



Jack Harkaway in China

By
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JACK HARKAWAY IN CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

A PAIR OF BOASTERS.

“Those rascally pirates have gone at last. Good riddance, I would say, had they not carried off young Jack Harkaway and his friend, Harry Girdwood, thanks to the treachery of our inveterate enemy, Hunston.”

So mused Isaac Mole, the ex-schoolmaster, as he stumped across the deck of the vessel that was bearing him to the mysterious land of China.

The ship, with Jack Harkaway's party on board, was resting calmly on the bosom of the Pacific without a trace of excitement on board, though only a short time before they had had a desperate encounter with Chinese pirates.

Harkaway's son, young Jack, and his chum, Harry Girdwood, had fallen into the enemy's hands and been carried off.

The ship's company had by no means given up hope of rescuing young Jack, but just now they had taken advantage of the calm to snatch a few hours' sleep.

But Mr. Mole was awake.

He had kept below during the battle; but now that the pirate craft had disappeared he was on deck and anxious to air his valor.

His eye caught sight of an easy victim, a Frenchman, who had been rescued from the bloodthirsty pirates.

“My name is Isaac Mole, sir, at your service,” said Mr. Mole, politely, approaching the Frenchman.

“And I am called Hypolite Potiron, monsieur, your *très humble serviteur*,” was the response.

And they exchanged bows.

The Frenchman was as full of motion as the dancing barber.

Mr. Mole bowed with the grace of a Chesterfield, in spite of a certain stiffness caused by the rigidity of his wooden leg.

“We can congratulate ourselves, sir, upon having given those wretches a wholesome lesson,” said Mr. Mole.

Happy Mole!

He was under the impression, as he spoke, that he had materially contributed to their success.

Already he forgot the painful sensations he had experienced during the action, and how he had sought comfort and consolation under the bedclothes in his berth.

He humbugged himself no less than his hearer.

And that was saying something.

“I haven’t given those rascals such a lesson, monsieur,” said Mr. Mole, “not for years.”

“Truly, sir.”

“A fact, sir.”

“Have you ever had the disagreeable honor of fighting ze pirate before, sare?”

“Fighting!” echoed Mr. Mole, with a withering look at the Frenchman. “I see you do not know me so well as the war offices of all nations do.”

And then he was buried in silent reflection for several minutes, as if mentally fighting his battles o’er again.

“Fighting, monsieur!” he went on; “why, the action in which I commanded was, perhaps, the hottest on record.”

“Indeed, sare!”

“A fact, sir.”

“The pirates must have been *nombreux*—numbrous, what you call—dat is frequent.”

"Numerous, you mean, Monsieur Potiron," suggested the tutor.

"Ah, yes."

"Well, of course."

"Great odds, as you say."

"Forty to one," returned Mr. Mole, unblushingly.

"*Morbleu!*"

"Yes, sir; and I fought eighteen of them single-handed, and, in fact, I may mention that I was more embarrassed by the bodies of the slain which I piled up around me than by all else. Two hours and a quarter of mortal strife went on, and I smote them hip and thigh."

"On the hip and on the thigh? How could you, sare, always strike in ze same places?"

Mr. Mole replied by a supercilious smile.

"A figure of speech, my friend," he said; "they fell before my arm like ripe corn before the sickle. One of them shot me through the breast. I had two sabre cuts on the head, and I lost this leg in that fight."

"Vat a great man!" cried the little Frenchman, in profound admiration.

"You flatter me," said the diffident Mole.

"You must be a very great personage in England," said Monsieur Potiron.

Mr. Mole smiled complacently.

"Well, yes, history will record my deeds."

"*Mais si—* yes; a great *capitaine.*"

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "I must confess that my little feats were much talked about in England."

"Your little feats? You mean, sare, ze one you have lose?"

Mr. Mole looked puzzled at this.

He could not fathom M. Potiron's meaning for a while.

But presently it dawned upon him.

"I see your mistake, monsieur," he said; "I don't mean feet—not f-double-e-t, but feat—f-e-a-t—a deed of daring, in this instance."

"Oh-h-h, I see!" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"Yes," pursued Mr. Mole; "I was known for a long while as Mole the Bold Buccaneer."

"Truly?"

"Yes."

"Mole ze Buccaneer."

"Mole the Bold Buccaneer," continued the tutor, calmly; "by others I was known as Mole the Avenger—some called me Mole the Pirates' Terror."

Monsieur Potiron stepped back to take a long look of deep admiration at the disinterested Mole, who was so condescending as to relate his own glories for his (Potiron's) special edification.

There was no mistaking the wild, extravagant admiration which the little Frenchman had for Isaac Mole from that moment.

Frenchmen are more given to gesticulating than we Anglo-Saxons, and Monsieur Potiron expressed as much with a shrug and a grimace as Mr. Mole could have done in a long speech.

"I know now, sare," said he, after a moment's reflection.

"Know what?" demanded Mr. Mole.

"Why ze pirate have done so little when we engage him."

"Do you? Why?"

"Dey have hear that you were on board."

"Likely enough," returned the tutor.

"It is sure."

"It would not surprise me," said Mr. Mole, "for it has been my lot to see a villainous pirate once strike his colors without so much as firing a shot when I summoned him to surrender."

"Nevare!"

"Fact, sir."

"And what did you to them, vid de pirates?"

"Hung 'em up to our yardarm; seven of a row, sir, as I'm a sinner."

"*Extraordinaire!*" exclaimed M. Potiron.

"So you'd have said if you had only seen our crew. Why, sir, they were twenty to one, and carried forty guns, while we hadn't so much as a howitzer."

"What is he, howitzer, Monsieur Mole?"

"A small gun, a little cannon. The pirate chief was a desperate fellow, over six feet high, and big in proportion. He did all he could to make his men fight, but they were demoralized."

"By your great name?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"Well, sir, he seemed to think himself hardly done by, so I thought I would give him a chance."

"It was too generous of you, sare."

"Perhaps, but then I always respect courage."

"I could not hang him in cold blood with the rest, so I challenged him to single combat."

"*'Cré, nom d'une pipe!*" ejaculated Monsieur Potiron; "vat a hero it is—and you did fight?"

"Yes; he was a tough customer."

"He chose to fight with swords, cutlasses."

"We fought for an hour and a half."

"I ran him through the body five times," said Mole, flourishing his umbrella, "but he would not give in, so I was forced to cut him to bits literally."

"A most remarkable man."

"He saluted me as he fell, covered with wounds, and his last words were a compliment to me—an undeserved compliment, I may say."

"No, no."

"Indeed it was."

"And vat said ze pirate to ze brave Monsieur Mole?"

Mr. Mole coughed, and after a moment's reflection said:

"The last words of the pirate chief were—'Honor to the brave Mole.'"

"Allow me ze distinguished honor, Monsieur Mole," said the Frenchman, with a most elaborate bow, "to take your hand. It is a privilege most *distingué*. I

felicitate the greatest warrior the world has seen since my father was in the world."

"Your father?"

"Yes."

"Was he a great soldier?"

"What, sare! Is it possible dat you do not know my father?"

"I regret to say I did not."

"He was the great rival of Bonaparte."

"Dear! dear!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "that carries us back a very long way."

"*Certes*—assuredly. My father won his fame by his bravery, Monsieur Mole. Not by scheming, as de oder did. Dey was at ze bataille of Marengo togezer. Ze bataille was lose."

"Lost?"

"Lost. *Oui*—lost but for my fader—father, I mean. At the head, of ten men he stood the charge of a whole wing of the enemy's army—five thousand!"

Mr. Mole opened his eyes at this.

When not lying himself he was keenly alive to the ridicule of exaggeration in others.

"Ten men!"

"Ten, sare."

"Your father was a corporal, then, I suppose."

"No, sare; he was a general and *maréchal* of France."

"And a general commanding ten men!" repeated Mr. Mole, in some disgust.

"Come, I say, monsieur, don't you think you are mistaken about the general details?"

"No, sare."

"You must be."

Monsieur Potiron looked as fierce as a maggot.

"I don't mistake, sare, and I can prove it at the point of ze sword to anybody."

Mr. Mole coughed.

He had not expected quite so fierce a retort.

"I wonder," thought he to himself, "if he really means it, or if he is only trying to bounce me."

He thought he would test it.

So he put on a swagger.

"I know much about the point of the sword, Monsieur Potiron," he said, "and I am acquainted with pistols."

"Ah!"

"I can snuff a candle at eighteen paces."

"Oh!"

"I can toss up a glove and cut out the thumb before it reaches the ground."

"Never!"

"A fact, sir," answered Mr. Mole, modestly.

"Or I can spot every pip on the nine of hearts, every shot."

"Dat is vat I call ver' good shooting, sare."

"Well, it isn't to say bad."

"No, *parbleu!* you must be a man to fear."

"No; not to fear," said Mr. Mole. "I manage to inspire respect by keeping myself in good practice, that's all; ever since I winged those three men in the trenches."

"Three!"

"Yes!"

"Vat! all together?"

"Yes, it was all at the same affair; in point of fact, I potted them all three, as near as a toucher, simultaneously, and this was how it was done.

"We fought with revolvers; I picked one off, and before they could say Jack Robinson, turned my weapon and gave the other two the contents of a chamber each."

"Wonderful!"

"Not wonderful," said Mr. Mole; "the fact is, shooting became a science with me."

"*Evidemment,*" said Potiron, "evidently."

"You have never seen my feat of shooting straight

up in the air and cutting the bullet with another before it can reach the earth."

Monsieur Potiron gasped again at this.

"You don't mean that I must believe dat?"

"It is a fact, sir."

"Sare," said Monsieur Potiron, looking indignant; "you laugh at me."

"I would not be so rude," replied Mr. Mole, "though I don't wonder at your supposing you were being laughed at."

"Why, sir?"

"You must be used to getting laughed at."

"*Morbleu!*" ejaculated Potiron, ferociously, "you shall answer for dat."

"With pleasure," returned Mr. Mole, cheerfully. "Shall I fetch my pistols?"

"No, sare, ze sword is ze only arm dat a gentleman can fight with."

"Pistols."

"I insist upon ze sword."

"Very good," said Mr. Mole, complacently. "You shall have a sword, and I'll bring up my pair of revolvers. D'ye see?"

"No, sare."

"Oh, yes, you shall quarte and tierce, and thrust away till you are sick, and I'll pepper you."

"Peppare me! *'Cré, nom d'un chien!* Peppare me?"

"Yes, monsieur," said Mole, throwing himself into an attitude calculated to inspire the other with awe. "And, damme, sir, you will not be the first one I have peppered. So take a Christian man's counsel and go and make your will."

"What?"

"Your will."

"Vill! Vat is vill?"

"Your last dying words."

"Oh!"

The notion appeared to make Monsieur Potiron just a little uncomfortable.

Mr. Mole perceived his advantage.

He swaggered, and looked as terrible as Pistol himself on the field of Agincourt.

"I don't care to make two or three bites at a cherry," said Mole, with his regular military cough. "I shall very soon put you out of your trouble for this wicked world."

The Frenchman could not brag so loud as Mole, and so he had to lower his colors.

He muttered something about meaning no offence, and being sure that the brave Mole was as skillful at the pistol gallery as he averred.

"Only, sare, I wish to express my admiration of you, *voilà tout*. I could not find words to make you comprehend how very much I admire——"

Mr. Mole interrupted him with a patronizing wave of the hand and a smile.

"That is enough, monsieur," he said superciliously; "only I never allow anybody to call my courage in question, for, sir, I am ready to fight any man that does so."

"Of course."

"And my pistols are still at your service if—if you doubt either my narrative or my courage."

"Mr. Mole!"

"Hello!"

Mr. Mole and the Frenchman jumped back, startled half out of their lives.

Just behind them was a large sea chest, and from the rear of this two figures suddenly rose up.

They were Pike and Nabley, the English detectives.

They had been sitting there to rest themselves and compare notes when Mole and Mr. Potiron came up.

"Mr. Mole."

"Mr. Pike! Goodness gracious, how you startled me."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; I did not know there was anybody there."

"I want a word with you, if you please."

"With pleasure, Mr. Pike. What is it, pray?"

"In private, if possible, Mr. Mole."

"Dear me, yes."

So he stepped aside with the detective.

"It is a very unpleasant matter I have come upon, sir," began the detective, with hesitation.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Mr. Pike?" said Mr. Mole. Pike was silent.

Mr. Mole appealed to Nabley.

But the latter was evidently loath to break the unpleasant intelligence, whatever it was, for he turned aside as well, and his glance fell to the ground while he heaved a faint sigh of commiseration.

"The fact is, sir," said Nabley, "I wouldn't for one have broached this subject if I hadn't happened to overhear a word or two that fell from you just now."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Mole, a bit uneasily.

"Nor would I for another, Mr. Mole."

"Will you speak out?" cried Mr. Mole, goaded on now to fierceness.

"Well, then, sir—then—there, Nabley, you tell it. I haven't the heart to."

"The fact is, Mr. Mole," said Nabley, "my friend Pike has come on a very awkward mission. He comes with a message of defiance."

"What?"

"A message of defiance," repeated Nabley.

"A challenge?"

"Yes."

"Goodness me!"

"I thought you would say so!" exclaimed Pike.

"Who from?"

"From a fierce American gentleman who thinks himself affronted, and whom nothing can pacify."

"Surely not Mr. Jefferson?" said Mole. Nabley shook his head.

"No; the gentleman we mean has been confined to

his room with a bad cold, but he has now recovered, and feels himself strong enough to fight any three men on board."

"His name! his name!" gasped Mole.

"Well," said Nabley, "his fighting name is Brick!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Mole, staggering back, for he remembered Mr. Solomon Brick, the gentleman who had volunteered to "carve" him when in New York City. "Brick again! Why was a Brick born?"

"You know him?"

"I should think I do."

"Why, he told me he had never seen you, but that you had grossly insulted him."

"I didn't."

"He says you did. Well, it appears that he followed you on board solely for the sake of fighting you and having your life."

"The ruffian!"

"Well, if he doesn't meet you soon in mortal combat, he says he'll shoot you down anywhere he can see you."

"Why, that would be murder."

"Of course; but he says he has murdered six men, and you will make the seventh—and he likes odd numbers."

"You will not allow him?"

"To murder you? No."

"Quite right," said Mr. Mole; "you are sensible men, both of you, and——"

"And this," said Pike, "is how I propose to obviate all danger of murder."

"Ah," said Mr. Mole, eagerly, "let me hear your plan, dear friend."

"You shall fight him."

"What?" shouted poor Mole.

"Wait a bit, we shall choose pistols. We are the aggrieved party, and the choice is with us; we choose pistols."

"Yes; revolvers."

"Why?"

"Can you ask?"

"Can I? Of course; damme, sir, I do!" cried Mr. Mole, working himself up into a perfect fever.

"The reason is that you shall get first fire, and wing him. You break his sword arm, you understand?"

Mr. Mole felt as though all his inner machinery had dropped down a foot.

"That will suit you to a turn," said Pike; "eh, sir?"

"But I might not have a steady hand, and miss."

"Not likely."

"No, it is not; but I might miss my aim and wound him badly."

"So much the worse for him."

Mole winced.

"Ahem! yes."

"Now, supposing," said Pike, "that the Frenchman acts for you? I'll tell him."

"No! no!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, hurriedly; "not him. See this dreadful Brick for me, Mr. Pike, and say I should prefer our duel to come off when we land."

"He wouldn't believe me, and—hello, why, here comes Mr. Brick with pistols and swords. My gracious, Mr. Mole, there'll be murder done."

The tutor shot along the deck like a deer, stumped away to his berth, and was seen no more.

* * * * *

It was at first thought by Pike and Nabley that he was going to seek the seclusion of his stateroom.

But this was a mistake.

Mr. Mole had no intention of doing anything of the kind.

He fully believed that the ferocious Solomon Brick was on board the ship thirsting for his blood.

It seemed probable enough that Pike saw him coming along armed to the very teeth.

At the risk of being considered a coward, he sought

refuge in flight, making as quick time as his wooden leg would permit.

He was getting used to his timber support now.

It did not inconvenience him half so much as it had done at first.

Nevertheless, he often worried over it in secret, though he did not allow his friends to notice his grief.

In fact, it was a great calamity to him, in that it made him look ridiculous.

He did not like to be alluded to as old wooden leg, or old timber toes.

It had also affected his nerves somewhat.

Mr. Mole felt that he could not encounter this terrible Brick.

If he had known that Harvey and the others were conjuring up Mr. Brick as a joke, he would have swaggered in his best fashion.

This, however, was hidden from him.

He had not the remotest idea that it was only a phantom Brick.

Dreadfully alarmed, he hurried to the ship's stern.

During the day, he had noticed a small boat floating in her wake and attached to her by a rope.

Another rope dangled from the bulwarks, having knots at intervals for anyone to go down underhand.

This boat had been used by one of the officers for fishing in the morning.

The dawn had broken without a breath of wind.

They were becalmed in the Pacific, with a hot sun beating down upon them.

This was just the time for fishing, and the officer in question had the boat lowered, got in, hoisted the little sail, and enjoyed himself for a few hours.

The dead calm had continued all day long.

Those who were weatherwise, had predicted that a breeze would spring up before sundown.

As yet it had not made its appearance.

There was an awning over the after part of the boat; some cushioned seats were displayed near a large

locker, and a general air of comfort and retirement pervaded the small craft.

The sail hung lazily against the mast, the tiller moved backwards and forwards as the listless waves struck against it.

Without any hesitation, Mole got hold of the knotted rope and descended into the boat.

He had to be very careful, for if he had come down with a run, he might have stove a hole in the bottom with his wooden leg.

When he landed safely, he went aft, sat down and chuckled to himself.

In his coat pocket he had a bottle, which he produced, also a glass and a flask of water.

Needless to say that the bottle in question contained a liquor known as rum.

He took a drink and sighed deeply, with a satisfied air.

The officer who had been fishing had left his line and bait in the boat.

Mr. Mole baited the hook and cast the line overboard, lighted a manilla cigar, and beamed, positively beamed, with a blissful consciousness that he was safe.

His enemy, Brick, could not injure him now.

If he found him out and attempted to enter the boat, the hunted and harassed professor resolved to cut himself adrift.

Rather would he trust himself to the mercy of the waves, than be compelled to face Solomon Brick.

That he was fairly panc-stricken, there could be no doubt.

While he smoked, drank and thought of calm content, as becomes a gentle angler, he imagined that his retreat had been unobserved.

It was his firm belief that neither Pike nor Nabley had seen where he went.

This was altogether a mistaken idea.

They had followed him at a distance, and were al-

ready plotting how they could have some more fun out of him.

"Twig the old cockalorum in the boat," exclaimed Pike.

"I spy," replied Nabley.

"He is making himself comfortable, and no mistake. We shall have to rouse him up a bit."

"How will you do it?"

"I'll go down the rope and join him in the boat," said Pike.

"What then?"

"You must help in the joke. Mole and I will talk, fish, drink and smoke. I intend to sympathize with him, but at the same time I will work him up against Brick."

"Isn't it time to drop it?" asked Nabley.

"Why should we? Mr. Harvey likes it, and Mr. Harkaway does not object."

"That's true."

"Old Mole was made to guy," continued Pike.

"Mind you don't give him fits. He might jump overboard and be drowned."

"Would he be any loss?"

"Decidedly yes. I like the old boy. Let him down easy."

"Very well," said Pike. "This is what you have to do: While the learned and erudite professor and I are enjoying our dear selves, you must look over the stern."

"What for?"

"Give an alarm of Brick."

"Oh! I see. All right," answered Nabley, "I'll do it; but if anything serious happens from it, do not blame me."

"What rot!" said Pike, "as if anything could happen."

"I don't know; great things from little causes come. But we must do something for a lark. Life is so awfully monotonous on board ship—no work to do; can't

play cards or read all day. It's too hot to go in for much exertion, so we will play Mole for all he is worth. Make a start."

"I am going to do so," replied Pike.

"Shall I hide?"

"Certainly, bob down under the bulwarks. It won't do to let him see you."

"When am I to chuck a brick—I mean, say that this human Brick is coming?"

"In about five minutes."

"Right; enough said," answered Nabley.

His companion, Pike, who was agile enough to go down a rope, let himself descend into the boat.

Mr. Mole was fishing diligently.

"Hello!" exclaimed Pike, "I didn't know you were here, sir."

"Keep it dark, then. What do you want?" asked the professor.

"I was about to have a little fishing."

"Hold your noise; I've got a bite."

Mole jerked his line and pulled out a large-sized fish.

"That is not so bad," he continued. "It makes the third I've hooked."

"Allow me to congratulate you upon your skill."

"Everybody knows I am a good fisherman. If Isaak Walton were alive, he would not be in it with me."

"Boasting again," remarked Pike.

"I have a right to brag when I can do a thing well. Take this line, Mr. Pike, and see if you can catch one of the finny tribe."

"With pleasure. What are they?"

"Sunfish—shy fellows, and no fight in them."

"Indeed?"

"Ah! If you want sport," added Mole, "you should go in for sharks or whales."

"Did you ever catch a whale?"

"Thousands of them, when I was in Labrador."

"I was not aware that you ever had been in such high latitudes."

"You don't know everything. Where have I not been? All over the world, I reckon."

"Great man," replied Pike.

"You may well say that. Great men are never thoroughly appreciated until they are dead."

Pike took the line from Mole and began to fish; but he had no luck at all.

Not a bite could he obtain.

The fish were off the feed, or he was singularly clumsy.

"Where's that fellow, Brick?" asked Mole, into whose head the rum was getting.

"Gone below, I think. He could not find you, so he made himself scarce."

"What did the low ruffian say?"

"Simply that he meant to have it out with you."

"He is welcome to do so at any appointed time. I am ready to meet him; but the affair must be arranged in a regular manner: seconds, and all that kind of thing, you know."

"Certainly. That is only fair."

"If the low, bellicose scoundrel talks to me, I shall knock him down."

"No, I would not do that," said Pike.

"Why not?" asked Mole.

"He has two legs, you have only one. Don't you see that you would be placed at a disadvantage?"

Mole uttered a groan.

"Yes," he rejoined, "I am a cripple. Everyone taunts me with my misfortune."

"I didn't mean it that way."

"Why can't this infernal half-baked Brick let me alone?"

"He's terribly vindictive."

"So am I when I am roused. Bless me, let him beware! I will pulverize this lump of cooked clay, this Brick out of a kiln."

"Don't talk so loud," said Pike.

"I will not hold my tongue for anyone," responded Mole.

"He might hear you."

"I am prepared for him. There will be murder on the high seas, if he dares to interfere with me."

"Look out! I fancy I hear his voice," said Pike, putting his hand to his ear, and assuming a listening attitude.

"Keep him away from me. I shall do him a mischief."

"Or he you?"

Suddenly Nabley appeared at the stern of the ship.

"Below!" he cried.

"Ahoy!" answered Pike.

"Have you seen Mole? He is not on board. Brick is coming."

"The gentleman is in the boat. I came down to have some fishing, and found him here."

"Tell him to look out. Brick swears he will have his life."

"All right. I'll warn him."

"Here he is; he has heard me. I'm afraid he will come down into the boat," answered Nabley.

Mole got up from his seat and took a knife from his pocket. He turned pale under his sunburned skin.

"I'll be bothered if he comes here. I—I don't want to calcine this Brick. I pity the poor fool, and therefore I will sever the rope," he said.

"Do what?" asked Pike.

"Cut the boat adrift."

"Are you mad?"

"Perhaps I am. You are all trying to make me so."

Saying this he stumped forward, and, before Pike could stop him, cut the rope.

The tide was running quickly, and in a minute the form of the ship began to rapidly recede.

There was a current, apparently, which was carrying them away.

"Help, help!" exclaimed Pike.

"Put your sail up!" shouted Nabley.

"What's the use without any wind?" replied Pike.

"You will be lost."

"I know it. The madman has done it on purpose."

A dense mist began to rise from the sea.

This is a very frequent occurrence in those latitudes.

In less than five minutes the boat containing Mr. Mole and Pike was out of sight.

Nabley's shouts brought Jack Harkaway and his friend, Dick Harvey, on deck.

They had been enjoying a *siesta* in the cabin.

"What the deuce are you making all this hullabaloo about?" inquired Harkaway.

"We've carried the joke too far, sir," replied Nabley.

"Explain yourself."

"Mr. Harvey started it about Solomon Brick, with Mr. Mole."

"And you have carried it on?"

"Well, Pike and I took a hand in it just now. Mole got into the boat which was riding astern. Pike went after him. I said Brick was coming, and Mole cut the painter."

"Where are they?"

"Adrift in the mist."

"Good Heaven!" cried Harvey, "they will be lost."

"I fear so," replied Harkaway. "The captain told me there was a storm brewing."

"Just so. A calm always precedes it."

"What is to be done?"

"Hanged if I know!"

The three men looked at one another.

It was certainly an awkward predicament for Mole and Pike to be placed in.

There were other boats on board the ship.

To lower them, however, in the mist would be worse than useless.

"I am really very sorry I started on Mole, now," re-

marked Harvey. "He will be drowned, and I should not like to lose him."

"Nor I," Jack answered, feelingly. "He has been my friend—I may say, our friend—Dick, from boyhood."

"That's true."

"And, with all his faults, we like him."

"I do and always did; but, for the life of me, I can't help chaffing him sometimes."

"It's just the same with me," replied Jack.

Nabley coughed, as if to hide some emotion.

"I will chip in for self and partner," he said. "We have no ill-feeling towards the old gentleman."

"How to find and save him is the question," continued Jack. "Here we are, becalmed in a mist."

"It may lift, sir. I hope it will, for Pike's sake."

"We can do nothing at present," added Jack. "When the wind rises the fog will clear off; and then we must cruise about and try to pick up the cast-aways."

"That won't be so easy as you think," observed Harvey.

"Do you mean that we shall have to say good-by to poor old Mole and the clever Mr. Pike?"

"It strikes me very forcibly that we shall."

"Confound the luck! That is what comes of practical joking. Mole was driven mad."

"There is no doubt of that, or he would not have cut himself adrift. It is all my fault," said Harvey.

"I have lost my son, and now I have lost the tutor," replied Jack.

"Let us hope that we shall recover both of them."

"It is a puzzle. All we can do is to stand by and search the ocean when we get some wind."

"There is a capful coming!"

"So there is, Dick," exclaimed Harkaway. "Look! the mist is rising. We shall have a bellyful of it, as the sailors say, in a few minutes."

"Good luck, my boy! We'll find Mole, if possible,"
Harvey answered.

The wind had come at last.

It was rapidly dissipating the fog.

The captain and the crew were soon at work hoisting
a spread of canvas, and all was bustle and activity.

CHAPTER II.

ADrift ON THE OCEAN WAVES.

When the boat drifted away with the current, Pike searched for some oars.

He was unable to find any.

Rushing to the mast, he seized the halliards and hoisted the sail.

It flapped idly against the mast, for there was no wind.

Then the mist rose with appalling suddenness, and he glared viciously at Mole.

The latter had lighted a fresh cigar, and, sitting down comfortably, was sipping his rum and water.

"You've done a fine thing. Think you've scored this time, don't you?" exclaimed Pike.

"What's the matter?" asked Mole.

"We're adrift, you old idiot! A fog has enveloped us."

"Better that than I should be massacred. I've done Brick. As I said before, why was a Brick born?"

"We shall starve, get drowned, or be captured by pirates, or perhaps be eaten by sharks."

"I care not," answered Mole. "A man can only die once."

"In that case, why did you not fight Solomon Brick?"

"That might have been a sudden death, and I like to take my time about everything."

"Dolt!"

"Call me names. I tell you I am reckless. The persecution I have been subjected to has been too much for me."

"Then you are mad!"

"Just as mad as the proverbial hatter."

Pike groaned in agony of spirit.

He could not see the end of this adventure, and he ardently wished he was on board ship again.

"I don't care if we drift to the North Pole, or get chucked on a desert island," continued Mole.

"Or swallowed by a whale," suggested Pike.

"That's better than being bitten by a pike like you. Oh, you fresh-water shark!"

"Why, I'm your friend."

"Yes, you are—just as much as a hawk is to a bird," replied Mole.

"If I get you on a desert island, you pumpkin-headed old donkey, I'll try and knock some sense into you, and, as this sea is full of small, and to some extent, uninhabited islands, there is a chance of it."

"Man, I despise you. Savages respect me, but you don't!"

"I don't know what is to become of us," groaned Pike.

"Make your miserable life happy, as I am doing."

"Not a bad idea. Pass the grog."

"Help yourself, and welcome. Don't take too much," said Mole, with an anxious look.

"Certainly not. Drink fair, is my motto."

He poured out a good half tumblerful and drank it down at a draught.

"Hand that bottle back. You've had enough," said the professor.

"All right! Here you are."

Mr. Mole repossessed himself of his cherished bottle. He hugged it to his breast with affection.

"Your only friend, eh?" remarked Pike.

"Let us hold in our arms those we love in our hearts," said Mole, sentimentally.

"Wouldn't it be nice if there was a grog shop, or floating public house, anchored every couple of miles on the ocean," observed Pike.

"First-class idea! Patent that."

"As commerce increases, and if there were many passengers like you, it would pay."

"Like the bank, sir. I'm proud of you; I am, indeed."

At this moment a large wave struck the boat.

It careened to port instantly.

Before it righted itself, Mole fell off the thwart on his back.

His bottle was broken.

Its precious contents were spilled in the bottom of the boat.

"Oh, dear! I'm done for," he shouted. "The doctors all said that I should never travel without a drop of rum, to be used medicinally."

He was lying on his back, with his wooden leg cocked up in the air at an angle of thirty-five degrees.

"Get up. Don't lie like that, you ninny."

"It sounds well in you to call me names."

"Why shouldn't I, when you deserve it?" asked Pike.

"Confound such lubbers!" cried Mole. "Didn't you turn the boat broadside on that wave?"

"I didn't touch the tiller. I don't know how to manage a boat. It isn't in my line. If you are so clever, why don't you take the helm?"

"So I can. Do you suppose I can't handle a cockleshell of a craft such as this? Assist me to rise, as you ought to."

"I'll help you do anything if you won't make a show and exhibition of yourself."

"In return," said Mole, "I will teach you to reef and steer, to clew up ten thousand topsail short blocks, to splice the mainbrace, to splinter the jibboon and—and to shiver your timbers generally, as becomes a man-of-war's man."

"All that in once!" laughed Pike.

"Hoist the flag! Let fly the Blue Peter! Fire a royal salute, and prepare to receive the port admiral!"

"Who's he?"

"Your humble servant, Isaac Mole, K.C.B.," was the reply.

Pike gave the professor a hand.

He was soon sitting on the thwart again.

Stretching forth his hand to get hold of the tiller, he made a discovery.

The door of a large locker flew open, displaying to the delighted gaze of the professor a store of good things.

There was, to begin with, what turned out to be a gallon of rum in a stone bottle, a bag of biscuits, various canned meats, a good-sized keg of fresh water, a ham boiled and just cut, and a couple of chickens.

These had been destined for the captain's table, but the officer who had been fishing bribed the steward to let him have them.

He had intended to go out again the next day, and left the provisions in the locker, so that he could start at an early hour if the calm continued.

"Here's a find!" cried Mole, uncorking the rum.

"Corn in Egypt," said Pike, quite as pleased.

"Balm in Gilead," continued the professor.

"Rum on the ocean."

"It will soon be rum in the stomach. It's very rum altogether; but, thank our stars, we shall not starve. Shake hands, old fellow. You're not such a bad sort, after all."

They made up their dispute, enjoyed an excellent repast, lighted cigars, and talked the situation over.

One thing was agreed on between them.

They must stick together for mutual preservation.

The boat would require careful handling.

A squall, in that treacherous sea, might overtake them at any moment, and capsize their frail boat.

The result of this confabulation was that they agreed to keep watch and watch.

The watches were to be of four hours' duration each, and as they were both possessed of time-keepers, there could be no mistakes.

Pike consented to take the first watch.

He hoisted the sail, took the rudder, and guided the boat before the waves.

Feeling the want of sleep, Mole made himself as comfortable as he could on some tarpaulin at the bottom of the boat.

He was soon fast asleep.

Pike continued to sail the boat.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE ON AN ISLAND.

Pike steered the boat until his watch was up.

When, according to agreement, he roused Mr. Mole.

Having no nautical knowledge, and being without a compass, he did not know in what direction they were going.

He was simply sailing before the wind, as it is called.

Possibly, he might be nearing the China coast, but it was just as probable that he was traveling towards the South Pole. His mind was ill at ease.

The provisions they had so luckily, we may almost say providentially, found in the locker, would not last them many days.

If they did not fall in with some vessel which would pick them up, they must starve.

In addition to this contingency, there was the danger of meeting with a storm or tempest.

Their little bark would soon be capsized.

In Pike's opinion, there were sharks about, and he was not in reality mistaken.

Scarcely had he roused Mole than there was a strange sound in the air.

It was early morning.

The sun had risen about half an hour.

The noise was made by a quantity of flying fish.

At least a dozen fell into the boat, the others shooting over it.

"What's roused those beggars?" asked Pike.

"Can't you see?" replied Mole.

He pointed to the ocean.

The horrible form of a large shark was to be seen.

It had perhaps been following in their wake all night.

"Shark, eh? I thought as much," said Pike. "Those creatures always make my flesh creep."

Mr. Mole smiled contemptuously.

"It seems to me that it doesn't take much to upset your nervous system," he remarked. "There is no harm in sharks when you get used to them."

"How is that to be accomplished?" inquired Pike.

"Tame them. Once, when I lived near the sea, I had a pond constructed to hold six fine sharks. I used to feed them liberally on pigs, horses, cows, dead donkeys, an occasional live nigger or two, and——"

"Draw it mild!" interrupted Pike.

"Fact, I assure you."

"Take your oath to it, I suppose?"

"Make an affidavit and kiss the book," replied Mole, with imperturbable solemnity.

"You'll do!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"You ought to get on; you do try."

"Mr. Pike, do you mean to insinuate that I am romancing?" asked the professor.

"Wire in and get your name up to date."

"I am telling you a shark story. If you don't want to listen to it, say so. If you do, haul in your slack, as the sailors phrase it."

"Pile it on."

"I suppose that is your elegant way of telling me to proceed with my narrative?"

"That's about the size of it. Keep it up."

"Well, these sharks got to know me. They would come to the side of the pond when I whistled them, and actually extend their fins for me to touch, as if we were shaking hands."

"That takes it!" cried Pike.

"What?"

"The cake. You're the champion! I'll give you the belt."

"Do you doubt my veracity?"

"Oh, dear, no! I believe every word of your story, over the left," replied Pike.

"You are an extremely rude, ill-bred person."

"Excuse me. I must speak my mind."

"I treat your ignorance with contempt—yes, sir, with the contempt it merits."

"Thank you. I am grateful for small favors."

"All the same," continued Mole, "I shall go on with my shark story. Now I have commenced, I will not be put down by vulgar clamor."

"I apologize. It shan't occur again."

"That is the way to speak to a gentleman of my acknowledged powers."

"Score one."

"What do you mean, sir, by your interruptions and interpolations?"

"Happy thought! Book it."

"Do you intend to convey that I am not telling the truth?"

"What price, Ananias?"

"Sir, that is an insult! Ananias was the prince of liars. The Baron Munchausen came very near beating him, but at weight for age, Ananias remains the master."

"Go on; I'm listening."

"Were it not for the fact that I should be alone in this boat if I threw you to the sharks, I'd do it," said Mole.

"Where should I be while you were trying it on?"

"In my arms—compressed by muscular power—hurled into the sea, like chaff to the winds!"

"You—not me," replied Pike.

"Be silent, if you want me to conclude, and do not, my good fellow, allow yourself to be carried away by the exuberance of your own verbosity. Now, pay attention."

"I will endeavor to do so."

"It is about the only thing, I am told, that you detective men ever do pay. You pay attention to your orders, but you never pay your debts—unprincipled vagabonds. However, let us return to our sharks," said Mole.

"First of all, you must retract."

"I never take anything back."

"Oh! You must, or I'll paste you. Didn't you call me a vagabond?"

"Ah! yes. I used the word, but not personally."

"How is that?"

"I was talking of the detective force generally, and not indicating you in particular."

Mr. Mole had always a clever way of getting out of a difficulty.

Seeing that he had pacified his companion, who was inclined to be irascible, he proceeded.

"I always did like you, Pike, and should be very sorry to fall out with you," he observed.

"Don't rub me the wrong way, then."

"Certainly not. Your feathers shall not be ruffled by me. I will coach you in such a way that you shall become as tame, docile and subservient as my sharks."

"What did they do?"

"I got them into such a state of perfection, that they allowed me to draw their teeth. After which, I used to bathe among them, ride on their backs, and——"

"Drop it!" Pike interrupted. "I can't stand any more of it. Take the tiller and let me sleep it off."

"If you allude to my yarn——"

"Turn it up, governor. I'm tired," protested Pike.

He threw himself down on the tarpaulin that Mole had vacated.

Lying on his side, he pulled his hat over his eyes, and was quickly in the land of dreams.

"It takes a lot to convince some people," remarked Mole. "That man doesn't believe my shark story. He is a skeptic. I can see it in his unbelieving face. A prophet is ever without honor in his own country. I will tell him an untrue story next time. It shall be a snake story, and—ha! ha!—a whopper."

Laughing to himself, the professor took a piece of rope and lashed the tiller hard-a-lee.

He liked to save himself trouble if he could, and as it was breakfast time, he thought he would take the edge off his appetite.

Some canned salmon and corned beef, with biscuit and a little rum and water, satisfied him.

As the little boat darted over the crest of the waves, he, as his companion had been doing, reflected upon the situation in which they were placed.

Being of a sanguine disposition, he did not despair.

During his travels with Harkaway, he had been placed in many awkward positions.

Yet he had managed to come out all right at the end.

After sailing for a couple of hours, he saw something on the verge of the horizon.

It looked to him like land.

He strained his eyes, and gazed in great excitement, until he made out the form of a tree.

In a few minutes he distinctly saw more trees.

Pike was still sleeping soundly.

The professor did not wake him up, as he knew that he needed rest.

Altering the course of the boat, Mole steered for the island.

For such he supposed it to be.

He knew that they could not be within hundreds of miles of the mainland.

Keeping on for a few hours, he beheld a low-lying shore.

It was well wooded.

His delight knew no bounds.

He could contain himself no longer.

Within a mile was a lovely island, which promised them an asylum.

Far better was that than being buffeted about in an open boat.

Going up to Pike, he shook him by the arm.

"Wake up!" he cried.

"What's the matter now?" asked Pike, rubbing his

eyes. "Has the shark got aboard? If so, you'd better tame him."

"Land ho!" exclaimed Mole.

"By Jingo! That is good news."

"See for yourself, if you don't believe me."

Pike sprang up, and looking in the direction indicated, discovered what appeared to be land in the distance. With feelings similar to what the Israelites of old may be supposed to have felt with regard to the promised land, he caught Mole by the hand, shaking it heartily.

"Bravo!" he said. "We are saved. Let the wind blow and send us along gayly."

"If it is a desert island, we shall be all right," Mole answered; "but if there are savages on it, look out!"

"Don't talk about savages."

"We must look facts in the face."

"My dear Mr. Mole, you are conjuring up dangers. Don't, please don't, meet danger halfway."

"We will hope for the best," replied Mole; "but I have been wrecked in these seas, and I dread the worst."

The wind increased in volume, and the boat rapidly drew near the island.

Its aspect became more pleasing and agreeable the nearer they got to it.

They could see monkeys on the ground and on the branches of the trees.

Parrots, and other gaudily-plumaged birds flew about, and the imposing red, white and blue cockatoo was not absent.

At length, the yawl beached herself upon the sand.

The tide was low, and they noticed a quantity of shellfish.

Some resembled clams, others were oysters, and there was a variety of the crab species.

Stepping out, the two men gave vent to a burst of joy.

It was such an unspeakable relief to get on dry land once more.

"Hurrah!" cried Mole. "This, I expect, is an island. I will name it."

"What are you going to call it?" asked Pike.

"I suppose you would like it to be known to posterity as Pikeland?"

"Yes, that sounds all right."

"Does it? Moleland sounds better."

"You always place yourself first. That's the worst of you."

"Why shouldn't I?" replied Mole. "I am a rarity."

"By Jove! you are!"

"You will never look upon my like again."

"Not much!"

"I am the kind of human article, sir, which, once gone, is remarkably hard to replace."

"So I should think."

"Men similar to you Pikes, are as common as blackberries; but Moles, if you want the genuine article up to date, are very rare."

"Quite unique, I suppose?"

"That is the word. Now, sir, allow me to welcome you to the newly discovered territory, Moleland."

"I thought it was a little bit of an island just now?"

"Not it. I wouldn't discover an island."

"What, then?"

"It's a new continent. I feel satisfied it is. Why, sir, do you imagine for a moment that I, Prof. Mole, B. A. and M. A., that is to say—to enlighten your ignorance—Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts, of Oxford University, would condescend to discover any tract of land less than a continent?"

"It's rather a large order," answered Pike.

"Did Columbus go about discovering paltry, dirty, insignificant little islands?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor shall I. This is a gigantic, colossal, stupendous discovery."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Oh, you little think that I am opening up a new

continent to civilization. It will be an outlet for the teeming millions of Europe—the safety valve which will save our brethren from overcrowding in slums and starving in a period of agricultural distress.”

Pike touched him on the shoulder.

“If you want to make a speech, deliver an oration, or write an article for a newspaper, don't you think you had better postpone it for a more fitting occasion?”

“Perhaps I had. We will take a drink to christen the new continent called Moleland. After which, we will explore.”

“Right you are. Beach the boat.”

This advice of Pike's was necessary, because, if they had left the yawl where she grounded, the tide would have later on taken her away.

They could not afford to lose their boat.

At some future time, and perhaps at no remote date, they would want to leave Moleland, as the professor had termed it in his comical and consequential manner.

When the boat was hauled up in safety, they indulged in a glass of rum and water.

A walk inland revealed the fact that the place was extremely fertile.

Cocoanuts, grapes, bananas and pineapples grew in great profusion almost everywhere.

In the distance they could see a range of hills.

From these, which formed the watershed of what subsequently proved to be one of the small islands of volcanic origin, so frequently met with in the Pacific Ocean, a stream of pure, sweet water flowed to the sea.

High up on the beach were pieces of wood.

These were portions of wreckage.

Showing that some ship had, at some time or other, been cast upon the shore in a tempest.

A little farther on they came upon some skeletons.

These formed part of the crew.

Turning away from the ghastly relics, they walked along the shore.

Rounding a corner which was covered with palm trees, they sighted a ledge of rocks.

Here were thousands of birds of the gull kind.

They were so tame that the men were able to knock them down with their hands.

"This doesn't look like an inhabited island," remarked Mole.

"I thought it was a continent," replied Pike.

"That's what I mean. If men exist here, the birds are wonderfully tame."

"I should imagine it is deserted."

"Looks to me," continued Mole, "like a shore that Capt. Kidd or Paul Jones would have selected to hide his plunder in."

"A treasure island?" asked Pike.

"That is precisely what I mean."

"You may be right. If there is a buried treasure here, I hope we may find it."

"We'll have a try, for it strikes me very forcibly that we shall have nothing to do for a long time to come."

"Worse luck, that's true," answered Pike.

"Heigho!" added Mole, pathetically. "It's rough, but it's got to be borne."

The only chance of their quitting this island, seemed to consist in attracting the notice of a passing ship in some way.

It might be done by a burning beacon at night, or it might possibly be accomplished by hoisting a kind of flag in the daytime.

Searching among the rocks for oysters and crabs, on which they intended to make their morning meal, they discovered a cave.

The aperture in the rock which gave admittance to it was very small.

It was necessary to stoop in order to enter. The dimensions were not spacious.

In formation it was long and narrow, and, strange to say, well lighted and ventilated by a hole in the rock at the extremity.

This formed a sort of natural window.

It overlooked the sea at a height of twelve feet at high water.

"This cave must be ours," cried Mole.

"Let us go and look out at the end. I can't see very plainly, for the half light dazzles me," replied Pike.

They advanced together.

An extraordinary surprise awaited them.

Never had they been more startled or astonished in their lives.

The end of the cave was fitted up and furnished as a bed and sitting room.

All the articles had, by the look of them, been taken from a ship.

There was a bedstead and bedding, two deal tables, a chest of drawers, two bookcases filled with books, cooking utensils, china, knives and forks, a carpet and a rug.

It was a rough civilization in the wilds of nature.

There was also a variety of bottles and jars, which, on being examined, were found to contain a very fair kind of wine.

In a corner were tobacco leaves and some old, black clay pipes.

As well as some new ones made out of corn cobs.

A shutter of wood had been arranged to fit in the hole in the rock, which served as a window.

This would effectually keep out the wind and rain.

Against the wall a cupboard had been made of deal planks.

Opening it, they found some meat which had been dried in the sun.

It looked like the flesh of deer or antelope, but tasted very well.

The bed had all the appearance of having been slept in quite recently.

There were two easy-chairs, and two others.

Into one of these Mole sank with a prolonged whistle.

"What do you think of this?" he inquired.

"It beats everything," answered Pike. "This island, for such I insist it is, resembles an earthly paradise."

"But it is not an Adamless Eden."

"No. You are correct in that. This cave is a small house. A man lives here. Perhaps more than one."

Mr. Mole held up his hand deprecatingly.

"Heaven forbid," he said. "One is enough for me. One we might conquer. Two would make mincemeat of us."

"What is your opinion, truly and candidly, of what we have seen?"

"This is an island," replied Mole. "Some poor wretch like ourselves has been wrecked or cast away on it."

"Wrecked, I should think," said Pike, "and got these things out of what was left of the ship or washed ashore."

"Very likely."

"And we have by accident penetrated to his cave."

"Perhaps we shall find it to be the lair of a wild man," replied Mole.

"How so?"

"Prolonged solitude and separation from his kind, drives a man mad."

"Heaven protect us!"

"Amen! So say I," exclaimed Mole.

At this moment they were startled by the sound of a footstep at the entrance to the cave.

What could it be?"

In a few seconds, a man stepped from the darkness of the entrance into the light.

It was evidently the owner of the cave.

He was a short, elderly man, with long white hair and beard.

His clothes consisted simply of a vest and pantaloons, made out of the sail of a ship.

He had tied them together by the aid of some fibrous material.

In his hand he held a large watermelon, which looked ripe and luscious.

Directly he beheld the intruders on his privacy, he uttered a loud cry.

The melon fell from his grasp.

He had a band or girdle of leather round his waist.

In this was a sailor's knife.

Snatching it from its resting place, he brandished it in the air.

