delivered a well-aimed broad-side upon the boats. Our men were quickly engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with the pirates, but in a few minutes the Malays drove them back, wielding their cruel (krisses or) creeses with terrible effect.

Stone was engaged in a desperate encounter with a pirate. I was, as usual, under the wing of the serang, who defended me and himself with much dexterity. Suddenly I perceived a young man, whose features I even then recognized in the early daylight, making his stealthy way unperceived along the deck, knife in hand, to stab Stone. I cried out to Stone, but he was too much occupied to hear. The serang and

myself, as well as the others, were pressing on, and the young half-caste, whom I recognized as Cayley, my former school-fellow, who had so cleverly robbed me.

He was already nearing Stone ; in one minute more he would reach him. My own attention was directed from him, when an unexpected ally appeared. A lad who belonged to the schooner darted up the companion, pistol in hand. He perceived young Cayley (Kaylee), and saw Stone in uniform. Though an adherent of the pirates (or why was he there?), he never hesitated. As Cayley was about to strike Stone a treacherous blow from behind, the ship's boy presented a pistol, and shot the half-caste youth down as coolly as possible.

The unhappy Kaylee fell helpless, but not dead. The Malays with fury continued the fray, and killed every man on deck. The guns were then turned on the boats, which stood no chance between the two fires. Nevertheless, one boat succeeded in boarding on one side, and a smaller one on the other bow of the barque. Of these the English sailors gave a speedy account, and with three cheers they saw the pirates defeated.

We responded from the *Phantom*. The Union Jack was brought on board the schooner, and hoisted proudly. The dreaded Luscumbe had reaped his deserts—at last.

"That beast Cayley is settled, I think," said a voice at my elbow. "Eh! Crumbs, my dear old fellow. Thank God, we meet again!"

I turned, and there stood the ship's boy, who had saved Stone. *Tom Arnold himself, alive and well!*
Hurrah!

CHAPTER XXX.

A MEETING AND AN EXPLANATION.—TOM'S FURTHER ADVENTURES.
—LUSCUMBE MEETS HIS DESERTS.

FOR a moment I was so completely taken aback by the appearance of Tom Arnold—although his presence on board was both hoped for and expected—that I was unable to greet him as I wished. But in a moment the surprise passed away; we forgot Cayley, pirates, bullets, knives and all, and rushed into each other's arms—literally rushed at each other and embraced warmly.

"My dear old Tom, this is splendid!"

"My dear 'Crumbs,' I can't tell you how delighted I feel."

These were our first sentences, and then we found that all the fighting was over. The ill-omened *Phantom* was in our possession. Young Cayley and the few men surviving on board were prisoners; the majority of the pirates had been killed or wounded in the boats in the attempt to board the British barque, which had defended herself with all the pluck and determination of a man-of-war.

The *Ruby's* crew brought the gun-boat alongside the

captured pirate schooner, and we took absolute possession. Luscumbe was of course in one of the defeated boats, and either at that time a prisoner in the hands of the British captain on board the barque, or dead.

Our Malays threw the dead bodies of the pirates overboard, and made no more account of these poor creatures than if they had been so many dead apes. But, of course, any remonstrance would have been useless, and no one seemed inclined to interfere.

Tom Arnold and I remained apart from the others, chatting, quite oblivious of duty or Stone, when a cry for help and an appeal to my old schoolfellow aroused us to a contemplation of what was going on. The appeal had come from Cayley, our former associate.

"Arnold! Fraser! don't let them hang me. I am dying, I believe. Make them let me die in peace. Remember our old days!"

We did remember them; and we also remembered that it was the robbery of my important papers, added to the meeting with Captain Garrettson, which had resulted in all this expenditure of life and money. It was rather an unfortunate appeal, I thought.

"We have no voice in the matter," I answered, sternly. "Mr. Stone will deal with you as he pleases. You are a scoundrel, Cayley, and will meet with your deserts."

"Oh, let me die in my bed," he exclaimed. "I am

too young to hang. Let me die where I am, if you like, but don't hang me !”

Stone heard him, and without taking any particular notice of him, went across to Tom Arnold and enquired how he had been treated. “Tell the truth fairly,” he added.