Mole and Pike drew their revolvers.

It was an anxious moment.

Would it be best to kill the old man, or let him alone?

That was the question.

It could only be answered by the attitude assumed towards them by the old man himself.

Suddenly he dropped his knife, and fell on his knees before them, holding up his hands.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD MAN OF THE CAVE.

Looking reassuringly at the old man, of whose cave they had taken such unceremonious possession, Mr. Mole exclaimed:

"Do not be afraid of us. We have no desire to do you any harm, if you are friendly towards us."

"I thought you were going to kill me," replied the cave dweller, in English, with a north-country accent.

"Why should we?"

"My cave and the stores and the little comfort that I have, are worth coveting; but you shall share all with me."

"That is generous. Get up. Shake hands, and tell us who you are and how you came here," said Mole.

"First of all, let me know whom I have the honor of entertaining."

"Certainly. I am the great Mole, professor of Oxford University—a man known all over the world for his learning. This is my friend, Mr. Pike, connected with the detective department, Scotland Yard. We were cast away in a small boat, and drifted to this land."

The old man poured them out some wine of his own making.

Then said he:

"My name is Dick Dormer. I was first mate of the *Blue Bell*, of Sunderland. We were wrecked on this island seven years ago. I alone was saved."

"So long as that!" remarked Mole.

"Ay, it seems like a lifetime to me. I had almost forgotten my own language."

"How big is this island?"

"I reckon it to be six miles in length, and about three in width," answered Dormer.

"Ah, a nice little property," exclaimed Mole. "I claim it as mine. The name I gave it—Moleland—it shall retain."

"You are welcome to my share of it," said Dormer. "I only wish I could get off it."

"Have you friends in Sunderland?"

"I left a wife and ten children there, when I started on that most unlucky voyage."

The man was visibly affected by the recollection of his distant family. A tear trembled in his eye.

"Surely you do not expect to stay here forever?" remarked Pike.

"Yes, sir; I do. This cave will be my grave."

"Don't say that; you make me shudder. I'm not an old man, and I shouldn't like to be confined in Moleland all my life."

"We are monarchs of all we survey," observed Mole; "our will there is none to dispute," as Cowper sang of Alexander Selkirk, the prototype of Robinson Crusoe."

"I don't care about being Crusoe. I don't want too much Crusoe, but just enough."

"How much is that?"

"I could do with a month—no more," replied Pike.

The old man sighed deeply.

"At first," he exclaimed, "I used to cherish a hope that a passing ship would take me off."

"Have you never seen a vessel?" asked Mole.

"Not one, sir, during the whole of the seven years I have been marooned here."

Mr. Mole pricked up his ears.

He knew enough of nautical life to be aware that to be marooned was for a man to be placed purposely on a desert island, as a punishment for some crime he had committed on board the ship.

The officers and crew decline to hand him over to the authorities when they reach port. They prefer to deal summarily with him themselves.

Consequently, they unanimously sentence him to be put on the first desert island they can find.

Here he is left, to live or die, as the case may be.

It is a solitary confinement for life.

This is what sailors call marooning.

Mr. Mole immediately came to the conclusion that Dick Dormer had not told them the whole truth.

He was keeping something back from them.

Not that it mattered much, except that it was as well to know the real character of the man in whose company they were all at once accidentally thrown.

For instance, it would not be well to be the guest of a murderer, and living with him in a lonely cave.

His murderous instincts might break out at any moment.

They might fall victims to his homicidal mania.

"Pardon me," exclaimed Mole, "but I thought you told me that you were wrecked on this desert island?"

"So I was," replied Dormer, snappishly. "How do you think I got here—eh? Swam it?"

"Not exactly, my friend; but just now you said you were marooned here."

"Did I?"

Dormer appeared to be slightly confused.

"Yes. Now, you know, as a sailor, that to be marooned is to be punished by being put off your ship onto a desert island."

"I have heard of it."

"This is the sentence for some dastardly crime. It is worse than hanging or shooting, because it is a living death."

"I have found it so," replied the man, bitterly.

"Are you concealing anything from us?"

"No, sir. Why should I?"

"But you said that you were marooned, don't you know. I can't forget that," Mole persisted.

"I can't tell how the word got into my head. I have been alone so long, that I get silly at times."

"Have you ever committed a crime?"

"Never!"

With that explanation the professor was obliged to be content, for the present.

The old man of the cave would reveal nothing.

He had, however, aroused some suspicion in the minds of his new friends.

In future they would be doubtful of him.

They noticed his features more carefully than they had hitherto done.

The scrutiny was not at all reassuring.

There was a restless glare in the eyes, and a dogged, vicious binding together of the lips.

Perhaps they judged him harshly, but they did not like the look of him.

"I'm going to tell you," continued Dormer, "how I felt during the first twelve months I was here."

"How did you keep the time?" inquired Mole.

"I knew the day and the month when I set foot here. I made notches in a tree every succeeding day, taking twelve palm trees for twelve months."

"We may call that a novel calendar up to date."

"It has enabled me to count the years of my misery. But to resume. I burned fires, and hung a flag on a tree, which I denuded of its branches, so as to make it resemble a staff; but there was no response."

"Why is that?"

"Simply because we are out of the trade track."

"By Jingo! that's bad news," cried Mole.

"Could it be worse?" said Pike.

"No ships ever sail within fifty miles of this desolate spot," added Dormer; "so there is no hope for you two men, any more than there is for me. We are here for life—d'ye hear me?—for life."

He grew very excited while he was speaking.

"Is that what your messmates said to you when they put you on the island?" asked Mole.

"Didn't I tell you I was wrecked?" replied Dormer.

"Oh, yes! I had forgotten that. By the way, how

did you get these books, this furniture, and kitchen articles?"

"Oh!—hem!" stammered Dormer; "they were washed ashore. That's how I got them."

"You picked them up on the beach?"

"Exactly."

"How do you live?" continued the professor.

Dormer explained that it wasn't necessary in Mole-land—he caught on to the name that had been given it—to live upon a vegetarian diet.

In the first place, there was a variety of birds, which could be knocked down by a stick or a stone, without any trouble.

These, although having a slightly fishy taste, were very good eating.

Fish of many kinds could be caught by the hand in the holes in the rocks, at low water, while turtles and turtles' eggs were also to be had.

The eggs of the birds were excellent when they could be got.

Fruit was very plentiful; he had planted corn in patches, which yielded him enough to make his bread.

The corn he pounded in a hole he had made in the rocks, and baked it in an oven of his own construction.

His fuel consisted of dry grass and wood, and being possessed of a flint and steel, he could always get a fire.

Grapes he dried until they were made into raisins, and he was able to manufacture as much wine as he could drink.

But one solace he was deprived of, and that was tobacco, of which not a plant grew on the island.

"Yes," he repeated, "I have lost all hope here."

He moved to the center of the cave.

Lifting up a board, he revealed a hole, six feet long by two broad, and about two and a half deep.

"What on earth is that?" asked Mole.

"That's my grave, gentlemen," replied Dormer.

"A ghastly idea, isn't it?"

"Maybe," said Dormer, carelessly. "When I feel

my end approaching, I shall lie down in that hole. I dug it out with my own hands, only using a chisel and a mallet—dug it out of the solid rock!"

"Let us hope that you will not occupy it."

"No hope—no hope," cried Dormer. "Didn't I tell you that I had abandoned hope for the last six years? And so will you before you have been on this accursed island long. However, you are here, and I will do all I can to make you comfortable."

"That is kind of you," replied Mole; "but I must tell you that I have every expectation of being rescued."

"What makes you think so?" asked Dormer.

"Our ship is not so very far off, and my friend, Jack Harkaway, who can do what he likes on board of her, will not leave these seas until he finds us."

"How can he tell in what direction you have drifted?"

"He will sail here and sail there, until he discovers our whereabouts."

"I trust you will not be mistaken," answered Dormer. "Make yourselves at home. I will go out and knock down some birds, and catch some fish for our dinner. When I come back, I will light a fire outside."

He nodded to them and went away.

Pike, with the natural instinct of a detective, followed him to the outlet.

He saw him walk along the seashore, until he was lost to sight round a curve in the rocks.

When Pike came back he looked very grave.

Mole was smoking one of the cigars he had left, and applying himself to the fermented grape juice.

"I distrust that man," said Pike.

"So do I," replied Mole.

"There is more in him than appears on the surface. Did you notice how he squirmed—that is the only word—when you tackled him about the marooning?"

"I did, and I made a note of it."

"You may be certain, Mr. Mole, that the man has committed some dreadful crime."

"How does that concern us?"

"He will not scruple to commit another, not he. We shall be his next victims."

"Do you think him mad?" asked Mole.

"Going on that way—he's not right. I, for one, will not sleep in this cave with him," replied Pike.

"It is very comfortable. If we sleep in our boat, or under the trees, it will be rather breezy."

"I said, 'with him.' We have got the cave, and we can keep it."

"What are you going to do with the man, Dick Dormer, as he calls himself?"

"Make him a prisoner."

"Where will you keep him?" inquired Mole.

"That is a puzzler. There is no place to lock him up."

"You are simply a superior sort of policeman," said Mole, "and you are carried away with your police ideas. Let the unfortunate wretch alone."

"But he may kill us in our sleep," urged the detective.

"It is a dilemma. I cannot see my way out of the difficulty. We cannot kill him. What are we to do?"

"I give it up."

They sat still, and looked at one another anxiously.

Each revolved different ideas in his mind.

"Oh," cried Mole at last, "I don't believe the poor fellow will hurt us—he must be glad of our company. And, I say——"

"What, sir?"

"Let us take possession of his knife. There it is on the floor of the cave. He has no other weapon, and we are fully armed."

"How do you know he has nothing else to injure us with?" asked Pike.

"Well, well—that is my idea."

"A man can be killed in his sleep with a piece of rock, or a log of wood."

"True. We must keep watch and watch, as on board ship; and that is a nice thing! It may go on for the rest of our lives. We have no certainty that Harkaway

will find us. Dick Dormer is a confounded nuisance. I would to Heaven that we had never met with him."

"Same here," replied Pike. "I wish he'd have a sun-stroke, or burst a blood vessel, or——"

"Never wish anyone evil," Mole interrupted. "It might come home to ourselves."

They became silent for a while, each being occupied with his own thoughts.

It was extremely difficult to arrive at a solution of the theory.

"Go after him, and see what he is up to," said Mole, after a time. "I am oppressed with a feeling that there is danger in the air."

"Do you expect to be blown up by dynamite?" asked Pike.

"That's a foolish idea—the old man's got no explosives; but I could see that he wants to get rid of us. He resents our intrusion upon his island, and our taking possession of his cave."

"You're right. I can see passion and resentment in every lineament of his face."

"As you agree with me in this, perhaps you will be good enough to go and look after the man. Find out something about him; knock him on the head; chuck him into the sea; feed him to a shark; sweep the floor with him—do what you like, only get rid of him. A man who has been marooned by his shipmates is always dangerous."

"You still believe that he has committed a crime?"

"I'm sure of it. He will do us injury, if we don't keep our eyes 'peeled,' as the Yankees say."

"We can't kill the poor old beggar in cold blood," said Pike.

"He would not mind treating us in that way, and as my life isn't insured, I want to take precautions."

"Well, I will tell you what can be done."

"Name it," said Mole.

"Let us make him a captive, and put him in our boat, with a month's supply of grub and fresh water."

"What's the good of that?"

"A lot of good. We shall get rid of him."

"My dear fellow," replied the professor, patronizingly, as he helped himself to another glass of the island wine, "you are what vulgar little boys would call a 'mug.'"

"How do you make that out?"

"Put the man in the boat, start him on his voyage to nowhere, imagine him pursuing his wild career over the stormy ocean, and what will be the result?"

"Perhaps he will make some other land—get picked up by a ship, or perish in a storm."

"Not he. The man's too smart for that. He is a criminal. Does he want to go back to England? No. It is all humbug about his wife and children. The old rascal knows he would be found out by some of his shipmates, and put on his trial."

"What are you driving at, Mr. Mole?"

"I tell you, the old man loves this island. If we put him in the boat, he will tack and come back to it."

"I'll threaten to shoot him on sight, if he does," said Pike

"That menace might have some effect on him," replied Mole, after some consideration.

"Try my scheme."

"Very well. Let us start out at once and capture him."

"Agreed," cried Pike.

"Treat him like a wild beast."

"Not exactly," replied the detective. "He is not much better, but we will act towards him as I do with a suspected criminal; be firm, but not cruel."

"You do me an injustice," said Mole. "I am as much a humanitarian as you. Do you imagine for a moment that a man in my position, of my social station, of my education and world-wide reputation, could?"

"Do you want to make a speech?"

"I am known from the Malvern Hills to the Andes, from China to Peru, and——"

"Is it you talking, or this island wine?"

"Sir," replied Mole, "your trade is that of a thief catcher. Manners you have none."

"How about your own——"

"I am an accomplished gentleman, brought up in the school of Lord Chesterfield, and polished off by such members of fashion as Beau Brummel and Count d'Orsay."

"Oh, here's a hall, if you want to spout," cried Pike.

He was entirely out of patience with the garrulous professor, who, whenever he began to talk, never knew when to stop.

Taking hold of him by the arm, in a policeman-like kind of way, as he would have done had he, in his professional capacity, captured a forger, he led him out of the cave.

When they got near the entrance, Mole, who was rather top-heavy, kicked against a small canvas bag, which was lying against the cave wall.

It broke, and at least a hundred bright, glittering sovereigns rolled out into the sunshine, which streamed into and illuminated this portion of the cave.

"Money! Gold, by Jingo!" Pike exclaimed.

"So it is," answered Mole; "and I can see some more bags close by—about a dozen. The old man has a treasure here."

"The mystery deepens," replied Pike; "he's an artful old card. It would take a clever man to fathom him."

"What are we? Don't call us duffers."

"Certainly not. I expect we shall be his match in the long run; but you had better keep away from that grape juice. It makes you unsteady."

Mr. Mole regarded him severely.

"Pike," he said, in a tone of remonstrance, "that's a very unkind and uncalled-for remark."

"Beg pardon, I'm sure."

"I don't like it. I like a drop, I'll admit that. I love a social glass, no matter what the stuff is."

"You're not particular—say, from turps to sour cider."

"Don't be absurd. What I want to ask you is, did you ever see me the worse for liquor?"

"Did I—what?"

Mr. Mole repeated his question.

He followed it up with this remark:

"Do not tell a falsehood to please me, Pike. Tell the plain, straightforward, unvarnished truth. Did you ever——"

"Oh, give us a rest, and come along," interrupted the detective.

He put a little gentle pressure on the professor, and got him outside the cave.

Nothing was to be seen of the old man.

They stood for a minute, looking over the pleasing landscape which was spread out in front of them.

This island in the Pacific Ocean was a veritable paradise.

Suddenly there was a rushing noise over their heads.

Pike seized Mole by the arm, and drew him on one side.

The next instant, a huge piece of rock fell in the very spot where they had been standing.

"What did I say?" cried Mole. "Treachery!"

"No doubt of that," replied Pike.

They turned round and looked up. On the top of the cliff they saw the figure of Dick Dormer.

The height was not very great—possibly twenty-five feet.

When he saw that he was discovered, he moved as if to hide himself.

This intention was frustrated by Pike.

The latter presented a pistol at him.

"What did you cast that rock down for?" asked the detective.

"It was an accident; it slipped," replied Dormer.

"That won't do for me. Come down here, or I fire."

"You will kill me. Have some mercy on a poor, helpless old man."

"You are not so helpless as you want to make out. We will not harm you, though. You can come down in safety."

"Will you swear that?" asked Dormer.

Pike gave him the required assurance, and he commenced the descent by a narrow path.

Pike and Mole watched the owner of the cave carefully as he came down from the rocky height.

He was covered by Pike's pistol all the time.

At the least attempt to evade them, he would have been fired at.

In a few minutes he stood before them.

"Old man," exclaimed Pike, sternly, "you have deceived us. It was your proposal to go and cater for us in the dinner line, as well as you could. Instead of that, you climb up to the top of the cave, lie in ambush, and when you see us come out, hurl a huge rock at our heads."

"It is a mercy we were not crushed as flat as pancakes," put in Mr. Mole.

"Mercy, sir! I call it a miracle—a direct intervention of Providence on our behalf."

"It was an attempt to murder."

"According to the laws of civilized nations, what is that crime punishable by?" asked Pike.

"Death," replied Mole.

"Right. And I think we shall be justified in becoming the executioners of this man."

"For the sake of self-preservation, we shall," said Mole.

"What shall it be?"

"What do you mean?"

"The cord or the bullet?" answered Pike.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I did not understand. I am a little dull of comprehension to-day. The bullet is what I should recommend. The rope is too much trouble."

"Decision in favor of shooting, instead of hanging."

"Exactly. Fire away. I am rather sensitive, and will turn my head in another direction."

"As you please."

During this conversation, Dick Dormer had made no observation.

The play of his features, however, was worth studying.

He was not calm and impassive, but the prey of extreme nervous anxiety.

His eyes blinked, his nostrils were dilated, and the corners of his mouth twitched.

"Hold!" he exclaimed; "do not kill me. I am afraid to die. The voice of the storm wind has hissed in my ears that the demons are waiting for me. Spare my life. The falling of the rock was an accident. Spare me. You may want mercy yourself some day. Besides, this is my island; why should you come here and molest me?"

Pike turned to Mole.

He was desirous of having a brief conversation with him respecting the old man's appeal.

"What shall we do?" he asked. "It certainly was the old man's island before we came here; he discovered it, or some one discovered it for him. I don't exactly like to kill him—nor would I, if I could make sure that he would leave us alone."

"He is treacherous," replied Mole, "his acts prove it; but we will give him another chance, I think, on certain conditions."

"If you say so——"

"I am not a hard man. I believe in the eminently Christian doctrine of living and let live."

"What are the conditions?" asked Pike.

"Let the man inform us where he procured the gold he has in his cave; let him inform us also how he came to be placed on this island—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; thirdly, let him swear, by all he holds holy, that he will not make any further attempts

on our lives. If he does this, we will spare him. That is what I propose."

"Can we trust him?" asked Pike, dubiously. "I do not want to be killed, for I have a firm conviction that we shall be taken off the island before long by some passing ship."

"Besides that, my friend," answered Mole, smiling slightly, "if we became tired of the monotony of life in Moleland, we could easily kill ourselves. Would it not be more satisfactory?"

"Certainly it would. I will put up my revolver. We will give the old man another chance."

"Yes," cried Mole; "he shall have it. No one shall say that I was unjust, cruel or hasty."

Pike turned towards Dick Dormer.

"Have you heard what was said?" he asked. "If so, and you understand it, I shall be glad of your answer."

Dick Dormer stretched out his hand. An expression of gratitude came over his face, but it was doubtful if it was genuine.

The old man had shown himself to be as crafty as a fox.

Mole's clemency, after all, might be a mistake.

"Allow me to grasp your hand," he exclaimed. "I am deeply grateful to you for your kindness, and will do all in my power to show you that I deserve it."

"Do you accept our terms?" demanded Pike.

"I do. Firstly, I swear not to harm a hair of your heads, as I hope to be forgiven for my sins."

"That is pretty good for a start. Go on."

"You shall know all," continued Dick Dormer. "I have kept something back, and will tell you my history."

"What about the gold?"

"You shall be made acquainted with my source of supply. Some gold you saw in my cave, but there is much more where that came from—enough to make the three of us rich for life."

"Would you like us to go back to the cave?"

"No. Walk along the island with me. We will talk as we go."

"As you like; I'm agreeable," said Pike.

They started, walking side by side, in a northeasterly direction.

The old man was in the middle. Mr. Mole and Pike waited for him to speak.

CHAPTER V.

THE REWARD OF TREACHERY.

Some minutes elapsed before Dick Dormer opened his mouth again.

He appeared to be going back into the past, to collect his thoughts.

"Two years ago," he said at length, "there was a dreadful storm. It can storm, too, in these latitudes when it wants to, at certain times of the year, especially about the equinox, in the autumn and the spring. A ship was thrown on the island, and beached high and dry. Not one of the crew survived—all were drowned. I found the vessel embedded in the sand up to her bulwarks. Many things I got out of her. The bags of gold you saw came from her. There are a hundred or more there now. I will show you the ship. You can help yourselves. What is the use of gold to me—or, for the matter of that, to you?"

"It's a fortune!" cried Pike.

"How much do you suppose there is in pounds sterling?" Mr. Mole inquired.

"A hundred thousand pounds—English," replied Dick Dormer, "or thereabouts. It was a London vessel, engaged in the China trade, as far as I could make out."

"Cargo?"

"Silk and tea. You can have your fill of that, as well as the gold; but where are the women to wear the silks, or the dressmakers?"

"We will have the gold, though. It will come in handy when we are taken off the island."

"When you are?"

"What do you mean by throwing cold water on our hopes like that?"

"There is no hope. I told you so before," exclaimed

the old man. "Do you know the prospect I have dreaded for some time?"

"How should I?" replied Mole.

"This island is, I am persuaded, of volcanic origin. In the center there is a spot where foul gases and sulphurous vapors arise. It was upheaved in some great convulsion of nature, and will subside in the same way before long."

"Have you had an earthquake?"

"Several small tremblings. They are of constant occurrence. Sometimes as I am walking about, the earth trembles, and I am thrown violently to the ground."

"That is a danger I did not suspect," said Pike.

"I can quite believe it," replied Mole. "And after this notification, the best thing we can do will be to fill our boat with gold, and such provisions as we can get, and chance our fate on the bosom of the mighty deep."

"I quite agree with you," answered Pike; "although, on consideration, is not the peril of the sea as bad as that of the land?"

"No, I think not. Moleland is not such a desirable acquisition as I first thought it. If I go into the real estate business, I will locate elsewhere."

While they were talking, they had made considerable progress, and on rounding a point, they came in full view of the ship that Dick Dormer had spoken of.

It was, as he had stated, embedded in the sand, and they easily stepped on board of her.

The old man had carefully, time after time, scraped away the sand from the companion way.

He conducted them below.

In the captain's cabin, he showed them three average-sized boxes, which were filled with bags of gold.

Some of the pieces were American eagles, but the majority were sovereigns of the British Mint.

Mole and Pike gazed upon them with admiration, not entirely unmingled with avarice.

"Something worth having there," said Pike.

"Half for you and half for me," replied the profes-

sor. "This is a veritable treasure island. We must transport it to the boat. It will do instead of the ballast."

"It won't stop here long."

"Not if I know it. I shall buy a landed estate in England, and be a country gentleman. No more of Jack Harkaway's adventures for me."

"Had enough of it, eh?"

"My dear sir," answered Mole, "I am like Ulysses; I have had my Odyssey. I may add that I resemble Jason, who, in the dim past, went sailing with his Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece."

"You have found it?"

"Yes; and you shan't fleece me."

"We'll have a fair divide. To-morrow, we'll carry the gold to the boat. No more island for me."

"I echo your sentiments."

Dick Dormer went to a locker, which he opened.

It had a dozen shelves, which were crowded with bottles of spirits, cordials and wines. Some were empty, but several had not been touched.

"Help yourselves, gentlemen," he said. "I am not much of a drinker. What I have touched has been taken when I have had the fever and ague, which is prevalent here in the spring and the fall."

Mr. Mole smacked his lips.

"Ha! ha! this is good," he exclaimed. "My friend, you have redeemed yourself."

He advanced to the rows of bottles, and examined their labels.

"Port!—too warm for that," he continued. "Hock!—rather light. Cognac brandy!—that's better."

Taking up a bottle, he dexterously knocked the neck off with a piece of wood.

"A practiced hand, sir," remarked Pike.

"What's that to do with you?" asked Mole.

"Nothing at all."

"So I should think. Mind your own business."

"That is a thing I never could do. I have always been engaged on other people's."

"This bottle is mine. If you want anything, help yourself."

The professor put the broken bottle to his lips, and indulged in a deep draught.

It took effect on him immediately, for it was strong and old.

Staggering, he reeled against the wall, and slid down gently on the floor.

But instinctively he retained his hold upon the bottle.

"Most ex—extraordinary—think," he said, "something wrong with the ship, I guess."

"Your legs have given way," replied Pike.

"No; ship gave a lurch. Sea on. I know."

"It is high and dry."

"You're dry. Don't tell—hic—lies, sir; they don't become a man of your years. I say it's—hic—ship. Storm raging. No matter. Batten down. Close—hic—hatches."

Mr. Mole seemed to be very comfortable, for he stretched out his legs, and leaned his back against the side.

"I could stay here till morning doth appear," he muttered.

Pike thought this was a good opportunity to get the old man's confession out of him.

He was very curious to know his history.

Accordingly, he pressed him to comply with the promise he had given.

In a shamefaced way, Dick Dormer complied.

It was a regrettable page in his life, and although he might shed many tears, he could not blot it out.

What he had at first said about having a wife and children at Sunderland was not true.

He had been in love with a girl in that town, and so had the captain under whom he sailed.

They were rivals, in fact.

During the voyage constant disputes arose between them.

At last Dormer came behind the captain and treacherously stabbed him in the back with a knife.

He fell to rise no more. The dark deed had been witnessed by two sailors.

They informed the rest of the crew.

The murderer was made prisoner, and tried by his mates, who, of course, found him guilty on the evidence.

At first they were inclined to sentence him to death.

He had been a favorite with the men.

This fact alone saved his life.

The sentence was that he be marooned on the first desert island they came to.

"That's how I came here, sir," he concluded; "and here I've got to stay, by the looks of it."

Whether Mole heard this confession or not, is doubtful.

His head was drooping on one side, and he was snoring loudly.

The potency of the brandy had brought on a heavy sleep.

"You look upon yourself as king of the island," said Pike.

"I was till you came here," was the rather surly reply. "Why should you interfere with my little comforts, and disturb the even tenor of my way?"

"We are going to leave you. Did you not hear us say that we would take the gold in our boat?"

"It is my gold, not yours. Why should you take it away from me? If a ship should ever take me off, why should I not have it?"

"Because we want it."

"You have no right to take it!" cried Dick Dormer, getting angry.

It was easy to see that he could soon work himself into a passion.

"We are the strongest, because we are two to one," replied Pike; "and we are armed."

Dormer pointed contemptuously at Mole.

"Do you call him a man?" he asked. "Not now. At present, you are only one."

"I'm a better man than you, so you'd best hold your tongue, or I shall give you a hiding."

"Beware! I have killed one man in my time, and I can do another!" cried the old man.

"Is that a threat?"

"Construe it in any way you like."

Pike's reply was to throw out his fist.

Before the old man could protect himself he was knocked down.

A cry like that of a wild beast broke from him.

He had fallen on the top of the professor.

Though the impact was heavy, it only elicited a grunt from the somnolent gentleman.

In Mr. Mole's belt was his six-chambered revolver.

The old man no sooner saw it than he made a grab at it.

Quick as lightning, he regained his feet, and pointed the weapon at the detective.

The situation was as effective as it was dramatic.

"Hold your hands up, or I fire!" he shouted.

Taken at a disadvantage, Pike was constrained to do so.

Dormer took a step towards him and deprived him of his knife and pistol.

He was now entirely at the mercy of the old islander.

"Down on your knees!" yelled Dormer.

With a wry face Pike obeyed the order.

"Beg for mercy. Beg, I tell you!" he went on.

"Mercy," repeated Pike.

"Ha! ha! It makes me laugh," said Dormer. "Who is the best man now? You were going to rule and rob me because you were strong. It is my turn now."

"Spare our lives," replied Pike.

"Beg again—beg! I like to hear it."

"Spare me," reiterated Pike.

"That's glorious. Well, I shall let you live, because I want two slaves to wait on me and to beat them. I like to beat men. It would be a pleasure to me to break a stick over the back of that old brandy cask lying there."

He indicated Mole with his hand.

For the moment he was off his guard.

His forgetfulness was fatal to his chance of being superior to the others.

Pike saw his opportunity.

He sprang up and again struck him, this time so violently that he was stunned.

His head fell against the side of the ship.

Pike instantly possessed himself of the weapons Dormer had deprived them of.

"Hurrah!" he cried; "that's the cleverest bit of business I ever did in my life."

For a brief space he thought the situation out in his mind.

It was, and would be, dangerous to live on the island with such a man as Dick Dormer.

An antagonism had already arisen between them.

Once he had endeavored to kill them with the rock, and having deprived them of their arms, he expressed his intention of making them his slaves.

There was no telling where the ill-feeling might end.

In a fit of mad passion he might slay them as he had killed his rival, the captain.

"He must die," muttered Pike, grimly.

It was a fearful necessity, but Pike put all sentimental consideration on one side.

He regarded Dick Dormer as one does a rabid dog, or a venomous reptile.

Self-preservation demanded that he should be rendered harmless.

This could not be done unless he was put out of the way.

Raising his pistol he put it to the head of the insensible man and fired.

The result was immediate.

Dick Dormer's limbs straightened out and he was a corpse in less time than it takes to write it.

Pike lifted the body in his arms and cast it over the side into the wavelets, which, as the tide came in, were laving the bows of the wrecked ship.

It was gradually but surely carried out to sea.

Having accomplished this deed, which was very distasteful to him, Pike turned his attention to Mole.

He knew that if he wanted to awaken him gentle measures were of no use.

You could not call him as you would a sleeping man.

It required heroic measures to rouse the professor when under the influence of liquor.

To begin with, he gave him half a dozen rough kicks in the sides.

These he called rib-roasters, and after them he rubbed Mole's ears till he made them bleed.

Then he put a pinch of snuff up his nose, with the effect of making him sneeze so violently that he bumped his head several times against the floor.

"What the deuce is the matter?" demanded Mole. "Ship on fire? If so, put it out."

"Wake up, I want you," replied Pike.

"Why didn't you say so at first? Oh, dear, how my sides ache! Oh, lor', oh!"

He did not know that he was indebted to Pike's rib-roasting for this feeling.

Getting up he took a refresher, as he termed it, out of the bottle.

"Why is that like the Athenian goddess of wisdom?" he asked.

"Give it up," replied Pike.

"Because it is Minerva—my nerver. See? Twig? Ha! ha!" laughed the professor.

"You wouldn't laugh if you knew what has been going on while you slept," said Pike.

"Anything wrong?"

"We have narrowly escaped a great danger."

"You don't say so? Where's old Rocks? What d'ye call him?—old Blunderbuss of the Cave."

"Gone to kingdom come—food for fishes. I had to shoot him through the head."

Mr. Mole was fairly astounded.

"Well, I am astonished!" he gasped. "Poor old beggar! What did he do?"

Pike informed him of what had passed.

On reflection Mole declared that, in his opinion, he had acted rightly, and that the solitary murderer deserved his fate.

Pike pointed to the body, which, floating out with the tide, bobbed up and down like a cork.

As he did so, he scanned the horizon.

On the verge his quick eye discovered a sail.

He grew greatly excited.

"By Heaven, Mole!" he shouted, "there is a ship!"

"Just what I anticipated all along," replied Mole.

"We must make signals."

"Let us take her rig in first. Perhaps she's a pirate," said Mole, cautiously.

"It may be so, but I hope not."

"What shall we do if it is a Chinese junk?"

"Hide in the old man's cave," replied Pike.

"Good advice."

They waited anxiously for the ship to come nearer.

To their great joy it was not a pirate, but a full-rigged American ship. Her build seemed to be familiar to them.

So indeed it was.

The ship bearing down upon them was no other than that from which they had been separated.

Jack Harkaway and his friends were on board.

They found their supply of fresh water getting low, so they made for the first land they saw.

This happened to be the desert island.

The feelings of the castaways can be better imagined than described.

Pike took off his shirt, tied it to a pole, and waved it in the air as a signal.

It was seen.

The ship anchored in a landlocked bay, and a boat was lowered.

They saw Harkaway and Harvey step into it.

Unable to restrain themselves, Mr. Mole and Pike ran to the beach to welcome the old friends they once fancied they had lost forever.

The meeting was a very cordial one.

Harkaway and Harvey listened to the adventures of the castaways with great interest.

The sailors took off a supply of water.

Pike accompanied them with a quantity of gold, which he was anxious to secure.

He left Mr. Mole to show Harkaway and Harvey the scenery, they having arranged to leave the island when the boat came back for them, in about an hour's time.

This event never happened.

A terrible calamity was in store for them.

It was heralded by a hissing and boiling of the sea, and a southing of the wind through the branches of the trees.

To those who understood the signs of the climate in which they were, it was clear that a tropical storm was coming.

CHAPTER VI.

A SUDDEN STORM.

"I say," exclaimed Jack, scanning the horizon narrowly, "we are going to have the deuce and all of a storm."

"A tempest, I should imagine," replied Harvey. "It is getting dark, although it is only midday."

"The sun is obscured," continued Jack. "Are there any volcanoes in these parts?"

He addressed this remark to the professor.

"The old man declared that there used to be occasional flare-ups, if I may use the term," was the answer.

"How should we feel if this island was swept by a volcanic wave, eh?" asked Jack.

"Rather damp and uncomfortable, I expect, Hark-away; but if you want shelter, I can afford it you."

"Where?"

"In the old man's cave. It's a first-rate place to rest or hide in, and I may mention one thing."

"What is that?"

"There is a store of good liquor—wines and spirits—in the cave."

"Of course, that just suits you," laughed Jack. "How did the old man get such things?"

"Out of the wreck. Being very abstemious, they have lasted him a long time."

"That is more than they will you."

"Well, I am going on board the ship when the boat comes back; I don't suppose I shall have much more need of the bottles," replied Mr. Mole.

"They will do for the next fellow who happens to be cast away here."

"There are worse places in which to exist than this.

The old josser who met his fate to-day was very comfortable in his den."

"How did you like Crusoeing it?" Jack inquired.

"Fairly well. It was the uncertainty of getting off that worried me."

"You knew we should try and find you," observed Harvey.

"I was not so sure of that. It is a selfish world."

"You ungrateful old duffer."

"Call me no names, but follow me to the den. The air is growing denser," replied Mole.

"So it is, by Jove!" said Jack.

"I can hardly breathe," answered Harvey. "Don't you think there is a smell of sulphur?"

"I don't think—I'm positive of it."

"Look out for eruptions, then."

The earth at that moment trembled slightly.

All looked at one another in consternation.

Was this the forerunner of an earthquake?

Again the sensation was felt, this time with more force than at first.

The seismic disturbance was traveling from west to east.

A minute passed slowly.

No further trembling was experienced.

The distant rumbling of thunder could be heard.

Out at sea the sky was as black as night.

The boat in which Pike had gone with the sailors, who were returning with the water, was close to the ship.

Those on the island watched her progress with interest.

It was a highly dangerous time.

With a pleasure they could not conceal from one another they saw the boat reach the ship and those in it climb up the chains.

"Safe!" cried Jack.

"We cannot expect them to come for us till the storm is over," said Harvey.

"It is not likely!"

During this conversation they had neared the cave. Some heavy drops of rain began to fall.

There was evidently going to be a deluge before long.

They quickened their steps, and reached the shelter of the cave ere the storm burst.

Through the window, made by the old man, they could look out seaward.

The waves were rising and swelling.

Suddenly a most unusual phenomenon took place.

About a quarter of a mile from the shore a huge wave arose.

It appeared to be a mighty volcanic upheaval.

For a few moments it was doubtful in what direction it was going.

The vast wave did not long remain stationary, however.

Jack, Harvey and Mr. Mole were standing together, and gazing awestruck at this freak of nature.

If it raced landward the island would be submerged, and great destruction done. The trees and fruit would be swept away.

If the three were not drowned, what would be their fate? The rocks might tumble upon and crush them.

At this dreadful crisis vivid lightning darted from the sky, illuminating the darkened ocean.

The thunder crashed with a deafening roar.

Then the wave dashed out to sea, taking the direction of the ship.

On board were Jack Harkaway's wife, Emily, and Hilda, the wife of Dick Harvey.

The hearts of their husbands sank within them, for the ladies seemed to be in imminent danger of death.

Onward with a fierce, irresistible fury went the wave.

A cloud, black as ink, came down, enveloping the vessel and hiding it from sight.

"Heaven help them!" groaned Jack.

This prayer was faintly echoed by Harvey.

For fully ten minutes the storm lasted, with supreme violence.

Then the thunder rolled away and died off in the distance, the lightning ceased playing, the darkness lifted, and the sun shone brightly as was its wont in that delightful but treacherous climate.

Nothing was to be seen of the ship.

Had it gone down or weathered the storm?

The wave might have passed over it, carrying it along in its wake.

If it remained afloat, was it a disabled log, drifting at the mercy of the tide and wind?

Who could answer these questions?

Jack and Harvey were deeply depressed, but Mr. Mole took a cheerful view of the situation.

"Don't give way, boys!" he exclaimed. "If the ship had been driven on the land all hands must have perished."

"I fear," replied Harkaway, "that we shall never see our loved ones again."

"How could the vessel survive the shock of that wave?" asked Harvey.

"Depend upon it, she will turn up before many days," Mole continued.

"What makes you think so?"

"She was close-reefed. We have always found her seaworthy, and the captain knows his business up to the handle."

"Heaven grant it may prove so!"

"That fellow Pike was lucky to get on board before the storm burst and the wave came rushing after him. There are volcanoes under the sea, and that sheet of water was the result of an eruption. Well, we must hope for the best. We're all right. Have a drink?"

The offer was accepted, and, presently, when they were in a calmer state of mind, they discussed the event which had just taken place.

There was no proof that the vessel was lost.

It was just as likely that she had been driven out to sea, badly injured, as that she had foundered.

They left it an open question.

What was plain to them was this—they were confined on the island without any chance, visible to either, of getting off.

"This is indeed a change in a few short hours," remarked Jack. "It seems as if some demon was putting obstacles in the way of our finding Hunston and my boy."

"Do not despair. Have a drop of this old rum," answered Mole.

"I would rather take something to eat," replied Jack; "we had not dined before we left the ship."

"Will you eat fruit, of which there is abundance," asked the professor, "or do you fancy shellfish, or will you rather cook some sea-birds, which can be knocked down with a stick?"

"Fruit will do. It will be a change after the salt junk we have had lately."

Mr. Mole quitted the cave, and was absent for some minutes, when he came back laden with several varieties of fruit.

The remainder of the day was spent in a gloomy, half-hearted manner.

Harkaway and Harvey were continually looking over the sea for some sign of the missing vessel.

But not the slightest sign could they discern of her.

The sun sank lower and lower, until it dropped into the sea.

Darkness fell upon the restless ocean and the land alike.

Accommodating themselves as well as they could in the cave, they forgot their troubles in sleep.

When they awoke in the morning the wind was blowing strongly inshore.

The tide dashed in large, foam-laden breakers upon the sandy shore.

Each one looked out eagerly for wreckage, but not

the vestige of a spar or even a water-cask was to be seen.

This fact raised their drooping spirits considerably.

If the crowning misfortune they dreaded had befallen the ship, some portion of her equipment would surely have been washed on the beach during the night.

There was hope for the safety of their relatives and friends yet; also was there hope for themselves, for if the ship was not lost, those on board would return to the island and take them off.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WRECK OF A CHINESE JUNK.

Three days elapsed, passing with dreary monotony. On the morning of the fourth day the three castaways were confined to the cave.

It was blowing hard from the southwest, and heavy rain was falling.

Jack had found some tobacco plants on the island.

The leaves he dried in the sun, and crushing them up for his pipe, found them a great comfort.

He had been smoking placidly.

Harvey was ill with a touch of ague.

Mole was lying on his back, snoring loudly, under the influence of old Jamaica.

Going to the aperture which served as a window, Harkaway looked out on the stormy ocean.

To his surprise he beheld a Chinese junk dismasted, driving before the wind.

Those on board had lost all control over it.

It was literally at the mercy of the waves.

The distance between it and the shore was only a short one, being about a quarter of a mile.

The junk was a large one, and had evidently encountered severe weather.

Its deck was crowded with at least thirty Chinamen, who had a piratical appearance.

Pistols and long knives were stuck in their belts.

A white man stood in the bows, watching the low-lying shore, calculating how long it would be before the junk struck.

He was the only one of European race that could be discovered on board.

The point to which the ill-fated junk was being driven was not above half a mile or three furlongs from the cave.

It was useless to speak to Mole, so Jack addressed himself to Harvey.

"Dick," he said, "here's a Chinese junk—or, rather, the wreck of one—being blown ashore."

With difficulty Harvey got up, his legs being weak, and his head as heavy as lead.

"We met more than a dozen," replied he, "not fifty miles from this island—pirates, our captain called them—and, crowding all sail, we gave them a wide berth."

"It has been roughly handled in a gale."

"Easy enough to see that. The junk is dismasted."

"Keep close," added Jack; "they must not see us. Chinese pirates show no mercy to Europeans."

"Nor to Americans, either. We are all 'foreign devils' in their eyes."

"Confound them! Why could they not keep away from here?"

"Perhaps they will all be drowned."

"Good job if they are," growled Jack, between his teeth.

"Do you see that white man in the fore-castle?" asked Harvey.

"Yes; I spotted him just now."

"He has got hold of a hencoop or something. It will be a cold day if he is left."

"Several of the Chinese have pieces of wood in their hands. It will be a swim for life."

As he spoke Jack again narrowly scrutinized the junk that was fast nearing destruction.

"Dick," he continued, "I fancy I have seen that white man's face before. He is looking this way."

The rain ceased falling and the sun came out, which rendered the person's countenance strikingly visible.

"I have an idea of the same sort," answered Harvey; "but then, going about the world as we do, we see so many people that it is impossible to remember and particularize them all."

"Did not we see him in Singapore, after school-days?" asked Jack.

"I really cannot recollect."

"He reminds me very much of a fellow calling himself Peter Punchard, a native of Portsmouth. If so, he was first mate of a merchantman, and a fast friend of our enemy, Huuiston."

"Ah," said Harvey, "I call the man to mind now. There were strange tales told about him at the club."

"Yes; it was rumored that he was in league with Chinese pirates, having betrayed more than one ship into their hands."

"Precisely so."

"If that is the case, and it should turn out to be this man, we shall have to keep a sharp lookout."

"He isn't saved yet. None of them are. The crash is coming, though. See! The ship will strike shortly."

They both strained their eyes to watch the imminent catastrophe.

The wind and tide bore the helpless ship steadily onwards.

It was a moment of the most intense excitement.

At length the junk went on some surf-washed rocks which were only a foot or two below the surface at low water.

She keeled over and sank with a list to leeward.

Instantly the sea was filled with struggling wretches, swimming for their lives.

The dark fins of more than one shark were to be seen.

Loud shrieks rent the air, as several of the Chinese were seized by the voracious monsters of the deep, and dragged under.

At least a score of the Chinamen, however, contrived to reach the shore unharmed.

It was also noticed that the man they supposed to be Peter Punchard, once of Singapore, effected a landing.

He was none the worse for his sudden immersion.

The Chinese, with characteristic stolidity, did not seem greatly concerned at the misfortune which had overtaken them.

Some basked in the sun to dry their clothes; others looked curiously at the wreck, and a few strolled about, gathering fruit and cocoanuts, which they retired under some palm trees to eat.

The white man remained in conversation with a Chinaman, who was a head taller than the rest.

He had a commanding presence, and appeared to be the chief.

After a time the white man quitted his companion, and walked inland, as if to explore his new abode.

No doubt he wanted to ascertain if it were inhabited, and what were its capacities for sustaining life.

When he was gone the chief gave some orders in a loud voice to his followers.

They instantly drew their long knives from their belts.

As is usual on the islands off the China coast, there was a multitude of bamboos.

A number of these they cut down, driving them into the earth, close together, under the palm trees.

They were at least ten feet high.

Soon a strong double stockade was erected of a circular shape.

It had a narrow aperture for a doorway and was open at the top.

This was strong enough to protect them from the attack of an enemy.

It also formed a shelter from wild beasts, should there be any.

This precautionary measure being taken, the Chinese fell into their former listless attitude.

The junk quickly began to break up.

Portions of wreckage and cargo were washed ashore by the waves.

These were eagerly seized and conveyed to the stockade.

Some chests of tea and a crate of crockery, tea-

pots, cups and plates, seemed to afford them special satisfaction.

"They are smart and handy fellows," remarked Harvey.

"Jolly lazy, though," replied Jack.

"That is constitutional and climatic. Look at the chief! He looks a regular swagger kind of mandarin chap."

"It did not take them long to knock up that stockade. Splendid idea."

"I wonder if they will be friendly?" asked Harvey. "What do you think?"

"That is what I am going to find out."

"How? Be careful. You are always foolhardy."

"It is my adventurous disposition, over which I have no control."

"True enough. You wouldn't be Jack Harkaway were it not so; but pray exercise judgment."

"I fully intend to do so."

"What is your plan?" continued Harvey.

"To ascertain whether they are friends or enemies. We can't live on the island long without meeting them."

"That's so."

"I shall take a trot inland to have a talk with the man we fancy is Peter Punchard," said Jack.

"We may be mistaken, and probably are."

"In an hour I will find out. Look after Mole. If he wakes up, keep him in the cave."

"All right."

Harvey did not attempt to dissuade Jack from undertaking the enterprise.

He knew from experience that it would be useless to do so.

It was impossible to restrain him when he had once made up his mind to do a thing.

Taking his pistol, Jack left the cave, and followed in the track of the white man.

He was a strongly-built, middle-aged person, with dark hair, a long, black beard, and swarthy complexion.

His face was rugged, weather-beaten and full of a dare-devil, do-as-I-please-and-ask-nobody-kind-of-expression.

Walking quickly under the fruit trees, and over the profusely flower-laden earth, which was like a variegated pasture, Jack soon came up with the person of whom he was in search.

They were a couple of miles, if not more, from the sea.

Therefore, they were quite alone, and free from interruption.

The man was seated under a tree cutting up pineapples with his knife, and eating them with evident relish.

"Hello! Good-morning!" exclaimed Jack.

The man started, and grasped the butt of his pistol.

In a moment Jack had covered him with his own weapon, which he hastily snatched from his belt.

"Who, in Satan's name, are you?" growled the man, eying him with curiosity.

Jack fancied that a look of recognition came over his face.

It was followed by a smile of triumph and then he assumed a grave, stolid look.

"I was just going to ask you the same question," replied Jack; "for it struck me that I had seen you somewhere before."

"Whereabouts, boss? I can't place you."

"In Singapore. Are you Peter Punchard?"

The man laughed loudly.

"You are wrong," he said. "Never heard the name before. Never was in Singapore in my life. I'm Bill Driver, of Leeds, England, able seaman, before the mast."

"Are you sure?"

"Wish I may die if I ain't! My ship the *Fanny*, of Leeds, was going to Hongkong with a mixed cargo. We got caught in a tempest, took to the boats; all in my boat died, except me. I was picked up by a

friendly Chinese junk. Another storm drove us on this darned old island."

"I saw the wreck."

"Infernal bad luck, wasn't it? Junk all smashed up, one-third of the crew gobbled up by sharks. Captain of junk—Hi Lung, nice fellow, good as gold—saved."

Bill Driver, as he called himself, spoke with such sincerity that Harkaway was fain to believe him.

He returned his pistol to his belt.

"Well," added Driver, "burn my toes if I ain't glad to see a white man, like myself! Been here long?"

"A few days only."

"Many of you saved from your wreck?"

He took it for granted that Jack had been wrecked the same as himself.

"Two, besides myself."

"What kind of location is it—savages, cannibals? Ugh! Makes you shiver to think of 'em."

"Desert island," answered Jack. "No wild animals, plenty of fruit, shellfish and birds."

"That's good. Guess we're stranded for a considerable spell. Out of the track of ships. Never seen this island on the chart."

"I hope to get off it some day."

"Same here, gov'nor," replied Bill Driver. "Life here would soon become monotonous. Let's make friends. Pal up! I like your style and face. Shake hands!"

Harkaway hesitated a moment.

His heart told him that the man was genuine, but his instinct, which very seldom led him wrong, bade him be cautious.

"Tip us your fin. Come on. We're comrades in misfortune, and down on our luck," added Driver.

Jack did so.

He held out his hand in a friendly manner.

Driver got up from his sitting position to take it ostensibly.

But instead of doing so he drew his pistol, clubbed it, and struck Jack on the head.

The treacherous blow stunned him.

He fell full length, insensible, at his assailant's feet.

The blood trickled slowly from a scalp wound.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Driver, "I've done the trick easier than I thought I should. Lor'! what a fool he was, to be sure!"

Taking a small coil of rope from his pocket, he bound Harkaway's hands behind him, and removed his weapon.

Then he sat down under the tree again, and, lighting his pipe, waited, with the utmost coolness, for him to recover his senses.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

It was clear to the meanest comprehension, from his actions and his manner, that the old sailor was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

He had grossly deceived Harkaway and taken a base advantage of his credulity.

The blow on the head which the latter had received was productive only of a brief unconsciousness.

Jack's head had been knocked about a good deal in the course of his adventurous life.

Yet it was none the worse for it.

If the skull was thick, the brain inside was active and clear enough, in spite of all.

When he came to himself, which he did in five minutes, he was a little confused.

Feeling sore and wet from a slight flow of blood at the back of his head, he tried to put his hand up.

This he was unable to do.

It dawned upon him in a moment that he had been assaulted and bound by the sailor, who called himself Bill Driver.

Harvey's suspicions and his own doubts respecting this man came back to him in a vivid manner.

"What cheer, my hearty?" cried the sailor.

"Perhaps you will explain the meaning of this," said Jack, regarding him with a hostile look.

"That's easy enough, if you find yourself well enough to listen."

"Oh, I'm all right! That tap on the head you gave me did not hurt more than a mosquito bite."

"Didn't it, really? Would you like another?" asked the man, sarcastically.

"No, thank you. I'm not naturally of a greedy disposition."

"You can have 'em wholesale or retail. Just as you like. Order a gross, if you feel you could do with 'em."

"Enough's as good as a feast!"

"Nothing like moderation in everything, eh? Afraid you might get an overdose?"

"Mind you don't some day," replied Jack, warningly.

The sailor laughed, and rubbed his hands gleefully. He seemed to be enjoying a good joke.

"Wouldn't you just revel in warming me up a bit? Couldn't you pile it on, and lay it on thick as molasses?" he said.

"You want all the say to yourself, don't you?" Jack inquired.

"I'm rather of a talkative disposition. You want to know why I floored you and tied your hands?"

"That is what I am yearning to get at."

"First of all, I'm not Bill Driver," replied the man.

"Who the deuce are you, then?"

"Peter Punchard at your service. Your old acquaintance of Singapore, first mate of the *Rattlesnake*, trading between the Straits and China."

"I thought so all along. Why did you deny it?"

"To throw you off your guard," said Peter Punchard.

"What harm have I ever done you? and what good will come to you by making me a prisoner?"

"You are the well-known Jack Harkaway."

"I am not ashamed to admit it," answered Jack. "In fact, I am rather proud of the distinction than otherwise, for there is not one act in my life that I am ashamed of."

"Nobody said there was. The general opinion is that you are a fine kind of man; but I must tell you that I am a sworn friend of your lifelong enemy, Hunston, and, in my opinion, Hunston is a better man than you."

"I can see now why you attacked me, fool that I

was! Keep your opinion of Hunston. You are a couple of frauds and rascals, banded together."

"Be civil, or it will be the worse for you!" cried Punchard, in a threatening manner.

"I will try to keep my tongue quiet, but it is a hard task."

"Hunston is my boss, not you; and, in the position you are, I should think it is a case of the least said the soonest mended."

Jack bit his lips.

He was in the man's power, and could see that, in common parlance, it was wise to sing small.

"Where is Hunston now?" he inquired.

"In China. His exact whereabouts I shall not tell you," rejoined Peter Punchard.

"Is my boy, young Jack, with him?"

"You may pump me as long as you please, but I shall answer no questions. Those are my orders."

"Oh, you have received orders from your chief?"

"Yes, I have, straight. Hunston has offered five hundred pounds to anyone who will capture you, and bring you alive to him. That is why Li Hung, the captain of the *Yanktze Kiang* junk, which was wrecked just now, below there"—he jerked his hand towards the beach—"and I resolved to go in search of you."

"Then you have been looking for my ship?"

"For some time past. I little thought, when we were cast away on this blooming old island, that I should have the luck to fall in with you."

"What good will it do you?" asked Jack.

"I've got you, that's one satisfaction. We are in an awkward hole, I'll allow; but we shall get taken off in time, you bet."

"Perhaps. We may be here for life."

"I don't think it," replied Punchard. "Some of the junks will be putting in here for water, and I shall keep a beacon fire burning, on an eminence, night and day. There's plenty of wood."

Jack saw that there was no escape at present from the dilemma that the cunning of Punchard had placed him in.

He determined to make the best of it.

Hunston, when dispatching his agents in search of him, had given them instructions to bring him, if caught, to his place of concealment, alive, wherever it might be.

There was a grain of comfort in that.

Jack's life was in no danger.

"I suppose, Mr. Punchard," he said, "that if I give my parole——"

"What's that?" interrupted Peter. "It ain't English, nor yet Chinese."

"It's French. Means word of honor—not to escape. If I give you this, and as you have, I see, disarmed me, there is no necessity for keeping this bit of cord round my wrists."

Peter was paring and slicing another pineapple he had cut from a bed growing wild at his feet.

"Everybody says you're a gentleman, Mr. Harkaway," he replied.

"I hope you and all will ever find me so."

"I don't mind taking your pay—role—what d'ye call it? But if you were to play any hanky-pangy tricks with me, I'd shoot you dead, so help me!"

"No danger of that. If I promise you that I will not attempt to escape, you need not be afraid."

"Give the word, then."

"I do. I am your prisoner on parole."

"Very good," said Peter Punchard.

He got up and cut the cord with his knife.

Jack stretched himself, rubbed his head, and coolly asked for a slice of pineapple, which was given him.

That he would be conducted to Hi Lung's camp, and detained there, he had no doubt.

Even if his ship had escaped the volcanic wave, and came back to the island, his chance of freedom was very remote.

Harvey and Mole would endeavor to find out what had become of him.

Yet to depend on their aid was to lean on a broken reed.

They were in great danger of being discovered and getting killed or captured themselves.

"Now," said Punchard, "we will go to our camp. I must introduce you to Hi Lung, the prince of pirates."

"Is he a nice fellow?" asked Jack; "but I need not put the question, for I never met a good Chinaman in my life yet."

"He is morose, sullen, stern, smokes and chews opium to excess. The gloomy fit is always on him," was the reply.

"What do you mean by that?"

"The beggar has cut so many throats in his time that he is haunted by ghosts."

"Remorse, eh?"

"Spell it with a big R! It is remorse of the worst kind. He's always thinking something dreadful's going to happen; and this wreck has stirred him up awful."

"Is he melancholy mad?"

"I s'pose that's what you call it in doctors' language. He started me out to explore the island, because he thought it was full of cannibals, wild animals and poisonous snakes."

"There is nothing of either kind," replied Jack.

"He won't believe it when I tell him. Hi Lung has fully made up his heathen mind that he is going to leave his bones here, when he goes over to the spirit world."

"A Chinese hates to be buried out of his own country."

"I know it," said Punchard. "When they die abroad their friends always take their bones to China for sepulture if they can afford it."

"Talking of friends," continued Punchard, "reminds

me that you are not alone here. Who are your people?"

"That I cannot reveal to you," answered Jack.

Peter Punchard laughed lightly.

"Oh, that don't matter!" he replied. "Didn't you say there were two along of you? I'll find them, and the Chinamen will make mincemeat of them. We have to take you alive. The order is to kill all that belong to you, root and branch."

"Women as well as men?" queried Jack.

"Ay! No mercy, no quarter to any of Harkaway's division!"

"What a brute that fellow Hunston is."

"He's going to torture you to death. Kill you by inches and half inches. Chinese style, up to date!"

"When he gets a safe hold of me," Jack said, with a smile.

"Oh, come now, captain!" Punchard cried, "that's good. Is it likely you will ever get out of my clutches? and, you know, I shall deliver you to Mr. Hunston, same as if you were a bale of goods consigned to him, duty paid."

"We shall see," replied Jack.

"I remember at Singapore," continued Punchard, "you had Harvey with you, Prof. Mole and a blamed artful nigger, named Monday. Are they with you now?"

"Fish and find out!"

"Thank you. That's a polite answer. Mr. Hunston said I was to let old Mole alone."

"He ought to be grateful for that."

"'Ain't no harm in the drunken old fool,' he says; 'but be down on Harvey like a beaver; and, as for Monday,' he says, with an oath, 'I hate him! Cut his liver out!' I wish he had nine lives, instead of one, to take. Never mind. Come on."

They started side by side for the coast, stopping at intervals to pluck some grapes or breadfruit.

As far as a vegetarian diet went, they had ample facility for gratifying their appetites.

In a short time they reached the stockade.

It was the hottest part of the afternoon.

The Chinese were lying down in the shade, with the exception of their leader.

Hi Lung was standing on the strand looking at the wreck of his junk, the *Yanktze Kiang*, which was rapidly going to pieces.

His aspect was sad and his countenance elongated.

"Hi!" exclaimed Peter Punchard. "How goes it, old son of a gun?"

The Celestial started, looked up, and stared at Punchard and his companion.

"Who havee metee with?" he demanded, laconically.

"The great English Mandarin, Jack Harkaway!" replied Peter. "He has been wrecked here, same as us, and I captured him."

"What! the Mandarin Hunston givee money for?"

"Exactly the same. The only genuine and original article."

"Good! we takee care of him."

Hi Lung took up a stone and threw it at one of his piratical crew.

It struck him on the arm, causing him to wake up with a jump.

"Who called me?" he asked.

"Chang," said Hi Lung, "you watchee this mannee all day, and put him in the stockade at night. Tie your leg to him. On your life, be answerable for him!"

The Chinese walked up to Jack and stood close to him.

"It is not necessary," remarked Peter Punchard. "He has given me his promise not to try to escape; besides, he has no arms, and he can't get off the island any more than we can at the present time."

"I givee him no chances. He shall be a worker."

"At what?"

"Since you have been gone I have seen the ghosts of the dead," replied Hi Lung.

"You are always seeing something."

"Be a listener. I know that we have all to die here of fever. One by one we shall go. Harkaway must be a digger of gravees."

"What! dig our graves?" Punchard said.

"Yes. Underer those palm trees in front, he shall dig two gravees each dayee. There are twenty-two of us. When we die there will be the tombers radee for us."

This was a strange hallucination on the part of the pirate captair.

But he had got it firmly fixed in his mind.

Peter Punchard would gladly have saved Jack from the hard, manual labor to which he was condemned.

But he knew it was useless to argue the point with so bigoted and misanthropical a being as Hi Lung.

Chang touched Jack on the arm, and beckoned him to follow.

"I can't help it," said Punchard. "'Tain't my fault. I told you he was a rum un to deal with. Maybe he will change his mind to-morrow."

"Bother digging graves!" replied Jack. "I'm not a sexton."

"Don't round on me!"

"Can't you reason with him?"

"Might as well talk to a stone wall."

With a shrug of the shoulders, Jack followed Chang, who stopped at the stockade.

Here he took up a spade, which had been washed ashore with some other agricultural implements.

"This for you to usee," he remarked.

Shouldering it, Jack went to the adjacent palm grove, and began to initiate himself in the novel, but rather depressing, occupation of gravedigging.

"You gottee to diggee our gravees," said Chang, stolidly.

The ground was sandy and the work easy.

Jack did not trouble or hurry himself. When he

felt tired, he rested for a spell, and knocked down coconuts off the palms with stones and sticks.

With these he refreshed himself.

It was a strange reverse of fortune.

He was now the slave of Peter Punchard and the Chinese emissaries of Hunston.

Certainly, he might have run away and hidden himself with his friends.

But he had pledged his word of honor not to do so.

This was enough for Harkaway.

Rather would he dig graves to please the morbid misgivings of an opium-crazed Chinaman than allow the slightest blot to fall on his escutcheon.

He had two glimmers of hope.

One was that his ship would weather the storm and come back to the island.

The other was, that Mole and Harvey might find him out and destroy the Chinese vermin.

It was long odds against them, however.

Twenty-two to only two!

If they succeeded it would be a marvel.

Yet more extraordinary things than that had happened before in the course of Jack Harkaway's experiences.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISCOVERY AND A DETERMINATION.

The time passed slowly for Harvey, who was practically alone in the cave.

Mr. Mole could not be called a companion, because, overcome with the fumes of liquor, he was fast asleep.

The shades of night began to fall.

As Jack did not appear, Harvey grew very uneasy.

He felt sure that something of a distressful nature had happened.

Harkaway had either been killed or made prisoner.

Giving him an unceremonious kick in the ribs, and a rough shaking, he roused the slumbering professor.

Sitting up the latter smiled, as if with a sense of supreme satisfaction.

"Lovely sleep, Richard!" he exclaimed, yawning -- "beautiful repose. I suppose I have been in the land of dreams for some hours?"

"All the afternoon," replied Harvey.

"Custom of the country. Can't help it in these islands. Must take a *siesta*. Seems a long time between drinks, though. You don't appear to remember that I have such a thing as a mouth. Be a man! Brace up, and give me some refreshment. I'm gasping like an expiring frog when there is no water in his pond."

Harvey handed him a bottle and allowed him to help himself, the calabash of water being by his side.

"Ah, that's good!" cried Mole, drawing a long breath. "I had a thirst on me a yard long."

"Yours is the thirst spoken of in the Testament, which is never quenched, sir."

"Don't be rude, Harvey. It ill becomes you to mock a gray-haired old man."

"I can't help it. You are such a caution when you begin."

"I've nothing else to do. Life is short. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Let us be happy, merry and gay while we can. Sing hey! sing ho! tra-la-la!"

"I wonder you have not more respect for yourself than to be continually under the influence of alcohol."

"Don't be personal."

"You haven't drawn a sober breath, really, for years," Harvey went on.

Mr. Mole burst out laughing at this hit.

"Gad!" he said, "you're right. I don't believe I have. Funny, isn't it?"

"I call it disgusting—a man of your years, too."

"Bah! A man is as old as he feels, not as old as he looks. I feel young and fit as a three-year-old. Drop your personalities. Harkaway would not do it. By the way, where is the ever gay and festive one—our incomparable, superlative, dare-devil, fight-'em-all Jack?"

"That is what I want to speak to you about," replied Harvey, gravely.

"Is there anything wrong?" asked Mole.

"Something most infernally wrong. We are menaced by a great danger. Pull yourself together. Get up, and let us see what is best to be done under the circumstances."

This speech alarmed Mr. Mole, who promptly rose to his feet, and though a little rocky, looked inquiringly at Harvey.

"Now, Dick," said Mole, "tell me all about it. I know something unlucky has happened because you show it in your face, which, pardon me, is as long as a child's farthing kite."

"I can't help it, sir," answered Harvey, dolefully.

"You can always depend on me. In moments of danger, call upon your Mole—your faithful servant, Isaac Mole."

"If I could rely on you——"

"Indeed, you can. Never have I failed you. In moments of danger, have I not invariably turned up trumps? The enemy have fled at the sight of me. I have scattered hosts."

"As you say so, I suppose it is all right; but I must confess I do not remember it."

"Oh, that's all bosh! Your memory is defective. I could give you plenty of instances, but we will not waste time."

"I wish to goodness you would not."

"Enough said. Let us return to our mutton—that is, to our Jack. Not that I want to compare him to a sheep. It is simply a French phrase, which means, let us get back to our subject."

"As if I did not know that! We are not at school now."

"Excuse me. The tutorial idea is always uppermost with me. I have imparted instruction, and I hope sincerely you have benefited by it."

"We shall never come to Jack if you go on like this."

"Why does he not come to us?"

"That is the question that perplexes me," said Harvey. "While you were asleep, Jack and I saw a Chinese junk wrecked close by here. Out of a crew of thirty or thereabouts, one-third were drowned; the others are camped hard by the shore. Among them was a white man, whom I am sure I saw at Singapore."

"Ah! this is serious."

"If I am correct, this fellow is associated with pirates, and a sworn friend of Hunston."

"Worse and worse."

"Jack would go out to see who the white man was, four hours or more ago. He followed him inland."

"Hem!" said Mole. "It strikes me very forcibly that Harkaway has fallen a victim to his temerity, and is in the hands of the heathen."

"So I think. What shall we do?"

A dead silence ensued.

The professor, in spite of his boasting, had no inclination to attack a score of Chinamen.

It occurred to him that he and Harvey stood in imminent danger of being captured.

They would have to go out of the cave to obtain food and water.

"It is a very difficult fix to be placed in," he remarked, at length. "I should advise only going out at night time. We can get birds, fish, fruit and water in the dark."

"That is nothing!" cried Harvey. "Fruit and water will do for me. I am thinking about Jack. How can we rescue him?"

"Only by killing the Chinese and the white man you have spoken of. If Harkaway does not come back before morning I shall conclude that he is captured."

"Suppose that means death by slow torture?"

"Don't suggest anything so dreadful," replied Mole. "You make my blood run cold."

"I want to go out to-night to see after good old Jack. I can't rest."

"No! no! Wait till the morning," said Mole.

"I'll be hanged if I do! If you won't come with me I will go to the Chinese camp by myself!" said Harvey, in a determined tone.

"Well, well, if you insist, in your headstrong way——"

"I do. How would you like to be left in the lurch?"

"All right. Let's have a drink, and I'm with you, my boy. After all, you can't do without your Mole. Obligated to fall back on the old man, who is the only one in your party who always has his wits about him, and shows that he was born to be a leader of men, and—ahem!—boys."

The day had been close, the night was suffocatingly hot in the cave.

Not a breath of air was stirring.

It was as if they were in an oven, and they felt it a decided relief when they got outside.

The stars were shining brightly, and the crescent moon, in its second quarter, was just rising above the sea.

Harvey and Mole were armed with revolvers, each of which contained seven chambers, which was equivalent to fourteen lives, if their aim was correct.

They proceeded cautiously along the shore, until they came near enough to the stockade to reconnoiter.

The Chinese had saved a chest of opium from the wreck of the junk, and, being assured by Peter Punchard that there was no danger of attack from men, beasts or snakes, they were lying about on the sand in a comatose condition, having smoked themselves into a happy state of oblivion.

One man leaned against a palm tree, envying his comrades, for he was on sentry duty.

Not for him were the delights of opium, which would be perfect bliss, were it not for the horrible awakening and the terrible reaction, which makes a man a wreck of humanity upon the sands of time.

Hi Lung and Peter Punchard had retired into the stockade, and fallen asleep through a different kind of debauch.

Peter had made salvage of a case of rum, and, having got some water from the spring, they indulged in the old Jamaica until they forgot all their cares and troubles.

The sentry was Chang, who had been told off by Hi Lung to guard Jack night and day.

This was rather a difficult thing to do, as Chang wanted to sleep as well as the rest.

Jack had dug two graves; that was his task for the day; breadfruit, grapes and nuts had been supplied to him; he had sat down with his back against a palm tree and dozed off.

It occurred to Chang that he would like to take a rest as well as the others, and, as Harvey and Mole

came up to the camp, he slipped a piece of rope round his legs and arms.

"What the deuce are you up to now?" cried Jack. "I've given my parole!"

"Tyee uppee. Makee safee," replied Chang.

"Oh! it's you, is it, you yellow-skinned demon! I thought I was somewhere else."

"You muchee dreamee!"

"Go on. Get your hair cut, or you'll never knock 'em this side of the equator, you ugly spawn of creation!"

"Talkee, talkee, no good. Me have a sleeper."

Saying this, Chang threw himself on the ground, put a piece of opium in his mouth, and was soon in the land of nod.

Jack looked wearily out upon the sea which that night was so still that its phosphorescent bosom only heaved gently, like that of a sleeping beauty whose mind is full of her own charms, and the admiration they arouse in the minds of men.

"It is all quiet," whispered Harvey. "There is Jack. Do you see? The guard has bound him. I told you that he was a prisoner, and that we should make a discovery."

"Do you think we can get to speak to him?" replied Mole.

"I mean to. Stay where you are."

"No; I wish to come with you. There is no danger."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Harvey. "In that case, of course, you will come."

"It isn't that, Dick," answered Mole. "You know me——"

"For a boaster!"

"Not at all. What you dare do so dare I! Come on. Death to the Chinese! Shall I give my war whoop?"

"If you do, you old fool, I'll floor you. Hold your row!"

With these words, Harvey walked up to the spot

where Jack was. Mole followed at a short distance behind him.

Harvey distinctly saw Jack under the palm tree in the moonlight, and immediately touched Mole on the shoulder.

"Stay where you are," he exclaimed; "we have found the pirates' camp, for I am persuaded that these fellows are the vermin who sweep the seas of honest merchantmen. Jack is close to us. I will speak to him, and see what is best to be done."

"Be careful," replied Mole, in a whisper.

"The crew of the junk are asleep."

"There may be some on the watch without your being able to detect their presence."

"I don't think so. Maybe they have a chest of opium."

"They are as artful as weasels. For Heaven's sake, don't wake them up!"

"It is not my intention," said Harvey.

"I cannot run with this infernal wooden leg of mine, and if there is any danger, perhaps I had better make a start for the cave. Some one must protect the stronghold, you know," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

Harvey could not refrain from smiling.

This speech was so characteristic of the professor.

"Very well," he answered, "go back to the cave. It is the best place for you."

"Not that I'm afraid——"

"Oh, no. We know all about that. You will only do more harm than good if you stay. I can see that."

"If you want to annihilate these yellow-skinned heathen——"

Again Harvey interrupted him.

"Should I want to do so I can do it, I suppose, without your help! Cut along!" he answered.

"As you say so, I will go."

"Make haste, for goodness' sake! You are only hindering me."

"It's the wooden leg. Were it not for that, I could stand my ground against a legion."

"Will you be off?"

"I'm going. Take care of Jack. He is a fine fellow. Bring him back with you."

Saying this, Mr. Mole stumped off on the return journey.

Danger was rather too close to him to be pleasant.

He wanted to keep up his assumed reputation for courage, and that was all.

When Harvey was alone, he advanced towards Harkaway, clutching his pistol, so as to be ready for any emergency.

Jack was half asleep, but the sound of some one approaching soon roused him.

Looking up he was surprised in the extreme to see his friend.

"Dick!" he exclaimed, gladly.

"Hush!" replied Harvey. "I have found you a captive, as I expected. Let me cut your bonds. No one is about. Escape at once."

Jack shook his head sadly.

"I cannot do it," he replied.

"How is that? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Not quite so bad as that, old boy," he answered; "but I have given my parole."

"Is your word to be kept to a pack of pirates and scoundrels?"

"The word of an English gentleman must always be kept. Don't you know that, Dick?"

"You are right," said Harvey. "Let me sit by your side, and tell me all about it."

He took a seat close to Harkaway, and they began to converse in whispers.

"There is not much to tell," replied Jack. "I have been a fool! The white man I followed is Peter Punchard, of Singapore."

"Didn't I tell you so?" Harvey cried.

"He spun a long yarn about his being Bill Driver, threw me off my guard, and got the budge on me, as the sailors say. When I least expected it, he knocked me silly, bound me, and, when I came to, made me a prisoner on parole."

"You ought not to be tied now if you are on your word of honor."

"True; but Punchard does not know of it. He and Hi Lung are drunk on some rum they saved from the wreck."

"Who did it?"

"The man appointed to watch me. That fellow lying there, Chang by name. He was tired, so he fastened my limbs with a bit of ship's cord and is enjoying his night's sleep."

"I wonder Punchard did not shoot you. What is to be the end of it?" remarked Harvey.

"You have not heard all."

"I can quite realize that fact. There is a secret or a mystery somewhere."

"You are right; and a very queer secret it is, too. Listen. This Chinese, Hi Lung, is a sort of pirate king. He knows Hunston. Punchard is a particular friend of Hunston's. The latter has offered a large reward for me alive, not dead, mind you."

"That is kind of him."

"Knowing that I was on board ship off the China coast, Punchard shipped with the pirate, Hi Lung, to go in search of me."

"Did they intend to fight us?"

"Rather. They had two small cannons on board the junk," answered Harkaway.

"What cheek! I like their style."

"They found me in a most unexpected manner, but they have got me, and I can't help myself. Punchard knew me directly he clapped his eyes on me."

"Seeing you in Singapore, I suppose?"

"No doubt."

"You have a face not easily forgotten," said Harvey.

"Really, Dick, you flatter me," laughed Jack, who kept up his spirits under the most disheartening circumstances.

"Does Punchard know you have friends on the island?"

"The estimable Peter guesses it, but I would give him no information whatever."

"If he catches Mole and me, what is to be our fate?"

"Oh, I did not tell you about that!"

"Pray do."

"I'd rather not. It might make you feel uncomfortable."

"What rot! I'm not easily funk'd, and I shall do a bunk back to the cave before any of these chaps wake up. Mole's gone; he came as far as the camp, and then hooked it."

"Didn't like the look of things, eh?"

"He put his anxiety to reach the crib down to his timber toes—wooden legs, you know."

"It is rough on him," said Jack, sympathizingly.

"So it is; but he was always a blower—he never will be a fighter."

"That's not his line of country."

"What is Punchard going to do with us if he lands us?"

"Hunston has ordered that you and Mole, or any of the rest of my party, are not to receive any mercy. Hi Lung can have you, and work his wicked will on you—skin you alive, boil you, or otherwise martyrize you."

"That's cheerful."

"The Chinese have a way of putting you to death, which they call 'dying by inches.'"

"What does it consist of?"

"They tie you naked to a stick, and with a sharp knife, or a razor, with an extra fine edge for choice, they cut little bits out of you."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Harvey, chaffingly. "I

think I could enjoy that. Don't they do something worse than that?"

"They beat you with sticks until you are one big bruise, and as pulpy as a jellyfish."

"Anything more?"

"Sometimes they make you swallow a dynamite cartridge, and play at looking for fragments of your body. The man who finds your head weighs in first and wins the game; legs come second, arms third. It is a very nice game to play at—from a Chinese point of view."

Harvey turned pale.

"Don't jest, Jack," he exclaimed. "These wretches are quite capable of doing what you have depicted in fun."

"We may as well laugh as cry," Harkaway replied.

"Your life is safe, unless the pirates get off the island and take you to Hunston; then——"

Harvey paused abruptly.

"Go on," said Jack.

"Then," resumed Harvey, "Heaven help you!"

"I fervently hope so," answered Jack, sincerely. "But I am in no particular fear of Mr. Hunston. I have licked him before, and I have a firm belief that I shall knock him again."

Harvey echoed that aspiration, and there was a pause in their conversation. At length Jack said:

"I've been thinking."

"There is generally something in that coconut of yours," replied Harvey. "Let me have it."

"I don't want these Chinamen on this island; we've no room for them."

"No more do I; but how are we going to get rid of them? If we had a little vermin-destroying powder we might strew it about on slices of pineapple."

"You have something better than that."

"I should like to know what?"

"Gunpowder. Come in the night and shoot them. Everything is fair in war. You want to save your skin, don't you?"

"Rather," replied Harvey; "but if I were to fire at that fellow Chang I should rouse the whole camp—they can run like deer. Where should I be?"

"That is true. You can use a knife, though."

"Doesn't that savor somewhat of the midnight assassin?"

"Oh, if we are to be squeamish," cried Jack, "and stand upon ceremony with these Mongolians, we may as well say our prayers and prepare for death."

"I am wrong and you are right," answered Harvey. "I'll kill them by twos and threes, night after night."

"They have made me dig graves. Two are ready to be filled."

"What is that for?"

"Hi Lung has an idea that some pestilence is going to carry them off, and he is preparing."

"Very well—we shall see," said Harvey. "Chang is there—another is a few yards off; will those two do to begin with?"

"Excellently well. It is a terrible task you have undertaken, though, Dick; be careful."

"I'll keep my eyes, and my ears, too, open. They shall die gradually and shall not see the hand that strikes them."

"You will have to be about night after night, so you had best sleep in the daytime."

"Perhaps they will do the same thing. If so, I shall perform my work in the day instead of the night. It is very likely that when they find themselves being killed off, they will watch."

"Don't get caught."

"Not if I know it! I'd kill the lot in one night if it were not a little too risky."

"When will you start?"

"At once," replied Harvey, resolutely. "I am no coward, as you know; and if a thing has to be done, however risky it may be, I don't care to brood over it."

"That's right. Take the bull by the horns as the saying is. If they ask me if I have seen anything, I'll

swear I saw a spirit, brandishing a knife, and describe him as something between an Asiatic ogre and a Cornish giant, with a dash of the mediæval fiend in him, horns, tail and pitchfork."

"They are superstitious," remarked Harvey, "and will readily credit anything horrible, ugly and abnormal. Their ideal of the beautiful is something hideous and ghastly."

"I know it. One word more before you go."

"Mention it."

"Keep Mole quiet. If the old donkey comes fooling about here, he will give the whole thing away," said Jack.

"I will exercise such authority as I have over him," replied Harvey.

"Good-night, Dick. Thank you for coming after me."

"As if I would leave you! Where is Hunston's friend, Punchard?"

"In that bamboo place they call the stockade. You'll have to be careful if you go in there."

"I shan't try a rush at him to-night. There is plenty of time. Good-night, Jack, and Heaven bless and keep you!"

"The same to you, Dick. Wish you luck."

They shook hands, and Harvey glided noiselessly away.

Ordinarily he had a very good-tempered face, but as he moved off his expression changed.

It showed how the passions can work upon a man.

His countenance clouded, it became hard, almost demoniacal, as he clinched his teeth together, and grasped his knife firmly.

He had no desire to take the life of any of these men, but, under the circumstances, it was a paramount necessity.

They would show him no mercy.

At any moment, when they caught him, they would put him to a cruel death.

By doing what he was about to do, he would probably save himself, Mr. Mole and Jack.

This was worth doing something for.

Chang slept as only a Chinaman can sleep when he has had his dose of opium.

There was a placid, childlike smile upon his parted lips, which showed his yellow teeth, some of which resembled fangs.

Bending over him, Harvey plunged his knife into his heart.

He started, there was a gurgling sound in his throat, his limbs twitched convulsively, but that was all.

No cry escaped him.

Withdrawing the knife, Dick glided to a second Chinese and treated him in the same manner.

Deeming this enough for one night, he retired, and made his way back to the cave.

Jack had witnessed the deeds, but no thrill of horror ran through him, for he could feel no pity for the bloodthirsty pirates.

They were truly enemies of the human race.

For their crimes they ought to have been hung in chains long ago.

It was with difficulty, however, that he composed himself to slumber.

Tired as he was, sleep refused to visit his eyelids.

At last he went off, being troubled with dreadful dreams.

He was roused by loud cries.

The Chinese were awake, and it had not taken them long to discover the deaths of their companions.

Peter Punchard and Hi Lung were quickly on the scene.

First they looked at Chang, then at his companion in misfortune, who was named Foochoo.

"Two men stabbee!" exclaimed the pirate chief, looking first at one and then at the other.

"That's a queer start," said Punchard.

"It must be the foreign devil."

"I don't see that; he had no weapon."

"Lettee us askce him. If he killee our men, we choppee him head off."

They walked over to Harkaway.

He saw them coming, and was prepared what to say.

"Me heeree no makee bobbery in the nighttee," muttered Hi Lung, shaking his head. "It very strange dammee business."

"I'm glad you've come, Punchard!" exclaimed Jack, eagerly. "Has anything happened?"

"Yes, curse it! Two of our chaps have been skewered in their sleep," was the reply.

"Never!"

"It's a fact. Chang and Foochoo."

"Well, I am not altogether surprised. Chang wanted to have a doss, so, contrary to orders, he bound me, as you see. By the way I will thank you to let me loose."

"Certainly."

"It is a breach of our agreement, you know."

"I admit that," Peter Punchard replied.

He cut the cords and Harkaway rose, glad to stretch his limbs once more.

"Before I went to sleep," continued Jack, "I saw a wild-looking man come, as it appeared, out of the sea. Flames seemed to come out of his mouth and nostrils; he brandished a knife in his hand, and his eyes were like coals of fire, while his face was that of an eagle. Never before did I see such a horrible creature. He frightened me so that I fainted."

Hi Lung began to tremble.

"What did I tellee?" he said. "Bad luckee is a follower of us; we all die. Yesterday I have diggee two graves. Lookee! Two bodies ready for the graves."

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Punchard.

"The Old Man of the Sea."

"Who is he when he is at home?"

"Vellee greatee spirit—much power. We sheddee

much blooder on the sea, the evil spirit comee to us and bringee vengeance."

"I'll keep a jolly good watch to-night," said Punchard. "If he comes again I'll give him toko."

"No gooddee," answered the pirate, with a melancholy sigh.

"I shall sit up, anyhow."

"Diggee more graves to-day. All gottee die soon."

"You're a cheerful cuss. There is some humbug about this."

Hi Lung did not care to argue the point. He had his idea, and Punchard had his.

The pirate walked away, and ordered the bodies to be put in the graves.

This was done. Afterwards tea was made, and the Chinese squatted on their hams while they had breakfast.

Punchard and Jack remained together.

"I say, Mr. Harkaway, you're playing it low down on this community," said Peter.

"What do you mean?" asked Jack.

"You're an artful card. What you don't know isn't worth knowing. I guess you've forgotten years ago more than most men know at fifty."

"Indeed! you flatter me."

"How about the spirit that came out of the sea?"

"It was something dreadful to look at."

"The veritable original and only true bogey man?"

"If you like to think so."

"Come, come, that won't wash," said Punchard. "How did you do it? I won't blab, if you——"

"When I was bound, how could I injure anyone?" Harkaway interrupted.

"Of course not. Your pals did it. You admitted you had some on the island. I'll have a search this blessed day, and if I find them, mark me, we'll have blood for blood."

"Do your worst," replied Jack.

"I fully intend to do so."

Saying this Punchard turned on his heel and joined his allies at breakfast.

When the Celestials had refreshed themselves, they condescended to allow Jack to sit down and recruit his energies on tea and biscuit, which did not taste the nicer for being soaked in salt water.

When he had finished he was set to work at grave-digging again.

Punchard went out.

His purpose was to find the hiding place of Jack's friends.

Towards the evening he returned dispirited, having been unable to discover any trace of Mole and Harvey.

Jack awaited the coming of night with the utmost anxiety.

Though fatigued, Peter Punchard announced his intention of sitting up to watch for the person who had killed Chang and Foochoo.

Hi Lung and the others indulged in their usual opium debauch and went to sleep, some in the stockade, others on the sandy ground.

CHAPTER X.

A SIEGE AND A RESCUE.

Jack was not bound on this occasion, and as the luxury of a bed was a thing unknown, he selected a shady spot, where he lay down.

It was necessary to be careful about shade at night-time when sleeping in the open air.

The moonlight is very pernicious to the eyes.

There is a complaint well known in the tropics as moon blindness, produced by the lunar beams.

This sometimes renders a man stone blind for weeks, and has been known to result in permanent injury to the sight.

Gladly would he have recruited exhausted nature by going to sleep, but the thought of Harvey prevented him.

He expected a terrible scene that night.

Punchard came over to where he was lying, having a pistol in one hand and a knife in the other.

"How many graves have you dug to-day?" he asked.

"Three," replied Jack.

"You expect your friend to come to-night and fill them. Ha! ha! Perhaps he will occupy one!"

"Or you," said Jack; "which will it be?"

"It will be a match; and I am willing to bet two to one on myself."

"Done. I'll take you; but I hope you will never pay me."

"That means that you wish me dead, for, of course, if I lose the bet, I die, and dead men can't pay debts, and there being no estate to realize on, you'll be the loser."

"You don't suppose I have any particular affection for you? I assure you if you were to kick out this

minute I should not dream of going into mourning for you."

"That's ungrateful. I might kill you at any moment. Yesterday I could have shot you."

"Don't assume a virtue when you have it not," said Jack. "It would not pay you to kill me; and fellows like you live for sordid gain. Hunston's offered reward is more to your taste than knocking me on the head would be."

"I won't say that you are not right. Money is my mark!"

Jack made no answer.

He despised Punchard so much that he did not care to talk to him.

A silence ensued which lasted some time.

It was only broken by the noise made by the countless insects that are active during the nighttime.

Suddenly Punchard, who had placed his back against a tree and closed his eyes, heard a subdued cry.

He started to his feet in a moment.

So did Harkaway, who had also heard the noise.

They looked in the direction from whence it came, and saw a man standing over a Chinaman.

There was a knife in his hand.

Jack recognized Harvey, but Punchard saw only the hidden foe, who had attacked them the night before. The mysterious slayer of his companions was in front of him.

He raised his pistol to fire.

Harvey saw the movement, and took refuge behind a tree.

It was easy enough to conceal himself, as the trees grew closely together.

And he could dart from one to another without being detected.

Punchard rubbed his eyes.

"Where the deuce has he gone?" he exclaimed. "I saw him a second ago, but I can't now."

"Didn't I tell you it was a spirit?" replied Jack.

"That be blowed for a yarn! Haul in your slack. That was no ghost."

"All right. Cail me names—abuse me, and say that I am an economist of the truth."

"If that means a liar, you're all that."

"Think so?"

"I'll swear to it. That man's your pal, and he wants to wipe us out by degrees—twos and threes at a time."

"Stick to it. If you really think he is flesh and blood seek him, put him to the test, and fight him. Couldn't you see he is a shadowy ghost—nothing but vapor?"

"That's too thin. Let me get hold of him," said Punchard.

The ghost theory would not go down with him at all.

It mattered very little to Harkaway whether it did or not.

All he wanted was to occupy the sailor's attention for a time.

"Yes," added Punchard, "all I want is to come face to face with this pretended spirit of yours."

At that moment his quick ear detected the sound of a footstep behind him.

He was on the alert immediately.

Turning round briskly he was confronted with Harvey, who had crept round the grove of trees.

The sound of a pistol shot would have roused the entire camp.

This contingency Harvey wished to avoid.

When he had stabbed the Chinaman he saw Punchard by Jack's side, and disappeared behind the trees so as to take him in the rear.

Before Peter Punchard could discharge his pistol Harvey struck him with his knife in the right shoulder.

The revolver fell from his disabled hand, the arm being rendered powerless.

But the sailor was not yet beaten. In his left hand

he held his knife, which was a murderous-looking article, known among the Chinese and Malays as a kreesse.

With the utmost frenzy he aimed a blow at Harvey.

The latter only succeeded in avoiding it by half an inch.

For a few moments Punchard slashed wildly at his opponent.

He gained no advantage, however.

Harvey foiled his efforts and parried every thrust with the skill of a practical swordsman.

At last he saw his opportunity.

Throwing himself upon Punchard he drove his weapon into his chest.

The sailor fell to the earth with a hoarse cry.

During this closely contested and highly exciting fight Harkaway had not moved.

As he had given his parole, he did not think it fair even to help his old friend.

But now that Punchard, to whom he had given his parole, was either dead or dying, he looked upon the matter in a different light.

To Hi Lung and the Chinese he had given no pledge.

It was consistent with the preservation of his honor for him to escape if he could.

"Is he done for, Dick?" he asked, in a voice husky with suppressed emotion.

"He's a settled member, but I'll make sure of him," replied Harvey.

Another blow with the knife rendered any doubt upon the matter impossible.

Peter Punchard breathed his last.

"Run, Jack! Come with me," cried Harvey. "You are under no obligation to anyone now. You may carry chivalry too far. These pirates will show you no mercy."

"I'm with you," answered Jack. "Step out lively! Put your best leg forward! Get under weigh."

Without any further delay they quitted the pirate camp at a rapid pace.

Neither of them had the least idea that they were watched.

Such, however, was the case.

Hi Lung was wide awake, and had been so all the time the fight was going on.

Being, as we have said, a superstitious coward, he did not dare to interfere.

He fancied he might incur the special resentment of the spirit.

But when he saw that the supposed ghost ran away with Jack his eyes were opened.

Without rousing any of his fellows he followed in pursuit of the fugitives.

"No ghostee," he muttered, "me foolee! Ha! ha! To-morrow me foolce, too! Waitce bittee. Findee their camp. Me clever alec samee as Englishman."

When they had gone halfway towards the cave Jack and Harvey stopped running.

They fancied that they were safe from pursuit.

Taking it easy they walked to the cave.

When they entered it they found Mr. Mole wrapped in a vinous slumber.

"I reckon we will follow his example," said Jack, pointing to the professor.

"Yes. We are safe now, thank Heaven!" replied Harvey.

They had a drink of the grape wine, and stretched themselves out on the floor.

Little did they dream that the keen almond-shaped eyes of the Chinaman, Hi Lung, were upon them.

Had they done so they would not have been so happy.

The Chinaman was satisfied with what he had discovered, and returned to the stockade to organize an attack upon the cave in the morning.

The night passed without any event of importance occurring.

As soon as the day dawned Jack woke up and went outside the cave.

He wanted to look in the direction of the pirates' camp to see if they were moving.

Scarcely had he appeared than he met with a hot reception.

A couple of bullets whistled past his head.

Alarmed at this, he retreated into the cave and hastily roused Harvey and Mole.

"Get up, for Heaven's sake!" he cried. "The yellow fiends have found us out."

"Shoot them down!" said Harvey. "This cave is not an easy place to storm."

"You back, Harkaway! The cave attacked! What does all this mean?" asked Mole.

"Fight for your life! Don't ask questions now. The Johnnies are five to one against us!" replied Jack.

"I'll do my best, as usual," said Mole.

They snatched up their weapons, and went to the mouth of the cave.

The Chinese were approaching rapidly, in loose formation, and without seeking any shelter or cover for themselves.

Jack, Harvey and Mole fired at them, keeping out of sight as well as they could.

The bullets were returned, but without doing any damage, as the English knelt down behind the rocks.

For some time the firing continued on both sides.

The Chinese suffered severely, and in half an hour had lost half of their number.

This discouraged them.

They retired to a distance, where they were out of range.

But the siege was not over.

Glad of a respite, Jack left Mole as a sentry, and, with Harvey, partook of some food.

They stood greatly in need of it.

It was now about nine o'clock in the morning.

The sun was shining brightly and the sea was rough with a strong breeze blowing inland.

Jack looked out of the window seaward.

After gazing at the restless waves for a minute or more, he was surprised to see a ship, with all sail set, round the point near the pirates' camp.

When it was in the bay sail was taken in and the sailors dropped anchor.

"Dick!" cried Harkaway, "here's a ship!"

"Thank Heaven for that! What are her colors?" replied Harvey.

"English. If I am not mistaken, it is our own vessel."

"Ours! Oh, Jack, if you should be right!"

"I am. I can see Emily and Hilda in the bows, and Pike and the rest of them. She didn't founder in the storm, after all. Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" echoed Dick. "Look! they are waving handkerchiefs."

"I'd return that, only I haven't got a handkerchief. Lend me your shirt."

In an instant Harvey stripped off his shirt.

He gave it to Harkaway, who waved it out of the window.

The signal was seen.

Half a dozen pistols were discharged from the vessel in recognition.

This roused the Chinese.

Hi Lung and his pirates looked on the sea, and beholding the ship became much alarmed.

They held a hurried consultation.

Then they ran inland as fast as their legs would carry them.

Mole came in.

"The enemy's skedaddled," he said. "They saw me at the mouth of the cave and bolted. I never had any opinion of a race that don't wear heels to their boots."

"You did not frighten them," replied Jack.

"What did it, then?"

"I will tell you."

"Certainly; explain the stampede."

"Our ship has come back. Let us go down to the beach and meet our friends."

"With pleasure. What a relief! Let me—er—have a little refreshment first."

They quitted the cave and hastened to the shore.

A boat had put off.

Soon they were shaking hands all round with those nearest and dearest to them.

Explanations followed.

The vessel had been swept many miles out to sea, and was badly injured by the tidal wave.

Damages had been gradually repaired, and the vessel had returned to the island.

Jack, Harvey and Mole went on board.

Before sundown the ship weighed anchor.

Nothing was seen or heard of Hi Lung or his pirates, nor did anybody know what became of them.

* * * * *

Within four-and-twenty hours more they disembarked, and the whole party started shortly for Mr. Mole's tea plantation.

No one could have recognized Mr. Mole, he had so disguised himself to avoid the dreaded Brick.

And now they were fairly landed in China. But, alas! without young Jack.

Where was he?

It had doubtless gone hard with him this time, for he was in the hands of cruel pirates.

His friends and family secretly mourned him as dead, although they did not admit to each other their fatal convictions.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHINESE PIRATE JUNK.

But young Jack was not dead by any means.

True, he and his chum, Harry Girdwood, had been captured by the Chinese pirate craft, *Flowery Land*, through the treachery of Hunston, the lifelong enemy of the Harkaways.

But only a few days before Hunston had been rescued from death by Jack Harkaway, and though Hunston was glad to have his life prolonged, he hated Harkaway none the less for his noble deed.

Hunston had a strange code of honor.

Harkaway had saved his life. Now, if he could save Harkaway's life, or the life of any member of his family, they would be quits, and he would be able to declare himself Jack's enemy as in the old days.

An opportunity came when the Chinese were about to throw young Jack overboard after the sanguinary battle had ended. Hunston stepped forward and rescued young Jack in the nick of time and led him to the upper deck of the Chinese vessel.