“I am not likely to tell lies, sir,” replied Tom, rather haughtily. “I have been badly treated—I was flogged and very nearly murdered.”

“Murdered !” we exclaimed, as Tom paused.

“Yes ! that fiend Luscumbe made some of us walk the plank. I was one of the victims selected, because I attempted to escape. My friend the doctor gave me the means to save myself. When I was waiting for death, the brutal mate—you remember him—threw me into the sea.”

A murmur of anger pervaded the little circle which had now been increased by some English sailors who came from the barque, and who were waiting until Stone could receive their message.

As Tom paused, Cayley screamed out—

“I tried to save you ; I did, indeed. Captain Luscumbe sent me below, or I would have helped——”

“Is that true ?” enquired Stone, impatiently. He was anxious to decide the question, go on board the barque and return to his station as soon as possible.

“Yes,” replied Tom. “He did remonstrate—I will say that for him.”

"Then we will let him die a natural death," replied Stone. "Now then," he continued to the emissary from the barque, "what is your message about ?"

"The captain wishes to know, sir, whether he may come on board ; or will you have the pirates tried on the barque. The pirate commander is a prisoner."

"Luscumbe not killed !" exclaimed Tom. "Let him be hanged at once, I should say."

"I should say, wait until your opinion has been asked, young sir," replied Stone, as he prepared to go on board the barque. "You will remain here, Fraser, until I return."

He then gave some directions to the serang and the interpreter, who received them with much deference, and Stone stepped into the boat alongside.

"Now, Tom," I cried, "there is no time like the present : come down into the cabin and tell me your adventures. Let us have Cayley carried to his berth, and then we can have a full explanation.

So Cayley was carried below, much relieved in his mind concerning his fate, although suffering considerably from his wound. We promised to send for the doctor of the barque, "If there is one," I added.

"The young surgeon Cobbetts is on board," Tom replied ; "but I fancy Cayley won't want him ; and you will say the same when you have heard what I have to tell you."

"Go on then, Tom, old fellow. I am dying to hear your adventures. Now begin!"

Tom then began a recital of his adventures and treatment on board the *Phantom*. With some of these details the reader is already acquainted. I will take up Tom's narrative at the time he was flung overboard by the mate—Smith—who had been carried overboard by Cobbetts.

This is Tom's own narrative :

"I found myself falling through the air," he continued, "and knew my chances of life were small. But the knowledge of the life-belt which I was wearing helped to give me hope. I rose to the surface almost immediately, and heard a loud splash. I perceived a black mass fall into the water. As it touched the waves it separated ; and then I could see two men, who had come overboard together, swimming to some spars which a humane sailor had thrown into the sea.

"These men reached the spars, and both managed to climb up. I was floating like a cork, and but for the fear of sharks was not for the time being unhappy, as we were well in the track of ships ; and besides, to tell the whole truth, I had perceived a vessel coming up with us fast, and knew she must have seen the schooner and guessed her character. So I hailed the doctor, and bade him keep a look-out in the darkness. Then things *did* get rather bad !

" Luckily the sea was pretty smooth, but the loneliness and the terrible uncertainty made me very nervous. I felt as if I could not keep up, and had my life depended on a spar or a plank I am quite sure I should never have retained it. I was not cold, but deadened to sensation, when I heard a shout, afar off it seemed, and faint.

" I raised my head, for I was drifting helplessly, and in the early light perceived the doctor—a splendid fellow, Crumbs—close by. He had been endeavouring to reach me for a long time, and it was only when the dim dawn began to light the horizon that he perceived me on the tops of the waves. But the dawn revealed to us a barque under all sail in the light breeze, and hope revived. We could see the mate, who was nearer to her than we were, gesticulating ; and in the course of a few minutes, although they seemed hours, she backed her topsails, and hove to. A boat was lowered, and the fellows pulled as only British sailors can pull. They very soon had Smith on board, and then they came towards us. The doctor got in easily enough, but I was helpless, and had to be dragged in like a sack. I was put down under the thwarts, and became insensible, or went to sleep, which is much the same thing, for I remember no more until I woke up in a berth in a very comfortable cabin, and found—who do you think?—looking at me."