"Now, boy," said he, when once they were fairly on deck, "your father saved my life off Cuba; I have saved yours."

Young Jack smiled bitterly.

Hunston had saved his life at last, it is true, but it was to his treachery that they owed their disastrous defeat and the terrible massacre of the boat's crew, of which young Jack and Harry Girdwood had formed a part.

"You see, boy," continued Hunston, in the same contemptuous tone, "we are equal now, so look to yourselves."

Young Jack made no reply.

He simply acknowledged the speech by a haughty

inclination of the head and Hunston walked off to get his hurts, which were few and trifling, attended to.

Presently several of the crew came and helped young Jack to take his companion, poor Harry Girdwood, below, where the wounded pirates were being cared for.

The unfortunate boy had got some ugly cuts in the skirmish, and only great care, combined with skillful treatment, could possibly bring him through.

They had a doctor on board, who was an American, and a man of some knowledge and experience.

So there was a fair chance for everybody.

The doctor looked hard at the two boys when they were brought down to the cockpit, and it was evident that their presence there excited his curiosity.

"Do you belong to this ship?" he asked, as he set methodically to work to see to Harry Girdwood's wounds.

"The pirate?" asked young Jack, in surprise.

"Yes."

"Not exactly, doctor," he replied. "Do we look like it?"

"Don't let your tongue run away with your discretion, my young friend," he said; "if you don't care to be taken for one of the crew, keep your sentiments to yourself."

Young Jack bit his lip.

"The horrid old vagabond," he said to himself; "he ought to be ashamed to be seen here. I suppose his job is to murder the prisoners by slow torture, when the Chinese and the Lascars can't invent anything sufficiently horrible."

And he turned on his heel, and strode haughtily up the cabin.

Turning round he saw the doctor was looking steadfastly at him.

And then he beckoned him to approach.

Jack felt half inclined to take no notice of it, but there was a commanding look about the American doctor which the boy instinctively felt bound to obey.

"Come here."

Jack marched up with a sort of defiant air.

"Well, sir?"

"A word to the wise, my lad," said the doctor, in a low but impressive voice.

"You cannot improve your position here by any brag or bold bearing; indeed, it is very likely to put an end to your captivity in a very summary manner, so unless you wish to walk the plank speedily, or have your head battered in, keep as civil a tongue in your head as possible."

Young Jack hung his head abashed at this.

"Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then pay attention," said the doctor, "and learn that what I tell you is for your own good, and not for the sake of saying anything sharp or disagreeable."

Young Jack did not know what reply to make to this strange speech.

So he simply nodded his head and walked up the cabin.

"He's a strange man," thought young Jack.

"Jack!" called Harry Girdwood, faintly.

"Yes."

"Come to him at once," said the doctor, peremptorily. "Hold his hand. He's faint. Stand quite still."

And then, while young Jack stood holding the poor sufferer's hand, the doctor finished dressing his wounds, handling him all the while as tenderly as a fond mother might.

Harry Girdwood strove might and main to stifle his groans, but do what he would a murmur of anguish escaped him from time to time.

"Keep up a while, my poor boy," said the doctor, encouragingly. "You'll be easy presently. I shall get through as quickly as possible."

The patient gave him a grateful look.

"Thanks, doctor."

"Hush! don't fatigue yourself with speaking."

Young Jack was getting more and more puzzled now.

Was the doctor really a humane man, and yet the associate of thieves and murderers of the lowest and vilest possible description?

No.

So young Jack Harkaway sagely came to this conclusion:

"He wants to lead us into a frank avowal of our feelings," he said to himself, "in order to betray us, but I must put poor Harry on his guard."

By this time, Harry Girdwood's wounds being dressed, he was allowed to rest, and then, being thoroughly exhausted, he sank back on his pillow into a gentle slumber.

As soon as he had watched his companion so far cared for, young Jack made for the companion ladder, and was just running up to see what was going forward on deck, when the doctor stopped him.

"Where are you going?"

"On deck."

"What for?"

"To look about."

"Are you mad?"

"I think not."

"Do you know what you are likely to meet with?"

"Where?"

"On deck."

"No."

"Death."

"Death!"

"Yes, young gentleman, death. That makes you start. But nothing is more likely. The men you are among now are the vilest and most unscrupulous you will find. One man walked the plank but yesterday."

"Was he a Frenchman?" asked young Jack, quickly.

"Yes."

"I thought so; and called Monsieur Potiron?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, in evident surprise: "Then you know——"

"I know all about him. We picked him up."

"You?"

"Yes—our ship."

"Good Heaven! you don't say so."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, I am glad he is saved, at all events. Poor Potiron."

"You knew him well?"

"Yes."

"Was he a prisoner on board this ship?"

"Yes."

"Then I am glad his story was so far true, at all events."

"Was it doubted?"

"In some measure by our officers, for he couldn't help pulling the long bow at times."

The doctor smiled.

"I know."

"He tried it on here, then," said young Jack.

"Of course; it was in the fellow's blood. He could no more help bragging and exaggerating than a crow could help cawing. But he was not to say a coward, after all."

"Indeed."

"No. When his time came and he was driven over the ship's side into the water he showed a bold front."

"You will excuse a question, doctor?" said Jack.

"Certainly; but I don't promise in advance to answer it."

"Of course."

"Go on."

"How came you among these men—doctor to a pirate ship?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Why, no."

"Well, you might, my young friend, and yet be less

quick-witted than I perceive you to be. How came you and your unfortunate companion here?"

"We were surprised by treachery and made prisoners."

"And so was I."

"Indeed, doctor; I thought that they always put their prisoners to death."

"Such is the case," returned the doctor, "in most instances; but not always immediately—or you would not be here."

"There is a reason for my escape, which I will explain to you later on."

"And mine, too; I was seized amidst a scene of such slaughter and such horrible carnage as I never yet witnessed before—as, please God, I hope never to witness again.

"I was dragged on board the junk, and fell across a whole mob of wounded, writhing about the deck.

"Our ship had fought gallantly, and the slaughter of the pirates before we were beaten was something most frightful.

"One poor wretch was writhing on deck at my feet, and crying aloud with the agony of his wounds.

"With me it is naturally a double instinct to succor the wounded; firstly, as a Christian, and, secondly, as a medical man. So I looked to him—dressed and comforted his hurts——"

"I see."

"Then told them my profession, and I was saved, while many a poor prisoner was plundered and thrown to the sharks."

"And how long have you been a prisoner here, doctor?" asked young Jack.

"Nearly a year."

"So long?"

"Alas! yes."

"Can't you escape?"

"I would risk my life to, if there were half a chance."

Just then Harry Girdwood moved and groaned, and the doctor motioned young Jack to silence.

"Our talking disturbs him," he said in a whisper; "we must be careful, for unless he gets perfect quiet for the present, I will not answer for the poor boy's life."

CHAPTER XII.

LIFE ON THE PIRATE JUNK.

Presently the doctor dozed beside his patient.

His hands had been full of work, and he was overcome by fatigue.

Young Jack sat by watching him, when a great scuffling and noise on deck attracted his attention.

"I wonder what's going on there?" thought he.

The noise continued, and young Jack felt half inclined to go up on deck and see for himself.

Harry Girdwood meanwhile slept peacefully on. The doctor slept.

Young Jack arose to stretch his legs, and every time that he moved up the cabin he drew nearer to the companion ladder, and presently he mounted a step.

Then Jack forgot all about the doctor's warning, and he stepped on to the deck.

A great deal of bustle and confusion was going forward there.

Some of the crew were busily engaged in swabbing the deck, to remove the unpleasant remains of the late fray.

By the traces of blood about he could see plainly enough that the battle had been fierce and fatal to the pirates, who had almost been deprived of the pleasure of a retaliation.

The wounded were still being helped away.

The slain outright were dragged off without the faintest show of ceremony, and swung over into the sea.

It was indeed, thanks to this and similar noises, that young Jack contrived, for the present, to pass unobserved.

The boy looked about him in every direction, but there were no signs of the vessel which he had unfortunately quitted on that forlorn hope.

And what for?

Glory!

Alack, he had had his belly full of glory by this time.

He was no coward—far from it—yet he had learned to feel sorry that he had ever quitted his mother's side upon that unlucky day.

He thought of her pale face and anxious looks, and he recalled her fond injunctions that he would keep out of danger.

He reviewed his own conduct in creeping off into the thick of the fight, and he felt inclined to take an exceedingly harsh view of it.

Was it true bravery after all? he asked himself, that had prompted him.

Was not his bravery rather foolhardiness?

"Yes; decidedly, yes," was his bitter reply to this mental questioning.

Moving about along the deck, he came presently across a telescope, and raising it to his eye, he quickly adjusted the focus, and swept the horizon.

Nothing in sight.

Yet, stay.

There appeared one sail, many, many miles distant.

So far, indeed, that it appeared but the very tiniest speck.

And this, he felt sure, must be the ship which his father and mother were in.

He fixed it through the glass, and gazed long and steadfastly through it.

And as he looked, the speck grew smaller and smaller, until it faded utterly out of view.

It was gone.

And with its final disappearance his heart sank low

indeed; and the poor boy heaved a piteous sigh of despair, as he let the glass slowly down.

* * * * *

A hand was placed upon his shoulder.

"Well?"

He started.

Then he turned his head and found himself close to an Englishman, who was quite familiar to him.

"Well, Master Jack Harkaway," said the man, "so you are here in the toils after all."

Young Jack recognized him then as the escaped English murderer, Protean Bob Emmerson, whom the two detectives, Pike and Nabley, were searching for.

"Emmerson!" he cried.

"You know me?"

"Yes."

"Sharp boy," said Protean Bob Emmerson, coolly. "Don't look so scared. Are you frightened?"

Jack answered quickly.

"Frightened! What of? You? No—not quite."

Protean Bob laughed satirically at this.

"Bravo, Jack! You haven't lost the family brag, I perceive."

Jack reddened to the roots of his hair.

"Brag should be your name," he said.

"Cheeky enough," said Emmerson, turning away. "I'm afraid, my fair youth, you're short-lived—too smart to live long."

So saying, he walked up the deck, leaving young Jack to his own reflections.

The presence of Robert Emmerson was the most puzzling thing that had happened to him.

What could it mean?

It was difficult to hazard even a guess; he was anxious to find out how Emmerson got on board the pirate ship.

But a still greater surprise was in store for young Jack before he quitted the deck.

His attention was called to a dispute that was going on aft, so he went off at a run to see what the matter was.

It looked as though a fight was going on upon deck. "I'm in it!" cried young Jack, in something like glee.

He could never keep clear of anything of this sort.

He shared his father's fondness for excitement, and so strong was the instinct within him that he never thought how foolish it was to flourish about the deck of the pirate ship while the wounded from the late action were scarcely yet cared for, but burst into the thick of the *mêlée*.

Wonders upon wonders here awaited him.

A huge fellow was knocking the seamen about like skittles.

A mammoth man, brawny and bearded.

A man that young Jack knew by sight almost as well as his own father.

Who but Toro?

The hot-tempered Italian and ex-brigand was quarreling with the Lascars, or the Celestials, as the Chinese call themselves.

On the present occasion a slight dispute had arisen between them upon the question of precedence.

High words were exchanged between them.

From high words to blows is but a slight step among such lawless ruffians as these, so that when young Jack arrived upon the scene they were in the middle of a most undignified scramble.

Toro's huge bulk, however, served him quite grandly at this precise amusement.

He had only to lay against them.

As well might they oppose the march of a young elephant.

But the most alarming phase in the whole affair was the incessant din which the combatants kept up.

Just imagine bad language being bellowed at each other by a dozen half-drunk men in four different

tongues—to wit, Italian, Chinese, Spanish and, worse than all, Dutch.

All talking at once.

All yelling at the top of their voices.

When young Jack looked at Toro, he began to feel very much puzzled.

The last time he had seen Toro the Italian was stretched upon the ground, and, to all appearances, dead!

He did not know that Toro had been rescued by his comrades and snatched from the grave at the very last moment.

The whole scene was so novel, and presented such a complete change from what he had been going through until the last few hours of his life, that he began to ask himself if he were not in a dream.

He had read the legend of the "Phantom Ship," and he had a momentary fancy flash through his mind that he was, perhaps, rightly mourned as dead by his parents—that, in spite of the real look of everything around him, he was out of the world, in the land of spirits, and there renewing some of the more startling scenes of his earthly career.

By what process of reasoning young Jack contrived to liken himself to the supernatural Capt. Vanderdecken, we are not in a position to state.

All we can say is that, whatever wild flights his fancy may have taken, he was brought rudely back to earth by being roughly collared by Toro himself.

The giant had just caught sight of him, and was filled with amazement on recognizing him.

But recovering quickly from his surprise, he rushed at him, and grabbed him sharply by the shoulder.

"Boy!"

"Well," said young Jack, looking up at him saucily, "what is it?"

Toro was staggered.

"It is young Jack Harkaway," he exclaimed.

"Rather!" returned young Jack, nodding.

"Why, where, in the fiend's name, did you spring from?"

"From below," replied young Jack.

"The devil!" ejaculated the ex-brigand.

"Well, no," retorted our youthful hero, with his accustomed readiness; "not from there, although from below."

"Why, what——"

"From the cockpit, I mean," explained young Jack.

"But how came you there?"

"Prisoner."

"Then you must have been on board that American ship that has just——"

"Given this ship a licking and got clear off. Yes, Signor Toro, I was."

"And your father?"

"Yes, he, too."

"And——"

"Mr. Harvey? Yes; all of us, including Mr. Jefferson."

"Hah!"

"Your worst enemy."

"No," ejaculated Toro, sharply; "Jefferson is a brave man. He fought fairly, and he won the victory. He fully merited it. Defeat, boy, is bitter, but even Toro can learn a lesson occasionally, and I have lately learned to know that it is an honor to oppose such a man as Jefferson, even if beaten."

Young Jack was astonished at this.

He regretted his taunting words then.

Of all the people in the world, he had certainly not expected anything like a frank or generous admission on the part of Toro.

"Nobly said, Signor Toro," said young Jack, "and, believe it or not, as you may, I am really glad to see you here, although I am quite astonished how you can have got here."

"Tell me how you came to be made prisoner. I

was on deck about here the whole time, but I saw no prisoners made."

"None?"

"No."

"Did you not see the fight between the boats?"

"No."

"Well, Signor Toro," said young Jack, "a fight did take place between some of the boats. The one I commanded engaged two of the pirates' boats, and we were fast giving them pepper, when a third boat in our rear brought deserters from our own ship."

"Deserters?"

"Yes."

"So you have some traitor Americans, as well as——"

"There are good and bad everywhere, Signor Toro," continued Jack. "The boat was rowed by one deserter. The only other person in the boat was a prisoner, aided by the deserter to escape."

"I see," said Toro; "so you had a prisoner?"

"Yes; a prisoner whose life had been saved by my father off Cuba. Guess who that prisoner was."

"I cannot."

"Why, it was——"

"Me," said a voice at young Jack's elbow.

"Hunston!" exclaimed Toro, in greater amazement than ever; "is it possible, or do my eyes deceive me?"

"Not at all, old comrade," returned Hunston; "here I am—Hunston himself in the flesh."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ONE-LEGGED MANDARIN.

"A knowledge of their language is very useful," said Isaac Mole to Dick Harvey.

"And do you speak it, Mr. Mole?" asked Harvey.

"Not to say fluently," replied Mr. Mole, modestly.

"I had no idea, Mr. Mole, you were such a linguist," said Harvey. "So you speak Chinese?"

"You know, Richard, dialect is my strong point. You may not now remember that my knowledge of the American dialect was of considerable service to us when we landed in Boston."

Dick was ready to burst at this.

"Quite right, Mr. Mole," he said. "I remember now."

"Now, it is not vanity on my part," said Mr. Mole, in a bland, winning manner, "but I know my powers, and I can imitate the Chinese dialect and intonation so nearly that they would never take me for a foreigner—if—if—if——"

"If you only wore a pigtail," suggested Dick.

"Yes."

"Why not wear one, then?" asked Harvey, with great gravity.

Mr. Mole looked very straight at him.

But Dick never blenched.

He smelt fun ahead.

"So you really think it desirable, Harvey?" continued Mr. Mole.

"Of course."

"Why?"

"Why, the natives here are notorious thieves and rogues; rob you they will if you are a foreigner, and if they have only half a chance, so you decidedly gain a point by looking like one of themselves."

"I see."

"So that in their dress, and profiting by your——"

"Imitative powers, which I possess so——"

"Like a monkey."

"What?"

"I say almost like the monkeys do."

"I object to your similes, Richard; I don't like your disrespectful way of coupling my name with that of a monkey."

"No offense, sir."

"I dare say, but——"

"Come, come, Mr. Mole, don't be so thin-skinned; I took you for a man of too much mind——"

"Quite right."

"And, really, if you analyze it, I think you will admit it is a compliment."

"Ahem!"

Jack Harkaway's party had at last reached the tea plantation in China owned by Mr. Mole.

Mr. Mole began at once to air his Chinese upon the native coolies on the plantation, and the men, cunning enough in their way, soon learned that the best way to propitiate their chief was to pretend to understand all he said or wished to say in their own tongue.

The honest truth is, that Mr. Mole did not know much about it.

"Chin-chin," and a few phrases of "pigeon-English," had to serve for a whole vocabulary.

Mr. Mole, however, in deference to Harvey's opinion of the "proper thing to do," had his head shaved over his manly brow, and made desperate efforts to grow a pigtail.

Alas! his efforts were not seconded by nature.

All he could do the pigtail would not be coaxed into growing a respectable length.

"No matter, my dear sir," said Dick. "What is art for?"

"Can't say," responded Mr. Mole. "What do you say?"

"To replace nature under certain conditions."

Mr. Mole rubbed his nose and pondered deeply.

He had, if the honest truth be told, taken something stronger than tea that day, and although not by any means mentally obfuscated, he felt that he was not as clear as he should wish to be as to Harvey's meaning.

He felt that he had been indulging a little, and he exaggerated in his fears the effect it had taken upon him.

"Isaac Mole," he said to himself, "you must pull yourself together, or else you will have Mrs. M. about your ears. She's a good creature, but so precious strait-laced upon the question of a glass of grog more or less that let her half suspect the least thing and she'll look as black as—as black as—pah! Ha! that's a joke. Mustn't joke about Chloe, by jingo!"

And doubts came over him.

Had he understood Harvey aright?

Now, during this long soliloquy Dick stood looking at the tutor, asking himself whether the old gentleman smelt a rat.

"I must be wary," thought the artful Dick, "and not spoil sport by being over eager."

Then, on looking again at Mr. Mole, he changed his mind.

"He's tight."

But he was wrong.

Isaac Mole was not in that condition so vulgarly yet tersely described.

"My dear Harvey," said the tutor, "I am waiting for the last ten minutes to hear you finish your eloquent reasoning."

"Which?"

"What you began."

"Oh! I see."

"All about ature and nart—I mean nature and art. Richard, Richard," added Mr. Mole, with a half tipsy and reproving smile. "I fear you must have been indulging a bit freely to-day."

"What?"

"Dick, you're not quite clear there," said Mr. Mole, tapping his forehead significantly.

"Come, come, I say, Mr. Mole," exclaimed Harvey, indignantly.

"You know it's true."

"I know nothing of the kind. The proof is, I was urging you, as soberly and as reasonably as a reasoning man can, to replace nature's deficiencies by a work of art."

"Do you mean it?"

Mole smiled.

"Ha! now we're getting back to it. Explain yourself."

"You have no pigtail. Have an artificial one made for you."

Mr. Mole stared.

"Yes."

"Truly?"

"Why not?"

Mr. Mole reflected for a little time.

"Why, just listen, sir," said Dick. "You admit that the object is to pass yourself off as a native Chinese?"

"Yes."

"For the purpose of defeating their cheating, avaricious ways?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, then, every means is fair, and worth trying, I take it."

"Perhaps you're right, Harvey," said Mr. Mole.

"Perhaps! Why, I am sure," exclaimed Dick, with an air of perfect enthusiasm. "Now, I'll tell you what, Mr. Mole."

"Why?"

"I'll be bound that you can find artificial pigtails ready made here."

Mr. Mole looked very dubious at this.

"Think so?"

"I feel sure so. There is, in fact, I should say, a

large trade done in them here. It is a natural consequence. Witness the enormous trade done in chignons in England."

This argument appeared conclusive.

"To be sure."

"Well, I'll go and try to find one," said Dick.

"Do you think it advisable? Well, perhaps—but don't get a very long one."

"Why not?"

"As I'm not used to it."

"If I wore one at all myself," said Dick, "I should wear it down to the ground."

"You would?" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "And why?"

"Because these savages call all of the short-haired people barbarians."

"I know."

"And they measure their respect for a man by the length of his pigtail."

Mr. Mole burst out laughing at this idea. It tickled him uncommonly.

He fairly roared, and Dick had some trouble to keep his own countenance.

"When you have quite done, sir," he said, trying to look severe.

"Oh, don't, don't, Harvey!" cried the tutor, while the tears ran down his cheeks; "I can't stand that."

"Mr. Mole, you always seem to treat lightly any information I have gleaned and wish to impart."

"No, no."

"I say you do."

"Come, come, Harvey—no offense is meant—only——"

"I know what it is; you can never forget that you were the tutor, I the scholar; and you feel ashamed of gleaning any information from me."

Mr. Mole was touched at this.

"My dear Harvey," he said, "I know we are never too old to learn."

"Then you may gain knowledge, even at your advanced age."

Mr. Mole looked severe, now in his turn.

"Don't be personal, Harvey."

"I won't. But laugh as you may, I don't see that there is so much to laugh at in the measuring of a man's intelligence by the length of his pigtail."

"Why, Harvey?"

"Well, do you remember what it says in the Bible about Samson?"

"Well, no, I don't—not at this precise moment."

"It says that his strength lay in his hair."

"So it does!"

And leaving Mr. Mole sharply, on this effect, it served as a clinching argument.

Dick went after the pigtail.

Need we say that he had not far to go?

Of course not.

He had had it carefully stored up for some time past, ready for the moment that he should have prepared Mr. Mole for it by subtle reasoning.

Dick called a meeting of his party generally, and all attended, with the exception of the Harkaways—Jack and Emily.

The bereaved parents of poor young Jack had no heart for fun.

You must not suppose from this that the others had forgotten our daring young hero.

No; they had never ceased to mourn his loss.

But to Harvey fun came as naturally as his food, and the rest of the party shared his predilection in this particular.

"I have persuaded old Mole to wear the pigtail," said Dick, when all were assembled, "and here it is."

"Isn't it a beauty?" exclaimed Jefferson.

"A real gem!" cried the rest in a chorus.

"Rather large, isn't it, Mr. Harvey?" said Pike.

"A whacker."

"He'll never wear that."

"It may put him on his guard, and spoil the joke altogether," suggested Magog Brand.

"Never fear."

"He must be very groggy if he puts that on," said Nabley.

"Not very," replied Dick; "I have carefully prepared the way."

"I'll bet a sovereign you never get him to wear it."

"Done."

"You take me?"

"Yes; it is a bet."

"I want to win a little money," said Jefferson. "I have you for ten dollars."

"Done again!"

So the gambling fit beginning, went all round, and Dick made bets with each.

"Now for it," said he; "but you mustn't breathe a word that might spoil sport."

"No, no."

"Of course not."

"I shall be only too glad to lose my bet," said Jefferson; "the fun will be cheap at the price."

"Well, then," said Dick, "I'll not only make him wear it, but I'll bring him before you as a real 'Heathen Chinee!'"

* * * * *

Dick returned to Mole with the pigtail.

"It is rather an unusual size, Harvey," began the tutor.

"Not at all," replied Dick, coolly.

"They never wear them so large as this one, though."

"Not the coolies, nor the common Chinese. But the mandarins and the regular celestial swells do; longer, in fact."

"Come, I say."

"It's a fact, sir; only I thought you wouldn't care for a longer one until you got better used to it."

"I should think not," ejaculated Mole.

"Come, sir, try it on."

Mole paused.

He did not really quite relish the idea.

"I don't positively think, Harvey, that I can bring myself to put that monstrous thing on. Why, it's like the great sea serpent that superstitious mariners talk of."

Harvey frowned and looked sulky at this.

"Well, good-morning, Mr. Mole," he said, moving towards the door.

"Are you going?"

"Yes."

"Really, I'm sorry to give you so much trouble."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Dick, with affected coldness; "only you won't catch me wasting my time in a hurry again. Good-morning."

"Stop a minute, my dear Harvey. You really are so very hasty."

"Well."

He paused suddenly at the door without turning round.

"You are not joking?"

Dick was fit to split, but he managed to preserve an immobile and severe expression.

"Mr. Mole, there are seasons for everything. You appear to look upon me as a species of baboon."

"Harvey!"

"So you do. Do you think I waste all my time in idle levity, sir? How long have I been pelting all over the place to find you that, and now you—pah! I am disgusted."

And he moved on.

"Stop, stop!"

"Well, sir?"

"I'll put it on, Harvey, if you assure me on your honor——"

Dick frowned.

"Such a speech, Mr. Mole, I wouldn't have tolerated from anyone but an old and valued friend. It implies a doubt of my veracity."

"Dear, dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, in sore distress at wounding Dick's feelings. "I'll put it on then."

"Not to please me."

"Then I will to please myself—only stay a moment."

And so, by degrees, Dick was even persuaded into fitting it on, so good-natured and easily mollified did he appear.

"Doesn't it hang down a very long way?" asked Mr. Mole, nervously.

"Not very."

"I think I'd like it coiled up at first."

"Very well."

So Dick coiled it up, and finished Mr. Mole's toilet *à la Chinoise* with the grace and dexterity of a barber of Peking.

Mr. Mole surveyed himself in the glass.

"Well, really, Harvey, I think your judgment is correct, after all," he said, graciously.

"I thought so."

"Quite."

"You prefer to have it coiled up, I suppose?"

"Well, eh; now that I am getting a bit used to it, suppose you let it down again."

"Very well," answered Dick, quite delighted with his success, "since you wish it, sir, as the ghost says to Hamlet—'I will a tale unfold.'"

"Don't joke, Harvey."

"Certainly not."

"Which is best?" demanded Mr. Mole, after a lengthy study of his personal appearance in the glass.

"Well, my candid opinion is that way," answered Dick.

"You think so?"

"I'm sure so."

"I hardly know," said Mr. Mole, hesitatingly.

"I'm so positive," said Dick, "that I'll undertake to pass you before all our friends as a native mandarin."

Mr. Mole took alarm at this.

He smelt mischief in the suggestion.

"Nonsense!"

"I'll wager you ten pounds that they won't recognize you," persisted Dick.

"Ten pounds!"

"Yes."

"Stake your money."

Dick did so.

"Now you must keep your countenance and not make any sign that would betray you."

"Trust me."

* * * * *

Mandarin Mole, gorgeously arrayed in a purple silk sac-tunic, and brown satin trousers, worn low so as to conceal his wooden leg, and with his long pigtail dangling, passed out, accompanied by Harvey.

In an adjoining room all the party arose.

"His excellency the Mandarin Chung Ike Moley," said Harvey, with the air of a grand chamberlain.

The whole party bowed with every appearance of great respect.

Mandarin Mole passed on, accompanied by his escort, bowing condescendingly.

And so they passed out of the room.

* * * * *

"What do you think of that, Mole?"

"A perfect success!" ejaculated Mole.

"I should think so."

"They were all quite deceived."

"That they were."

Mandarin Mole chuckled to himself.

"I cannot refrain, my dear Harvey," said the new mandarin, bubbling with laughter, "from a vulgar idiom, although I don't usually indulge in such things."

"Fire away, sir," said Dick, "and ease yourself for once."

"I mean to say, Harvey, that in the Cockney slang, we had them alive."

"Had 'em, sir," said Dick, getting yet more slangy—"had 'em on toast."

CHAPTER XIV.

A LESSON IN REAL CHINESE.

Monday entered.

"Well, Monday?" said Harvey. "What now!"

"Hyar's a Chineese swell, sar, dat want to see Massa Mole."

Harvey tipped Monday the wink on the sly, that is, unseen by Mandarin Mole.

"Mr. Mole is not here at present, Monday."

"Sare?"

"But he will be here shortly."

"Shall I ax the Chineese swell to walk in, sare?"

"Yes."

With that Monday disappeared.

"Now, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, with a great show of anxiety; "this is the time to distinguish yourself."

"How?"

"By letting him see you are up to everything."

"But do you know who it is?" demanded Mr. Mole, nervously.

"No."

"I can guess."

"Who is it, then?"

"A sort of shipping agent who is to arrange about chartering a vessel for me."

"What's his name?"

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming."

"Is he a merchant?"

"He's a kind of shipbroker. He has been recommended to me by some friends here, and is a most reliable person."

Without any more ado, therefore, the shipbroker was admitted.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming was a remarkable-looking person.

He wore a very broad-brimmed hat which shaded his face, but did not quite conceal an ugly scar across his forehead.

He had no pigtail, but wore his hair, which was coarse as horsehair, and jet black, very short.

He had no eyebrows, nor, indeed, any hair upon his face at all; but his skin was so dark that he looked almost like a mulatto.

This was the chief characteristic that Dick Harvey noticed.

"He is certainly a rum one," said he to himself.

"Is his excellency present?" demanded the visitor in English, but with a very strong accent, after a pause.

Harvey looked.

There was a tone in the voice of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming that rang in his ears.

Was it a familiar tone to him?

Query.

Dick was a rare fellow for fancying that he traced likenesses between folks.

This fancy had often led him into small scrapes, so that, being aware of his weakness, he was in a measure prepared to combat it, and to persuade himself that it was nothing but fancy.

"His excellency Mr. Mole sent for me," said Biga-Eng; "may his servant ask the motive?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Mole, cheerfully.

"You speak English, too?" said Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, turning to Mandarin Mole in unfeigned surprise.

"Oh, yes."

"I, too, have been much with Englishmen."

"Much with Englishmen, have you, indeed?" said Harvey, looking steadfastly at Biga-Eng.

"Yes."

"Been in England?"

"Yes," replied the shipbroker, who looked extremely confused, and at last fiercely laid his hand upon a short curved sword he wore.

"Hello, Master Chinaman!" exclaimed Dick Harvey,

noticing the threatening motion of the Celestial towards his sword, "what do you mean by that?"

"Excellency——" he stammered.

"Do you mean to threaten me?" asked Dick, half drawing a revolver from his pocket.

"Certainly not, excellency; but some years ago I received such treatment from a party of your countrymen, that I am almost mad when I think about it."

"Oh, indeed! Pray what did they do?"

"Pardon, it is a long story, and it will not make you proud of your countrymen, so let us proceed to business. You sent for me."

"Yes."

"For——"

"For the purpose of getting rates quoted," said Harvey, "and learning the dates of the different ships engaged in this trade—that is all."

"Good, sir. I can give them to you when you please."

"Now, then."

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming referred to a small pocket-book he carried before he made answer:

"There is the *Maria Theresa* on the twenty-third."

"The twenty-third. That will about suit," said Mr. Mole.

"On the twenty-fourth we have another departure."

"The name of the vessel, if you please."

"The *Franz Josef*."

"Austrian?"

"Yes."

"Both?"

"Yes."

"Now," said Dick, who had a double motive for his next proposition, "suppose you and Mr. Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming arrange about the rates."

"Freight?"

"Yes."

"Very good."

"Make your prices in his language," said Dick to Mr. Mole.

"What for?" asked the latter, nervously.

"He'll be more at home, of course, and it will be just the same to you."

"Why, of course—very nearly the same thing, that is."

"So I said."

Then Dick pulled the Chinese aside a few paces, and said to him, in a low voice:

"Will you talk to him in your own language?"

"Why?"

"To please him."

"Do I not speak English well enough for you?"

"Oh, yes."

"And does not his excellency understand me thoroughly?"

"Yes."

"Then why change our language at all?"

"There is nothing very serious in it, my good sir," replied Harvey. "But Mandarin Mole is a great linguist in our country. He talks every tongue, and he told me on the quiet, that is, between ourselves, just now, that he did not believe you were a Chinaman." Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming gave the speaker a curious glance.

He felt uncomfortable, apparently.

Dick watched him.

Not a look of his, not the faintest change in his expression escaped Harvey.

For the latter's suspicions were roused.

"I'll wager anything," said he to himself, "that they are both humbugs—he as great as Mole and Mole as great as he. Hang me, if I don't try them!"

So turning again to the shipbroker, he addressed him in the following extraordinary idiom:

"Chin Chin."

"Chin Chin," responded Biga-Eng, promptly.

"Exactly," said Dick, "Chin Chin talkee talkee, pongo wong, cow cross, cum roce pork."

"Oh, yes."

"Do you think so, Mr. Mole?" asked Dick.

The tutor was a bit puzzled, but he made a wild hit at it.

"Very much, indeed."

"I thought so," said Dick, rather gravely.

Then he went on staring hard at Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, who was fast waxing very unhappy.

"Chin Chin, youra braceofor alumb ugsum ustown? Eh?"

"Decidedly," said Mr. Mole, eagerly.

"Quite right."

"I thought so," said Dick, looking more serious than ever.

"I had no idea you spoke the language, Harvey," said Mr. Mole.

"I thought not."

"Most fluent," said Biga-Eng, politely.

"You flatter," said Harvey, diffidently.

"Oh, no."

"Well," said Dick, "I have only to add that Chin Chin talkee talkee bird's-nest or finerat cum picklegg-walk ickeraboo an chapell blanche orfulduf fers bo thovu."

"Oh, precisely," said Mole, "just my opinion. Eh, sir?"

"Decidedly," responded Biga-Eng.

"I felt sure that you would agree with me," said Dick.

"Quite right."

"Great fluency," said Biga-Eng to Mole.

"Wonderful," responded Mr. Mole.

Dick enjoyed it mightily, as you may suppose.

"The thundering old humbugs!" he said to himself.

"I'll lead them a precious dance yet."

The sham Chinese shipbroker now began fidgeting about.

Evidently he wanted to be off.

But Dick would not let him go just yet.

"Chin Chin," said he.

"Chin Chin," replied Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming.

"Pikey wike oky in long acre chung drury lane and bumfit co perriwig in baggynails," said Dick, addressing Mr. Mole, with great apparent earnestness; "to which I may add, kerri ki ko thum an there ugo cherri-bobin an berrymce dasently."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "no one could deny the truth of that."

"No one," said the shipbroker, thus appealed to.

"Well, Harvey, we are quite agreed," said the tutor, "so that settles it."

"Just so."

"I will send you the table of the rates" said Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming.

"Very good."

"As soon as possible," said Harvey.

And then the shipbroker made a low salaam, and took his leave.

Upon this Harvey followed him out, and watched discreetly where he went to.

CHAPTER XV.

WHO LAUGHS LAST.

Who could be happier?
Who more than satisfied than the three of them?
Each fancied that he had hoodwinked the other two.

* * * * *

"I've humbugged Master Dick Harvey most completely this time," said Isaac Mole. "He won't try it on again with me in a hurry. I got out of it with even more than my accustomed skill and readiness. But really, I should never have imagined that he was so very proficient in the Chinese language. He took me completely by surprise."

* * * * *

"I've rather worried the two of them this time," said Dick Harvey to himself; "but old Mole ought to have a severe lesson for his lying and brag. He's not had it half taken out of him as yet. I must manage something yet to worry him.

"And as for that other scamp—for I feel sure he is a scamp—I should like to show him up. I'm positive he is a thorough impostor. I must give it to him. But the first step is to find out who he is, now that I know where he lives. I feel as though I had known him wonderfully well some time or another. But when? That's the question."

* * * * *

Riga-Eng hurried home, and once safely indoors, he dropped into a cushion on the ground and gave vent to his feelings, which had considerably changed since leaving Harvey and Mole.

"Harvey!" he ejaculated, "and old Mole! Of all the bad luck in the world, nothing could be so bad as this;

why, I shouldn't wonder if Jack Harkaway is with them.

"If they are all here, it will soon be the end of me. They never let a poor devil have a chance with their precious virtue, but so far I have the advantage of them. I know of their presence, but they will never dream who Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming can be."

But presently a smile crossed his evil face.

He thought of a scheme for making a good bag of money in a single stroke and taking a "rise out of old Ikey Mole," as he expressed it, all under one.

"The twenty-third," he said to himself. "Well, I can't be too early with my warning to them. I must send them a letter now, and then make sure of old Mole, the silly old pump!"

And then the shipbroker sat himself down, and addressed a letter to one Chung Ali, now the commander of the *Flowery Land*, a heavy war-junk, cruising about the China Seas, and said to be as suspicious a craft as any afloat.

CHAPTER XVI.

DANGER!

To return to young Jack.

On board the Chinese pirate ship *Flowery Land* all went on quietly enough for the present.

The reaction after the fatal fight with the American ship under Capt. Clemmans insured this.

Young Jack managed to take advantage of a short conversation between Toro and some of the Lascar seamen—preparatory to a renewal of their scramble, be it remarked—to steal off and make for the cabin again.

Harry Girdwood still slept on.

The doctor, however, had just woke up.

“Well, young gentleman,” said he, gruffly, “so you have thought fit to disobey orders?”

“Orders, doctor?” said young Jack, in surprise.

“Did I not say——”

“Yes, yes, doctor,” returned young Jack, interrupting him; “you were good enough to give me advice. Had you given me an order, I should not have thought of disobeying you.”

The doctor smiled.

“You’re as artful as you are plucky, my lad,” he said; “only there is no merit, bear in mind, in risking one’s life needlessly.”

“I’m not ungrateful for your kindness, doctor,” Jack said, “but, really, I could not control my curiosity, and so I—I——”

“And so you chose to thrust your head into the lion’s mouth?”

“Not quite that, doctor,” said young Jack. “I only went about to take observations.”

“With what result?”

“I did not learn a great deal,” said young Jack.

“I thought not.”

"I only recognized among the crew an old enemy."

"Indeed."

"Yes. A man I felt sure was dead long ago. I left him covered with wounds, and with scarcely a breath of life in him a few weeks since near New York."

At the mention of New York, a smile of mingled pleasure and pain flitted over the doctor's face.

"Do you know New York, doctor?" asked Jack.

"Do I know New York?" iterated the doctor. "Why, I was born there. I have lived there two-thirds of my life—do I know New York? Well, no. I did know it, but I question if I shall ever know it again; ever say 'how are you?' to any of my friends there?"

And his voice grew more and more sad as he concluded with a deep-drawn sigh.

Young Jack was touched.

He thought that he would cheer the doctor up.

"You don't like your quarters here, doctor?"

"No."

"Why haven't you tried to escape, then?"

The doctor shook his head gravely as he answered:

"No chance of that, you will see by and by. They watch me for the same reason that they saved my life, when they murdered all the poor crew and passengers on board our ship."

"Why?"

"Because, as a doctor, I am useful to them."

"I see."

"They watch me night and day. That little Frenchman——"

"Hypolite Potiron," said young Jack.

"Yes."

"What of him?"

"He spoiled my chance, if ever I had one."

"How?"

"By his clumsy attempt to poison or drug the whole ship's company."

"Why was he spared, then?" asked young Jack.

"Because, as a cook, he was a desirable acquisition

to the crew of this slaughterhouse. But he was too precipitate; he soon grew impatient of his bondage, and he was clumsy in his attempts to get free of it. He dosed them so awkwardly, that it was discovered at once, or nearly so."

"And how was it discovered, doctor?"

"By them all growing bad of the same complaint at once. A little more patience, and the vessel would have been in our hands—drifted, in spite of them, in the hands of the authorities."

"I see."

"And so there would have been an end to these wretches, whose sole delight, apparently, is bloodshed—useless brutality—slaughter."

Just then, Harry Girdwood began to talk in his sleep and to grow restless.

The doctor, with his finger on his lip, motioned Jack to silence.

"He is feverish to-night, but unless I am deceived, he will be better by the morning."

"You think so?" said young Jack, eagerly.

"Yes."

* * * * *

Young Jack withdrew to the other end of the cabin, and sat down to reflect upon the doctor's words.

For Jack, be it understood, had made up his mind that he would by some means of other, leave the dreadful pirate ship.

"If that clumsy little Frenchman so nearly accomplished it," he said to himself, "surely, with care, it could be brought off by the doctor."

And by degrees this became his one fixed idea.

He fixed that part in his head, and from that moment he set himself steadily and systematically to work to find out the best means to accomplish it.

"I must be more cautious than old Potiron," he said to himself. "I won't make a step unless I have the doctor's advice and consent. His coolness and shrewd-

ness, with a little dash of my desperation, would be sure to manage it. But I must not think of doing anything for the present."

He could not conscientiously set to work actively in this matter, until Harry Girdwood was able to accompany him.

Once let his young companion be on the fair road to recovery, and something should be done.

So he resolved.

Now, therefore, he had a double motive for desiring his comrade's speedy restoration to health.

And so he watched, anxiously, every phase in Harry's illness, and followed the good doctor's movements—ay, even the expression of his open countenance, with almost breathless interest.

The doctor saw this.

And seeing, he managed to profit by it.

He invited young Jack's attention—explained to him, learnedly, the nature of the evils he had to fight against in the treatment of his patient.

In this way he contrived to keep young Jack down in the cabin for the present, and out of harm's way.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SPLIT IN THE CAMP.

Meanwhile some other matters transpired on deck upon which young Jack Harkaway had by no means reckoned.

Toro was, from the first moment that he saw our young hero, all agog for settling him at once.

"Hang him up to the yardarm," suggested the amiable ex-brigand, "or drop him over the ship's side with a six-pound shot tied to his heels, and let us get rid of the vermin."

"Why be in such a hurry?" asked Hunston.

"Because I loathe the sight of his face and the sound of his voice."

"So do I."

"Then why not make an end of it at once?"

"Because we may make better use of him."

"Bah! These Harkaways have as many lives as a cat. They have the devil's luck and their own, too. He'll bring some mischief to us unless we are careful."

"That's just what I say. Let us be careful."

"And begin by cutting the brat's throat."

"Not quite that."

"What then?"

"By squeezing particulars out of him about his father—about their ship—find out its destination, and watch for them?"

"What then?"

Hunston stared at him contemptuously.

"What then! Can you ask?"

"I do ask."

"Once found out, we could, perhaps, get the whole of them into our power; think of that."

Toro's eyes sparkled.

"That would be glorious!" he exclaimed.

"Of course."

"Suppose we have him up and make him tell at once?"

Hunston shook his head.

"No good."

"Why?"

"He wouldn't tell."

"How do you mean to get at it, then?"

"By slow degrees. The boy will let it fall if we only allow him to brag a bit. He can't help bragging; it's in the Harkaway blood, and then we shall know all we want to know."

Toro frowned.

"I could name a way of getting to know what you want at once."

"Indeed."

"Yes."

"Out with it, then," said Hunston, impatiently, "or I shall begin to think that you are tinged with the weakness of the Harkaways."

"What?"

"Brag."

Toro swore a fierce oath, and drew his knife as though he meant to carve up Hunston for his temerity without delay.

But Hunston feared him not.

He only laughed derisively at him.

"Give me the boy for ten minutes," said Toro, finding his companion in crime was not frightened.

"What then?"

"I'll pledge my life that he'll make a clean breast of all he knows."

"Pah! or lose his own life, I suppose."

"No."

"I say yes."

"I swear he should tell all, and in less than ten minutes. Hunston, you even treat my suggestions with contempt."

"Not more than they merit," retorted the other.

Toro's eyes flashed lightning, and he bit his lip till the blood came.

Few men but Hunston would have said this much with impunity.

"Give the brat over to me," he said, controlling his rage, "and you shall see."

"Hark you, Toro," said Hunston, deliberately, "to give the boy over to your keeping would be about as sensible as to drop a jewel coffer into the sea, because I couldn't find out the secret to open it."

"I promise——"

"I tell you," returned Hunston, "that you know as little of that boy's temper as of your own. Why, he would never speak."

"Bah!"

"Never. You would tear him limb from limb. The cruelest tortures could not make him wag his obstinate tongue unless he chose. He has too much of his father in him. Once rouse their vanity in this particular, and he would die like a young martyr at the stake."

"Martyr! stuff! You're mad, Hunston!"

"And you, Toro, are a hot-headed fool!"

And so, with these mutual and frank expressions of displeasure, the companions in villainy separated.

* * * * *

"I must look after that Italian idiot," said Hunston to himself. "He'll spoil all else for the sake of killing the boy."

* * * * *

"Vain ass!" muttered Toro, as he was left alone. "Since he will not give his help or approval, it shall be done without him. I'll see the rest of them, and hear what they have to say about it, for the life of that boy I will have."

He walked aft in high dudgeon, and ran across Robert Emmerson, who was engaged in earnest conversation with Von Koppenhaagen.

"Ah, Emmerson," said Toro, "did you know that we have bagged a prize?"

"Which?"

"Young Jack Harkaway, to be sure."

"Stale news," replied Emmerson; "I've seen him."

"Vat!" ejaculated Von Koppenhaagen, "young Jag Hargavay! Ter tuyvel!"

Emmerson laughed at the Dutchman's vehement expression.

"Not quite the devil, Kop," said he. "Only one of his imps."

"His imbs! I know it vell. Dat ist zer goot!" cried the Dutchman. "He vonce make us to danze in der Bowery mit his shmoke droo der hole in der wall."

"Perhaps it wasn't him," said Emmerson.

"Soh! ja wohl! vell, he make us to danze; ve shall make him to danze upon noding."

"May he die of the caper in his heel," said Emmerson, laughing.

"Ja, ja!" cried Von Koppenhaagen, "dat ist zo. Der caber in his heel is ver' fonny."

"I'll go bail," replied Emmerson, dryly, "that the boy won't see the joke of it."

Toro looked on and smiled.

Emmerson and the Dutchman were apparently just in the humor to work with him and thwart Hunston.

"Now the next thing is to inform some of the crew. Once let them know that this boy's father led the attack on them—and this is sure, for Harkaway is the master spirit in every daring enterprise that takes place near him—and they won't stand any nonsense."

He sought out for his present purpose an Armenian, called Kappa, who was a petty officer of the pirates, and just the man he wanted.

It needed very little to incite the crew against young Jack Harkaway.

The bare mention of the fact that his father was the prime mover in the attack upon them was quite sufficient.

They called a meeting upon deck at once, and a council was held as to the kind of death that our young hero was to suffer.

Thus the matter was taken completely out of the hands of Emmerson, Toro and Von Koppenhaagen.

"We have decided, gentlemen," said the Armenian, who was as full of grace as a courtier, instead of being coarse and brutal, like the great majority of his comrades.

"What?" demanded Robert Emmerson.

"How the boy is to die."

"Might you not have consulted me?"

"Pardon me," returned this genteel pirate, suavely, "it is our prisoner."

"And ours, too."

"Nay."

"Well, well," said Emmerson, "it is idle losing one's temper over a question of form. What do you propose doing with young Harkaway?"

"Hanging him up."

"Yes."

"But not as you proposed. We mean to suspend him to the yardarm by the ankles, and use him as a target."

Protean Bob smiled grimly at this.

"There is some fancy about that notion," said he, "and I am with you."

A party was sent in search of young Jack, and soon it transpired that the prisoner was in the cabin with the American doctor.

Six men, headed by the Armenian officer, Kappa, trotted off down the companion ladder, to find themselves face to face with young Harkaway himself.

"Come," said Kappa, clapping him on the shoulder.

"Where?" asked young Jack.

"On deck."

The boy felt just a little bit uncomfortable.

"What do you want with him?" demanded the doctor.

"Pardon me, medico," returned the ever polite pirate, "that is our business."

"In that case," said the American doctor, coolly, "the boy remains here."

"Who says so?"

"I."

"Are you sure, doctor," said the polite Armenian, "that you are in your full senses?"

"Quite."

"Bah!"

His politeness momentarily gave way to this slightly contemptuous expression, and he motioned to his men to bear young Jack off.

But this was not altogether easy to do.

Young Jack was slippery as an eel.

Down he wriggled on to the ground, toppled over two or three of the ruffians, and scrambling through the confused heap, he bounded over to the doctor's side.

"Come, doctor," said the Armenian, "don't you interfere. We wish to treat you with every respect, but if you do not stand aside, we shall have to be very rough with you."

"Begone!"

"Come, come."

They advanced menacingly.

"Hark you," said the doctor, "if you go now, at once, I will say nothing of this outrage. Linger a moment longer, and I shall complain to the captain."

"What?" cried one of the Lascars, "does the old medico presume to threaten us?"

"Down with him!" cried the rest.

Now the polite Armenian tried to stay them. But in vain.

Knives were drawn, and ugly words were bandied, and the pirates moved to their destined victims.

"Back!" said the doctor, waving his hand.

And they instinctively stopped at the word.

"You see this little phial," said the doctor, calmly; "that contains what would end, not merely your

wretched lives, but those of the whole ship. I have but to let it fall, and you are annihilated. In less than two minutes there would not remain a fragment of your miserable carcasses or a plank of the ship."

The men shrank back aghast.

"Begone!"

It was a sight to see those bold bullies, with blanched checks and quaking limbs, retreat before the stern old American, and crawl up the ladder out of the way.

Young Jack turned to the old American and embraced him.

"Oh, sir," he cried, "how can I ever thank you enough? You have saved my life."

The old American patted his head kindly.

"I ask no more than to have saved you, my boy," he said; "I cannot tell you how much I am gratified. Do you want to gratify me now in return?"

"Tell me how I can, sir," he replied, eagerly.

"By heeding my counsels in future."

"I will."

The old doctor regarded the boy with a curious expression for a few moments.

He was studying his character in his face, and he soon made up his mind.

"Yes, yes," he said, "I'll trust you, Jack. If ever I knew a noble boy—well, well, I mustn't compliment you. I shall make you vain."

Two days elapsed without adventure.

Harry Girdwood mended rapidly.

In eight days, according to the worthy old doctor, he would be fit to get about.

This was grand news to both the boys.

Young Jack was full of fancies and wild schemes for escaping, and he felt that, backed by Harry Girdwood, he should be able to bring one of his daring and dangerous plans to a head.

On board the pirate ship Jack and his American friend lived quietly enough for a few days.

No other attempt was made by Toro or his vile asso-

ciates to get possession of the boy, who from that time lived at peace in the surgeon's cabin.

One morning Jack and the doctor were startled from their sleep by the sound of a cannon being fired overhead.

The doctor went to inquire into the cause of it, and he discovered that they were signaling a small ship.

"Another victim," said the doctor, with a sigh; "more prey for these insatiable murderers. Brutal ruffians! When will these scenes of bloodshed and wholesale murder come to an end?"

The doctor and young Jack watched the strange ship with considerable eagerness, and they were filled with vain regrets when they saw it lured to its doom.

"It would be a Christian work to warn them," said the old doctor.

"It would, indeed," replied young Jack, "but how?"

Plan after plan was thought of and dismissed, for the simple reason that it would be dangerous to them, and perhaps risk the safety of those whom they wished to preserve.

"I have a plan," said young Jack, after a time.

"What is it?"

"We could write them a letter," he began.

"Of course," said the doctor, interrupting him with a sad smile, "we could write a letter, but the postage presents some difficulty."

"Don't be impatient, doctor; I'm coming to that."

"What would you do?"

"I have read of shipwrecked people telling the world of their troubles by means of a letter fastened in a bottle."

"They might not pick it up," said the doctor.

"True, sir, but, on the other hand, they might."

The doctor brooded long and earnestly over it.

"Perhaps it is worth a chance," he said.

And so they made up their minds to try it.

But just as they were making their preparations,

young Jack discovered that the strange ship had lowered a boat, and was going to send some men on board.

"Now they will discover all about it for themselves," said the doctor.

"Do you think so?" asked young Jack.

"They must be blind as bats not to discover all about it," said the doctor.

"Half a glance ought to tell them as plainly as we could."

"At all events," said the American doctor, "we may have an opportunity of putting them upon their guard once they come on board. The only thing is to act with the greatest possible prudence, and then we may be of some good to them."

"You may count upon my caution, doctor," responded young Jack, earnestly.

"I do."

And the boy was fully resolved to take the old gentleman's advice before he made the least step in the matter.

* * * * *

Not very long after this the boat from the strange ship pulled alongside the *Flowery Land*, and the officer in command of the boat came on board.

Young Jack could not repress his curiosity.

At all hazards he determined to learn all he could.

He crept up the companion ladder on to the deck, and profited by the general attention of the pirate crew being engaged by the newcomer to get close up.

And then he perceived that the officer in question was dressed in the loose trousers and gaiters, such as are worn by the inhabitants of some of the Chinese islands, but his countenance was rather of the European cast than of the dull-faced, heavy-eyed Oriental.

"He looks almost like an Englishman," thought young Jack, in some surprise.

And this was in some measure confirmed the next

moment by hearing the officer address them in his language.

"This is the *Flowery Land*, I believe?" he said.

"Yes," replied one of the Lascar officers.

"And is commanded by Capt. Lin-Van-San?"

"Yes."

"I have a letter for his excellency."

"Well," thought young Jack, "that's funny, calling a pirate his excellency. What next?"

The next surprised him even more.

"His excellency will grant you an audience, I dare say," said the Lascar lieutenant.

"That is my wish."

"Give me your letter——"

"I cannot do that; it is against orders. I had particular instructions to give it into the hands of his excellency, the captain, and none else."

The Lascar lieutenant smiled.

"Very well, I will seek the captain and ascertain his pleasure."

Now the officer from the boat was in luck.

His excellency, the Capt. Lin-Van-San, graciously deigned to put in an appearance.

The captain of the *Flowery Land* was a formidable-looking fellow.

He stood nearly six feet high, was broad-shouldered, in proportion, and was fierce in aspect.

He wore around his middle a broad sash of gray crape, in which were stuck enough knives and pistols to stock a small armorer's store.

The captain did not wear his hair in Chinese fashion, that is, shaved off the front of the head, and gathered into a long pigtail; he let his hair grow like the Europeans, and this with the Chinese is usually a sign of mourning.

The officer from the boat made a profound obeisance as the dread captain advanced.

"You bring me a letter," said he, in good English.

"Yes, your excellency," replied the strange officer.

"From whom?"

"A friend and humble servant of your excellency," was the reply.

"His name?"

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. It is of high importance."

"Give it to me."

The captain took the letter, and handed it to the Lascar officer who had been to announce the visit from the strange vessel.

"Read."

The officer bowed, opened the letter, and read aloud as follows:

"The *Franz Josef* will leave upon the twenty-third, and the cargo will be rich. The *Flowery Land* is too well known to venture about our latitudes, but let your other vessel be on the watch. The *Flowery Land* is watched for. Be upon your guard; a British ship is on the lookout for you. Beware of her. The accursed British are a terror to the rovers of the sea. Avoid them as you would the plague. They have pushed the emperor to aid in the pursuit of the *Flowery Land*. Need I say how important it is that you should be quick?"

"Your devoted servant to command,

"BIGA-ENG-MING-MING."

The captain frowned.

"These British are very meddlesome."

"They are, sir."

"And is that all?"

"No, sir; there is yet a postscript at the end."

"Go on."

"The postscript says that besides carrying a regular captain, the *Franz Josef* will bear the owner of the plantation of whom mention has been frequently made."

"I remember him well," said the captain; "he has a wooden leg."

Young Jack started.

He thought of his poor old tutor, Isaac Mole.

"Go on."

"It's more than likely, too, that two rich Americans will be of the party, and an Englishman so wealthy that he can pay a princely ransom."

"He should have given all their names," said the captain.

"One moment, captain," said the Lascar, "he does; here are names, but I can scarcely read them. The Americans are called Jep—Jep, no not Jep, Jefferson—I see, and Magog Brand."

Young Jack could scarcely refrain from crying out aloud.

"The Englishmen are called Harvey and Jack Harkaway," pursued the lieutenant, "and both are desperate men, but rich, and the men are worth more than the whole cargo of the *Franz Josef*, by reason of the ransom that they can be made to disgorge if they are handled judiciously. All this your excellency can get confirmed by either of my friends whom I am given to understand have found you by now, either Ostani or Toro."

"Good," said the captain, "call Toro."

And then the burly Italian came slouching along the deck to where the party stood around the commander of the pirates.

"Toro."

"Captain."

"Do you know these names? Tell him, Salvator, I can scarce pronounce those barbarous names."

"Harvey?"

"Yes."

"Harkaway?"

"Yes."

"Magog Brand?"

"Yes."

"Jefferson?"

"Yes."

And then the ex-brigand, with a fierce oath, ejaculated:

"Yes, indeed I do know them; and what of all these, captain?"

"Our good friend writes us glorious news from Foo-Chow."

Toro's eyes glistened as he said:

"From Biga——"

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. Yes, a grand prize is to fall into our hands shortly. He writes to let us know."

"Good, good," exclaimed Toro, rubbing his hands gleefully; "very good. And is this all that Biga-Eng, as you call him, says?"

"Yes."

"Where is his letter?"

"Here," returned the Lascar lieutenant.

He had put it down for a moment on a big sea chest which stood beside him, and now it was gone.

In the general interest which the conversation had excited no one had observed a hand steal along the top of the chest and withdraw the letter.

Nor had they seen the stealer creep on hands and knees from his lurking place.

All that they knew now was that the letter was gone—overboard, they imagined.

So was the audacious young Jack.

But they did not know that.

Luckily for him he had gone as he came—unseen.

* * * * *

"Doctor, doctor!" cried the boy, sliding down the companion ladder.

"What is it?" echoed the old American, looking up quite startled.

"See here."

And Jack handed him his booty.

"What's this?"

"A letter; this ship is the pirate's consort."

"Never!"

"It is indeed."

"And this letter——"

"Announces when their next victim will fall into their hands; but, oh, doctor," added the boy, with a burst of feeling, "only fancy, my father and several of our friends will be on board."

The doctor started.

He eyed young Jack sharply.

He feared that he was going mad, that the exciting events had deranged his intellect.

"Read the letter, sir," cried young Jack Harkaway, "learn for yourself."

The doctor did so.

"You are right, my boy," he said, gravely; "this is sad news indeed."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MANDARIN MOLE AT HOME.

Mandarin Mole appeared likely to fall into trouble.

The Chinese are notoriously superstitious, and their supernatural fancies take some few peculiar flights.

Their national weakness is a belief in Feng-shuy, who may be defined as their god of luck, and has also some control over the wind.

To propitiate this deity, the Chinese perpetrate all kinds of wild extravagances.

For instance, they will only build their houses facing certain directions; and if examined closely into, it will frequently be discovered that sanitary laws are mysteriously at work in their ostensible purpose of invoking the protecting aid of Feng-shuy.

It was in this way, however, that Mandarin Mole contrived most unluckily to get into trouble.

He built up a low house, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, a hut, upon his property, and whether, being on the hillside, he had in some strange way worked in opposition to the inexplicable and inscrutable laws of Feng-shuyism it is not easy to say.

However, the day following the completion of this building a very remarkable accident occurred.

Mr. Mole was seated at breakfast with his wife, Chloe, Dick Harvey, Jack Harkaway and little Emily.

Mr. Mole was reading a native newspaper, or was pretending to read it, for he was a more arrant humbug than ever, and he used to get coached up in the meaning of the newspaper, and recite it off from memory, pretending all the while to decipher the Chinese characters as easily as English.

Monday burst into their presence, closely followed by his fellow darky, Sunday.

“Oh, Massa Mole! Massa Mole!”

Mr. Mole looked up.

"Oh, Brudder Mole!" ejaculated Sunday.

"What is it?"

"Oh, such a accident, Brudder Mole," cried Sunday.

"An accident, Sunday? Surely——"

"Oli, der is——"

"What?"

"You know dat new house?"

"The new house?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Brudder Mole, Brudder Mole!"

Mr. Mole began to grow impatient.

"What is it? Why can't you speak out?"

"Don't you get 'patient, Brudder Mole," said Sunday.

"No, sar," said Monday; "you'll learn all 'bout it soon enough."

"What?"

"Too soon."

"I wish you would——"

"Oh, dat new house."

"What of it?"

"Smashed up," replied Monday, with great gravity.

Mandarin Mole sprang up in his chair, and stamped his wooden leg vehemently upon the floor.

"My new house smashed up?" ejaculated Mole.

"Yes, sar."

"Yes, Brudder Mole."

"It is, sar," added Monday. "Smashed—broke up—chawed up, sar—pulverized—demolished!"

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Mole, staggered by the blow: "my newly-built house medolished—I mean domelished—tut, tut, confound it, I mean demolished!"

"Got your tongue in a knot?" suggested Harvey, chuckling.

"Don't joke, Harvey," said Mr. Mole, reprovingly. "It is no joking matter."

Harvey looked very serious at this.

"Right, sir," he said, "it is not. You should have taken more water with it."

"With what?"

"Your grog, sir."

Mr. Mole was utterly outraged at this.

Before the ladies, too.

Monstrous.

He mentally vowed to store up a heavy debt of vengeance against that scoundrel Dick Harvey.

It should be none the less certain or severe because he was forced to conceal his anger now.

None.

* * * * *

"Why, Brudder Mole," explained Sunday, "the fact is, dat Monday and me was walking ober dere to get to work, when we see a lot of dem fellars bolt away like scared venison."

"Deer," suggested Mandarin Mole.

"Well, deer; ain't deer and venison all the same?"

"Yes, but——"

"Don't interrupt, Brudder Mole," said Sunday, loftily.

"Weil?"

"Well, we see dem fellars flying off like flashes of greased lightning before we see nothink else, and den all of a suddink instead of the house we see nothink but a blank space standing up."

"I or'!"

"Good gracious me!"

"Are you sure you are right?" said Mr. Mole.

"Certain."

"I can place implicit belief on them, for one," said Harvey; "their keen sight is really marvelous."

"You think so, Harvey?" said Mandarin Mole.

"Decidedly. Who but they could have seen a blank space standing up?"

"Who indeed?" added Harkaway, slyly.

Poor Jack!

Poor hereaved father.

It was the first word of light-heartedness that they

had heard him utter since the fatal sea fight with the pirate junk.

"And the house?" asked Mr. Mole. "What has become of the house?"

"On de ground, Brudder Mole," answered Sunday. "Eh, Monday?"

"Yes, all dat's left of it," returned Monday.

"But now tell me," said Mr. Jefferson. "Just a word, Monday."

"Yes, sar."

"Who did it?"

"Dem 'fernal niggars, sar."

"The Chinese?"

"Yes."

"What can they have done it for?"

"Perhaps," said Magog Brand, "it is something connected with their religion or superstition."

Mr. Mole listened thoughtfully till now.

Then he spoke:

"I think not. It was built by native workmen."

"True."

"And if they had found anything about the place which didn't agree with their faith——"

"Well, but it may have interfered with their notions of what was right for their Feng-shuy fancies."

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," said Magog Brand, "for they are a very wonderful people, and there is no getting to the bottom of their fancies."

The party then, in some uneasiness, were led off by the two negroes to the scene of the outrage.

They were right.

The house, which had been built by Isaac Mole as a storehouse for the plantation, was utterly demolished.

There lay the house, which had taken weeks of patient labor to construct—a heap of ruins upon the ground.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHINESE SENTRY.

They looked on aghast.

Utterly dismayed at the ruin before them.

What was to be done?

They held a general consultation.

"I think we ought to arm Sunday and Monday, and let them stand upon the watch," proposed Mr. Jefferson.

"Why?"

"They are sure to come back."

"Were they in numbers?"

"Dere was a big crowd of dem," replied Sunday.

"How many?"

"Can't say."

"How many should you say?" they asked, appealing to Monday.

"Thirty or forty," was Monday's reply. "or more."

"We must be careful," said Brand.

"There's not much danger," said Jefferson; "they soon clear off when they smell powder. It disagrees with them."

"I have seen the Chinese fight well enough at times," said Magog Brand.

"When they are a hundred to one, I suppose."

"Well, yes."

"As far as numbers go, they would have it all upon their side," said Harkaway; "so let me recommend prudence."

"Quite right, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, "although, to tell the truth, if I were to follow my own inclination, I should act very differently."

"And what would you do?"

"Why mount guard," replied Mr. Mole, boldly.

"Alone?"

"Yes, alone!"

And he gave a regular swagger.

To see Mandarin Mole just then, one would have deemed him capable of challenging the whole province single-handed.

Dick eyed the old tutor slyly.

"Mr. Mole is quite right," said he, "and my opinion is that we ought not to stand in his way."

"True, Harvey," said Mole; "I feel I could fight fifty of them single-handed."

"Surely, Harvey, you would never consent to it."

"Not if we had to deal with any ordinary man," said Dick, "but I happen to know Mr. Mole better than most of you."

"Yes, but consider, single-handed."

"No, no, Mr. Mole must not be allowed to do anything so rash."

Mr. Mole felt that this was a safe opportunity for him to indulge in a little swagger and brag without running any risk.

"Gentlemen," he said. "I am not ungrateful for your affectionate regard and consideration. But there are moments when one's dignity and one's manhood revolt at coercion. I insist."

He regretted this speech very soon.

Although they had made such a show of opposing his rash resolution, they now one and all gave way, and turned to leave him then and there upon his solitary watch.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Home."

"To leave you," added Harkaway, "since such is your wish."

"Decidedly."

"Come along, then," said little Mr. Brand, falling into the joke. "But stay, one word."

"What is it?"

"Had we not better take an affectionate farewell of Mr. Mole?"

"Farewell!" gasped Mr. Mole. "What for?"

"In case of accidents, Mr. Mole."

Mandarin Mole was seen to wince at the word.

"Accidents!" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"But you don't think——"

"We don't anticipate anything," said Dick Harvey; "but one can never tell, so good-by, Mr. Mole; and may we meet again."

"Amen!" groaned Mr. Mole.

"And may no harm come to you—at any rate, let us pray you may not be mutilated like they do their prisoners generally."

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this.

"Oh, they mutilate their prisoners, Harvey?" he said.

"Oh, yes," continued Dick, cheerfully; "they are the most inventive people on the face of the earth in the matter of tortures for their prisoners."

"Dear, dear!"

He made a hard struggle to keep up an appearance of calm.

But his fears would show themselves in spite of him.

"Well, good-by, Mr. Mole," said Harvey.

"One moment, Harvey," said Mandarin Mole. "Eh—ah—just—ah!"

"We shall be within gunshot."

"Oh!"

"And though you are likely to fall honorably——"

"Don't."

"We shall avenge you, never fear."

"A pretty lookout for me," groaned Mr. Mole.

"And we'll bear your mutilated remains back to Mrs. Mole, no matter what may occur."

"Don't talk nonsense, Harvey," said Mole.

"You'll find it no nonsense."

"But what do they do? I—I am anxious to learn all I can."

"Yes," said Dick to himself, "and to find an excuse to keep me here."

Then he gabbled off hurriedly some of the notorious tortures which the Celestials have discovered.

He also added a fancy sketch or two of his own.

"Well," he said, "this is a favorite programme of theirs. They strip the prisoner stark naked, and tie him hands and feet, so that he is utterly helpless.

"Then they procure a springless cart, and carpet the bottom of it with jagged and rusty nails and bits of broken glass——"

"Ugh!" from Mole.

"And they lay their prisoner upon this to carry him over the worst roads they can find."

"Beasts!"

"Then they draw his finger nails——"

Mole with a groan dived his hands into his pockets.

"With a pair of pincers, and then——"

"Then," groaned Mole; "why, that would kill anyone."

"Oh, no," said Harvey, coolly, "not anyone that was hardy."

"Oh!"

"Then they tie the prisoner up by the ankles and give him the bastinado."

"What?"

"You don't know what the bastinado is?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, it is nothing more nor less than playing the devil's tattoo upon the soles of your feet with bamboo canes, and by Jupiter, don't it make you dance!"

"The fiends!"

"Well, next——"

"Next?"

"Yes."

"Why, no man——"

"Oh, yes he could," retorted Dick, anticipating Mr. Mole's remark, "if, as I stated before, he had been brought up hardy."

“Hardy!” echoed the dismayed Mandarin Mole; “why, hang me, Harvey, if an iron statue could stand it.”

“Well, next——”

“There, there,” interrupted Mr. Mole, “I don’t want to know anything more about the horrors that these revolting wretches have invented.”

“Oh, very well,” said Dick, “then I’ll go.”

“Eh?—oh!—stop a minute.”

“What for?”

“To keep me company.”

“Well,” said Dick, with an air of great candor, “I must say that that would give me great pleasure, only I have no wish to fall into the hands of the Chinese thieves.”

“Nor I.”

“Not that I so much mind their springless cart, their bastinado or their nail drawing.”

“Ugh!”

“I only think of the sequel.”

“The sequel!” shrieked Mandarin Mole. “What sequel can there possibly be to such horrors?”

“The prison,” replied Dick, solemnly.

“Prison?”

“Yes.”

“You can’t compare confinement in a prison to such horrors?”

“Can’t I?—no, I can’t; you’re right, Mr. Mole,” said Dick, looking more and more alarmed as he spoke; “nothing can compare to the prison. Do you know, they keep you awake until you die horribly of fatigue?”

“Oh!”

“Jailers are placed over you night and day, who prod your ribs with cruel spikes every time that you close your eyes.”

“What devils!”

“They are.”

And then, having made poor Mandarin Mole about as uncomfortable as he could by this rather highly

colored description of the manners and customs of the Celestials, Dick Harvey made off.

"Good-by. Remember, we shall be within gunshot, and if they torture or kill you, we shall avenge you."

And off Harvey ran at a great rate to rejoin the rest of the party, who were far on their way back.

When he overtook the party they were just discussing the prudence of leaving Mr. Mole there alone.

"It's all very well for a joke," said Mr. Jefferson, "but supposing that the thieves did come down from the hills and fall upon poor old Mole?—we shouldn't laugh then."

"No, indeed."

"What shall we do?"

"Fetch him away."

Dick burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"You don't know old Mole yet," he said; "there is no fear of his remaining long there alone."

"Think not?"

"It is sure."

"Still," said Jack Harkaway, "he might remain too long just by five minutes."

"Better call him back."

"No; wait a while," said Dick, "here we are at home. I'll show you a way of frightening him back, and then he will explain to us how many Chinese he has killed. But wait here for a while."

So saying, he went in, and returned in the course of five minutes accompanied by a curious little Chinese soldier, carrying an old-fashioned musket and the scimitar-like side-arm.

He wore a helmet also, which was so put on that it almost concealed his head and face.

Harvey led his native trooper up to the assembled company, and then gave him the word of command in his own particular Chinese.

"Fy-chow!" cried Capt. Dick, in those hoarse accents with which anyone is familiar who has seen

an English company put through its paces by a superior officer; "Keri-ki-ko-kum, slapbang penniwink!"

And then, turning toward the company, he added, gravely:

"Freely translated, gentlemen, that means present arms!"

The Chinese soldier faced around.

"Why, blow me!" exclaimed Mr. Nabley, in surprise, "look there. What is it?"

"It is Nero."

And so it was.

Nero, as large as life!

And a capital Chinese young Jack's monkey made, with perhaps this trifling ground of objection:

His pigtail had commenced growing rather lower down in his back than did the real Celestial's.

"Now we are off to make an experiment," said Harvey, with his old mischievous laugh.

"Where to?" demanded Jefferson.

"To the plantation; to the ruins."

"What, to Mandarin Mole's post?"

"Yes."

"What is your trick?" said Harkaway. "Tell us all about it?"

"I am only going to march Nero up there, to see how far noble old Mole's pluck will hold out."

So the whole of the party, seeing that there was a chance of fun, followed Dick Harvey and monkey Nero Fy-chow.

As soon as they got within a hundred yards or so of Mr. Mole, they discovered that that worthy gentleman had been trying to raise his courage for the solitary vigil by artificial means.

He had sat upon the ground to rest while he "refreshed" from a black bottle that stood beside him.

The bottle was labeled in conspicuous characters "Spring Water," but it smelt suspiciously of whisky. So did he!

It was evident that he had refreshed freely and fre-

quently, for he had been completely overcome by it, and had sunk back asleep.

Not only did the worthy Mole sleep, he also snored most discordantly.

Nothing could be better for Harvey's scheme.

He brought Nero up, made him strike an awe-inspiring attitude over the recumbent Mole, and then he, vulgarly speaking, kicked up a devil of a shindy.

First Harvey hulloalooed and then blazed away on a six-shooter revolver.

And just as he had let off his revolver, down dived Dick behind the ruins of the house.

Mole shrieked.

It was a drunken cry, but a cry it was.

"Murder, thieves, help! Oh, the devil!"

No response to this appeal appearing to be forthcoming, Mr. Mole scrambled up to his feet—well, no, his foot—and hurried away as fast as his legs—well, no, his leg—would carry him.

Nero managed to fire off his gun, loaded only with powder.

Mole heard the report, and tumbled flat on his face, but was soon again on his leg, stumping quickly away.

"Well, Nero," said Harvey, laughing heartily, "we've got the best of that, anyhow. Now, Nero, I'll leave you on guard, and just go home to hear what old Mole has to say for himself. He's sure to tell lies by the bushel over this."

CHAPTER XX.

NERO MOUNTS GUARD UP A TREE.

Nero, like a brave soldier, shouldered his musket and marched up and down.

There was a bit of a hop in his march, otherwise he would have looked like a highly disciplined sentry.

This was until Dick Harvey was out of sight, for Nero was as artful as the father of evil himself.

Then he dropped his musket and began to search about among the ruins of the demolished pagoda.

A woefully curious monkey was Nero.

His sharp eye had perceived something glistening in the rubbish of the ruins.

He prodded down with a stick that he found, poked and raked about until he fished up the object of his search.

It was a shiny leather case.

Nero tried to open it, for his natural intelligence told him it was to be opened, but he could not manage it, and so he stuffed it into his pocket in apparent disgust.

Suddenly Nero pricked up his ears.

He heard footsteps.

He looked about him, and then, seeing cause for alarm, scrambled up into a tree.

It wanted all his wonderful dexterity in climbing to make good his hold up there with his musket on his arm.

He had only just time to get fairly ensconced when a man appeared upon the top of the steep hill just close by the ruins of Mole's pagoda.

There was something very suspicious in the man's movements.

He looked carefully about him before venturing to descend the hill.

But apparently it never occurred to him to look into

the tree where Nero, the artful, sat perched and grinning.

The newcomer was satisfied that the coast was clear. So down he came.

He paused immediately beneath Nero's perch, and looked anxiously about him.

And then he began muttering to himself.

Now, his speech appeared to have a singularly exciting effect upon his monkeyship.

What could be the reason?

Was it because the stranger, who was outwardly a thorough-paced Celestial, spoke in English, that had an ultra-Whitechapel ring in it?

Perhaps.

Certain it is that it did excite Nero exceedingly.

"I'm cock sure," said this strange Chinese, "that I dropped it about here."

He raked about again.

"Blow it!" exclaimed the disappointed searcher. "Hang it!—dash it!"

Nero grinned and showed his teeth.

"Well," soliloquized the Chinese, ruefully, "this is a pretty go—jigger me if it ain't.

"Here I come, with a whole mob of these long-tailed prigs, to knock down old Moley-poley's shop, to fied the treasures he's got there, and devil a ha'porth can we drop on.

"All the good I do is to lose my case, with my letters and money in it. Damme, it's like the boy that found a marble and broke a window with it."

He stopped short.

His eye fell upon the black bottle that Mandarin Mole had been caressing.

"What's this? Spring water?" said the stranger.

He picked it up.

He sniffed.

Then his eyes beamed, and his voice sounded ecstatic as he murmured:

"Whisky!"

He took a drink.

"Oh, num-num!" he exclaimed; "and Irish, too. Old Mole was a rum old fool, but he had always a very pretty taste in whisky!"

And so he showed his belief in Isaac Mole's taste by sucking away at the whisky until he began to feel the potency of it about his head.

"I wonder if old Mole has been here," he said to himself, presently; "I would like to drop across him alone; I'd make him soapy, and nick his wooden member. What a lark! He! he! he!"

And the way he laughed told its own tale plainly.

Mole's whisky was very much overproof.

"I'd like to transmogrify him altogether," pursued this amiable person, who was amusing himself with picturing the discomfiture of the real provider of his feast. "I'd like, as the cockney proverb says—or doesn't say—to catch a mole asleep and shave his eyebrows! What sport!"

Suddenly his humor changed.

He went at once from gay to grave.

"What if they have got my case of letters—and the money! Oh, blow the tin!" he added. "But the letter! Oh, my! That would be too cruel! How it would spoil everything, just as we have got such a delicious swindle on. Oh, it can't be!"

He got on to his feet, but to his surprise he found that he was not quite as steady as he could have wished.

"Dear me! I must have got cramped, sitting so long," he muttered.

Suddenly Nero swung round and dropped from his perch.

Down he plumped, full in front of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming—for that was the mysterious Celestial who spoke English of the Whitechapel idiom.

The latter gave a mighty start.

Nero recovered arms like a real military machine.

Then he presented his gun full at the intruder.

"What is it?" cried Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. "Oh, sir, don't fire."

Nero remained impassive.

Immovable as a statue.

He was a wonderful animal, and did rare credit to Dick in having learned so much in so little time.

"Chin Chin!" said the half-inebriated Biga-Eng, ruefully. "I wish I only knew a little more of their blessed lingo. I might be able to gammon him, and smarm him over."

Nero advanced upon the terror-stricken Biga-Eng menacingly.

"Don't, handsome sir. Oh, great mandarin, don't hurt a poor little fellow."

And just then he caught sight of Nero's face.

This was enough for Biga-Eng.

His white face grew ghastly, his teeth chattered, and his knees knocked together.

"Evins!" groaned the wretched man; "it's the old one been and disguised hisself and coming to fetch me for my sins—where's his fork?" Nero showed his teeth.

And, truth to tell, he did look rather an alarming personage when his white teeth stood out against his hairy face.

He was an artful monkey, too, and he saw his advantage.

He made another step forward.

Then down Biga prostrated himself in the dust.

Thereupon Nero brought down the butt end of his gun an awful whack upon Biga-Eng's bigger end.

"Whoo!" yelled Biga; "somebody come and help me. Oh, the devil, the devil!"

And he had good cause to yell.

The effects of the blow were to color the unfortunate man's damaged part like a harlequin's coat, and it effectually prevented him from enjoying himself sitting for a long while to come.

Nero belabored the unhappy man until he was tired of the sport, and then he made a grab at his hair.

It came away in his paw.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming wore a wig.

At this, satisfied with his victory, Nero shouldered his musket and marched off homeward.

You could see by his strut that he was not a little pleased with his exploit.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming wailed and groaned—he groaned and wailed.

And when he could no longer repress his curiosity, he looked up.

There was the conquering hero marching off with his gun in one hand and the spoils of victory in the other.

“Oh, my, what a remarkably long pigtail he wears,” said the suffering man to himself. “And how low down—but I’ve done him, and I could laugh if he hadn’t given me ‘bacca so awful, for I’ve diddled the devil himself—he thought he had scalped me, and blowed if it ain’t a wig.”

And so he crawled away with his hands behind him, groaning and yelling:

“Oh, how I suffer in this particular part.”

CHAPTER XXI.

BIGAMINI DROPS HIS MASK.

Harkaway and Jefferson met Mr. Mole on his return from the ruined pagoda.

"Glad to see you alive, sir," said Harkaway; "did anyone attack you?"

Mr. Mole nodded.

"Yes."

"Surely, you were not exposed to any danger, sir?" said Harkaway.

"Indeed, I was," replied Mr. Mole. "But thanks to my good nerve and a strong arm, I have given them a lesson."

"Goodness gracious!" said Mr. Jefferson. "Did many attack you?"

"Yes."

"In force?"

"They were at least twenty," said Mr. Mole.

"Did many attack you at once?"

"Yes. I will not disguise from you that I was in some alarm. But the cowardly ruffians dare not come within reach after I had knocked three of them upon the head."

Harkaway and Jefferson said nothing.

Their looks expressed their profound admiration for Mandarin Mole.

"They all assailed me at once," pursued the unblushing Mole, with the air of a warrior. "But I fell upon them—hang it, sir, I smote 'em hip and thigh, and I scattered them like chaff before the wind."

"It sounds like a song."

"It does," said Jefferson. "I should have been sorry to have been in your place, Mr. Mole."

And while Mr. Mole was giving a finishing touch to his highly colored narrative, Dick Harvey came in.

"Here's a letter for you, Mr. Mole," said he.

Mr. Mole took it and read it.

And then he handed it to Mr. Jefferson, saying that it was from the shipbroker, relating the departure of the *Franz Josef*.

Mr. Jefferson read it, and handed it to Harkaway, who scanned it through, and then read it aloud to the company generally.

"HONORED SIR: The *Franz Josef* sails on the twenty-third inst. By special arrangement, and special accommodation has been prepared on board for your friends who purpose going. The state cabins and berths have been refitted, and every requirement has been carefully anticipated.

"Your excellency's obedient servant to command.

"BIGA-ENG-MING-MING."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "are you still of the same mind?"

"Yes."

"All?"

And so it went round, every one deciding upon leaving the place, save Isaac Mole and his Chloe.

It was poor Harkaway who had started this movement.

Since the untimely fate of young Jack, his mother was so saddened that nothing could rouse her from her settled melancholy.

Constant change of scene was, he thought, the only thing to chase dull thought.

And so it was determined that they should start for the voyage in the first ship—by the *Franz Josef*.

At the same time it was understood that they were only going for the voyage.

They agreed with old Mole to return within a few months.

The only members of the party that were to remain behind were the two detectives, Daniel Pike and his

comrade Nabley, the French cook, Hypolite Potiron, and Mr. and Mrs. Mole.

"By the way," said Dick Harvey, "I have got a bit of fun to relate to you."

"What of?"

"Mr. Mole."

"Me!" cried Mole.

"Yes, you and Nero."

"Nero and I went up to the ruins of the pagoda."

Mole started.

"Nero and you!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, what of that?"

"Nothing, only I didn't know," stammered Mole.

"I rigged Nero up as a Chinese soldier——"

"What?"

"And he looked the part to the life," continued Dick, as though he did not hear the interruption. "Well, there lay Mr. Mole, asleep and snoring."

"No, no."

"Snoring."

"No, no, no," cried Mr. Mole, vehemently. "Asleep, I grant you, but I deny the snoring. Mrs. Mole will tell you that I never snore. Chloe, my love, tell them that I never snore. Tell the truth."

"Why, you snore like a old pig, Ikey," said Mrs. Mole. "I sometime punch you in de back, turn you ober, and den you not snore so much."

Whereupon there was a general roar of laughter.

"Well," resumed Dick.

"Don't trouble yourself to tell any more, Harvey," said the tutor; "we have had quite enough."

"Come, come, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, "I want them all to know about it, and you, too. Well, Nero and I marched up. Mr. Mole was snoring, as I said, and beside him lay a bottle."

"Spring water," ejaculated Mole.

"Marked so, but smelling uncommonly like whisky."

"A scandal!"

"Oh, Mr. Mole, Mr. Mole," said Harvey.

"So it is," persisted Mr. Mole. "Besides," he added, appealing to the company, "if there was any truth in your wild story, where is Nero dressed up, eh? That's a poser for you, Master Harvey—eh, where's Nero?"

Dick heard a noise that induced him to step to the entrance.

"Where's Nero?" he echoed; "why, here!"

And Nero, grinning and showing his teeth, marched triumphantly in, shouldering his musket and bearing the spoils of victory.

"Hello!" cried Harkaway; "he's found something."

"What's that?"

"It looks like Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming's hair," said Magog. "I always thought that he wore a wig. Well, Mr. Mole, what do you say now?"

"Why, where is Mr. Mole?"

He had disappeared.

The overpowering evidence had been too much even for him.

So he had retired until the affair blew over.

* * * * *

The twenty-third arrived.

The *Franz Josef* had been fitted up grandly enough for royalty to travel in, and the Harkaway party embarked.

Nero was left behind, be it observed.

Since his adventure at the ruins of Mole's pagoda, Nero had been allowed to retain his native soldier's costume.

The consequence was that the leather case containing the letters and money of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming was not discovered.

On the morning of the twenty-fifth, Mr. Mole came upon Nero squatting on the ground and making another desperate attempt to open the leather case.

"What have you there, Nero?" demanded the tutor.

The intelligent monkey held up his treasure to Mr.

Mole, and to his great delight, the latter opened it immediately.

"Why, what's this?" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Money—bank notes—English, too. Why, Nero, where did you get this?"

He went on.

There were letters, so Mole opened one of them, eagerly glancing first at the outside address, which was:

"BIGA-ENG-MING-MING,
"Hongkong.

"To be forwarded."

But inside the letter, the first words dazed poor Isaac Mole, and set him all of a tremble.

"FRIEND BIGAMINI: Your last letter has come safely to hand. But before I go on to speak of the chief subject of interest to us all, let me remind you that you have been guilty of imprudence in selecting a name so nearly like the one by which you were so long known, and by which I always feel to want to address you. You are surrounded by danger. You do not know how careful you should be when you have in your immediate neighborhood such a mob of keen-sighted men as Harkaway—curse him!—Harvey, Jefferson, a new foe, and his friend the dwarf, Magog Brand, not to speak of the two English detectives, Pike and Nabley, who can read a face as plainly as a written volume! Beware of them! Your only bit of luck is having that drunken old donkey Mole there."

"What!" ejaculated Mole, firing up, "'that drunken old donkey Mole there.'"

He crushed the letter in his palms, but overcoming his wrath with an effort, he read on.

"You have only to hang him out a drink as a bait, and you can hook him when you please."

He dashed down the letter with a cry of indignation.

"The villain!" he ejaculated; "but let me finish it."

He resumed.

"If you can manage to get the Harkaways off, as you suppose, by the *Franz Josef*, on the twenty-third, it will indeed be glorious, for nothing can then save them from visiting our delightful floating country, the *Flowery Land*—and in that case, good-by to all our old enemies at one fell swoop, and we shall reap the reward of industry, the fruits of our labors. We shall be rich for life, my Bigamini. Harkaway's brat is here on board, and has been permitted to live till now. In two days he is to be hanged!"

"Poor boy, poor boy," cried Mole.

The letter fell from his hand, and Nero eagerly snatched it up.

"Ah, Nero, Nero," said poor old Mole, "if you could only read, you would learn that you were going to lose the best master you ever had, or ever could have, and I shall lose the best boy, my own dear young Jack."

And the old tutor, quite overcome by his feelings, fairly wept.

We can't say if monkeys ever indulge in tears, but one thing is certain.

Nero knew that poor old Mole was in grief, for he sidled up to him, and fondled him just as a pet dog does when you are in trouble.

"Poor Nero," said Mr. Mole; "poor Nero, when did you get this? Why didn't you find it sooner? Nero, you are just two days too late."

Alack, he was!

The *Franz Josef* was two days on her journey.

Two days nearer its fate.

Mr. Mole jumped up.

What was to be done?

"It's no use sitting down to regret," said he, aloud; "I must do what I can to save them. Oh, what an ass I have been to fall into such a trap. What shall I do to help them?"

He looked out for the two detectives.

They were both out.

He scarcely expected them back that night.

Was there no one he could consult in the meanwhile?

No one.

"Oh, I shall die of impatience," groaned Mole, in anguish, "I know I shall. All, all gone—all at one fell swoop, and I shall be left a poor, miserable old wretch to end my days in solitude."

His grief was sincere, but still it was rather hard upon the faithful Chloe.

* * * * *

"Sir!" said a servant, advancing to Mole.

"What now?"

"The broker Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming would see your excellency."

Mr. Mole started up.

"Biga-Eng?"

"Yes, sir."

"Show him in."

The servant bowed and left the apartment.

"Now," said Mr. Mole to himself, "now I shall have him. Now we will see how he will go on with that 'drunken old Mole,' as they call me. Well, I am a drunken old fool and a donkey, but, please goodness, he shall learn that Isaac Mole is not utterly despicable when he has a lucid interval."

He hastily concealed the pocketbook, gave a final glance at the letter to ascertain who was the writer, and discovering that it was Toro, he got Nero out of the way while the sham shipbroker, Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, was ushered into the room.

The traitor bowed.

Mole responded by a grave salute.

He had to exercise the greatest control over himself to prevent his feelings betraying him.

"Good health and happiness to your excellency," said the sham shipbroker. "You are looking in excellent health."

"I am, my friend," replied Mr. Mole. "Come and be seated."

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming obeyed.

"To what am I indebted for the pleasure of this visit?" asked Mr. Mole.

"I have brought your excellency a little present," said his visitor, blandly.

"Ah, what?"

"A bottle."

"Of spirits," interrupted Mr. Mole, excitedly. "I thought so."

Biga-Eng smiled.

"Your excellency is fond of whisky?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Mole, with forced gayety, "very. Some of my dear friends go so far as to say I am a drunken old rascal."

"Surely no one would take so great a liberty. Have you enemies, your excellency?"

"Some few only."

"Your excellency surprises me."

"Why, when I was in Italy, I knew a scoundrel, an Italian thief, called Toro—you look strange. Do you know the name?"

"No, your excellency," replied the visitor, quickly. "Not I."

"I thought you might."

"Never was in Italy in all my life."

"Never?"

"Never."

"Could you swear that?"

"Yes."

"At the point of death?"

"Oh, certainly," replied the visitor, cheerfully, "certainly."

"That's right," said Isaac Mole, stumping across the room to a cabinet in which he kept some arms, "for you are near death now."

"What, sir?"

The visitor smiled.

He had not quite caught what Mr. Mole said.

Mr. Mole got from his cabinet a large horse pistol, an ugly, old-fashioned weapon, with a barrel eighteen inches long, and walking to Biga-Eng's chair, he took the unsuspecting visitor by the throat, and thrust the pistol muzzle into his face.

"Now, Bigamini," said Isaac Mole, in a strangely calm voice, "you are at the point of death, so swear you never were in Italy in the whole course of your life."

It was indeed the villainous and hypocritical impostor Bigamini, the murderer, and the former associate of Italian brigands, who, after being cast adrift upon the ocean, was saved by a passing vessel, and now was a spy in the employment of the Chinese pirates.

The villain was unmasked.

His color went, and his cheeks turned of the livid hue of the grave.

His jaw dropped and he was dumb-stricken.

"Swear!" said Isaac Mole, in the same cold and terrifying tones; "swear it, for I have promised myself that you shall die with a lie upon your lips."

Not a word.

Not a sound from that fear-stricken wretch.

"Do you hear?" said Mole, with subdued ferocity. "Swear!"

And he jobbed the pistol fairly into the impostor's mouth.

Bigamini only gave a hollow groan.

"Swear!" persisted Isaac Mole.

Bigamini then found his tongue.

"Concealment is useless," he said; "but if you kill me, your friends will all be sacrificed."

"Swear!" cried Mole, jobbing him again with the pistol.

"Spare me, and I can save them all."

"You prince of liars," said Isaac Mole. "You are trying it on again."

"I am not; my life is in your hands; is it likely I would trifle with you now?"

"How could you save them?"

"Easily."

"Explain," cried Mole, quickly, "or the pistol might go off, and your head with it."

"Let a steamer be dispatched after them," said Bigamini, hurriedly; "let me be kept in bondage until they are safe. If you can pay for it——"

"If," cried Mole, excitedly. "I—I'll pay thousands—anything, everything that I possess."

"Nothing is easier, then," said Bigamini.

"What shall I do? I will give my life to save my friends."

"Call your people."

Mole stepped up to a gong that stood in the room, and beat upon it with a large drumstick that was hung beside it.

Bigamini glanced eagerly about him.

"Now or never!" the spy muttered to himself.

He bounded from his seat, and snatching up a broad scimitar from the cabinet of arms, he made a dash at Mole.

"Ha!" cried Mole.

But before he could get out of reach, a deadly cut from the scimitar upon his leg sent him to the ground with a groan of agony.

"You've got it, old Mole, have you?" said Bigamini.

He raised his scimitar again to strike.

Just then something leaped upon his shoulders, and two sharp, claw-like hands caught in his hair.

The hands of something horrible and unnatural cut into his flesh.

He yelled with agony.

Down he rolled upon the floor, and then, catching a glimpse of his hitherto unseen enemy, he was filled with a nameless horror.

His assailant was the devilish-looking sentry from the ruins of the pagoda.

He scrambled up and fought desperately, and made for the door, but some one was near at hand.

So he fought up to the window, and somehow or other contrived to scramble out.

But his unearthly assailant had given him something to remember him by for many a long day to come.

For the brave Nero had not only taken out the traitor's hair by the handful, and this time it was not a wig, but he had also torn his face and blinded him in one eye for life.

* * * * *

Daniel Pike burst into the room, followed closely by Nabley.

"Mr. Mole, Mr. Mole," cried the latter, "what is it?"

Poor old Mole was almost beyond speech.

But he pulled himself up, and with a groan, gasped: "Bigamini -- window -- he escapes -- shoot -- kill -- bring him back."

Pike heard the words, and his quick wit caught the meaning at once.

So, snatching up his rifle, he ran to the window.

"I can see a man flying up the hill."

"After him!" cried Nabley; "don't miss him."

"I won't."

Pike scrambled through the window, rifle in hand.