" I am sure I can't tell, Tom—a sailor, I suppose.

The captain of the vessel—Jones, or Brown, or Robinson—perhaps.”

“No, neither Brown nor his friends. You will never guess, so I will tell you at once—Captain Rawlings!”

“Captain Rawlings!” I said, puzzled. “Who is he? I don’t know him, do I?”

“Oh, you stupid!” exclaimed Tom Arnold, who seemed to have quite recovered his spirits. “Oh, you old stupid! Don’t you recollect Captain Rawlings of the *Clementine*, and his little girl, who sprained her ankle——”

“And with whom you fell in love, Tom—Oh, yes, I remember it quite well : of course you don’t care for her now!”

“Shut up!” cried Tom. “Well, it was Captain Rawlings who had picked us up ; and when I recovered my senses I found him leaning against the berth with my friend the doctor, who had been the cause of my preservation.”

“Did Captain Rawlings recognize you?” I asked.

“Of course he did,” replied Tom. “He knew me long before I saw him, I can tell you. He *was* kind, Charlie.”

“Well, go on, Tom : I am getting impatient. What became of him and you all after?”

“Why, you silly midshipman, there he is yonder in the *Clementine*, alongside us.”

"That barque Captain Rawlings'?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then how did Smith (the beast) get away?"

"He deserted in the Straits. Somehow he heard of the proximity of his worthy captain, and bolted with one of our boats, having induced two of our men to accompany him. So he escaped trial and death at Singapore, for the doctor had determined to hang him, and I would have helped, I can tell you. The *Phantom* caught sight of us and attacked us. You know nearly all now."

"Yes, but how did you manage to come on board here? You did not explain that."

"That is easy enough. Captain Rawlings saw your gun-boat, and guessed you were a friend; so he put me and a few other young hands of his crew into the boat when he perceived the pirates about to attack us in their boats. We kept away until we perceived you approaching, and then we made a dash up too. I came on board almost beside you—Mr. Fraser!"

"I never noticed you," I replied. "But, my dear Tom, what escapes you have had! You must have at least nine lives!"

Tom laughed. "Let us go on deck," he said.

"Hallo," we exclaimed, simultaneously the moment we reached the open air. "What's that?"

No one answered. We said not another word

while a human being was slung up in the rigging by four sailors, who manned a whip. The body struggled for a moment, and then hung motionless from the yard-arm.

"It is Luscumbe," whispered Tom. "They've hanged him pretty quick."

"Serve him right," I said. Yet I shuddered as the body swung helplessly from side to side. Then I turned away, and waited in silence for Stone's return.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PILGRIM AND THE PHANTOM.—OUR RECEPTION ON THE CORVETTE.

AFTER a while I was very glad to perceive that Stone, accompanied by Captain Rawlings, was about to return to the schooner, for I was anxious to be relieved of my command. The gig was manned, and in a short time my superior officer and our old acquaintance Captain Rawlings ascended the side of the redoubted *Phantom*, no longer a pirate schooner. The captain greeted me very kindly indeed.

Several of his men accompanied him, and assisted our Malays in binding the wounded pirates, as well as their wounds, when they had been attended to by the doctor. Cayley did not appear to be in any imminent danger, but he was terribly frightened when he heard that his case, with the doom of all the rest of the prisoners, save their captain, would be decided upon by the authorities. Luscumbe was too old an offender to escape summary vengeance ; but my friend Stone was afterwards reprimanded for permitting the pirate captain to be hanged without a full and

entire investigation of his case—a proceeding which we all decided was much more cruel than the summary execution, as the fellow would have been hanged to a certainty in any event; so it was, in our opinion, better to put him out of his misery at once. But the good people did not see this—they wished him to have time for repentance, they said. Can a leopard change his spots? No; and I am certain that Luscumbe never would have repented. He would have escaped and continued his old career, if possible—he confessed so much.

Arrangements were made for the barque to return to refit; and so the gun-boat, the *Clementine*, and their prize sailed in company as soon as damages had been repaired. A prize crew was put on board the *Phantom*, and to my consternation first, and delight afterwards, Stone sent me in command, with his serang as first officer, and a mate from the barque to look after the English sailors. The *Clementine* took all the prisoners on board.

“Mind what you are about, Fraser,” he said. “If we get separated, make for Singapore, and report to Captain Ellerby as soon as you are able. You must keep your eyes about you in case you are attacked. On the other hand, capture all the pirates you can.”

“Why should we be attacked?” I enquired.

“Because you are sailing a pirate schooner,” he

replied. "Some of our gun-boats may give you a dressing?"

"I am sure they will get as good as they give," I answered. "If they pitch into me I'll show them what the *Phantom* can do."

"You mustn't fire on Her Majesty's ships, you young donkey!" exclaimed Stone, in horror. "You'll be tried by court martial and shot."

"It seems we run that risk any way," said Tom, laughing. "I'll remain with you, Crumbs, old fellow, and keep you in order."

"A nice pair you'll make," muttered the doctor, Philip Cobbetts; "but you will have little chance of distinguishing yourselves, I hope."

"*Ex-tinguishing* themselves, more likely," remarked Stone. "But seriously, Fraser: no nonsense, please. Remember, you are in a very responsible position."

"I will take care, sir," I replied, touching my hat, for we were on duty then, and Stone was a strict officer. "You may depend upon us: we will be within hail of you all the way, I trust."

"That is by no means certain," he replied. "You have the heels of us, and the weather may change; but now let us arrange this business."

Preparations were made accordingly. The *Phantom* was repaired as well as circumstances permitted; the *Clementine* was also put to rights; and when night

fell we were all ready to start for Singapore, where we hoped to find the *Narcissus*. As it happened, we found more than I bargained for: but of this anon.

During the night we kept company, but as morning dawned the wind freshened so fast that the sails were reefed, and then taken in rapidly. The little *Ruby* plunged and rolled; the large barque dipped and heeled over occasionally, while we in the *Phantom* rushed up and down the waves, tearing through the water, though with as little sail as possible. The wind was on the quarter, but it soon shifted, and came on the starboard bow. We still carried on, and when evening again fell the other vessels were far behind us—the barque hull down, and the gun-boat completely invisible.

The sun was setting gloriously when, as we turned from contemplating it, a brig was discovered in the nor'-east. She was coming down hand over hand, her canvas bellying out, not a crease in a sail, bowling along as steadily as a rock. We could see her ensign; she was an American, and of course a friend. So, with the British ensign displayed, we continued our course unsuspectingly.

The brig, which seemed heavily armed—but what armament she carried we could not distinguish—altered her course when she made us out, and came direct before the wind. She was smartly

handled, and our men remarked upon her trim appearance.

She came nearer and nearer, and I began to fancy her intentions somewhat particular.

"What do you think?" I asked my companions. "I am not satisfied about her. She carries some loud 'barkers,' I can see. Is she honest, do you think?"

"She looks very suspicious," replied the English mate, "but she won't hurt us. She will be out of sight before morning, I daresay."

"She seems inclined to stick to us, I believe," said Tom Arnold. "Shall we fight or fly?"

"We will proceed as before," I replied, feeling my authority demanded as much. "We will keep our course, serang."

He assented, but nevertheless we had the guns loaded and all made snug. We continued our way rapidly, but with our nightglass we could perceive the brig was on our track, and apparently intended mischief.

As the sun rose she yawed a bit, and a shot went dancing over the water half a cable's-length ahead of us, from her bow gun.

"She'll soon fall astern, at that rate," remarked the English mate. "What does she mean by this?"

Another shot came along, evidently aimed this time, and passed between our masts.

"Too much powder, Yankee," remarked Tom. The boatswain asked permission to reply.

"Certainly," was my answer. "Let her have it. Teach Jonathan a lesson, my men."

The English sailors, nothing loth, went to quarters. They could fight, we knew ; so as soon as they were ready, the order was given, and our carronades went flashing out into the morning air as the ship fell off a little.