Then, when he saw that the fugitive had to make a long, straight run of it in the open, he dropped upon one knee, and resting his elbow upon the other, he took a long, steady aim.

"Hit him!"

He had.

The fugitive threw up his arms and fell forward upon his face.

"He's safe," said Daniel Pike, contentedly; "now for poor old Mole."

He ran back to the window and put his head in.

The place was full of people now.

Poor Chloe was supporting her husband's head in

her lap, while the servants were gathered about, looking on.

"Nabley," said Pike, anxiously, "how is he?"

"Bad."

"Is there danger?" he then asked, anxiously.

"I can't say, but the villain has nearly lopped off the other leg—if we can save him, he will have to go through the world upon another wooden leg."

Just then poor Isaac Mole opened his eyes.

"Has Pike got him?" he faltered.

"Yes."

"That's brave," said the sufferer. "Save them and I can die happy. Bring him here."

Pike and one of the servants ran back and mounted the hill to the spot where his well-aimed shot had dropped the pirates' spy.

But he was gone.

Where, it was impossible to say.

But Bigamini had got clear off, and the only sign of his passage was a telltale pool of blood upon the hillside where he fell.

This was indeed bad luck, and Daniel Pike returned quite crestfallen to the house.

CHAPTER XXII.

HUNSTON'S MECHANICAL ARM.

Let us board the *Flowery Land* once more.

Several details have to be related in connection with the pirate vessel before we resume the adventures of the unfortunate Isaac Mole.

They had naturally a good deal of leisure time upon their hands now, and some of them put it to a very good advantage.

Robert Emmerson showed that, in addition to the various gifts of which we have seen he was possessed, he was a highly skillful mechanic, and he passed his hours in making a movable arm for Hunston.

The artificial limb was made of steel, and so cunningly wrought that there was not even any stiffness to betray it to those who might not happen to know of Hunston's loss.

The hand was a masterpiece, and jointed with a delicacy and finish that was perfectly marvelous.

When this clever piece of mechanism was complete, Emmerson showed that, joined to his skill in other branches of mechanical art, he was an admirable engraver.

Upon the smooth steel of the thicker part of the arm he engraved this legend:

"From Emmerson to Hunston.

"Foes, beware me!

"But woe to the wearer if raised against a friend."

Now, clever as was this mechanical limb, it yet concealed from the general eye a most important feature of its construction.

This feature was known only to Emmerson.

It was this:

One of the springs in the top joint was anointed with a subtle and insidious poison.

It was so arranged that in a given time the friction would inevitably cause the joint to wear away, and then it would need the care of the inventor himself.

He alone knew how to repair it in that part.

The bond of guilt existing between them gave Emmerson no guarantee of Hunston's good faith.

Now, this would, he thought, make Hunston secure; for once let the spring wear through, it must corrode, and then woe be to the wearer of the arm!

During the progress of the work, Robert Emmerson had carefully kept the nature of it a secret.

The consequence was that when Hunston appeared on deck among his comrades, there was a general excitement.

They all pronounced it a marvelous work, and Emmerson was quite lionized for a while.

"You see the legend it bears upon the arm, my friends and comrades all," said Hunston. "Let us hope it may be true. Let me echo the wish heartily, sincerely. 'Woe to the wearer if raised against a friend.'"

As they walked aft, Hunston asked Toro what was the day of the month.

"The twenty-third."

"Good."

"You know what occurs to-day," said Hunston.

"No," replied Emmerson. "What?"

"The *Franz Josef* sails to-day."

"Of course," said Emmerson, his eyes flashing greedily; "I had forgotten for the moment."

"In a few days more we shall have them in our clutches."

"I hope so."

"It is sure."

"Remember the old adage," said Emmerson, smiling; "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip.'"

Hunston laughed.

"I don't think there is much chance of mishap now."

"I hope not."

"I am sure not."

"Can you make sure of your agent, Big—Big—what's his name?"

"Bigamini."

"Ah, Bigamini; is he to be relied on?"

"Yes; he's the prince of spies."

"Glad to hear it," returned Emmerson, "for if all goes well, this should be a splendid haul."

"Splendid!" echoed Hunston; "my dear Emmerson, it will make us rich for life."

Emmerson smiled in a strange manner.

"Do you doubt it?"

"Not I."

"Why do you laugh, then?"

"Partly at your enthusiasm, and partly at——"

"At what?"

"At my fancies."

His manner was slightly tinged with melancholy, and it excited Hunston's curiosity.

"What fancies?"

Emmerson looked very solid as he answered:

"I think that I shall not have long to enjoy whatever spoil we may make."

"Stuff!"

Emmerson smiled, though sadly.

"You laugh at such fancies, Hunston," he said.

"I do."

"I don't wonder at it. Still, I cannot shake it off. I am sure that I am not long-lived."

"Ah, you mustn't trouble yourself about that," said Hunston, heartily. "Robert Emmerson is worth forty dead men yet."

"At present, yes," said Emmerson.

And so the conversation was allowed to drop.

* * * * *

It was midnight.

All was silent on board the *Flowery Land*.

In the old doctor's cabin a solemn conference was going on between young Jack, Harry Girdwood and the doctor.

They were debating still about the best means of warning their friends against the threatening danger into which they had been decoyed by the treachery of the pirates' spy, Bigamini.

And this was the only scheme that they could hit upon:

They got a dozen large bottles together, and in each they dropped a few small shot.

This was to be used as a steadier.

Then they inserted a small written note in each bottle and carefully sealed and corked it.

They next waxed each bottle and dipped it in tar.

This done, they drew a broad line of white, and another of red around the top of the bottle.

And when the first of these was completed, young Jack dropped it through the cabin window into the sea.

Then followed an anxious time for them all. Would it float?

Would it attract the attention of a passing vessel?

Alas! it was doubtful.

"We must hope for the best," said the American doctor: "it is our only chance, and I have a presentiment that all our labor and all our perseverance cannot go unrewarded."

And so the old gentleman comforted his two young companions.

The second night saw three more of their large signal bottles completed and launched.

Now, as it chanced to be fine and moonlight, they could plainly see their bottles dancing on the water.

"They are visible enough," said young Jack.

"Our only hope is therefore to send out enough of them and hope for the best," said Harry Girdwood.

"True," said the American doctor; "our hope must be in Heaven now."

And so nightly they pursued their self-set task, hop-

ing that Providence would send the *Franz Josef* across their little floating beacon of warning.

"Doctor," said young Jack, one night, "do you remember how you saved me?"

"When?"

"When they followed me down here and would have carried me up on deck."

"Yes."

"Do you remember what you then threatened them with?"

"Yes."

"Was there any truth in that?"

"In what?"

"That little phial that, if crushed, would send the whole ship and crew to the bottom?"

"Yes; undoubtedly, it is true."

"Then," said young Jack, thoughtfully, "we have always that one resource on hand."

The American doctor looked serious.

"We have; but still I should hesitate to use it."

"Even in a very extreme case?" asked young Jack.

"Yes."

"Then you just give it to me, doctor," said young Jack, boldly. "I shouldn't myself."

The doctor looked more serious than before.

"I dare say not, Jack," he said, quietly; "but it is better in my hands at present."

* * * * *

Harry Girdwood was convalescent.

Still he was scarcely fit as yet for violent exercise.

By the good doctor's orders he reclined for several hours out of the twenty-four more than either he himself or young Jack did.

He shared all their counsels, and being compelled to rest so long bodily inactive, his mind was all the more pliant and industrious.

And one solitary thought ever occupied it.

Escape!

At a first glance you will naturally say that there was not much scope for invention, unless he started by some plan which was too full of risk and danger to be contemplated for an instant.

"Doctor," said Harry Girdwood, late one night, as they were about to commence their usual conference, "and you, Jack, I have got something to say to you both, something to propose."

"What is it?" said the doctor.

"I have a plan of escape to suggest."

"Is it practicable?"

"You shall hear and judge for yourself."

"Go on, Harry," said young Jack, who was all eagerness to hear it.

"In the first place, do you hear that creaking noise just overhead?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what it is?"

"It's the boat swinging there, and it creaks with rust as the ship moves, or as the wind blows."

"That's it, Jack," said Harry Girdwood, "and it was that noise that first gave me the idea as I lay groaning with pain. At first it was only a confused fancy, but by degrees I have got it into shape, and I think now that if you will help me, we can work the scheme pretty safely."

"Go on," said young Jack, with all the hot eagerness of youth.

"Proceed," said the old American, more gravely.

"I thought night and day how to lower that boat and ourselves with it. We must get a store of food together, saved out of our rations, to victual the boat, and we must get firearms. The next thing is to have the pulleys so well greased in advance that it will drop down into the water without any noise at all."

The doctor smiled.

"That is a difficult job," he said.

"Difficult," said Jack, with eagerness; "but not impossible."

"Perhaps!"

"And what about the watch?" asked the doctor.

"You must do that."

"How?"

"Why, you must have plenty of drugs that could send them to sleep for any length of time."

"I have," responded the doctor; "the only difficulty would be to——"

"To administer them," said young Jack.

"Yes."

"That shall be my job," said Harry; "the plan of the French cook was a good one—all that it wanted was care in its execution."

"True."

"To avoid rashness."

"True again."

"Well, I would get in the night at the water cask—tamper with it all."

"My dear boy," said the doctor, "that is a bold scheme—a very daring notion."

"It is, doctor; nothing but daring can save us. Would you not dare something to get out of this floating slaughterhouse?"

"I would indeed," said the doctor, with a sigh.

"Then join us in our scheme," said young Jack; "I'm sure it sounds well, and with your help it could be done, I am sure."

The doctor made no reply.

He sat moodily for a long while, calculating the chances of this desperate business.

"Well, doctor?"

"Well, my dear boys, I shall join you," he said; "but only on one condition."

"Name it."

"That you will be guided by me and avoid rashness."

"I promise."

"And I, too."

"Then, my boys, I am in the plan heart and soul,

and if you only join the greatest caution to your natural tact and skill, something good will be sure to come of it."

Well, the conspirators passed each night maturing Harry Girdwood's plan of escape.

But upon the third day a misfortune happened to them.

One of the crew, a Lascar, named Spirillo, fell from the rigging to the deck, bruising himself rather seriously.

The man was carried by his comrades into the cabin, and the doctor had to attend upon him.

The injuries the man had received were of such a nature that they feared to move him.

The consequences were that Spirillo was obliged to spend two days and nights with them, which put an end effectually to their proceedings in the matter of the escape.

Now the doctor was by nature humane, and he was also exceedingly politic.

"It's an unfortunate job, Jack," said he to our young hero, "but we must make the best of it. We have a double motive in getting this Spirillo well as quickly as possible."

"Let me nurse him, then," said young Jack.

"You can if you like," said the good doctor, "only be careful."

"Trust me, sir."

"And attentive."

"I will."

And thus our hero, young Jack Harkaway, found himself installed in the office of chief attendant to the Lascar Spirillo, one of the ferocious, bloodthirsty pirates who had so lately sought his life.

The Lascar received young Jack's attentions somewhat surlily at first, but the boy's winning manner soon told upon the rough Spirillo, and by degrees he quite warmed up to him.

Then it was that young Jack suddenly discovered

that Spirillo was anything but a brutal or ferocious man at the bottom; indeed, that he had, under the very roughest of exteriors, some really kind feelings and worthy attributes.

Young Jack made Spirillo grow quite confidential in the course of a day or so.

And by degrees he learned all the Lascar's past history.

It was not without a certain interest.

But we have not space here to give it in his own words.

Briefly, then, Spirillo had fallen into his present way of life by pure accident.

Without being utterly bad, he was just careless enough of his reputation and morals generally to drift into anything that turned up—whether smuggling, piracy, or even slave-catching.

He had originally been in the merchant service, and his vessel had been run down by a notorious pirate—one of a whole fleet—cruising about the Greek Archipelago.

Here he had spent many years of his life.

The Greek rover had spared his life on condition of his joining them.

Spirillo might have chosen the career had he had the choice left free to him.

With such an ugly alternative as losing his life, he did not hesitate half a second.

And so, behold Spirillo drop suddenly from being a bluff, honest tar into a full-blown pirate, one of a most notorious gang, with a heavy price upon his head and a rope halter waiting ready for him whenever he should be captured.

"And how came you to leave the Greeks?" asked young Jack.

"I had a quarrel with the captain," replied Spirillo; "it was about one of the prisoners taken. I knew that he was a vicious fellow; he never forgave anyone yet for so much as a thoughtless word—never forgot an

injury, however slight or even unintentional. So I made my escape."

"Where?"

"Here."

"What, direct?"

"Almost."

"But did you know of these people when you lived cruising about in those latitudes?"

The Lascar pirate stared in a peculiar way at the questioner.

"You mustn't be too curious," he said.

"I don't mean to be indiscreet," said young Jack, hastily; "pray don't let me annoy you by my questions."

"You don't," responded Spirillo, quite melted by the eagerness of young Jack to make himself agreeable. "Ask all you wish; there is only that that I shall refuse to tell you—nothing more. Anything about the old gang I'm free to speak about—anything—it's only of these that I must, of course, keep silent."

"Then just one question, please," said young Jack; "could those Greeks make large fortunes out of their plunder?"

"Some of them."

"How, some?"

"The captain and some of the officers."

"I see."

"There is a treasure in the pirates' island of the archipelago that would make the fortune combined of Rothschild, Oppenheim, Baring, Pereire and a score more."

Jack smiled.

"It's a big one, then, Spirillo," he said.

"You are right, young fellow, it is. You have read the tales of the 'Thousand and One Nights,' I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And you remember the tale of 'Ali Baba'?"

"I do, indeed," said young Jack; "you would speak of the Forty Thieves' treasure?"

"Yes."

"Well, and is there such a fairylike cove in your pirate island?"

"You may laugh, young fellow, but it is literally so. The wildest fancy cannot exaggerate the fabulous wealth of the treasure."

"Whose treasure is it now?" asked Jack.

"One man's."

"One!"

"Yes, one—the captain's. This, the wealth of a kingdom, has been amassed by him in one generation. Daring, courage and some skill, too, have made him, beyond all manner of doubt, the richest man upon the face of the earth!"

Jack stared.

The picture that Spirillo drew took his breath away.

There is something awe-inspiring in hearing of such fortunes.

"And what does this captain do now?" asked he; "does he still cruise about to plunder poor wretches who haven't a tithe of the riches which he himself possesses?"

Spirillo shook his head as he replied:

"Monastos is a great man now."

"Where?"

"Athens."

"What!" exclaimed young Jack, "has he ventured to trust himself there?"

"In Greece they are not particular. The government winks at many things, especially the origin of a man who can lend it a million at a day's notice."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed young Jack.

"Why, Capt. Monastos is a power in the land," Spirillo went on to say. "A man of more importance than prime minister, ay, or even king. He is fêted, and courted, and fawned upon more than any man in Athens."

"And all this upon——"

"Plunder; don't pause—that's the word; but I'd dearly like to get at it."

"At what?"

"His treasure."

"Do you know where it is?"

"Yes; and I suppose that I am about the only living man who does."

"Indeed."

"Besides himself. The secret was shared by few, and of this few I was one. The others who were in the secret with me died off one by one by sickness in such a mysterious manner that I deemed it prudent to get out of the way in time."

"Why not go and secure it, Spirillo?" said young Jack. "Why stay here, working for nothing, with men you care nothing for, and in a black, bad trade, when, by helping yourself to Capt. Monastos' treasure, you will only be helping yourself to your own?"

Spirillo's eyes flashed as young Jack spoke, and he remained buried in thought for some little time.

"Shall I tell you the truth, young fellow?" he said, presently.

"Yes."

"Well, the truth is this: I have thought of it. I do think of it. Not a day of my life but I think of it. But to get at it involves many difficulties."

"What are they?"

"I couldn't do it alone."

"Well?"

"I should have to trust my secret with others. I should want capital and a ship, and a daring, bold fellow or two with me!"

"And if you find all these, Spirillo?"

"Why, then, I'd think seriously about it."

"What would you say if I could show you how to get it all—money, men, a ship?"

"You?"

"Yes."

"Who are the people?"

"My father and his old friend Dick have all that is required for such an expedition."

"How should we get at them?"

"I must escape from here first," said young Jack, looking Spirillo straight in the eyes.

"Escape?" cried the Lascar, leaping up from his couch and grasping Jack fiercely by the wrist.

CHAPTER XXIII.

YOUNG JACK'S NEW FRIEND.

Jack quietly released himself from the Lascar's grasp and repeated the words:

"We may escape."

"Humph! I will think of it when I am better. But not a word to anyone."

In a few days Spirillo was cured.

He returned to the deck and his duties generally.

He came down as often as his duty would permit to see the doctor, and young Jack never failed to profit by these visits.

He had seen, with a shrewdness far beyond his years, the effect of his words upon Spirillo.

Spirillo would ask young Jack, every time that the subject was broached, if he was sure of his father, and if he could guarantee that his father would enter into so wild a scheme as the expedition after the pirate's treasure in the Greek Archipelago.

"I'm sure of him as I am of myself," replied young Jack. "Spirillo, you don't know my father—God bless him! Why, his gratitude to anybody who had shown me any kindness would guarantee his consent."

"Perhaps," said Spirillo, dubiously.

"He would want the tale to be borne out by something in proof, that's all."

"That can be easily done."

"How?"

"Here is the plan of the place. You may take charge of it, young fellow."

So saying he handed over a roll of paper to young Jack.

"Can I trust you, Spirillo?" he said.

Spirillo frowned.

"Have I not trusted you?" he said, pointing to the roll of paper.

"Of course. Forgive my words; only caution must be used. We are surrounded here by danger."

"True."

"I can tell you how we could escape."

The deuce you can. How?"

"You see that boat that swings there, creaking in the rusty davits over your cabin?"

"Yes."

"If a reason could be found for lowering that boat and letting her be towed along astern, I could do the rest."

Spirillo's eyes brightened at these words.

"Is that all?"

"All."

"Then it is done," said the pirate.

* * * * *

That night the boat was being towed along astern.

Young Jack ran down gleefully to carry the news to the doctor and Harry Girdwood.

The doctor was elated at this.

"Jack, my son," said he, "I believe now that we shall carry it through."

"Believe!" cried young Jack; "it is a certainty."

"We must get the boat under the window here to-night," said Harry Girdwood, "and lower our provisions and arms into it."

"We can manage that."

"And then we have but to lower ourselves."

"And Spirillo," said the doctor.

"Of course. It would indeed be base ingratitude to play him false," said young Jack.

"How did Spirillo manage it?" asked Harry Girdwood.

"Under pretext of greasing the chains and davits," was the reply.

"The only thing remaining is to get Spirillo to learn

our latitude very precisely, and get a chart, so that we may be able to steer to the nearest port when once we get clear, and not drift about hopelessly in mid-ocean."

"We can manage that," said young Jack.

At a little after sundown young Jack went up on deck, in hopes of coming across his friend and accomplice, Spirillo.

The latter was on the lookout for him.

At a single glance young Jack perceived that there was something amiss, for Spirillo's look showed uneasiness.

He made a sign to young Jack not to speak with him yet, until they were sure that they were not observed.

Then, having assured himself upon this point, he beckoned the boy aside.

"Jack," said the Lascar, in low, earnest tones, "I want to say a word to you that is very serious."

Jack stared.

"Serious?"

"Yes."

"Indeed?"

"Your life is in danger, a very great danger."

"How?"

"You have some bad enemies on board."

Young Jack smiled.

"That is no news," he said; "and I know to whom you allude."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Then you know that there is a great danger."

"I do; the greatest. But I have baffled them before now in as great difficulties as this, and I have the greatest confidence yet."

Spirillo stared at young Jack, and smiled dubiously, as he said:

"You are a brave boy, and I hope your confidence in yourself may not be misplaced this time. The danger is great. Toro and his friend, your fellow-coun-

tryman, hate you worse than poison, and you will have to die."

"I do not fear them."

"They mean it this time."

"They have often meant it," said young Jack; "but they couldn't manage it. Besides, now I know that the captain of the *Flower Land* means me to live."

"He does."

"What have I to fear, then, if the captain means it?"

"Everything. They dare not oppose the captain, especially as his purpose for keeping you alive is but to get a heavy ransom from your parents for you."

"Of course."

"Well, your two enemies mean you to die; they are opposed by all the crew as well as the captain. Therefore, they have been conspiring to put an end to you on the quiet, so be upon your guard, lad."

"I will."

"They mean to get hold of you, and heave you overboard in the night, while the captain and the crew are all asleep."

Jack shivered.

"That's awkward," he said; "and when do they mean to carry out the amiable plot?"

"To-night, if they can."

"Very good; I must be on my guard. But how did you learn it?"

"By overhearing their schemes. They did not disguise their thoughts before me. They conversed very freely in English, never dreaming that I spoke your language."

"Good!"

"You have but to keep out of their way to-night. In the morning I will put the captain on his guard, and then woe betide them if they dare lift a hand against you."

Young Jack shook the pirate's hand warmly.

"You are a real friend, Spirillo," he said, earnestly;

"and I hope to show my gratitude to you in some tangible form soon."

"Help me to get the treasure, my lad, and I shall have all the reward that I want."

"That you may count upon."

"Right; and now back to your cabin. Away with you. Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

The boy turned from his new-found friend and made for the cabin stairs.

Just as he was upon the top step a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

A cloth was thrown over his head and he was lifted up in a pair of brawny arms and borne away.

In the toils.

The boy gasped.

The full sense of his danger flashed across him.

His hand had been resting upon his knife when he was caught up, and this proved of very material assistance to him in the dire extremity.

He jerked his arm free and lunged out with his knife at random.

He struck something, and the knife went in pretty deeply.

So deeply that his captor gave a cry of pain, and then, as young Jack wriggled with desperation, he dropped upon the deck.

To scramble up and make off was the work of a moment.

Two men rushed after him.

First was Hunston.

Next was Toro.

The latter, as he came on, was busily engaged in binding his right arm, which the boy's knife had gone right through.

Young Jack flew on like the wind, dodged round a heap of luggage piled upon the deck, and glided down the cabin stairs.

They were close upon him in an instant.

"I'm safe now," thought young Jack; "they will never dare to follow me here."

But barely had the thought flashed through his mind when he made an alarming discovery.

A discovery which chilled his very blood.

In the confusion of his flight he had not got into the right cabin.

In a berth at the farther end of the cabin was a man stretched at full length upon his back, and tossing about restlessly.

The face and form were alike familiar.

A step nearer and young Jack recognized in that man the notorious Robert Emmerson!

Robert Emmerson, the murderer!

Poor Jack felt he was lost!

Here was his retreat cut off.

Emmerson here, his two bitterest enemies up the cabin stairs.

Perhaps they had passed the stairs and did not know that he was there.

Quick as thought he crept up the steps.

But before he could put his head out of the hatchway he heard Hunston's voice close by his ear:

"He is not far off."

Jack drew back.

Down he went again on tiptoe, and just as he got to the bottom they were on the top peering down.

"He must have gone down there."

"Stop a bit," said Hunston. "You stay on guard here, Toro, while I get round. The brat is as slippery as an eel. We mustn't leave him half a chance."

The boy's heart sank.

He had but one faint hope.

This was that they would go farther to resume their search, and that he could make a bolt for his own cabin.

The boy crept nearer yet to Emmerson's berth.

It was got up with a certain amount of elaboration and luxury for a cabin of a pirate ship, and the bed

was hung with damask curtains, which now served young Jack as a hiding place.

Now, as he stood here, his attention was gradually fixed by the disturbed appearance of the sleeping Emmerson.

The murderer's dreams were evidently of an unpleasant nature.

No wonder.

Man may occasionally elude the vigilance of the law for the crimes of which Emmerson was guilty, but there is a worse punishment than the hand of man can inflict, which he could not escape.

The workings of a guilty conscience.

Robert Emmerson did not know what rest was.

Never a night passed in quiet rest.

Barely did he close his eyes ere the shadows of his victims, Nabley, the elder, and of Saul Garcia, the Jew miser, haunted his dreams.

Ghostly and forbidding they looked, and the words they whispered in his ears were always upon the same strain—warnings, dire forebodings!

Just at the moment that young Jack came down he was with his last victim, the wretched, murdered old Jew.

Saul Garcia, robed as Emmerson had last seen him—his pallid face whiter even than his nightclothes.

The shade of his victim did not speak to him, but it placed its long, thin fingers upon his arm and they closed upon it!

Then while the miserable man was shrinking from the shade of Saul Garcia, he felt himself dragged from his bed through miles and miles of the ocean, emerging in a bright and sunny land.

In his dream the shade of Saul Garcia dragged him on across waving cornfields, until they came upon an English village.

It was a pretty, bright scene; there was the village green away to the left, the old-fashioned Norman church close to it, with its quaintly-built parsonage ad-

joining, and just a field off was a more modern brick building with a miniature belfry over it.

The bell was just tolling the boys out of school.

One of these young scholars caught Emmerson's attention at once.

He was a fair-haired boy, with blue eyes and a clear complexion.

A handsome, well-built boy, with an expression that was frank and manly.

There was something in that boy of all the others which greatly interested Emmerson.

It was himself in his boyhood.

And he followed the boy's path homewards.

His way lay across a large tract of green meadow land, beyond which he came to a lane cut between two hills.

As the fair-haired scholar passed through this ravine, a low whistle was heard that caused him to look up.

Then a man pushed his way through the bushes, and catching hold of an overhanging branch of a tree he swung himself, with considerable agility, down into the lane right before the schoolboy.

The boy was a bit startled at first, but he soon recovered himself.

And then there took place between them an earnest conversation.

It was clear that the swarthy, gypsy-looking man was tempting the boy—that the boy was resisting the temptation.

The gypsy now brought out a big, old-fashioned silver watch as a bribe for the boy.

And the latter wavered.

Then Emmerson grew strangely excited as he watched the result.

Excited, too, in the eager hope that the boy would not yield.

Strange this!

Strange, for so utter a villain as Robert Emmerson to be now so troubled in his dream.

His dream still continued, and he saw that the boy's good nature conquered, and he went on his way.

And then Emmerson could not repress a cry of joy.

The gypsy fellow ran after the fair-haired boy and caught him by the collar.

He took out an ugly-looking knife, and flourished it before the little fellow's eyes.

But the boy, too plucky for the gypsy, ducked under his legs and bolted off, while the gypsy toppled over and scrambled upon the ground.

Emmerson, in his dream, gave a joyous laugh.

And then the scene had faded away.

All was darkness!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FATE OF ROBERT EMMERSON.

Emmerson, in his dreams, once more looked around him.

The shade of Saul Garcia was still before him.

The long, bony fingers still clutched his arm.

The Jew spake not, but waving his hand once more, silently invited Emmerson's attention again.

The scene was changed.

Before him now was a homely, pleasant interior, and there were two actors in this scene, both of whom caused every pulse in Emmerson's body to vibrate with strong emotions.

And why?

Because the most prominent figure of the two was the woman who had cared for him from his tenderest infancy—who had nurtured him with a fond affection that none but a mother could show.

Yes! it was the shadow of his mother.

The other figure was the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy who had just fled from the gypsy tempter.

And that bright little lad was—himself!

Emmerson gazed, awe-stricken, at these figures—so real, so lifelike, which his conductor conjured up in dreamland.

And now Emmerson could see that the two were conversing, but he could not catch their words.

But their gestures were full of meaning.

He was describing to his mother the danger from which he had just escaped.

The mother showed her fears as he went on, and then she was full of gratitude for his safe delivery from peril.

He undressed himself, and prepared for bed, and then, before going to rest for the night, he knelt de-

voutly at his mother's knees, and they lifted their voices together in prayer.

The fair boy's bright face and his innocent eyes looked up to her, and she looked fondly down upon him.

It was an eloquent picture of filial affection and parental tenderness.

He thought he heard a stern voice speak.

"Do you recognize the group?"

Emmerson started, rudely aroused from contemplation of this touching picture, and there was the shade of Saul Garcia pointing solemnly to the scene.

Emmerson felt sensations which had been strangers to his breast for many and many a long year.

"Speak!" said the shade of the Jew; "answer me!"

"Alas!" responded Emmerson, "I do."

And with his answer came a deep-drawn sigh, telling of remorse that was more agony than any physical suffering could possibly be.

"You remember it?" said the shade of Saul Garcia, in the same sepulchral tones. "Now look again."

Emmerson involuntarily obeyed.

The scene was changed.

The actors were the same as before.

The bright-looking boy was in bed; his mother stood on the threshold! Lamp in hand.

She bade her boy a fond and lingering good-night, and then withdrew, leaving the boy to his slumbers.

He was asleep almost immediately.

Then after a brief interval a light shone faintly in at the window.

A moment or so after the window was forced noiselessly open, and a dark, swarthy face appeared.

It was the gypsy.

The ruffian who had met the boy in the lane, and, tempting him in vain, threatened his life.

Emmerson, in his spellbound dream, watched in breathless expectation for the next incident in this dark scene.

The gypsy darkened the lantern a while, then clambered into the room.

But as he walked his footfalls were not heard; they made not the slightest noise.

He moved like a shadow.

His feet were provided with the soft list overshoes such as burglars are reputed to wear in their nefarious calling.

The intruder listened at the door.

Then he made himself secure against interruption by fastening the door on the inside.

This done, he stole back to the bed, and flashed the bull's-eye lantern in the sleeper's face until the glare aroused him.

As the boy opened his eyes he was dazzled with the fierce blaze, and he failed to recognize the intruder until the gypsy spoke.

"Bob, you must come with me!"

The boy refused.

He was full of tears, but he stoutly refused to go with the gypsy.

Thereupon the latter seized him by the throat, and brandished the knife in his face, and it seemed as if murder was imminent.

Emmerson could look no more thus passively.

He made a rush to help the boy, but suddenly the shade of Saul Garcia seemed invested with a giant's strength, and he dragged him back with the greatest ease.

Emmerson fought desperately, but he fought in vain.

And in the middle of this horrible nightmare his struggles aroused him, and he awoke.

* * * * * * *

"Where am I?" he murmured, confusedly. "What, a dream only? But, oh, how dreadful!"

He stretched out his hand for the light.

He raised it.

Something was beside him.

It was a boy kneeling at his bed.

It was young Jack.

The boy's fair face was turned upwards appealingly, and as Emmerson looked, the face so reminded him of the one he had just seen in his vision that he could scarce believe that he was awake.

"Will this never be over?" he muttered, passing his hand across his eyes; "shall I never wake?"

"Save me!" cried young Jack. "Save me!"

Emmerson stared half stupefied at him.

"Why, I know you—you are young Harkaway."

"Yes."

"How came you here? What do you want?"

The voices of Toro and Hunston were heard just then at the top of the steps.

"He must have gone down there."

"Never! It is Emmerson's berth; the boy's as sharp as a needle. He knows that as well as you do. He'd never venture down there."

"I don't care where he has ventured," said Toro. "Once let me put my hand upon him——"

Young Jack looked up imploringly at Emmerson.

"You will not let them harm me!" he urged. "You were young once yourself, and you'll let me hide here, I know."

Young Jack's stammering appeal touched Robert Emmerson, in his present state of mind, more than words far more eloquent could have done.

How could he forget the dream of his own youth, when he had only just seen himself back in his boyhood as plainly and as vividly as he now saw young Jack?

It all flashed through his mind in those few moments.

He was back in the past, and tracing his career from whence he had looked upon those two scenes of his boyhood until now.

Step by step he traced his fall and his progress in guilt up to this.

And all this panorama of a life flashed before his eyes in the space of a minute, and then he was recalled to himself by hearing footsteps on the companion ladder.

"Save me!" cried young Jack, despairingly.

He clambered upon Emmerson's bed, crawled over him, and crouched down behind him for protection.

He could not know what was passing in the guilty Emmerson's mind. He could not see the workings of that overcharged conscience.

What, then, could have induced him to seek refuge there?

Instinct.

"You're safe here, my boy," said Emmerson, placing his hand kindly on Jack's head.

Hunston appeared on the steps.

He pruned and turned to his companion.

"Keep a sharp lookout up there, 'Toro," said he; "don't let him slip."

"Trust me," replied the ex-brigand. "If he slips through my fingers, I'll forgive him."

Hunston advanced, and then young Jack began to tremble with apprehension.

He would have crouched down behind Emmerson, but the latter would not allow this.

"Stand up," he said; "there's no fear while you are with me."

Hunston heard the voice and ran down.

Just as he reached the foot of the ladder, he called out to Toro to follow him.

"Come on," he shouted; "I have him, 'Toro."

Toro replied with a chuckle, and ran down after his companion in crime.

"You young viper!" exclaimed Hunston, "let me catch you."

And he advanced a pace to drag young Jack out.

"Stand off!" said Emmerson, springing up; "the boy is under my protection and you must not harm him."

"Must not!" echoed Hunston, fiercely. "What does this mean?"

"Must not!" repeated Emmerson, with a kind of dogged determination.

"Oh!" cried Hunston, scornfully, "we will soon see this. Here, Toro!"

"Here," returned Toro, entering just then.

"Hark you, my friends!" said Emmerson; "I want this boy spared."

"You, Emmerson, want him spared—what for?"

"Why," said Toro, "he belongs to the crew that are our worst enemies. Harkaway and his set have ruined us, and shall we spare him now?"

"Yes."

"No; a thousand times no!" cried Toro.

"It's only to please me," persisted Emmerson, "and surely you cannot refuse me so small a matter as this boy's life. Besides, consider, the captain and crew wish him spared for the rich ransom they can get."

"Stuff!" cried Toro; "give us up the boy!"

They looked threatening, but Emmerson was not to be daunted.

He had often shown courage in a bad cause; he was not to be cowed now that he was acting in a good one.

"I advise you both to keep back!" cried Emmerson; "for I now tell you, rather than have this brave lad hurt I would have both your lives."

"Your life, then, against ours," cried Hunston, fiercely.

As they advanced, Emmerson made one step back, and, turning round, he made a grab at a pair of loaded pistols that hung over his bed, but before he could reach them, Hunston was upon him.

In his iron hand was fastened a long, ugly knife, and lifting this high above him he brought it down with fearful force upon the stooping Emmerson.

The blow needed no repetition.

"Coward!" cried Emmerson, looking fixedly at Hunston, then he gave a dull, hollow groan, and rolled over. Hunston started back aghast.

Toro was considerably startled by the deed.

Young Jack was ready to help himself by this time. He had noticed Emmerson's effort to get at the pistols, and he caught them up in a moment.

"Stand off!" he cried, presenting these; "here's one for each of you."

Emmerson was in a very bad way by now.

He supported himself upon one arm, and tried vainly to rise.

"You have done for me, Hunston," he said, faintly, "and with that arm, too."

"What did you interfere for?" growled Hunston, in a surly tone. "You asked for it, and you got it. Let me look at your hurt."

"Keep back," replied Emmerson; "it is past your aid now."

Hunston would have helped him, but Emmerson shrank from him.

Young Jack saw the repugnance that he manifested, and he menaced the two ruffians with the pistols.

The positions were reversed now.

Emmerson had to be protected, and young Jack was the protector.

"Hunston—villain!" gasped the wounded man. "I haven't now five minutes' life in me. Without me your iron arm is useless—worse than useless. Remember my words, and the legend on the arm."

And then, as though the effort to pronounce these words had been too much for him, he dropped back, faint and exhausted.

A change came over his face.

An ominous change.

The end was not far off now.

"I would have seen you safely through this, my

boy," he gasped, faintly; "but you must see to yourself now; I am done for. Hunston," he added.

"Yes?"

"Beware of the steel arm! It has been my death, and may be yours."

And then, with these words upon his lips, he sank back.

Robert Emmerson was dead, killed by his false friend, the villain Hunston.

At first the two ruffians were startled at the suddenness of the catastrophe, but they were too much accustomed to look upon death to be very much upset by this murder.

They sprang forward to grab at young Jack, but the boy was not to be taken unawares.

He sent out his pistols again, and brought the ruffians to a stand.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DOCTOR'S RUSE.

"Go!" said Jack, boldly, "or I'll bring the pair of you down. I never miss."

They did not like the look of the boy.

"If you don't go, I shall lose patience," he said; "I shall bring down one, for sure, and the other will be dealt with by your Chinese friends for murdering a comrade."

At this Hunston backed up the ladder, closely followed by Toro.

Young Jack went up after them, and driving the two ruffians before him, in this way he made for his own cabin.

The good old doctor and Harry Girdwood hastened to meet him.

"Oh, Jack, Jack," exclaimed Harry, "where have you been?"

"We have been in a rare state of mind," said the doctor. "What has kept you?"

"More than there is time to explain, doctor," answered young Jack. "I have been attacked. One of them defended me against Toro and Hunston, and one has been murdered."

"Which one? Surely not Spirillo?"

"No; where is Spirillo? Have you seen him within the last half hour?"

"No. Why?"

"We must make our escape to-night."

"Why?"

"To-morrow may be too late."

The doctor was quite flushed at this.

"Pray explain yourself, Jack," he said. "Why must it be to-night?"

"The murder of Robert Emmerson by Hunston will

probably bring about an investigation of the whole matter, and any moment might discover all our plans, our boat ready for starting, provisioned and armed, and then our lives wouldn't be worth a rap."

He then gave them a hurried account of all that he had gone through upon that eventful night.

Young Jack was right.

To-night or never.

The American doctor got together his medicines and everything which had been left.

Not a thing was forgotten by him.

Very few words were exchanged.

They had made a lowering apparatus by which they filled the boat with the various articles they had got ready for the expedition, and as this was dropped through the window with its small cargo, the doctor ticked off its contents against his written list of necessaries carefully compiled.

The moment approached when all would be completed.

"Jack."

"Sir."

"Spirillo."

"Good."

He moved towards the companion ladder.

"No rashness; and, above all, don't venture on to the deck. Only signal Spirillo and come back."

"Good."

"Harry."

"Sir."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Now then, take the rifles. Where is the small keg of powder?"

"Here."

"And the bullet mold?"

"Already in the boat."

"Good. Now then."

At this moment a low, soft whistle from above told him that Spirillo was there.

Harry Girdwood answered it.

Then he squeezed through the porthole and slipped into the boat.

In the space of a minute he was joined by young Jack, who reached the boat in the same fashion.

Next came Spirillo, who glided as nimbly as only a monkey or a sailor can.

"Now, doctor," said Harry Girdwood, "make haste."

"All right."

The doctor gave a look round as he spoke and then he stepped over the ship's side and took hold of the rope.

"Good-by to the pirate ship *Flowery Land*; fare-well to the floating shambles," muttered the American.

"Not yet."

A dark form had risen from the planks, it seemed, and confronted the doctor at this moment.

The doctor was momentarily taken aback.

Only momentarily.

"What do you want?" he demanded, coolly.

"You," was the reply. "You first, and them next."

"Oh! is that all?"

The man in response placed a metal whistle in his mouth.

But he did not blow.

Before he could get out a note the old American gave him a sudden drive, which sent him staggering back, and then whipping from his waistcoat pocket a tiny phial, he dashed it upon the deck close by the man, and slid down the rope into the boat.

They were ready.

Before the doctor could be seated, Spirillo had severed the rope with one vigorous cut.

The *Flowery Land* held on her course, while the boat drifted astern.

"Lower your oars," said Spirillo, eagerly, "and pull for your lives."

"There's no hurry," said the American, coolly.

"What?"

"They have got plenty to occupy them at present," said the doctor in explanation.

He was right.

"Look!"

They stared in utter amazement then in the direction of the *Flowery Land*.

The whole end of the junk from whence they had made their escape was full of a dense white vapor, which utterly obscured every object on board!

"What is that?" demanded Jack, breathlessly.

"Only my way of covering the retreat of the rear guard," was the American's quiet rejoinder.

"Will it blow up?"

"No."

"But will it set the ship on fire?"

"No."

"What does it do, then?" demanded Spirillo.

"Blind the pirates for a time only."

"Then," said Harry Girdwood, "let us pull off as fast as we can—for when the smoke clears away——"

"We shall be out of range and out of sight, too."

And he gave a quiet chuckle as he spoke.

They watched the huge hull of the pirate junk as it receded from sight, and by degrees nothing was visible but the dense cloud of white vapor, which seemed to rise slowly to the heavens without losing its density.

"Will it destroy them?" demanded young Jack, in an awe-stricken whisper.

"No."

"What will be the effects of it?"

"Nothing very dreadful. They will doze off quietly, if they get a sniff of it, that's all."

"Stifled?"

"No; merely drugged."

"But when they wake up——"

"We shall be far out of harm's way, please goodness—and now," added the doctor, "lend me the lantern, Spirillo, and let me examine the chart, for, although we are well provisioned, I'd rather not make a mistake."

* * * * *

Morning dawned.

The *Floecry Land* had utterly disappeared.

They swept the horizon with their glasses, but not a sign nor a trace of the pirate junk could be seen.

And when this was known, Spirillo eyed the doctor suspiciously.

"I rather think, doctor," said he, "that you have disposed of them all."

"How?"

"Sent them to the bottom."

Young Jack and Harry Girdwood were silent.

But their looks showed that they shared Spirillo's belief.

"No, my friends," said the doctor. "They are safe enough for all that I have done to them.

"And now, gentlemen all," he went on, airily, "now for our first picnic afloat; to breakfast!"

"To breakfast!" shouted the boys together.

And a hearty meal they made of it, for they ate as free men.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON BOARD THE "FRANZ JOSEF."

The *Franz Josef* made good headway, and with favoring winds, scudded along in a way which slightly upset the plans of the traitor spy, Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, otherwise Bigamini.

On board the *Franz Josef* were Jack Harkaway, Emily, Harvey and his wife, and the friends, Jefferson and Magog Brand.

A goodly party.

Now Emily's health had been fast failing her during the last days of their residence on Mandarin Mole's property, and they all feared, more than they cared to acknowledge to each other, upon her behalf.

Judge then of the great pleasure when, after being about forty-eight hours at sea, they perceived a marked improvement in her.

Her cheeks grew ruddy, and her eye regained its brightness, and her restoration to health was well-nigh complete.

The change appeared to be wrought by magic.

"How wonderfully the sea suits you, dear," said Hilda, repeatedly. "You look better and handsomer than ever now. Your dear cheeks are like damask, and your eyes----"

Emily interrupted her laughingly.

"If you were a man, Jack would be jealous," she cried. "You are so full of flattery, Hilda, dear."

"I speak literal truth," protested Hilda. "I don't know how far a flatterer would go."

"Nor I, if that is not flattery."

"The sea is your proper element, depend on it."

Emily looked very hard into her face.

"Shall I tell you a secret, dear?"

"If you think I can keep one."

"Well, I should be sorry to pledge my faith to

that," returned Mrs. Harkaway, with a smile of mischief; "but I'll risk it. Do you know what is the chief cause of my improved health?"

"The sea air."

"No."

"The change."

"Guess again."

"I'm at a loss."

"Then I'll tell you. It is that hope is born again."

"Hope?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you know, dear, what made me so ill? Do you know what crushed my spirit, my health, and almost broke my poor heart?"

Hilda knew well enough, but she sought to shirk the painful topic.

"You know well enough; you are a mother, and no one knows the cause so well as you. It was the loss of my dear boy, my darling Jack."

"Emily!"

"You know it," said Mrs. Harkaway; "none know it better than you, Hilda. I felt that my boy was in danger of immediate death. At one time I felt sure that all was over, and then melancholy settled upon me. I could not shake it off. I know that it would have ended by shaking me off instead," she added, with a faint smile.

"Then, dear, the inference from your fresh looks——"

Emily nodded, and laughed gleefully.

"You guess it, I can see," she said, with an air of conviction. "My Jack lives. My boy is saved."

The exalted manner, the visibly subdued excitement that seemed to foreshadow hysterics, frightened Hilda.

She began to fear that Emily's mind was going.

Hilda sat silent before her loved friend and companion for a while.

Emily regarded her with a singular expression on her countenance before she spoke.

"You are worrying and puzzling your brains about me, dear," she said, presently. "You cannot understand whether I am sane or wandering."

"Emily!"

"Well, I must say——"

"Of course, that's frank of you. Well, you will have to enjoy a good laugh at me."

"Then the subject will have to be a merry one."

"It will," said Emily; "know then that I have been warned in a dream."

"A dream?"

"Yes."

A look of disappointment showed upon Hilda's countenance.

The confident manner of her friend had almost made her hopeful.

"I dreamed that he was saved, that he had been in deadful peril, but that it was past, and that we should soon have him with us again. You don't believe in dreams?"

"I confess——"

"No need to—I know you don't, nor I, either, ordinarily, but this was an exceptional affair altogether. My dream was rather a vision, and I am sure was Heaven-sent. It was shared, too, by the two persons who loved Jack best in the world."

"Who are they?"

"I should say—perhaps his father and mother."

"No; by the two Emilys."

"What, my Emily?"

"Yes."

"She never told me."

"No; but she did me. Here was the place for the confidence she had to give, and she knew it. She dreamed that she saw Jack in great peril, and that at the most critical moment one of his worst enemies

had his heart touched by a good spirit, and became his defender.

"She saw Jack in a boat, gliding with outstretched arms toward us. Beside him sat Harry Girdwood, and with them were two new-found friends. They were safe; she brought me her confidence, and when we compared notes, I found that our dreams had been identical in every particular and detail."

"It is a most remarkable coincidence."

"It is something more than that, dear; it is a warning—a Heaven-sent vision, I feel assured, and it will take much to destroy that conviction."

"Where is Emily?"

"I left her with her inseparable companion—the telescope."

"Where?"

"Perched up beside the captain."

"On the watch?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Harkaway laughed heartily at this.

"The minx! we have a wager on between us."

"About what?"

"Who shall discover him first. She means what Jack would call to steal a march on me. Let us go to her, and you shall see for yourself."

They went up on deck.

Here they were just in time to share in a great general excitement.

The excitement prevailing was occasioned by the lowering of a boat to fish up something floating at a distance, which little Emily had spied while on the lookout.

Jack Harkaway was in the boat, for he seized upon the least pretext for a change, and, moreover, he was glad to gratify the girl's whim.

And as they rowed towards the white object bobbing up and down in the distance, the whole of the ship's crew and passengers mustered on the deck to speculate upon the nature of the floating object.

"It's a gull she has seen skimming the water," said Magog Brand.

"Likely enough," returned Jefferson; "but it's no particular harm, if it be nothing more interesting even."

* * * * *

The boat still pulled nearer and nearer yet.

And now they were up with it.

One of the sailors bent over the boat's side, and grabbed at it, and as he pulled it in, there was a general exclamation of disappointment.

"It's only a floating bottle, after all!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEEP.

And so it was only a floating bottle, after all.

A bottle, corked most carefully and hermetically sealed.