Without waiting to see the effect of the broadside, the helmsman, at my desire, let the *Phantom* fall away, and then come round, port side presented to the stranger, so as to rake her as she came stem on to us. But the American was a wary man, and put his helm down smartly. The consequence was, the two ships passed on opposite tacks, and blazed into each other with considerable effect, our sails being rent, and our rigging injured.

The American captain, with his telescope to his eye, was standing beside the helmsman ; the flag was floating above his head, and we were admiring his pluck, when suddenly his ensign dipped to us.

"He's had enough of it," remarked Tom. "How do we stand, serang?"

"Two wounded men," was the reply. "The running rigging is *hurt* too."

"Here comes the *Clementine*. By Jove, there is

prize-money for us here," cried the mate of the *Clementine*.

We saluted the stranger, and lay to, our men still at quarters for fear of a surprise. The brig wore round and came up on our port side to leeward across our bows. We were a very little distance apart, when, as I gazed, my telescope fell from my grasp.

"It cannot be!" I exclaimed. "Why, Tom, look here—read the name—what is it?"

"*Pilgrim*," replied my chum. "What of it!"

"It's Captain Garrettson's brig," I said. "He named his vessel the *Pilgrim*. I see the whole thing now. He took this for Luscumbe's schooner, and us for pirates. He wanted to rescue you, Tom. He said so. Give him three cheers, lads, he's a friend."

I waved my cap, and we received the *Pilgrim* joyfully. After our little "tiff" we were faster friends than ever.

The "Pilgrims" lowered a boat and came alongside the *Phantom*, wondering. Captain Garrettson was in the stern sheets, and I went to welcome him, followed by Tom Arnold and the mate of the *Clementine*.

For once in his life, at any rate, the American captain was fairly astonished. He had, of course, recognized us on board before he had dipped his flag, but the surprise had not left his features when we met.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "If this isn't the very most astoundin', catawompin', circumstance that ever was, tar and feather my grandmother."

We were too delighted to see him to criticise his offer, which, on consideration, lost something of its force; inasmuch as his elderly relative was, presumably, in America, and therefore out of reach, if not dead, as we believed she was. So crediting the captain with sincerity, we did not dispute his unselfish suggestion, or his statement.

"Yes, captain," we cried. "Here we are, with the *Phantom* at last! We hunted the *Hydra* to death, and we have caught the *Phantom* too!"

"And Tom Arnold into the bargain. Ain't he grown! My! Why, when you go home, your mothers won't know ye! Pass the word for Mr. Bone, you."

The boat was despatched for the Single-eyed One, who quickly arrived on the scene.

"There, Bone, what do *you* think? Look at them young sea-lions, and don't tell me as Britannia don't rule the waves! Rule 'em? aye, does she. We're not in the same ranche with them, Bone."

"That's an everlastin' fact," replied Bone, as he welcomed us warmly; so warmly, that he had to touch his solitary eye with his fingers, and swear at "Skeeters;" while we danced with pain and crushed fingers for five minutes afterwards.

Then came questions and answers, long explanations, and many a hearty laugh at the captain for firing at us.

"Ah, it's all very well, but it's a mercy Bone's eye is keen. He 'spotted' you a mile off. I b'lieve he can see through a stone wall. He said you'd been captured, and we were determined to kill that Luscumbe anyway."

"He's already met his deserts," said the mate of the *Clementine*. "Captain Rawlings strung him up to the yard-arm."

"Shake hands, sir," said the captain. Then, as he and the mate met in friendly grip, Garrettson sighed and said—

"I'm kind o' sorry too, I *am*!"

"Sorry!" we exclaimed. "Sorry for Luscumbe?"

"Yes, sorry; very sorry that I wasn't there just to have had a pull at that rope. But there's always a bitter drop in every enjoyment."

The captain was becoming cynical, we thought, so we turned the conversation, and the approach of the *Clementine* and the *Ruby* gave us plenty of subjects for speculation. We all joined forces, and when night fell we wished for more prahus to conquer.

But our not unnatural wishes for distinction were not gratified. We continued our course within hail of each other, sometimes one, sometimes another passing ahead, according to the strength or lightness of

the wind. As we neared our former station Stone came on board the *Phantom*, and called me into the cabin.

"Look here, Fraser," he said. "I expect I shall get a 'wiggling' for this little expedition; and as it is your fault I shall send you on board the *Narcissus* to explain matters to your uncle. You may say what you please about my saving your life. I can't say anything, but it was going out of my way for very little, still, you——"

"Being the captain's nephew, Stone," I said.

"Just so. In these circumstances I was *bound* to do it. So, go you with your *Phantom*, report yourself, and I will go back to my blockade."

Thus we parted. The *Ruby* took her own men and the serang. Captain Garrettson came with me; but before we could reach Singapore a large vessel came in sight. She was the *Narcissus*; Garrettson recognized her at once; and no doubt Bone in the *Pilgrim* had long ago made her out with his unaided eye.

The man-o'-war made no signal, so we continued our course; but were quickly bade to lie to by a shot across the bows.

"I must say your uncle's arguments partake more of the *fortiter* than of the *suaviter in modo*," remarked Captain Garrettson. "But he's right. Nothing like asserting yourself. Where would we Americans be if we hadn't asserted ourselves, eh, mister?"

"Ah," replied the mate of the *Clementine*. "Yes, you did and *do* assert yourselves."

"Why not?" retorted the captain. "We feel that when we begin to give way we are like to be bullied, and *you may depend, when your old country knuckles down, her power will go!* It's moral as well as physical courage. Yes, sir, your uncle's right. Fire first, enquire after."

We had no time to combat the American's argument if we wished to do so, for the *Narcissus* had hailed us, and I was obliged to go on board. The captain volunteered to accompany me.

The *Narcissi* were clustered on deck. The *Phantom's* description was well-known, and when the young "game-cock" (your humble servant) was descried, astonishment was universal.

"Come on board, sir," said I, touching my cap as I appeared on the quarter-deck.

"What craft is that, Mr. Fraser?" asked the captain, acknowledging my salute; "and how did you come on board of her?"

"Mr. Stone, sir, captured her while she was engaged with a peaceful trader, and put me in command as prize-officer, with——"

"Is not Captain Garrettson of the *Pilgrim* yonder?" he interrupted.

"Yes, sir. He met us on our way here, and we nearly had an engagement; and——"

"Bid him accompany you to my cabin," said the captain very graciously. "Mr. Mervyn, will you join us?" he continued, addressing the first lieutenant; "we will hear the youngster's yarn below."

To the cabin we accordingly repaired, and I unfolded my tale, giving Stone as much praise as possible. The captain at one time looked grave, and when I had concluded, said—

"Am I to understand that Mr. Stone quitted his post, without orders, to cruise about in search of pirates; and raised the blockade?"

"He only came in search of me, sir," I replied; "and then he sailed to assist Captain Rawlings: an expedition which resulted in the capture of the notorious *Phantom*, and the recovery of my friend."

"Success is no excuse for disobedience to orders, sir. You may go, and rejoin the *Ruby*. Tell Mr. Stone to consider himself under arrest. No, stay: you will remain with your prize. Mr. Gibbons will supersede Mr. Stone. Mr. Mervyn," said he, to the first lieutenant, "you will see to these arrangements, please."

Then he bowed us out politely as ever. But Garrettson was furious.

"If this is the way your sea-captains reward merit and pluck, then I'm just real glad we won that little trick at Bunker's Hill."

"Hush, sir," said the first lieutenant. "You are on board a British man-of-war."

"Aye, and I wish I warn't, if that's a specimen of British justice," muttered Garrettson. "Come along, lad."

Crestfallen, we quitted the *Narcissus*. The American was very angry. We saw the corvette sail to supersede Stone, and meanwhile, we made our way to Singapore, according to orders, but sadly.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETURN TO ENGLAND.—MARRIED AND SETTLED.—CONCLUSION.

SAD indeed did we feel our position when we had anchored at Singapore, and the *Narcissus* had come in with poor Stone on board. Our orders were to communicate with the Governor; this we had done pending the arrival of Captain Ellerby. When the news of our prize-taking got abroad many people came to gaze upon the *Phantom*, and offers were slily made to Captain Garrettson for the schooner—offers which the captain promptly declined.