Tarred, and painted white atop, with a red streak round it, and with a white collar round the neck of the bottle, which had evidently been placed there to attract the attention of any chance passer.

"What can it be?" said the coxswain of the boat.

"A bottle of grog," suggested one of the men.

Whereupon the rest snacked their lips in eager anticipation.

"It's a queer way of bottling grog," said a tar.

"Supposing a fellow prigged it, and wanted to hide it somewhere away," suggested one.

"A blessed odd place to hide it," interrupted another of the men. "Let's see what's inside."

The men laughed, and agreed to this, and they were about to knock the neck of the bottle off, when Harkaway took the bottle unceremoniously away from them.

"I'll take care of this," he said, "and we'll see what's inside it when we get back on deck."

They looked black at this.

But Jack Harkaway was one of that sort that men who know what discipline means do not feel inclined to quarrel with.

So back they rowed.

The whole company on board the *Franz Josef* were waiting to meet them, and foremost among the number were the two Emilys and Mrs. Harvey.

"What is it--what is it?" asked a score of eager voices.

"Only a bottle."

"Oh!" groaned the disappointed excitement-seekers.

Once fairly on deck, the company gathered around Jack Harkaway.

When the neck was knocked off it was found that there was no liquor in it.

"And yet I can hear something rumbling about in it," said Magog Brand.

"I'll wager I guess what it is," said Jefferson.

"I'll wager you champagne all round you don't guess," said Harvey.

"Done."

"I'll bet that I guess it," said Harkaway, suddenly struck by a thought.

Wagers became the order of the hour.

Anything for a little excitement.

While their sporting proclivities were being indulged in by the gentlemen, little Emily was seen busily engaged in writing on a leaf of her pocketbook which she proceeded to tear out.

"What is that, Em?" demanded her father.

"My guess, papa," replied his daughter, blushing a little.

"What?"

"Why, Emily, you are never going to bet!" said Jack Harkaway, pretending to look inexpressibly shocked.

"How unladylike!" said Harvey.

"Dreadful!" said Jack Harkaway.

"No, no, uncle; I only want to guess, like all of you. Here's my guess—only, mind, it is not to be opened until the bottle has been broken."

The bottle was broken and a folded paper was discovered inside.

But the noise they had heard had been caused by some small shot which had evidently been placed in the bottle as ballast.

"A message from the sea."

"The last words of some poor, shipwrecked people," suggested Magog Brand.

"Likely enough."

Little Emily stretched forward eagerly, and to the surprise of all snatched up the paper.

Then before they could discern her intention, she read it hurriedly through, and fell fainting on the deck.

"Look to her!" cried Harkaway, excitedly.

He picked up the paper, and while little Emily was carried away by her father, he read it aloud to the amazed bystanders.

"This is to warn the *Franz Josef* that the notorious Chinese pirate junk, the *Floccery Land*, is cruising about in these waters with the avowed object of capturing it. Their plans are all well laid, and they have precise information about the *Franz Josef*, sent them by the agent and spy of the pirates, who is called Big-Eng-Ming-Ming. Mr. Harkaway and friends of his are known to be on board the *Franz Josef*, so that the pirates look forward to the certainty of making a very rich prize. This warning is sent forth by Jack Harkaway, the younger, and Harry Girdwood, both prisoners on board the *Floccery Land*, but who fondly hope that their captivity draws to a close. Anybody finding this is earnestly requested to forward it to Mr. Harkaway, who will handsomely reward the finder."

Harkaway and his friend Harvey were silent.

An awe-stricken silence had fallen upon them all.

* * * * *

"Well, Hilda," said Mrs. Harkaway, "what have you to say now to my vision?"

"Say—nothing," responded Hilda; "I am all amazement. Give me the note that my Emily wrote."

Harkaway had forgotten this for the moment.

He now opened it, and read there little Emily's guess at what the bottle would be found to contain.

It was simply these words:

"A message from Jack."

"Wonder upon wonder," ejaculated Harkaway, handing it to Hilda.

The latter actually trembled when she read the words. It looked like witchcraft.

"I shall look upon you as a sorceress in future, dear," she said, "and my Emily, too."

"Pon my life!" exclaimed Jefferson, "that's tall guessing. Why, she was the only one who shot the mark."

"The only one."

"Gentlemen," said Harkaway, seriously, as he looked about him, "there is something more in this than mere guessing. The hand of Providence is clearly indicated here. Let us profit by the warning without delay."

"At once."

"At once!" echoed every voice about him.

"Let us have the captain here, too, and have a general conference."

This was done.

The captain came up, and the matter was gone into at length.

"Let us take opinions as we go on," said Harvey.

"By all means," said Jefferson; "and suppose we begin with the captain."

"Good."

"Now, sir."

The captain looked about him rather nervously before giving his answer.

"I think, gentlemen," he said, "that you will guess my answer. There cannot be two opinions, I presume, on the matter. We must put back, without losing any time."

"But what about the writer of this letter?" exclaimed Jack Harkaway; "what about my boy, eh? Shall we go back without making an effort in behalf of the brave lads that warn us of our peril?"

"What good could we do in opposing such a vessel as the *Flowery Land*?" said the captain.

"We could at least try," said Harkaway.

"Yes," said the captain, "and swell the list of their victims, that's all, and perhaps cause your boy to be murdered under our very eyes; no, Mr. Harkaway, that would be idle folly. The only thing is to get back and seek the assistance of the British admiral. Then we shall be able to rescue the lads, and pay out these villainous sharks into the bargain. We shall be doing a wonderful service to the world at large by these means."

Harkaway made no immediate answer, but he looked as if he did not relish the idea of going back.

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "what do you all say?"

"I for one think you are right," said Jefferson.

"There can be no doubt of it," added the dwarf; "a moment's reflection will suffice to convince you of that."

"I must say I think so, too," said Harvey; "much as I am tempted, Jack, to say as you have said, I can't help seeing that it would be the height of folly to do it. We must get a ship that can cope with the pirates."

"Perhaps you are right. I have only one stipulation to make."

"Name it."

"That you get back with all dispatch, lose not a day, not an hour--nay, not a minute. My boy's life may actually depend upon an hour one way or the other."

They little thought what had already taken place, how Mandarin Mole had detected the villainous little spy, Bigamini.

Still less did they anticipate that poor Isaac Mole had lost his other leg, and that, for the future, he would have to stump through the world on a pair of timber toes.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RAFT AND ITS DEAD.

Young Jack's troubles were not over.

The pirate junk was out of sight.

Their provisions held out; but they had one severe difficulty to encounter.

Bad weather.

They were driven before the wind at a desperate rate for hours.

But they lived it down.

On the third day they came in sight of a sail.

This raised their hopes.

They hung out flags, and made every possible signal of distress.

But in vain.

They had the mortification of seeing the ship keep on her course without heeding them.

This can be easily understood.

Their tiny craft was invisible to the big ship, which they saw with comparative distinctness.

Had the people on the passing ship been on the lookout for them, a close scrutiny through a telescope might have revealed their mere speck of a boat, dancing about upon the waves.

But they were not.

And so they passed on, never dreaming that four fellow-creatures were so near, comparatively, and in imminent peril.

"We shall never be seen," said young Jack, despondingly, "unless we are near enough to be run down."

The doctor was more philosophic, however.

He had one word of consolation for every grievance.

"Wait."

"That's all very well," said young Jack, impatiently;

"but it is more easy to preach patience than exercise it. Our only chance is to be picked up by a passing vessel."

"True."

"We may go weeks again and not meet another."

"True again."

"Then can you wonder at my impatience?"

The doctor smiled.

"My dear boy," said he, "when you get my age you will take matters more quietly."

Another day passed.

Towards sundown they fell in with an adventure. Spirillo was engaged in setting a sail that he had contrived when he spied something floating out to leeward.

"What is it?"

"It looks like a piece of a wreck."

"Anybody on it?"

"No; yet stay—I think I see some one— give me the glass."

He looked long and earnestly.

"I think I can see a man making signals."

"Look."

"There, in that direction."

After a few moments young Jack distinguished something very clearly.

"I am positive that I see a man on the raft," said he; "but he appears to be bowing to us."

"Or to some one else," added Spirillo.

"Let us pull toward it," cried Jack.

This was done.

The day was declining, and in the fading light it had appeared farther off than it was in reality, for in less than twenty minutes they were close enough to see what it was.

And a ghastly spectacle it proved to be.

A roughly-made raft, to which were lashed two half-naked forms.

One was fastened to the side of the raft and his lashings had slipped with the motion of the waves, and his dead body, attached only by a leg, while the rest of the body was submerged, was towed along.

The other form was that of a tall, gaunt man, with sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, and a long, grizzled beard, who sat huddled up in the center of the raft, bowing gravely to something in front of him.

They shouted to him as they approached, but he did not hear them apparently, for he went on bowing with the same gravity.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Spirillo.

"Hillo--ho!" responded the man on the raft, in sepulchral tones, "bring the lights and pipe all hands for a dance."

They looked at each other gravely.

"An Englishman," said young Jack.

"Or an American," added the doctor.

"Mad?"

The doctor nodded.

"What shall we do?"

"Give him something to eat."

Harry Girdwood tossed him a piece of biscuit, and so true was his aim that it fell at the man's feet.

He started, snatched it up, and devoured it eagerly.

And then, before he had swallowed the last morsel of it, he fell heavily forward on his face.

They pulled alongside, and the American doctor boarded the raft.

He knelt down beside the man, and found him utterly insensible.

"The shock has been too much for him in his weak state," he said.

He turned the man over and felt his body vainly for a pulse.

Then he looked up at his companions in the boat.

"Well, doctor, how is he?" asked young Jack, anxiously.

"We came across him just in time to see him die."

"Die!"

"Yes; it is all over."

* * * * *

Hunger and exposure had done their work thoroughly.

They looked about the raft and examined the bodies for any indication of their names or the name of the ship from which they had come to this piteous end.

But there was nothing to give them the least information.

The doctor got back to the boat and they pulled away slowly and sadly.

"See! see!" exclaimed Harry Girdwood, a moment after.

"What now?"

"The raft has broken up."

And so it had, strangely enough, just after the doctor had left it, and the two grim occupants of the raft slipped over and rolled to their last resting place, the bed of the ocean.

"How horrible," said Harry Girdwood, with a shudder. "I hope that that may not be our fate after all our severe struggles."

"Amen," responded the doctor, solemnly.

The twilight deepened and the sun set, tinging the whole span of the western horizon with a rich golden hue.

And as they strained their eyes to get the last glimpse of the fragments of the wrecked raft, it looked blood-red in the sunset.

And as it faded away from view, the sun sank below the horizon.

Darkness was on the face of the waters.

Then their hearts grew heavy, and they drifted away in a solemn silence.

And as they fell asleep, they all asked themselves these two questions:

"Shall we ever reach land?"

"Shall we be picked up by a passing ship?"

And filled with dire forebodings, they felt hope abandon them.

The solemnity of the position made them involuntarily superstitious.

In spite of themselves, they looked upon that fatal raft as an omen sent across their path.

The ill-fated Englishman on the raft had just come in sight of succor and had probably died ere he could realize the fact, since his mind was distraught.

Were they, too, destined to reach help when it would be too late?

They feared so.

And this it was that caused them to grow heart-sick.

But sleep came to help them.

Heavenly sleep, the panacea for all our ills.

It was Spirillo's watch that night, and a weary vigil it was for him.

"I made a mistake in joining them," said the Malay to himself. "I ought to have known when I was well off, and stayed on board the *Floresery Land*."

CHAPTER XXIX.

HIGH JINKS ON BOARD.

"Ship ahoy!"

Harry Girdwood awoke with a start.

"Where away?"

"Yonder."

He picked up his glass and looked eagerly out.

Yes, sure enough, there was a ship, and at no very great distance, either.

"Shall we wake them up?"

"No; let us signal her first."

"You run up a flag," said Harry Girdwood, "while I fire off the rifle."

The rifle lay ready loaded to hand, so he lifted it, and blazed away into the sky.

At that young Jack and the doctor awoke with a start.

"Hello!" cried the former, "what's the matter?"

"Ship ahoy!"

"So there is, and not far off. Dear me! and we were getting down in the mouth, too."

"Hurrah!" shouted young Jack, joyfully, "we are saved."

"I hope so; don't be too sanguine, lest our disappointment be proportionate."

"Wisely spoken, doctor," said Spirillo.

"It can't be the *Floecery Land* again."

Spirillo had taken a long, steady look through his glass by now, and he soon put them right upon this point.

"It's no more like the *Floecery Land* than it is like the raft we saw yesterday. Fire the rifle again."

In their eagerness three of them blazed away now, and by the time that the echo of their own shouts died away, they saw a flash of light on board the ship, a

puff of smoke, and then came the deep boom of the answering gun.

"They see us!"

"They signal us!"

"Hurrah!"

They lowered their oars, and pulled away for the ship with a hearty good will.

And presently they were so near that they could see them run their colors up to the masthead.

"The Union Jack!" shouted Harry Girdwood.

"Let's give it three cheers!"

"Hip, hip, hip, hoorah! hip, hip! Why, Spirillo, man alive, you don't seem pleased."

"I—oh, yes."

"Why, what a half-hearted way of showing your pleasure then."

"The English are notoriously hard on all pirates," said Spirillo, coldly; "what guarantee have I that I am safe?"

"You!" exclaimed young Jack; "why, you're with us, aren't you? Well, that shows you are no pirate. Why, Spirillo, my good friend, the fact of your being with us would make you safe if you were known, which you are not. We shall give no explanation beyond the fact that we have escaped from the *Flowerery Land*, you with us."

"All right."

"Give me your hand."

"With all my heart," said Spirillo, reassured.

"See! see! they are lowering a boat!"

This was true.

The ship had now lowered a boat, and it was speedily manned and pulling towards them.

They pulled sharply to meet them, and in the space of a few minutes the two boats were alongside of each other.

"What cheer, my mates?" cried one of the boat's crew; "lost your bearings and drifted away?"

"That's it."

"Is yours a trading ship, my friend?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, your honor; a tea ship," replied one of the sailors, heartily.

"A tea ship?"

"Yes."

"Whither bound?" demanded young Jack, eagerly.

"Back to Chaney?"

"What is the name of your ship, my man?"

"The *Franz Josef*."

"The what?" almost shrieked young Jack.

The man confirmed his speech with a sort of mild oath, but his speech was drowned by the great din of voices from the ship itself.

And above them all was heard a clear, ringing, manly voice, shouting out:

"Jack! Jack! my own boy Jack! Now Heaven be thanked!"

Jack gave a yell. It was his father!

They scrambled up the ship's side goodness knows how.

All we know is, that young Jack was foremost; and that in less time than it takes to write it, he was being strained to his father's heart, and their eyes were dim with tears of joy.

The two Emilys came running along the deck, and Hilda, scudding after them, a good third in a hotly contested race.

And then there was more hugging and kissing, and everybody laughed and cried all at once.

And as for little Emily, her joy was so great that she quite forgot her ladylike reserve, which she was now just beginning to think it proper to assume, and she hugged her young sweetheart before everybody with greater warmth than all the rest.

"Come, come, I say, Miss Emily," said Mr. Jefferson, winking at Harvey, "I think you ought to serve us alike all round."

Little Emily blushed purple, and retreated behind her mamma.

"Now, Jack," said the elder Harkaway, "tell me who your friends are—or, rather companions."

"Friends, father, friends," corrected young Jack.

"Well, friends."

"Dr. Stanley—our good friend—he saved Harry's life, and mine, too, for the matter of that, as much by his good counsels as anything else."

The speaker's father held out his hand to the American doctor.

"Sir," said he, "you have made yourself our friend for life—and me your eternal debtor. I hope that I may be in a position to requite your goodness."

"Mr. Harkaway," returned the doctor, smiling, "our dear young Jack has overrated my services very greatly. He must have kissed the blarney stone. I am in his debt, on the contrary—in his and that of our young friend and fellow adventurer, Harry Girdwood."

"Doctor!"

"It is so," affirmed the American. "To their energy and indomitable perseverance I owe my presence here—my escape from that floating slaughterhouse in which I was so long a prisoner."

"The doctor is too kind," said Harry Girdwood, "for without his cool head and his sage advice we should have been ruined and undone twenty times."

"And we must not forget our friend Spirillo."

"Glad to know you, friend Spirillo," said Harkaway, grasping his hand.

The Malay pirate was a bit abashed at this public recognition of his services.

"The lads did all," he said. "They planned it all. I owe them my escape. They owe me nothing."

"But without Spirillo we should never have got away."

"True," said Dr. Stanley. "It was he who provided the means."

"I am bowed down with the weight of the obligations I am under, my good friends, to you," said Jack Harkaway, senior. "May the friendship thus begun last till we have done with life."

"Hurrah!" shouted an enthusiastic tar. The cry was caught up by the whole of the assembled crew. And a joyous day it was on board the *Franz Josef*.

In the midst of the excitement, the handshakings, kissing and hugging, and the questioning that was going on all round, young Jack did not particularly observe the jolly old salt who led the cheering.

His father led the sailor in question forward.

"An old friend of yours, my dear boy," he said.

The old sailor scraped a bow and pulled his forelock.

"Glad to see your honor back again among us," he said.

"What!" cried young Jack, "my old friend, Ben Hawser? Precious glad to see you, Ben. Tip us your fin."

They shook hands with such evident enjoyment, that it made the whole of the bystanders feel a sensation of pleasure merely to look on.

"Damme!" cried Ben, "it makes me tingle with joy to look at you again, Master Jack, and to think you are safe out of them sharks' clutches. Blow my pig-tail, if I can hardly believe the evidence of my own blessed toplights; let's feel your flesh again."

And they shook hands with greater warmth than before.

"You ought to have been in that fight with the pirate," said young Jack.

"Well, I dunno," replied old Ben. "With such a vessel as it were, according to all accounts, the odds was about the Lord High Admiral to a powder monkey ag'in you."

"Right."

"But I should vastly like to have about three of

them pirates here just now—only three, and with nothing but a bo'sen's rattan in my paw—damme! I'd make small biscuit of 'em and look on it as dinner, in a manner of speaking!"

The first mate summoned all the crew, and Jack Harkaway, senior, addressed them from the top of a barrel.

"I want to have some small recognition of my boy's return, my men," he said, "and so I have asked the skipper's permission to treat you to a double allowance of grog all round."

"Hoorah!"

"Three cheers!" cried Ben Hawser. "Take the time from me, and give it mouth—one, two, three—hip, hip, hoorah!"

A deafening cheer burst from the crew.

"I would also suggest," said Harkaway, "that we should have a dance."

"Bravo!"

"A dance! a dance!"

"But the serious question of the hour is, have we got a fiddler on board?"

"I should think so," returned Dan, an old sailor, with a look of something approaching scorn at the question arising. "Why, what do you call Ben Hawser?"

"Can Ben play?" said Harkaway, in surprise.

"Ben play!" echoed Dan. "Only like a gilded angel, that's all. Can't he, mates?"

"Ay! ay!"

"Well, then," said Harvey, "here's the programme right off."

"First the grog," suggested Mr. Jefferson.

"Yes."

"Then clear the deck for a dance," added Magog Brand.

"Ay! ay!"

"Call the grog."

"Here it comes."

"And now," said Jack Harkaway, the elder, "as soon as Ben Hawser tunes up, I'll try if I can get my legs lissome enough to lead off the hornpipe."

This proposition was greeted with deafening cheers.

Harkaway led off the dance with a will, and every step that is known in association with the hornpipe he could do—ay, and do it to perfection, too.

The tars were delighted.

And when Jack, senior, was tired, Jack, junior, had to start off, and he showed himself scarcely less agile than his father,

Then followed Harvey, and Magog Brand came next with Punch's breakdown, which made the crew yell with gratification.

It was a grand festival for the crew.

And the reputation of the Harkaways—father and son—was from that day wondrously enhanced for the sailors.

They had looked upon them with considerable respect and admiration before; they now regarded them as men of the most exalted genius.

* * * * *

While the festivities proceeded, Mr. Jefferson and Dr. Stanley stood aloof, chatting about the details of the escape.

"It is a remarkable thing," said the doctor, "how apt we are to believe in what we most desire."

"We are."

"Do you know that no sooner did we get sight of a sail than young Jack set it down for the *Franz Josef*?"

"Indeed. Well, we came across a bottle containing your message."

"You did?" cried the doctor.

"Yes."

"Now Heaven be thanked!" exclaimed the other, fervently. "Providence was with us."

"It was, indeed," said Mr. Jefferson, seriously; "it

is little short of marvelous that we should have picked up one of those bottles after all."

* * * * *

The *Franz Josef* was back again.

As soon as she was in port they made their way to the British consul's house, and made an official report concerning the notorious pirate ship, the *Flowery Land*.

The consequence was that an expedition was got up to go in pursuit.

Once their business settled there, they made their way up the country to Mr. Mole's property.

Judge, then, of their surprise and dismay when they discovered the calamity which had befallen the old tutor.

Poor Isaac Mole—ever seeking for glory, even in the midst of pain!

He was once more nursed by his faithful black partner, with all her old tenderness and affection, and thanks to a good constitution, no less than her unremitting attention, he was comparatively soon convalescent.

And so it fell out that when they arrived, he was walking about upon two wooden legs.

"Welcome all," said the old gentleman, with genuine joy. "My troubles are over now that I see you all here again; and, believe me, I would have two more wooden legs and go through even more suffering yet if it were necessary for the delight of having my own boy safe back with us—bless him!"

But the troubles and ugly adventures which they had gone through had this notable effect upon them.

They were tired of China.

"We will leave the Celestials to their own devices," said Harkaway, "as soon as Mr. Mole is fit to undertake the fatigues of a sea voyage."

CHAPTER XXX.

MOLE BAGS A BURGLAR.

Mr. Mole had suffered many a rebuff from the hand of Fate during his long service with Jack Hackaway, but he was still the same cheerful member of society.

The loss of his only remaining leg did not affect his spirits much. He had looked upon the world cheerfully when he possessed the perfect complement of two legs. Naturally it was a great grief to him to lose one of them, but the world still looked good to him, and his cheerfulness was untouched. Then came the loss of the last leg, a thing to overwhelm some minds, but it seemed to Mole that with a perfect body, and eyes and ears to see and hear the fine things that were going on around him, there was still no real cause for unhappiness.

The only visible effect the loss had upon him was that it caused him to grow spiteful at times.

And at such times he would vow vengeance upon the villainous Bigamini.

"I am not a vicious man," he would often say, "but that wretch has condemned me to a life on stilts, and if I wait till I'm a hundred, I'll have my vengeance upon him."

And when he made this remark in the presence

of his two detective friends Nabley and Daniel Pike, they would endeavor to put him off his favorite topic by assuring him that Bigamini was dead.

"I am sure that last shot did for him," said Pike, "positive. The others carried him away in order that nothing might be discovered to compromise them."

"How compromise them?" Mr. Mole would ask.

"By letting their names be known."

This puzzled Mr. Mole until it was explained.

The two detectives, true to their instincts, had ferreted out a number of particulars concerning this same Bigamini and his exploits.

Not only was that ruffian the spy of pirates, but he was also connected with a villainous gang of thieves, who carried on their exploits, in an underhand way, with a secret organization that completely puzzled the native authorities.

They had their agents and spies everywhere, and indeed it was very soon evident that they must have them upon Mr. Mole's plantation.

The continual robberies which occurred soon convinced the detectives of this.

Nabley communicated his suspicions to Isaac Mole, and the latter was on the watch night and day from that moment.

By degrees, however, he got the better of this nervous feeling, and Mrs. Mole began to get a fair night's rest.

One night, however, just three weeks after the return of the Harkaway party to the plantation, Isaac Mole started up in the middle of the night, and snatching up his revolver, hobbled off on his rounds

His wife vainly endeavored to dissuade him.

Now Mr. Mole would fain have aroused his friends generally, but the fact was that he had cried "wolf" so often, that they would not pay any heed to him now.

Chloe tried to coax him into going back to bed again, but tried in vain.

Down he hobbled into the grounds, nothing on but his dressing gown.

Now he had not proceeded far when he saw in the dim night light a figure crouching by the back door of his house.

"Hello!" thought Mole, "I've got him, have I?"

What could he be doing in this position?

"Evidently trying the locks," thought Mole.

So he had a capital notion.

"I'll just go back quietly," he said to himself, "and wait till John Chinaman opens the door and then meet him face to face inside with my little six-shooter -- glorious lark!"

So full of glee was he at the notion that he could scarce refrain from chuckling aloud.

Back he crept around the house and into the room and straight up to the door, upon the outside of which the midnight burglar was operating.

Now what was his surprise when he got there to find that the thief had drilled a hole on each side of the door large enough to get his hands through?

And there were his two hands groping about for the fastenings.

Mr. Mole was seized with a brilliant idea.

So grand that he could scarce carry it into execution for laughing.

He looked about him for a rope, and having secured a good stout one he hastily made a running noose at each end of it.

This done, he slowly approached the two hands, held the pair of nooses over them, and then, with a sudden jerk, tightened them.

"Bagged!" he cried; "bagged, by the everlasting jingo!"

He dragged at the poor wretch's wrists with no gentle hand, and a groan of anguish came through the door.

"Now," said Mole, "I must administer toko."

Round the house he trotted, and reaching the exterior, found his prisoner writhing ineffectually to release himself from these novel stocks.

"I've been waiting for you a long while, my friend," said Mole; "and now, as I'm a sinner, I'll enjoy myself on your carcass."

He looked for a stick.

But there was nothing to hand.

Mole was up in arms, and he was not likely to be balked of his revenge.

A happy thought.

He had two wooden legs; one would suffice for his present enjoyment.

So he hurriedly unscrewed it and prepared for the fray.

"This is most enjoyable," he said to himself.

So he turned up his sleeves.

Then he poised his wooden leg gracefully in his hand.

"One, two, three, and that's toko!"

Mole Bags a Burglar.

Down it came a terrific bang on the poor wretch's back. The thief gave a yell.

"That's only to open the ball, my friend," said Mole, cheerfully; "we shall enjoy ourselves more, presently."

Crack!

"Chin-chin," said Mole, pleasantly, "how does that style suit you?"

Bang! Bang!

It was something to hear him yell.

Mole had never heard any music that pleased him half so much.

"Now, my dear friend," said Mr. Mole, pausing for a moment to take breath; "we have had the plain, straightforward hitting. I'm going in for a few fancy touches."

Saying which, he prodded his prisoner desperately in the ribs.

At each poke the thief gave an "Ugh!" that reminded Mole of the navvies at home, knocking in the paving stones in the London roads.

He writhed, and yelled, and shrieked.

And the more he cried, the more Mr. Mole laughed.

"Dear, dear," he cried, "what an evening I'm having, to be sure; and all to myself."

Whiz! Crack!

He played a little wildly now, and landed an awful blow on his prisoner's head.

"Dear, dear, that won't do," he said. "I shall knock him out of time and spoil it before I've had half my pean'orth out of him."

Crack!

"Mercy!"

"Hello!" said Mole, starting, or rather hopping back in surprise, "English!"

Just then he heard the voices of Jack Harkaway, his friend Dick Harvey, and others calling him.

"Mr. Mole, Mr. Mole!"

"All right," shouted Mole, "here I am."

"Where?"

"Round here."

But finding that they did not arrive very quickly, he hopped after them.

"Why, what in the name of all that's wonderful is the meaning of this?" said Jefferson, the big Kentuckian, who had attached himself to Jack's party.

"I've bagged a burglar," returned Mole.

"You have had the nightmare."

"Not I," answered Mole, with a chuckle. "I thought I should surprise you; come with me."

He took Harvey by the arm for support.

Now just as they turned the corner, they perceived a number of dark forms stealing away across the plantation, and all that remained in evidence of Mr. Mole's prisoner, was the ends of the rope.

"Well," ejaculated Mr. Mole, "he has got away. But he had such a dose of my wooden leg that I don't think he could go far."

"Your leg?"

"Where is it?"

"Don't you see? He had made those holes to reach the iron bars on the inside, and there I caught him and held him too, and then I came round to give him a token of my gratitude, and having no stick handy, I unscrewed one of my legs, and I enjoyed myself; in fact,

if I hadn't left to show you the way, I should probably be still at work on him."

They laughed at this.

"They have carried him off."

"Of course; I knew he couldn't walk; I spoilt him for that. But what startled me was that he called for mercy in English."

"English?"

"Yes."

"I shouldn't be surprised to find it Bigamini again."

"Well, I lost a leg when last I tackled the scoundrel Bigamini, and now I've lost one again."

And although they scoured the country round not a trace could they find of the thieves or of their booty—Mr. Mole's wooden leg!

CHAPTER XXXI.

A MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE DELAYS.

Certain suspicions entertained by Mr. Mole and Detective Pike respecting Bigamini were perfectly correct.

He was in league with Chinese pirates.

His relations with the captain and owner of the pirate craft *Flowerly Land*, from which young Jack had escaped, were especially intimate.

Bigamini pretended to be a ship broker, and had an office in Hongkong.

But he did not live there.

"Oh, no! His domicile was a few miles out of the Chinese treaty port.

Biga-fang-Ming-Ming, as he was called in Hongkong, but Bigamini, as he really was, had two partners in his business.

One was a rascally, lying, boastful Englishman, who had been in more prisons than one.

His name was Dick Blowhard.

The other was a Dutchman, called Hans Schneider.

He had come from Holland to Sumatra, and, being kicked out of the Straits Settlements, had gone on to China.

Birds of a feather generally flock together.

Bigamini had been picked up by a ship, after being thrown over the vessel's side, in the Mediterranean Sea.

It was greater luck than he was entitled to.

The ship was going to China.

He served as a deck hand, and worked his passage out.

In Hongkong he met with Dick Blowhard and Hans Schneider.

They entered into business together as receivers of the goods stolen by the junk pirates.

It was their business to pay a certain sum down, and to make as big a market as they could of the articles brought them.

The nefarious trade paid them very well.

Blowhard and Schneider lived over the office where they pretended to trade as ship brokers in Hongkong.

Schneider and Blowhard would manage the business in his absence.

There is an old saying that there is honesty among thieves.

They did not cheat one another.

The tea garden was managed by a superintendent and about thirty Chinese, with their families.

These people lived in some huts, half a mile lower down the lake.

They were the servants of Bigamini, and obeyed his orders without a murmur.

Bigamini had once attempted to break into Mole's dwelling, and the detective, Pike, had shot him, and slightly wounded him.

These simple people, who were at his beck and call, had picked him up and carried him home.

He was not badly hurt.

Still, the pain he suffered made him more vindictive than before.

He vowed to have a fearful revenge for that shot in the leg, which disabled him for at least a week.

It must not be supposed that such a man as Bigamini lived alone in his lake house.

Not at all.

Forgetting the two wives from whom he had fled, he had lost no time in getting married again.

Singular as it may appear, he could not keep out of matrimony.

He ought to have had enough of it.

But Bigamini had not.

He tempted fortune again.

This time he married a young Chinese woman named Hysa.

As Chinese women go she was pretty, hard-working, meek-mannered and obedient.

He made a perfect slave of her.

Taking her to his house on Lake Lonely, when he bought his property, he kept her shut up there.

Never did he allow her to go into the city.

Being an orphan, dependent on an uncle, who had died since her marriage, she had no friends.

She was literally alone in the world.

The poor thing was entirely at the mercy of Bigamini.

Little did the wretch show her.

In his former marriages, he had been dreadfully bullied and browbeaten by his wives.

With Hysa, all that was altered.

She did not dare to call her soul her own.

He could have his revenge on her sex now.

It was a splendid opportunity for the mean-minded little cur.

His contemptible nature would not allow him to neglect it.

He was continually abusing and ill-treating his wife.

She was familiar with blows and curses.

There was no chance of her escaping from her isolated prison.

A Chinaman, named Hi Li, in Bigamini's employ, lived in the house.

He had charge of the boat.

Without that she could not get from the lake house to the mainland.

Though an old man, Hi Li made a very good watchman, and gave Hysa no chance to get away.

If she could have fled, she would have done so.

Having explained Bigamini's position and mode of life, we will introduce our readers to his office in Hongkong.

It consisted of two rooms on the ground floor of a house in River Street.

He kept no clerk, as he kept no books, and either he or one of his partners, Schneider or Blowhard, were always sure to be in.

Besides, a clerk might have learned secrets, and betrayed them.

It was easy also to receive and warehouse the stolen goods they received in a cellar they had below their offices, where they remained until they were sold at a profit.

The three partners were together one afternoon, when the weather was very warm.

The Dutchman, Schneider, had just come in from a journey.

Some wine, brandy and iced water flanked a couple of boxes of cigars.

This fraudulent gang of so-called ship brokers liked to live well.

"Now, Hans," exclaimed Bigamini, impatiently, as he drained his glass, "your news?"

"Vel, I going to it," replied Schneider. "Gif a man's time to draw his breath, after he shall trink his goot liquor."

"Have you news from the *Flowery Land*?" asked Blowhard, the third partner.

"Yah. I see a pirate some miles down the coast. They have captured a ship with silk laden. The bales will be brought on shore to-night."

"Good!" said Bigamini. "Did you arrange for their carriage to this office?"

"It is all settled. I be there mit a cart, and bring them meinself."

"And I will stay here all night to receive them, and put them down cellar," remarked Blowhard.

"Are there many bales?" inquired Bigamini.

"Two hundred and fifty. The price of silk has gone up. It is a lucky haul. The pirates cut the throats of the crew, and burned the ship. *Himmel!* they know how to do pisness."

"To-morrow night," said Bigamini, "I want you to help me in a little enterprise."

"What is that?" asked Blowhard.

"I want to make another raid on Mole's house. You know that I failed the last time I tried it on."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Blowhard. "He nearly basted the life out of you."

"Yah!" grinned the Dutchman. "You was bash over the head till I thought you was dead."

"It was all that wooden leg," replied Bigamini.

"If we hadn't rescued you, by Jove! you would have been a candidate for a coffin."

"That's true, boys, and I'm thankful to you for it; but I'll have my just revenge."

"What will you do?" asked Blowhard.

"Old Mole's rich; I know him of old. He doesn't believe in Chinese banks, and keeps his money at home, hid away. I mean having that bullion."

"Anything else?"

"In the elegant phraseology of the educated Yankees, you bet. You know, perhaps, that the Harkaway party are all at the plantation?"

"Yes," replied Schneider and Blowhard together.

"Well, I mean to steal one of the party, which, I have not made up my mind yet."

"What on earth for?"

"To hold him for ransom. Make money while you can, is my motto."

"I'm solid on that, too," remarked Blowhard.

"Your head was *schr* level," observed the Dutchman.

"Harkaway and his friend, Harvey, can afford to pay," continued Bigamini. "I shall take my prisoner to my lake house, and there keep him while negotiations are going on for his or her ransom."

"You say 'her.'"

"It may be one of the females. Harvey has a little girl called Emily. She's a nice little thing, and a kind of sweetheart of young Jack's."

"Ah, ver' goot!" said Hans, gruffly. "They would pay as moch for her as for a grown-up person."

"She'd be easy to carry and easy to mind," put in old Dick Blowhard.

"Just my idea, though I had not quite made up my mind about it."

"I would, then. You can't better that spec."

"Very well, the little girl, Emily, it shall be, and I'll have a thousand pounds for her redemption. That will be over three hundred apiece, boys. Are you on?"

"I was in it from the word 'go!'" cried Schneider. "Yah, we will wake up old Mole."

"I'm with you," said Blowhard. "The Harkaways are a hard lot to deal with, aren't they? I have heard of them, but never come in contact with any of the party."

"Oh! they're tough; but I've seen them cornered," answered Bigamini.

"They have baffled our friends, the pirates. That is a feather in their cap, as the saying is."

"Never mind. We will baffle them, and double-discount them. I will strike, and they will not know where the blow comes from," said Bigamini, with a vicious gleam in his eyes.

He was terribly wicked.

In fact, there was no crime in the decalogue that this diminutive viper would hesitate to commit.

"How are you going to get the ransom money?" inquired Blowhard.

"When the kidnaping is done, and I've got old Mole's secret hoard, and given him a knock on the head for what the timber-toed old pig gave me, I'll consider that."

"You must write a letter, stating that the child will be given up if the sum of money required is put in a certain place at such and such a time," continued Blowhard.

"That will do," answered Bigamini, smiling. "I can count on you two to-morrow night?"

"Without fail," said Blowhard.

"I was your most obedient servant," remarked Schneider. "Where there was money to make I was always on. *Mein Gott!* I think I never able to get enough of the ooftish *man*."

He shook his head gravely, rattled some coins in his pocket, as if he liked the sound of them, took a drink, filled his large pipe, and began to smoke placidly.

"That being arranged," exclaimed Bigamini, "I shall walk home to my country house, and if my wife hasn't got my dinner ready when I arrive, I pity her."

He grated his teeth savagely together.

His small eyes emitted a spiteful glare.

"Well," said Dick Blowhard, "there is no more business to be done to-day, so I shall go to my diggings."

"I shtop here and shmoke *mein* pipe and have a trink or two, den I shuts up the shop and closes the show," remarked Hans.

They shook hands, and the three precious villains parted.

The road to Lake Lonely being a good one, it did not take our old acquaintance, Bigamini, more than an hour and a half to walk to his house.

As we have said, there was only the little village of bamboo huts, in which his people lived, within measurable distance of the lake and the plantation.

Bigamini was doing very well from a pecuniary point of view, yet he was not happy or contented.

It is a question whether anything would have made a man with his temperament so.

He had no character, and loved things evil rather than things good.

Arriving at the edge of the lake opposite his house, which looked very picturesque, standing on piles driven into the water, he took a silver whistle from his pocket.

This he blew shrilly.

His man, Hi Li, was on the lookout for him.

Instantly a boat put off from the house, and the Chinaman pulled for the shore.

"Is there any news?" asked Bigamini, as the boat ran alongside the landing place.

"Lo Mung camee, and is waiting for you," replied Hi Li.

"In that case, he has got something to communicate."

Bigamini stepped into the boat.

Hi Li turned the bows round, and struck out for the house, which he was not long in reaching.

Lo Mung was a middle-aged Chinaman, in the pay of Bigamini.

But he was also a servant in Mr. Mole's house, helping in the cooking and in various other ways.

Mole and his wife had every confidence in him.

Nevertheless, he was nothing else than a base, ungrateful spy, who betrayed the secrets of his master's house.

Through the cook, Lo Mung, Bigamini knew all that was going on at the professor's dwelling.

Arriving at the house, Bigamini got up the ladder which led to the balcony.

Hi Li moored the boat to a pile, and followed.

Seated on a bamboo chair in the balcony was an obese, bloated-looking Chinaman.

This was Lo Mung.

"Ha! muchee good-day," he exclaimed. "Vellee vell? Me allee samee. How you doee? Fine day? Sunshine makee feel thirst. Drinkee, drinkee."

He took up a cup of tea, which had been provided for him by Hysa.

She was in the kitchen, preparing her husband's dinner, which was nearly ready.

"What have you come to tell me?" inquired Bigamini.

"Mole, Harkaway, all go awayee in three days," was the answer of Lo Mung.

"Going away!" echoed Bigamini, in genuine surprise.

"Yes, Biga-fug-Ming-Ming. They go because they think they get money in Europe."

"Is that all you have heard."

"They bringee home from sea a Greek sailor man—Spirillo callee."

"Well?"

"He tellee them comee to this country. On an island, greatee treasure. Make all richee for lifers."

"That is the queerest start I ever heard of."

"They buyee a shipper for themselves. In three days they be off," added Lo Mung.

"Not if I know it they won't," said Bigamini, with a knowing grin.

"Very strong, clever man Harkaway."

"I put a stop to their little game."

"How you be a stopper?" asked Lo Mung, raising his soft, almond-shaped eyes.

"You will find out in time. Here are five English pounds for you."

He counted out the money.

Lo Mung snatched it up with eagerness.

"Serve me faithfully, as you have hitherto done," continued Bigamini, "and I will double it in a day or two."

"I always be your good serverter; be slavee for you."

"Betray me, play me false, give Harkaway and his

party any idea of where I live, or what I am going to do, and you shall have your flesh sliced off your bones with razors."

"I would bitee out my tonguer firstee."

"You know I have influence with the commissioner of the district."

"I am a knowee of that, Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming."

"Very well, be careful."

"What you wantee me to be a doer of?" inquired Lo Mung.

"To-morrow night, when all have gone to bed in Mole's house, leave the back door open."

"It shall be done, most honorable excellency."

"Where does Mole keep his money?" continued Biga-mini.

"In an old wooden chest, in the back room, on the ground floor, which is on a level with the earthce," replied Lo Mung.

"Can you get the key?"

"He keepee that himselfers; always tie round his neckee with a stringer."

"Doesn't he generally go to bed more or less drunk?"

"Sometimes sleep on the floorer, on a mattee."

"Persuade him to drink to-morrow night. Put this in his grog; it will make him sleep."

He handed him a small phial, which contained a white fluid.

"Yes, most honorable," said Lo Mung.

"Get the key, and await my coming at the back door."

"Haa! you stealee monee. Good! That better than takee wooden leg. Me be an understander. Go now,

or get into troulbers for being outter too longee muchee."

Bigamini raised his hand.

"Stop!" he cried; "I haven't done yet."

"What more you sayee?"

"Where does the little girl Emily sleep? Harvey's daughter, you know."

"The one who playee with young Master Jack Hark-away?"

"Exactly. That is the one I allude to."

"She havee littler roomer all to herselfers, at the bottom of the staircases," Lo Mung answered.

"You must be ready to show it to me."

"She prettee child—no killee."

"Who said I was going to kill her, you fool?" exclaimed Bigamini. "I am only going to bring her here and ask money for her return to her mother and father."

"Ah! that allee rightee."

"You shall have some of the cash when I get it and when the party go, I will find work for you."

"I bow to your generosity, most honorable Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming," said Lo Mung. "But respectfully me tellee you one thing."

"Name it."

"Beware of the big monkee. He always about the house somewhere. That beaster is never a sleeper."

"Will he fight?" asked Bigamini.

"He scratchee and bitee like a Tartar, excellency."

"I'll carve him with my knife. Bah! I'm not afraid of apes. You can depart now. Don't forget my instructions."

"They are written on my heartee," replied Lo Mung.

He inclined his head, and walked down the steps.

Hi Li unfastened the boat as he stepped into it, and paddled him to the land.

Then Lo Mung went back as quickly as he could to Prof. Mole's house, to attend to his duties.

Bigamini entered his own domicile, and walked into the kitchen.

Some fish, caught in the lake by Hi Li, had been fried in oil.

Hysa was busily engaged in putting some plain boiled rice on a dish, round a fowl, which she had roasted.

"Isn't my dinner ready?" he demanded, with an oath. "You heard me come home."

"It will not be a minute," she replied. "I never know precisely when to expect you."

Bigamini walked up to her.

Raising his fist, he struck her a cowardly blow.

She fell to the floor, stunned.

When he had gratified his appetite—he was a large, quick, gluttonous eater—he finished the bottle of wine.

Lighting some opium in a pipe, he threw himself on a pile of cushions in a corner and remained all night, under the influence of opium.

The next day the abject wretch awoke from his debauch, weak and trembling, all his nerves being shaken by the vile, soul-deadening drug.

He had recourse to strong tea and the brandy bottle as a means of steadying himself.

That day he remained at home.

In the evening he was visited by his two partners, as had been agreed upon.

Schneider and Blowhard drank and talked with him until it was nearly midnight.

Then Hi Li rowed them to the shore, and they started to walk to Mr. Mole's house.

It was their settled determination to rob the professor of his hidden hoard.

Also they were to steal away little Emily, young Jack Harkaway's sweetheart, and hide her in the lake house for the purpose of ransom.

It was a dangerous undertaking.

Their path bristled with perils.

The air was still as death.

No moon was visible, but, as usual, a galaxy of stars twinkled in the sky.

As the confederates went along, they arranged their plans.

Schneider and Blowhard were to stay outside Mr. Mole's house, while Bigamini went inside, and with the aid of Lo Mung, accomplished his purpose.

The little girl, Emily, was to be handed to Blowhard, and the money taken from the chest was to be given to Schneider.

They were to hasten to the house on Lake Lonely, and Bigamini was to bring up the rear.

In order to facilitate matters and render the child unconscious, Bigamini had provided himself with a handkerchief steeped in chloroform.

This would effectually prevent her from crying out and raising an alarm.

The house was reached in due time.

All was silent as the grave.

The inmates had retired to rest some time ago.

Schneider and Blowhard placed themselves against the wall so as to conceal themselves.

With a crafty tread, Bigamini approached the back door.

It was open.

"Are you there?" asked Bigamini, under his breath.

"Yes, excellency," replied Lo Mung. "I have been awaiting your coming for some timee."

"Is all quiet?"

"Everything. Mandarin Mole is asleep in the parlor, fullee of whisky."

"Are you sure he is tipsy?"

"Him sleepee like a toppee."

"Good. Where is the key of the chest in which the old man keeps his treasure?"

"Here, O sun and moon of my existence."

Saying this, Lo Mung handed him a key.

"Do I not serve you well, hope of my life?" he added.

"Yes; I will advance you. Before long you shall have land, and be your own master."

"Follow me, high and mighty. I showee you the chest."

Lo Mung led the way to a room in which a Chinese lantern was burning dimly.

In one corner was a large wooden chest, secured by a patent lock, which had been made in Europe.

There was enough light in the room into which he was introduced for the robber's purpose.

Mole was lying on his back, snoring heavily; a bottle was by his side, and there was also an empty glass.

"Me givee him the powder," said Lo Mung.

"He won't move till morning," replied Bigamini.

"I've a good mind to take away the old rooster's wooden legs, but it would occupy too much time. Where is the key?"

"Me gottee it. Here it am."

"Hand it over."

The Chinaman gave Bigamini the key of the chest.

In less than a minute it was opened, and two large bags of gold extracted.

Carrying them to the back door, Bigamini coughed.

"Where are you, Dutchy?" he said.

"Here," replied Schneider.

He presented him with the gold, which the Dutchman, according to previous agreement, was to take to the lake house.

Returning to the room, Bigamini relocked the chest and put the string which held the key round Mole's neck again.

The professor did not stir.

He was perfectly unconscious of all his surroundings.

"Now for the child," said Bigamini, in a hoarse whisper.

"This way, most magnificent," replied Lo Mung.

He conducted him to the apartment in which little Emily was sleeping.

She looked the picture of innocence, as the Chinaman held a lantern over her head.

Bigamini took the chloroformed handkerchief from his pocket, and held it to her face.

She moved uneasily, but uttered no cry.

In two minutes she was completely under the influence of the soporific drug.

Bigamini could hear his heart beat.