As soon as the *Narcissus* came in I was taken on board, and found Stone in a very cheerful state of mind. He welcomed me warmly.

"A thousand thanks, Fraser: I owe you a good deal, and I will pay you some day."

"My dear fellow, it really was not my fault. I did my best. I——"

"Never mind, man: say no more; when I make up my mind I intend to do what I say."

"But, Stone, listen: I didn't tell my uncle more than was necessary. He asked me some questions, and I had to answer them. I am very sorry."

"Sorry, what for? Because you are going to Europe?"

"To Europe? To England, do you mean? Who says so?"

"Captain Ellerby. He's going home on promotion, and intends to take you with him. Our first lieutenant, Mr. Mervyn, succeeds to the command."

"And you, Stone, are under arrest! oh dear!"

"Arrest? not a bit of it! Captain Mervyn asked me whether I would remain with him or go with Captain Ellerby, and I chose to go with your uncle: and I am 'made' my boy. I am a lieutenant in earnest. All your uncle's doing."

I was completely puzzled. A few days previously my uncle had suspended my friend, and talked of putting him under arrest. Now I perceived the intention. The captain could not overlook the disobedience, but he could reward the bravery of his youthful officer.

So he promoted Stone over Gibbons by taking him with him to his new ship, while he left Gibbons in the gun-boat, under Captain Mervyn of the *Narcissus*.

I need scarcely say that I was delighted, and Garrettson pronounced Captain Ellerby a "trump." The *Phantom* was sold with her cargo, and proved a most valuable prize. The Indian government purchased

her after all, and transformed her into a smart cruiser. The pirates were tried and hanged, all but Cayley, our old schoolfellow who had treated us so badly. He died of fever in Singapore.

Captain Ellerby took an affecting farewell of the corvette, which remained on the station. The yards were manned, and every demonstration of regard and regret was made as the *Diana* carried us away *en route* for England. Captain Garrettson and Mr. Bone promised to return to Govan if possible, but they never did. They went to America after a prosperous trading season, and are, I suppose, now at rest.

Tom Arnold and I accompanied my martinet uncle in the *Diana*, and were with him transferred to the mail-packet which conveyed us to old England afterwards. Captain Rawlings also soon sailed for home, and Tom did not fail to leave a message with him for his little daughter.

My uncle had taken care to send intelligence of our safety, and of his intention to bring us home, by the same ship which carried his official notification of his return to London. So when we arrived at Southampton we found father and mother, with Tom's parents, awaiting us. On such a happy meeting I need not dwell. The reader may imagine with what delight our parents received us, and how grateful we all were to Uncle Ellerby.

Stone also came in for his share of welcome, and when he had obtained leave he came down to our home on a visit while Captain Ellerby was preparing for sea. Both Emily and Miss Callenbury were delighted with him, notwithstanding his cynicism. My sister particularly approved of him, and we were all sorry when the summons came for us to leave and join our ship.

Tom Arnold got an appointment in the Merchant Service in one of the new mail steamers, and rapidly rose in his profession. He became a captain and the commodore of the Company's fleet, and is still hale and hearty. He married his youthful love, and it was only the other day that she came down to see us in our quiet home.

I say our home, for I am married—very much married now, with a young family who read these adventures critically. Miss Callenbury consented one day to become Mrs. Fraser, and I trust she has never regretted her decision.

My days afloat are ended—they did not last. More homely vocations demanded my attention, but I am not *yet* laid up in ordinary. The old friends of my youth have nearly all passed away: my mother still lives, I am thankful to say, in excellent health.

There is little more to add. These adventures in search of the *Hydra* are not all fiction: such things

did happen as are herein portrayed. My tale is done, and if the young reader has derived any amusement from the narrative of my adventures, he will not, I trust, regret the time spent in pursuit of the *Phantom*—nor shall I.

END OF THE HUNTING OF THE *HYDRA*.

APPENDIX.

IN accordance with the intimation on page 82 we annex the following statement, from which our readers will perceive that truth is at least as strange as fiction. The *Times* says that :—

"The owners of the *Ferret*, a steamer of 346 tons, were the Highland Railway Company. A stranger coming to Glasgow, giving the name of Walker, and professing to act as broker on behalf of a principal named Smith, chartered the ship from the company, stating, as it appears, that Smith intended to take a six months' yachting cruise for the benefit of his wife's health. What looked like good references were, no doubt, supplied to the company, and also to the ship-chandler from whom Walker obtained ship's stores, including an ample and excellent stock of wine, to the value of £1,490. These goods were paid for by a three-months' bill which was afterwards dishonoured. As soon as the steamer had finished its overhauling in one of the Clyde yards, it was taken down to Cardiff by a temporary crew. At

Cardiff a new crew was shipped, coal was taken on board, and Smith and his invalid wife made their appearance. Thence the ship went to Milford Haven, and from Milford Haven it started, on the 1st of November, 1881, ostensibly for Marseilles. The Highland Railway Company, it is needless to say, had not received their charter-money, or, if a portion had been paid, had not received the balance. The coals, like the ship's stores, were probably paid for with paper.

"Thus cheaply hired and equipped, the *Ferret* passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, with Smith, or Henderson as he afterwards called himself, as owner, and Walker as purser. So far, all seemed straightforward. The *Ferret* was well on its way to Marseilles. Smith and his wife were already beginning to revel in that balmy Mediterranean climate which was to restore Mrs. Smith to health, when a remarkable course of behaviour was adopted by her husband. After passing Gibraltar, and on the same day, the steamer's funnel, previously white, was painted black; and her boats, before blue, became white. The next of Mr. Smith's eccentricities was to turn the ship's course round in the night, and to steer back past Gibraltar with lights obscured. Then, when nearly out of the Straits, he caused two boats, some buoys and casks, and other articles, all bearing upon them the name of the *Ferret*, to be thrown overboard. The

sea was credited with another victim, and Smith and Walker pursued their voyage rejoicing. Some of the crew desired to know the reason of these remarkable tactics, and the engineer, in particular, importuned Smith for an explanation. The answer, when at last given to the engineer, and then to the crew, was hardly such as to set suspicion at rest. Smith said that his yachting expedition was to combine profit with pleasure. He was going to trade between Brazilian and other ports. But he was a political exile from the United States, whose lynx-eyed agents were doubtless on the watch to arrest him anywhere and everywhere. Naturally it became necessary that he should double about, change his ship's number and aspect, give the outside world reason to believe she had foundered with all hands, and enter the crew under false names. This somewhat improbable explanation was followed by threats to blow out the brains of any man who should be over-communicative, and by promises of handsome remuneration. On November 21, Cape Verd was reached, stores were taken, and a bill—fraudulent of course—was given in payment. Leaving Cape Verd the name of the ship was changed to the *Benton*. The severance of identity was now complete. The whole world was before the confederates as a field for plunder. They had already settled their plan of campaign. They steered for Santos, where, after some delay, they

obtained on freight, by false pretences, a cargo of coffee for Marseilles. Nothing was further from their thoughts than a voyage to Marseilles. They steamed off for Cape Town, and on the way the paint-pot and fitter's tools were again brought into use. The name of the ship was this time changed to the *India*. Thus rehabilitated, the vessel made Cape Town on January 29, and the coffee which had been obtained for nothing was sold for between £13,000 and £15,000. The next point was Mauritius, and here the steamer was docked and overhauled, the master still probably drawing on an imaginary London firm by way of payment. Mauritius was quitted, and Melbourne was reached on April 29. At Melbourne the adventurous rovers had reached the end of their tether. A vigilant eye noticed the similarity of the vessel, as it entered the docks, to the *Ferret* as described in the hue and cry raised in various parts of the world by telegraph. A few days' observation strengthened these suspicions, and a search by the Customs authorities proved them to be correct. Smith, now become Henderson, his wife, and Walker decamped, but the Melbourne police tracked and captured the two principal actors; and the invalid lady, whose cruise had been extended so greatly beyond its original limits, surrendered herself. The eyes of the crew were somewhat tardily opened to the character of their employers. They atoned for their simplicity by