It was an anxious time for the cowardly scoundrel.

But fortune favored his disgraceful schemes, his star was in the ascendant.

Without interruption he wrapped the child in a sheet and carried her to Blowhard, who immediately made off.

Bigamini spoke a few words to Lo Mung, who retired into the house, and bolted the door as if nothing had happened.

As the chief concocter of this mischief was about to follow his companions, he met with a great surprise.

Something sprang on to his back, and two sinewy, bony arms were twined round his neck.

What was it?

He put up his hand to ascertain.

It came in contact with the furry skin of some animal.

In a moment he recollected Lo Mung's warning.

It must be young Jack Harkaway's monkey, which had been prowling about outside the house.

Nero's instincts told him there was something wrong.

He felt that he had come across an unauthorized person in the garden.

Perhaps he remembered and knew him again.

If he did not, Bigamini recollected the ape perfectly well, and shuddered at coming in contact with him.

The attack had taken him by surprise.

In vain he endeavored to throw off the clinging embrace of the savage and powerful little beast.

Nero's grip became intensified.

He was slowly but surely throttling the hateful spy and kidnaper, all the while he kept on chattering in

his ear, as if he was telling him, in monkey language, how glad he was to have got him in his power.

The veins on the wretched man's forehead became swollen like cords.

His eyes began to start from their sockets.

Great beads of perspiration dropped from his face, and blood trickled slowly from his nose.

He gasped for breath, for he was choking.

Lo Mung had retired within the house and knew nothing of what was going on.

It was useless to look for assistance from him.

To call out would have been to betray himself to Harkaway and his friends.

He felt for his knife, but he had dropped it.

His pistol was available, but he was afraid to use it, as a report would give the alarm.

Besides this, the bullet would probably go through the monkey's body and into his own.

Suddenly he noticed that he was standing close to a large palm tree.

Making a final effort, he staggered towards it.

With all his strength he backed on to the trunk, and got the monkey jammed against it.

The shock caused the brute to relax his hold.

Another jam made his ribs crack, and, with a shrill cry, Nero fell to the ground.

Bigamini was able to breathe again.

Looking up, he saw a light moving in one of the rooms.

It vanished, and was then to be seen in another.

Some member of the household had been aroused, and was awakening the others.

"Time to be off," muttered Bigamini.

A cock began to crow.

It was heralding the dawn, which ushers in the day very early in those latitudes.

Giving the monkey a parting kick, in token of derision, the spy disappeared among the tall and graceful trees with which Mr. Mole's house was surrounded.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MONDAY GOES ON THE WARPATh WITH YOUNG JACK.

When Nero was jammed between the trunk of the tree and Bigamini's back, he uttered a peculiar cry, as we have said.

This was heard by young Jack Harkaway.

All the evening he had been strangely restless, and when he went to bed he was unable to sleep.

His mind reverted back to his timely escape from the clutches of Hunston and the pirates.

Though he was safe with his parents once more, he doubted the present and feared the future.

At any moment he knew that he might expect a blow in the dark, either from Hunston or one of his emissaries.

When he, through his open window, heard the monkey's cry, he sprang out of bed. It did not take him long to light a lamp and get his clothes on.

He was well aware that Nero would not cry out like that for nothing.

There was something wrong.

Of that young Jack was sure.

His father slept in an adjoining room, to which he quickly made his way.

In moments of danger, Jack always sought his father in preference to anyone else.

He could rely equally upon his judgment and valor.

Without waking his mother, he touched his father on the shoulder, and rousing him, made a sign.

Harkaway construed this correctly.

His son wanted to communicate something to him privately.

As rapidly as possible he slipped on his clothes, and followed Jack down the stairs.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I don't know, but there is something up, father. That's why I called you," answered Jack.

"Let me hear all about it."

"All I can tell you is that I heard Nero give a strange cry, which monkeys only utter when hurt."

"Inside or out?"

"It seemed to come from the garden. Shall we go and see? I have a pistol."

"All right—forge ahead," said Harkaway.

Young Jack unbolted the back door, and they both passed out.

The sun was rising with unspeakable beauty, streaking the heavens with a roseate hue.

A perfume of many flowers assailed the nostrils, and the eye was gladdened by green leaves and verdure of various kinds.

The beauties of nature had no charm, however, for young Jack on this particular occasion.

He had made a pet of Nero, and was greatly attached to him.

The monkey had rendered him good service in times gone by.

Some boys make pets of birds, some of dogs and ponies, but Jack's only favorite among the dumb creation was Nero.

He would sooner have been knocked about himself than that his monkey should suffer.

Looking around he speedily espied him.

As he lay under the palm tree, he looked exactly as if he were dead.

"Look, father!" cried Jack. "They have killed the poor brute."

"Who do you mean?" asked Harkaway.

"How can I tell? Some enemies, I suppose. We have enough of them, and to spare."

"I hope he is not dead. It appears to me he breathes."

"Will you look at him, dad? I'm not much of a doctor. By Jove! I knew he would not cry out for nothing. It's lucky I heard him, got up, and roused you."

"Yes. If he is injured, he might have died without help."

Saying this Harkaway advanced to the prostrate monkey

He felt his bones all over his body.

Harkaway was surgeon enough to be able to tell that none were fractured.

Then he examined the head, and found that Nero was bleeding from two wounds—one above the mouth, the other under one of his ears.

"He's all right, as far as his bones and body are concerned," he said; "but he got a couple of what the Westerners call 'sockdollagers' on the head."

"Is it serious?" inquired Jack.

"No; he's been floored and stunned. A drop of brandy will suit his complaint as well as anything."

"Shall I get some?"

"Yes. I'll stand by."

Young Jack went into the house, got some brandy in a wineglass, and handed it to his father.

The latter gently administered the spirit, as a nurse or a doctor would medicine.

In a few minutes a decided improvement was noticeable.

Nero opened his eyes, and seeing his young master by his side, rose up, and began to chatter vehemently.

He pointed as sensibly as possible to the hurts on his face.

Then he capered among the trees, as if to indicate that his foe had gone that way.

"All right, old boy," exclaimed young Jack. "I understand what you want to tell us. Some one has been here. You drove him—or them—off."

"It's a pity the beggars can't talk," remarked Harkaway. "They are very human."

"So they are. I've seen lots of monkey-faced people. Perhaps they are some relation."

"He's got something more to tell us."

"How? what?" asked Jack.

"Don't you see he is at the back door? He wants to show us something, if he can't talk," replied Harkaway.

"By Jingo! that must be it. I never saw such a monkey."

"Nor anyone else. He's a living curiosity. Recollect what he did at the hotel in New York when it was on fire."

"Yes, and more recently, how he played at being a soldier and fired a blank cartridge at Mole. Ha! ha! that was a good joke."

Talking in this way they entered the house, preceded by Nero.

The monkey appeared especially anxious for them to follow him.

There could be no doubt from what ensued that Nero had witnessed all the villainy of Bigamini.

Nor, as will be seen, was he ignorant of the treachery of Lo Mung.

First, he took Jack and his father into the parlor where Mr. Mole had fallen asleep on the floor.

It was always too much exertion, now he had lost his legs, to go upstairs if he had had a drop too much.

Poor professor! He was not growing younger, and he had been in the wars.

Nero jumped on the money chest and touched the lock with his paw.

Then he looked up intelligently at his master.

"Father," said young Jack, "there's been a robbery here, or I'm mistaken."

"What makes you think so?" asked Harkaway.

"This is the chest Mole keeps his money in. You

know he has a prejudice against banking it. Nero has some meaning in his head, or he would not sit there."

"Where is the key?"

"He carries it on a bit of string tied round his neck."

"Go and see if he has it there."

Young Jack examined the tutor, who was blissfully unconscious of all around him.

He reclined on his back, and snored as if it were for a wager.

"Here's the key, father!" cried Jack.

"Mole's indulging in one of his 'usuals.' He thought we had all gone to bed and should not miss him. He's as drunk as a lord, but here's the key of the chest, so Nero is wrong for once."

"That proves nothing," Harkaway replied.

"Why not?"

"Bring me the key. Let us examine the chest."

"Oh! I see what you mean."

"If you don't, you are a baby. When were you born--yesterday, or the day before?"

Young Jack took the liberty of removing Mr. Mole's key and opened the chest.

Harkaway leaned over his shoulder while he did so.

The lid was thrown up.

There was no money there.

"As I suspected," observed Harkaway, "the thief, whoever he is, has taken advantage of Mole's inebriety. He replaced the key after emptying the chest of its contents."

"That is plain enough," answered young Jack. "I did not tumble at first. I do now."

"But the door was locked. How did he get in? You undid the bolt. I saw you."

Young Jack looked at the window.

That was shut.

Only the ventilators admitted air.

He ran to every room on the ground floor.

It was the same in each one.

The front door was also securely fastened.

It did not seem as if there was a traitor in the house.

The thief must have come from outside, or how did the monkey get his injuries?

It was a mystery.

"Some one must have let the robber in, and then let him out," remarked Harkaway.

"We have Chinese servants, father," replied young Jack.

"Lo Mung, one man, two women," said Harkaway. "All the others who work for us live outside—come in the morning and go at night. Their cottages are half a mile off. Lo Mung was highly recommended, good character, and all that sort of thing."

"The Chinese are not trustworthy."

"That is true; false characters are easily obtained."

"I must confess that I am fairly puzzled," said young Jack.

Nero came up to him as he spoke, put his paw on his hand, and with a significant look walked towards the door.

"He is at it again. There is some idea in that noddle of his," exclaimed Harkaway.

"It's a case of following the leader."

"Certainly. The sagacious animal wants to show us

something more. Heaven grant it may be nothing very serious."

"How can it be?"

"I don't know. My heart misgives me."

Nervous and anxious, they went after the monkey.

The latter directed his steps to the room in which little Emily had been sleeping.

He proceeded on all fours to the bed.

Snatching at the clothes, he showed them that it was empty.

Their consternation was extreme.

"The girl's gone!" cried Harkaway.

"Don't say that," exclaimed young Jack, turning hot and then cold.

Emily was his sweetheart, and the daughter of his father's oldest friend, Dick Harvey.

He loved her as tenderly and fondly as she loved him.

These two seemed to be made to grow up affectionately together, and marry in due course.

If marriages are made in heaven, this was to be one of them.

"Search the house," continued Harkaway. "Don't wake anyone up yet, if you can help it. She may be with Harvey and Hilda."

Away went young Jack, his heart beating wildly.

He carefully examined every room in the house.

No trace of the missing girl was to be discovered.

Crestfallen and dejected, he came back and told his father so.

"This is a great blow to all of us," said Harkaway. "Especially will it be felt by Harvey and his wife."

"Who can have done such a dastardly thing as to steal an inoffensive child who has never done anyone any harm?"

"I am at a loss to imagine. It puzzles me. Hunston cannot be in Hongkong. We shall have to find out."

"What would people steal Emily for?"

"Money, I expect—a ransom, as it is called. It is a terrible mystery, and a great perplexity."

"We shall not be able to sail for the Island of Mystery now," continued young Jack.

"It is not likely until we have recovered Emily. No—our stay here is prolonged indefinitely."

"When will our troubles be over?"

"Never, I am afraid; but we must face them bravely like men," replied Harkaway.

"That's right, father; nothing will daunt me."

"You're a chip of the old block, Jack."

"Thank you, father. I feel complimented."

The monkey a third time came to young Jack.

He put his paw on his hand, looking in his face as before.

"Hello?" said Harkaway, "more revelations. The simian creature must be obeyed."

Young Jack patted Nero on the head, and again followed him, his father also accompanying.

This time the monkey led them to a small anteroom on the same floor.

In this apartment Lo Mung slept on a pile of matting.

He pretended to be asleep.

But the artful Mongolian was far from being in the land of dreams.

He had heard people moving about the house, and had not closed his eyes.

When the monkey entered the anteroom with Harkaway and young Jack, he simulated slumber.

Nero walked to the bed, touched Lo Mung on the arm, and regarded his master steadfastly.

"What does that mean?" asked Harkaway.

"Simply that this Chinese Johnny is in it," replied Jack.

"A spy! a traitor!"

"Exactly."

"In league with the robber and kidnaper!" continued Harkaway.

"What do you think? I'd stake my life on the acumen of Nero. He knows how many beans make five."

"I will tackle him in the morning," said Harkaway, "though I do not think we shall get much out of him."

"Wake him up now, and ask him questions," exclaimed young Jack. "Sleeping here, as he does, close to the passage, he ought to know a lot."

"Let him be."

"What are you going to do, father?"

"Wake Harvey and tell him of his loss. He must communicate the sad news to Hilda. They will feel as bad as your mother and I did when you were in the power of Hunston on board the pirate junk," answered Harkaway.

They walked away to the door.

Nero did not appear to like this, for he began to chatter noisily.

As they paid no attention to him, he stood on his hind legs and bent over Lo Mung.

With a sudden outburst of temper, he fell upon the Chinaman and bit his ear.

Lo Mung sprang up with an awful howl.

It was audible over the whole house.

"Takee the monkee! He killee me!" he yelled. "Oh! ah! oh!"

Young Jack seized Nero by the neck, and pulled him off.

"My carce badlee chewee! I am a sufferer of paince!" continued Lo Mung.

In a few minutes everyone was aroused.

Mr. Jefferson, the big Kentuckian, his friend Magog Brand, and Pike, the detective, had gone on a three days' fishing excursion, and had taken Sunday with them.

But Harvey, Monday, Dr. Stanley and Jack's boy friend, rushed downstairs.

They eagerly inquired what was the matter.

In a few words Harkaway told them of what had happened.

Harvey's grief was excessive.

After a brief conversation, it was determined to examine Lo Mung.

Nothing less than a cannon shot or an earthquake could have roused Mr. Mole until his usual time.

Lo Mung was made to stand up before Harkaway and Harvey.

Behind them stood young Jack and Monday.

"Now, Mr. John Chinaman," exclaimed Harkaway, "we want you to answer a few questions."

The man rubbed his eyes and yawned several times.

"Me vellee sleepee," he muttered. "Never me sleepee so soundee. Heapee big sleepee this nightee."

"Who was it you let into the house?" demanded Harkaway. "Speak out, you old humbug, or I'll leather you with a bamboo till you do."

"Never was a mover. Shuttee eye all timee."

"We know better. The money is gone from the chest, and the little girl has been stolen."

"That bad news. Wicked man comee from citee."

"You let them in."

"No, no—that is a mistake," replied Lo Mung, shaking his head emphatically.

Harkaway had hastily seized a bamboo cane used as a walking stick.

Telling Harvey and Monday to hold him, he lashed the fellow's back as hard as he could.

The Chinese from their youth are used to be being beaten.

Perhaps it has not so much effect on them as it otherwise would have, for this reason.

Lo Mung squirmed, twisted, groaned and yelled.

But he did not betray his employer, Bigamini.

Fully a hundred blows did Harkaway bestow upon him before he desisted.

He was compelled to do so from sheer exhaustion.

"Won't you confess?" cried Harkaway.

"Me nothing to tellee. Sleepee all the timee," replied Lo Mung.

"I'll give you fifty taels if you will let me hear the truth."

"You payee me for beatee, or me go to commissioner judge and he finee you."

Harkaway bit his lip. He saw that the rascal was a match for him.

Though Lo Mung was his servant, he had no right to beat him.

By committing an assault he had exceeded his privilege, and rendered himself amenable to a fine.

To avoid this he had to bargain with him, and make him a present of a certain sum of money.

"Good," said the Chinaman, with a bland, childlike smile, forgetting his pain by counting his gain. "Now payee for monkee, ear chewee."

"What do you mean, you insolent scoundrel?" Jack demanded.

"That China law--payee for monkee."

"Do you think I'm made of money, and you have found a little gold mine in me?"

"If not knuckle downee, allie samee as before, me go to judge, and he givee you toko for yam."

"You are making a market of me, and I suppose it's no use for me to kick."

"Pay him and sack him," suggested young Jack.

Harkaway had to make another bargain, and part with more money.

It was necessary to gratify the rapacity of Lo Mung, or he would have set the ponderous machine of the law in motion.

"Now you can hook it as soon as you like," continued young Jack. "Make yourself scarce."

Lo Mung did not offer to move.

He looked contemptuously at young Jack, who was rapidly becoming enraged at his immobility.

"Pay no attention to boy talkee," cried Lo Mung. "Mandarin Mole my master boss."

"He'll soon start you."

"When he say go, me be a goner, not before."

Saying this, Lo Mung walked in a stately way towards the door.

Just as he reached the threshold, young Jack pursued him, and giving him what boys call a running kick on the lower part of his back, sent him sprawling into the passage on his hands and knees.

At any other time there would have been a laugh at this.

What had happened, however, made everyone grave and serious.

All the mirth and hilarity was taken out of them by the loss of little Emily.

Lo Mung did not think it prudent to take any notice of young Jack's conduct.

It would have been risky to provoke him further.

He slunk away to the servants' quarters, and refreshed himself with a cup of tea.

The day had dawned very miserably for Harkaway and his party.

Failing to get any information out of Lo Mung, young Jack and Monday searched the grounds.

Bigamini and his accomplices were far away by this time.

Nothing whatever rewarded them for their trouble.

It was extremely painful to witness the grief of Hilda

when she came down and the sad news was communicated to her.

In vain Emily endeavored to comfort her.

She was like Rachel crying for her children, and refusing to listen to the voice of consolation.

The tables were changed now.

A short while ago it was Emily who was mourning the absence of her son.

Now, it was Hilda lamenting the loss of her daughter.

Mr. Mole was, it must be said to his credit, much more shocked at the disappearance of Emily than of his money.

He had more hidden away in another place, if he wanted it at any time.

The morning passed in anxious conversation as to what was to be done.

Fike was dispatched to the police office in Hong-kong, to give notice of the robbery and kidnaping.

At exactly twelve o'clock Harkaway, Harvey and Mole sat down to lunch.

Emily and Hilda could not eat anything, they were so upset, while young Jack and Monday were in the grounds with the doctor.

To his great surprise, as he took his seat, Harkaway saw a letter on his plate.

It was directed, in an ordinary commercial hand, to "Mr. Harkaway, leader of the party staying at Mole's plantation."

"Hello!" he cried, "a letter for me. How did it come here?"

That was a mystery.

Lo Mung was called.

Mole had not given him notice to leave, and he remained at his post.

He denied any knowledge of the letter, and declared that he had seen no one enter the house.

The other servants, on being interrogated, made replies to the same effect.

This caused the mystery to deepen.

Nothing remained to be done but to open the letter.

Harkaway was a little nervous.

Knowing what his enemies were capable of, he was half afraid there might be some explosive inside.

But he was soon reassured on that point.

The letter contained a single sheet of paper, on which was written:

"Notice: If the sum of one thousand pounds in English gold, is forthcoming within three days, the girl will be brought back in the night.

"No watch must be kept. This will mean death!

"If any attempt to arrest, shoot, or otherwise injure the one who brings her, she will be killed by a confederate in the rear.

"The money must be put in a canvas bag and placed at the edge of the well in the front garden attached to Mr. Mole's house.

"By order of

"THE SYNDICATE.

"P. S.—If the money is not deposited as aforesaid, the girl will be poisoned."

Jack elevated his eyebrows and looked up.

"This is what I call a nice, pleasant letter," he exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Harvey, breathlessly.

He fancied that it related to his daughter.

"The plot thickens. Shall I read it aloud?" replied Harkaway.

"Do so, please."

In a clear voice Jack read the document.

"Thank Heaven, she lives. My little girl is in the land of the living!" cried Harvey.

"Who is at the bottom of this villainy?" ejaculated Mole. "It can't be Hunston."

"No," answered Jack. "He is at sea with the pirates, but he has friends with whom he communicates on shore. He may have instigated the outrage."

"I have not the money," remarked Harvey. "It is such a large sum, or I would pay as demanded, and get her back."

"We can raise the cash at the bank within the given time," replied Harkaway, "but a question arises."

"I know what you are going to say. Is it advisable? May we not be tricked?"

"Precisely. How can we trust to the good faith and honor of these thieves?"

"Emily is so dear to her mother that she will sell her jewels—do anything, in fact, to recover her darling."

"Tell her we are going to pay, but, in reality, we will play the rascals a trick," said Harkaway.

"What is your suggestion?"

"Allow a day to pass to make the fellows who form this horrid syndicate believe we have been to the bank to get the coin."

"Yes. What next?" queried Harvey, eagerly.

"Fill a bag with small stones, put it where he mentions, and lie in wait for him."

Harvey shook his head.

"That won't do, dear boy," he exclaimed. "We may capture or kill him, but it will seal the fate of little Emily."

"Perhaps you are right."

"I know I am. The letter contains a threat to that effect."

"We must raise the money somehow, and as soon as possible," cried Harkaway. "I will help you to the best of my ability."

"And I, also, in spite of my recent loss," said Mole.

"How can I thank you?" exclaimed Harvey. "It is more than I have any right to expect."

"Not at all. You should command my last shilling if you wanted it," replied Harkaway.

"And I would actually pawn my wooden legs for you," said Mole, smiling.

Harvey was much affected at these proofs of their friendship.

Jack got up and shook him cordially by the hand.

"We'd do anything for you, old chum," he exclaimed. "Friendship with us is not a name; it's a solid fact."

"I'll go and tell Hilda. It will relieve her mind," said Harvey.

"Do so. Mole and I will drive into Hongkong this afternoon and get the money."

"Again and again I thank you."

"In a few days, when we have recovered little Emily,

we shall be on board our ship on our way to the magic island."

"That is so."

"Hurrah for Greece, the treasure, and our new friend Spirillo."

"So say all of us," cried Mole.

Harvey went out of the room.

He was in such a hurry to see his wife and tell her of the good news, that he did not see a form in the passage.

It was Lo Mung.

He had been listening, and had heard everything that had been said in the luncheon room.

Consequently he was well aware that Harkaway and Mole were going to Hongkong to raise a thousand pounds.

They would bring it home with them in the carriage.

This might be important news for his employer, Bigamini.

The spy determined to discharge himself, and go to the lake house.

He had been threatened with instant dismissal, and might get it at any moment.

Why not be first in the field?

As Harvey left the room he stepped in.

"We do not want anything," said Mole, when he saw him.

"Me wantee," was the reply.

"You can go. Don't interrupt me when I am talking to a gentleman."

"Me been beatee."

"You were paid for it," Harkaway exclaimed.

"Havee my carce chewee by monkee."

"More money!"

"Boy kickee. No payee for that."

"Look here! I've had enough of this system of extorting money. Get out!"

"If Mister Molee tellee me, allee rightee," said Lo Mung, with a cunning look.

"By all means. I don't need you," answered the professor, "there is something fishy about this business."

"Aie not go fishee."

"I believe you are in it. Go! Cut! Clear out!"

"Givvee wagee."

"You Johnnies are all on the make," cried Mole. "I never saw such a lot. What do you do with your money?"

"Smokee opium and gamble. Eatee bird-nest soup."

"Yes, and puppy dogs and rats. I know you. Be off. You can call for your wages in a week. I've got no money."

"Wantee now."

"I've been robbed. If you don't go, I'll kick you out!"

"Cantee vellee well. Gottee wooden leggte."

"You impudent scoundrel! If I could get at you, I'd—I'd pulverize you—reduce you to dust—squash you, as I would a mulberry, with my foot!"

"Payee up."

"Not I. Get it as you can."

"I'm a wonderer that you are not an ashamer. You bullee poor Chinaman."

"Get out, you yellow-skinned, almond-eyed, evil-smelling, thieving, lying skunk."

"Wooden legs. He! he! walk on two sticks."

"Disciple of Confucius, begone, or beware of the consequence. I'm hot-tempered and valiant."

"Foolce when drinkee."

Lo Mung grinned as he said this.

Mr. Mole fell back in his chair, gasping, with a mixture of too much lunch, and indignation.

"Am I to stand this?" he asked.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Harkaway.

"Then eject summarily that impudent Celestial, or I shall draw on him whatever the consequences may be."

"Don't do that. Murder, you know-----"

"Bosh! Is it a murder to kill a wretch like that?"

Mole interrupted.

"They would call it so in Hongkong."

"But the vile brute is not civilized—he's not worth his salt."

"They say they discovered the art of printing, and that of making gunpowder, thousands of years ago."

"I know they do, but don't you believe it," said Mole. "It's all a confounded lie."

"If so, they've degenerated," Harvey remarked.

"Very much so," replied Harkaway.

"Give him a send-off; be your own chucker-out, Harkaway; drive the bally rascal away, or I shall bore a hole through his infernal carcass, which is only fit for crows to feed on."

Lo Mung waved a fan he held in his hand.

The Chinese high and low are never without a fan.

"*Fanqui!*" he hissed.

This was a term of reproach.

It meant "foreign devil."

"D'ye hear him?" shouted Mole.

"Hark at the hard words he's giving me. He's calling me a foreign devil!"

Unable to restrain himself, he threw a tumbler at him. It was full of claret.

Striking Lo Mung on the side of the face, it caused him to beat a precipitate retreat.

His movements were expedited considerably.

As he wiped the blood from a gash in his face, he swore a bitter oath in Chinese.

"Me be a revenger," he muttered. "Chinaman good man allee samee. Englishman foreign devil!"

Scarcely had he disappeared when young Jack and Monday walked into the room.

"Got any grub to spare, governor?" asked young Jack.

"Heaps. Duck, fowl, and——"

"Don't!" interrupted young Jack. "I'm as hungry as a hunter; in fact, I could eat a horse and chase the rider."

"Where have you been?" inquired Harkaway.

"Out prospecting. Monday and I have found tracks; haven't we, old ivory?"

"Yes, sar; um right enough," replied Monday.

"What do you mean by that?"

"We are going on the warpath, sare, to find little Emily," said Monday.

"It's true, dad," remarked young Jack. "We mean biz, and good biz, too."

"Really?"

"If you don't see us for forty-eight hours, don't fluster about us. We shall be all right."

"But——"

"Let me sit down and fill up the corners. You can talk, dear old guy, while we are eating."

"Go ahead."

"I intend to. See me wire in. It's no use going on the warpath with an empty stomach. Is it, Monday?"

"Dat are so, sare," replied the Prince of Limbi. "The greatest foe in all creation am de full belly. What you say, Mast' Jack?"

"No breakfast, no man; no dinner, no man," replied Harkaway.

"That's me. Yah, yah!" laughed Monday.

He and young Jack sat down to the table and helped themselves abundantly.

The way they ate was a caution to vegetarians.

Nothing seemed to come amiss, and they drank a bottle of claret between them.

"I'm going to fill a knapsack with food, and a keg with water," said young Jack. "That will do for us."

"Hold on! Where are you going?" inquired Harkaway.

"We don't know yet; but we've found tracks."

"I don't understand you."

"Monday has an eye like a hawk. There was a heavy dew last night, and we have discovered footsteps. That's tracks, isn't it?"

"Where do they lead to?"

"We are going to find out, if we can. Our purpose is to get back my sweetheart, little Emily."

"All right, my boy. I honor you for the noble sen-

timent; but we shall get her without your intervention."

"Have you had any news?"

"Read that precious epistle."

Young Jack took the letter which his father had found on his plate.

He read it carefully.

"Dad," he said, with a knowing look, "in my opinion, this is all kid. There is too much of the young goat about it."

"How so?"

"The syndicate, as they call themselves, will take your money, but they won't give us back little Emily."

"Why not?"

"They will keep on holding her to ransom, or send her to sea in the pirate junk."

"With Hunston?"

"His agent, Bigamini, is doing this, don't you fret. No fear about that, I'm sure."

Harkaway looked at Harvey and Mole.

"There is some sense in what he says," he remarked.

"I'm only a young one, but my head's level, dad. Let Monday and me go on the warpath."

"As you like; but I shall go to Hongkong presently and get the money."

"Do as you like, father; I want to go after Emily. You won't get her your way."

"I mean to try, anyhow."

"We will both try--I in my way, you in yours; and perhaps between us we shall pull it off," replied young Jack.

"Keep out of danger. You do not know how many foes you have to fight against," observed his father.

"We will be as prudent and careful as we can."

"Keep um eyes open," said Monday.

When lunch was finished, Harkaway and Harvey went to the city to get the money demanded in the mysterious letter.

This was written in a disguised hand by Bigamini himself.

Young Jack and Monday looked to their knives and pistols, and then made a start.

They had noticed footsteps in a certain part of the tea garden, where, at that time, no one was employed.

Outside the garden was a track of sandy soil, on which grew some stunted trees.

Here they lost sight of the tracks.

But they saw something which arrested their attention.

Two Chinamen were sitting under one of these trees, engaged in conversation.

Occasionally they drank something out of a black bottle.

It looked suspiciously like European wine.

In fact, a closer inspection showed a label on which was written "Sherry."

Monday was the first to discover these Mongolians.

"Look," he whispered, "two Johnnies. We listen, sare, and hear what um say."

"This is a good idea," replied young Jack.

"See um fat one? That look to me like Lo Mung, who I think very bad man."

"So do I. He's an artful customer. Yes, it is Lo. Creep up gently. Don't disturb them."

"Um not make little sound. Quiet as mouse. Hush!"

Jack and Monday went on their hands and knees, succeeding in getting behind the two Celestials without being perceived.

The disciples of Confucius were evidently very jolly.

They laughed and chatted together at their ease.

The sips they took from the bottle of sherry elevated their spirits and loosened their tongues.

Monday and young Jack listened attentively.

"You givee my master's letter?" asked one, who was no other than Hi Li.

Bigamini had sent him with the letter to Lo Mung, who was to put it where Harkaway would see it.

Accordingly he had placed it on his plate, where it was found.

"He findee it allee rightee," replied Lo Mung.

"Where you going to workee? You say you leavee Mandarin Mole for goodee."

"Me come to your master for a dayee or two; then I go to Hongkong, havee smokee opium joint, and drink Tangiers whisky for drunkee."

"Drunkee for drunkee, velle goodlers," remarked Hi Li, with an appreciative nod.

"You comee with me," exclaimed Lo Mung. "We both have what foreign devils call a highee spree time."

"In three days I readee. Waitee first to gettee money for little girl. My master boss payee extra for hold tongue, and watch Missy Hysa."

"Allee rightee; we be going together. You got to make haste back now?"

"No. Master at home. He watch Missy Hysa and little girl, too. Me restee. Finish bottle."

"Not much left, but me got another in my pocket."

"Ha! you clever fellow," cried Hi Li. "Me likee you vellee much for friendlers."

"We always were good friendlers," replied Lo Mung. "How your Missy Hysa go on now?"

"She cry all day, master beat her so. She try gettee away, and swear for revenge. Either she killee master, or he drownee her in the water."

They paused to empty the first bottle and begin on the second.

The effect of the wine upon them was to make them sleepy.

Lo Mung began to sing a verse of a Chinese song in a low and not unmusical voice.

For a brief space Hi Li accompanied him.

The effort, however, proved too much for them, and finishing the sherry, they vowed eternal friendship.

Then they leaned back against the trunk of the tree and went to sleep.

Monday and young Jack retreated to a short distance.

They wanted to talk together and discuss what they had heard.

All the time, however, they kept their gaze fixed upon the two unconscious Chinamen.

"What do you think of that?" asked Jack.

"Lo Mung what I call him—big rascal thief," replied Monday, in an angry tone.

"The other is a friend of his, and the servant of the man who has stolen Emily."

"Certain sure ob that, sare."

"Well, all we have to do is to follow the villains, and we shall find out where my little sweetheart is, and who has got her."

"That de ticket for soup, boss!" cried Monday.

"How fortunate we followed the tracks and came upon these tippling Chinamen."

"I knew we should make a discovery. You and I de boys to do it, Mast' Jack."

"Yes," said our young hero. "I think we are about as clever as most people."

"What we do now?" asked Monday. "Got to wait till Johnnies wake up."

"That's a nuisance. I hate inaction; but it won't do to scare them. They must have no idea of our presence. Confound it! Perhaps it will be hours before they sleep off the effects of that sherry."

"Never mind. I got lily drop of brandy in a flask. You have water."

"And I've a bundle of cigarettes," put in Jack.

"That fine. We enjoy ourselves."

They did so, and, after smoking for a time, Monday, who was a man of resources, found a pack of cards in his pocket.

A game of euchre for a small stake helped to pass the time away.

The sun was declining in the west.

But the two Chinamen still slept.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LITTLE EMILY'S CAPTIVITY.

It was several hours after the arrival of little Emily at the lake house before she recovered from the effects of the soporific drug which had been administered to her.

She was placed in bed with Hysa.

Bigamini admonished his wife to take care of her.

He and his partners in crime, Schneider and Flowerhard, retired to an inner room, where they gambled with cards, and drank brandy until long after day-break.

When they were tired out they threw themselves on some mats, and snatched a few hours' feverish sleep.

About eight o'clock in the morning they woke up, partook of a light breakfast, and separated.

The Dutchman and the Englishman were rowed to the landing stage by Hi Li.

They had to return to Hongkong to attend to some business.

The money they had robbed Mr. Mole of had been equally divided between them.

But they did not take away so much as they had expected.

They had been playing for high stakes at the game of poker.

Bigamini was an expert at this, and he also knew

how to cheat. He had risen from the table a heavy winner.

It was generally the case when they gambled together.

His partners had their suspicions, but his sleight of hand was so clever that they could not find him out.

If they had done so, blood would have most assuredly been shed.

These wretches would have drawn their pistols upon him, and he, of course, would have defended himself.

There was always a chance some day of this kind of thing occurring.

It very often happens that thieves fall out and kill one another.

When Schneider and Blowhard had departed, Bigamini went into one of the verandas of his strangely built house.

Here was a chair, a fishing rod, tackle and an earthenware jar filled with bait.

Angling was his favorite pastime, and the lake was full of various kinds of fine fish, weighing from an ounce to five and six pounds.

He liked to eat these lake fish, fresh out of the water, at any time of the day.

Many hours did he pass at his country house in angling for the finny prey.

He was particularly lucky this morning, for the fish bit freely, and he caught some fine specimens.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed. "I am doing well in this country, and have made a nice little pile of money; but I shall not stay here. This is not a country for a white man to live in. I want just enough money to

support me comfortably, and I will seek a fresh land. I am tired of Hysa, and will marry again."

The rascal was a most determined bigamist, and did not seem to care how many women he betrayed.

He had had a good many wives already.

In fact, he was a sort of modern Bluebeard.

"If I get that money for the girl's ransom," he added, talking to himself, "it will stock me up. Why should Schneider and Blowhard have any of it? They might be killed easily."

His mind now turned upon murdering his confederates.

There was no crime too bad for him to commit.

He was roused from his evil meditations by the sound of little Emily's voice.

She had woken up, and was frightened at finding herself in a strange place with a Chinawoman she did not know.

"Where am I?" she demanded. "This is not my house."

"You are with friends who will not harm you," replied Hysa, kindly.

The latter felt sorry for the child.

She did not care to aid and abet her husband in his criminal practices.

"I want my mamma and papa. Let me go," continued Emily, "you have no right to keep me here."

"Soon you shall go homee, but not now. Waitee bitee."

Emily got up from the bed—she had not been undressed—and began to cry bitterly.

Giving her some tea and rice, Hysa endeavored to console and soothe her.

She ate and drank, but her tears did not cease, nor did she stop her lamentations.

Bigamini put down his fishing rod and walked into the sleeping apartment.

"Stop that noise," he exclaimed, "or I'll make you."

The child looked curiously at him with her big eyes.

"Did you take me away from my home?" she asked.

"Yes, I did."

"What harm have I done you?"

"I want to make money and I have told your father if he will give me a certain sum you shall be sent back. My resources are unlimited and I neglect no precaution. If you try to escape, you will perish in my deathtrap."

"What do you mean by that," asked Emily.

"I will explain to both you and Hysa," answered Bigamini, with one of his grim ogrelike smiles.

Stepping out on the veranda, he took up a hook which was secured to a post; attached to this was a cord, which dropped down into the lake.

"The landing stage is built of wood," he explained; "underneath it is a large pit, ten feet deep. Watch, I pull this cord which is attached to an iron bolt which supports the floor and the boards draw back and any one standing on it falls into the pit. The boards meet again and all is as it was before."

Emily shuddered, and turned away.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DEATHTRAP.

Night had fallen before Hi Li and his friend, Lo Mung, arose from their sleep.

Young Jack and Monday were becoming impatient, but the information they had secured thus far, was too important for them to now give up the trail.

Finally the two Chinamen woke from their drunken sleep and began to move. They walked on in blissful ignorance of the fact that they were being followed by Jack and Monday.

When they arrived at the margin of the lake, they found the boat which Hi Li had left in the morning and set out for the house in the lake.

But Pigamini's quick eyes detected other people on the landing stage. With the aid of his searchlight, he soon recognized Jack and Monday, and with haste pulled the cord.

The deathtrap opened suddenly, and Jack and the faithful Monday were precipitated into the pit beneath. The next moment, the hidden mechanism caused the boards of the landing to resume their former position.

At dawn of day, Hi Li who was on the watch, roused his master.

"Sayee boss! Timee wakee!" he explained, shaking him vigorously.

Bigamini sprang to his feet.

After drinking some cold tea, he got into the boat and was soon on shore. It was his intention to visit Mr. Mole's plantation at an early hour to see if the money had been deposited in the place indicated in his letter.

When he reached the well, he was delighted to see a large canvas bag on the wall. Eagerly he grasped it, noting with satisfaction that it was very heavy.

Then he hastened homeward and arriving at the lake, he secured the boat and was soon at the lake house.

He went into his private room and put the bag on the table. It did not take him long to untie the string and turn out the contents. The gold, for such it was, consisted entirely of sovereigns minted in London for the Bank of England. He counted them into little piles of twenty-five each.

After putting the money away, he went outside and blew the whistle sharply. In a moment Hi Li was at his side.

"What is it, master?" he asked.

"Conduct the young lady safely to within a short distance of Mr. Mole's plantation. The ransom has been paid and she should be returned at once," said Bigamini. "Mind you are not followed when you return."

Then he called Emily, who bade Hysa an affectionate farewell. She gave her hand willingly to Hi Li and tripped away, her face wreathed in smiles.

After Harkaway and Harvey had placed the money

for the ransom of little Emily on the edge of the old well, they returned to the house. The evening passed slowly; no one was in a mood for talking.

At length the whole family went to bed, but Harvey could not sleep. He tossed about restlessly until day dawned and then got up and went downstairs.

To his delight, he had scarcely opened the door, when he saw the child running toward him.

"Here she is! Emily has been brought back!" he shouted loudly to arouse the whole household, and Hilda and Harkaway came running down the steps.

They caught her in their arms and embraced her tenderly.

"Who took you away and where have you been?" asked Harvey.

Emily shook her head. She recollected a solemn oath which Bigamini had made her take when she was with him in the Lake house.

They all regarded her with astonishment. Had she taken leave of her senses?

"What do you mean?" demanded Harvey sternly.

"Just this, dear papa. My lips are sealed. I am pledged to secrecy."

"Well another misfortune has happened since you went away. My son, Jack and our faithful Monday are missing," said Harkaway. "They would start to find you after having found some tracks which they thought might be a clew to your whereabouts."

"I saw nothing of them," said Emily sadly, being ignorant of their capture in the deathtrap.

Emily went with mother and child upstairs but

though they plied her with questions, they could get nothing from her.

After the three men had been left alone, a servant entered and gave a card to Mr. Mole.

"Curious!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "The famous thought-reader of Peking is here. His name is Tien Sin and he has favored us with a visit. Let us have the fellow in and maybe he will be able to help clear up this mystery."

"How can he do this?" asked Harvey.

"By having him talk to little Emily," replied Mr. Mole. "At any rate it will do no harm. Send him in."

Presently, a tall, thin man entered and made a profound obeisance to the company.

Mr. Mole rose from his chair and grasped the thought-reader by the hand, and told him something of the trouble they had and of the difficulty they had encountered in getting any information from little Emily.

Then they all accompanied him to the room upstairs where little Emily lay asleep.

"Give me your hand," commanded the thought-reader.

The child drowsily stretched out her hand.

For five minutes he looked her steadily in the face and then began in a singsong voice:

"You have been on the water. The house is built on piles in a lake. The lake is about three miles from here in an easterly direction."

"What is its name?" asked Harvey.

"Lake Lonely. Its owner is named Bigamini."

"I have seen it and noted the strange-looking house

built on piles, a quarter of a mile from the shore, but I did not know who lived there," said Harvey.

They saw no reason for doubting this information, and the man was handsomely rewarded for his thought-reading. Bowing low he left the house rattling in his pocket the tacks he had received.

His visit had been of great value to Harkaway and Harvey.

They talked the matter over, and decided to arm themselves and go at once to the lake.

It was their intention to capture Bigamini, and, taking back the thousand pounds they had paid for Emily's return, convey the rascal to Hongkong, and hand him over to the police.

They were in great doubt as to the fate of young Jack and Monday.

So they took their pistols as well as their rifles and all three started toward the lake followed by Nero, the monkey.

Owing to his wooden legs, the professor did not make quick progress.

It was hard work to get over the sand, even with the aid of a crutch.

Harkaway and Harvey lounged along, smoking and chatting, about two hundred yards behind.

"I reckon we shall have Bigamini this time," said Harkaway, "and he shall pay the penalty of his many crimes."

When Mole reached the landing stage, he looked at the house and then turned his head, but Harkaway and Harvey, who were hiding behind the trees, were nowhere to be seen.

Mole stood upright staring across the water when he caught sight of Bigamini. He hastily secured a rifle and fired at Mole, who promptly returned his shot.

Then Bigamini pulled the cord. In a second the boards collapsed and Mole and the monkey went down into the pit and the flooring resumed its former position.

Harkaway and Harvey from their places of concealment were much astonished to see Mole and the monkey disappear and decided that they had better look into the matter.

"It's a trap," said Harvey, "but look out for his rifle."

"We will do it this way," said Harkaway. "You keep an eye on Bigamini and keep him busy, and I will look into the mystery of this floor and find out where Mole went."

Bigamini thought he was beset. He decided there were probably a number of people behind to assist Harkaway and Harvey, and he began to shoot wildly, entirely forgetting to pull the cord and to try to entrap the rest of the party, who were proceeding with the utmost caution.

However, Harvey secreted himself behind some heavy boards and returned the fire, while Harkaway sank on his knees on the platform. Between the sharp cracks of the rifle, frantic cries could be heard coming up from beneath them.

"That's Jack's voice, and that's Mole's," muttered Harkaway. "They are in some accursed pit beneath this flooring."

He had a strong hunting knife in his pocket and with this he began to try and pry up the boards where they joined in the middle.

At last by putting forth all his strength, he managed to succeed in his attempt and the bolt gave way.

"Back," shouted Harvey, "or we too will be caught."

They both gave a spring and managed to get on the edge of the pit, and looked down on the upturned faces of those imprisoned beneath.

Nero made good use of his claws and managed to climb out first, chattering wildly. Harkaway found a rope which had been used to secure boats to the dock, which he knotted and lowered into the pit.

"Catch hold of that," he commanded, "and I will pull you up."

"Mole first," suggested Jack. "He says that he has broken his wooden pins."

"Fasten the ropes under his arms," Harvey ordered coming forward to help, now that Bigamini seemed to have disappeared.

This was done and poor old Mole was hauled up more dead than alive and was laid in the sun to recover.

It was an easy matter to hoist up Jack and Monday, though they too were very exhausted from their long stay in the wet pit.

In a few words Harkaway informed them of all that had happened.

"Thank Heaven, Emily is safe at home," said Jack.

As the rescued party were not in a fit state for fighting, Harkaway suggested that they go home where they might procure food and rest. They constructed

a rude litter from some of the boards and on this they placed old Mole and Harkaway told his son and Monday to carry him back to the house.

It was clear that Bigamini had been rendered desperate, since his enemies had discovered his abode.

On returning to the house, he found that he was alone. Hi Li and Hysa had taken one of the boats and had escaped unobserved in the midst of the fracas.

The house and the land attached to the lakeside, was not his own property. The last half year's rent, he had not paid. He decided that it would be wisest to burn up all traces of his vile career and took a match from his pocket.

He then went to the kitchen and threw a can of oil on the floor and deliberately set fire to it. Immediately a huge blaze was seen. The wood caught fire and the whole place burst into flames within a very short time.

Bigamini had his money secured about his person in two stout canvas bags, and the rest of his belongings in a large bag, which he carried in his hand.

He made his way to the veranda and got in the one remaining boat and sculled to the opposite shore.

It was his purpose to avoid any contact with Harkaway and Harvey, and he steered to a point at some distance from his landing stage.

But his escape had been seen by the eager watchers on the shore, and they began to run around the edge of the lake to intercept Bigamini at the other side. They took care though to keep behind the trees so

that their movements would be unobserved by the man in the boat.

With great difficulty, Bigamini managed to make a landing in a secluded spot where the shore was fringed with bamboos.

But when he finally jumped on the land, Harvey and Harkaway, were there before him, hidden by the bamboos.

No sooner had he set foot on land, than they sprang up. Each had a revolver in his hand, leveled at Bigamini.

He trembled in every limb. This was a reception which he had not calculated upon.

He was armed with a knife and a pistol but he had no chance to use them.

"Hands up," said Harkaway, "or you are a dead man!"

Bigamini threw up his hands. He saw it was useless to resist.

"Search him, Dick," said Harkaway.

Harvey lost no time in taking from him his knife and pistol and the two bags of money.

"I haven't done anything," whined the wretch.

"Did you not try to rob Mr. Mole? Haven't you abducted little Emily? Didn't you put my son and Monday in your pit to perish? Liar and thief!" exclaimed Harkaway.

"Is my life safe? Have mercy!" implored the miserable Bigamini, groveling on the ground.

"Get up. I hate to see one man groveling before another man," commanded Harvey. "We do not in-

tend to kill you. The police shall deal with you as you deserve."

Bigamini rose to his feet. He assumed an insolent air now that he knew that his life was not at stake.

"Where are you going to take me?" he inquired.

"To Hongkong," replied Harkaway.

"What are you going to charge me with?"

"Stealing my friend Harvey's child and trying to kill my son and others in your trap," said Harkaway.

"Can you prove it?" swaggered Bigamini.

"I don't think there will be any difficulty about that," answered Harvey.

"Well I shall accuse you of highway robbery. No sooner do I peacefully land from my boat, than you spring upon me and take my money from me," said Bigamini.

The two men burst out laughing.

"You always were an impudent rascal. It was a pity that you were not drowned, but then I suppose that you were born to be hanged," said Harkaway.

"A man may as well die one way as another," muttered Bigamini.

"Well, march. We have got you at last and we shall keep you until we can hand you over to the police."

THE END.

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