

Stables Gordon

**Harry Milvaine: or, The
Wanderings of a Wayward
Boy**



Gordon Stables
Harry Milvaine: or, The
Wanderings of a Wayward Boy

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23149083
Harry Milvaine Or The Wanderings of a Wayward Boy:*

Содержание

Book One – Chapter One.	5
Book One – Chapter Two.	15
Book One – Chapter Three.	27
Book One – Chapter Four.	37
Book One – Chapter Five.	48
Book One – Chapter Six.	57
Book One – Chapter Seven.	71
Book Two – Chapter One.	81
Book Two – Chapter Two.	93
Book Two – Chapter Three.	106
Book Two – Chapter Four.	118
Book Two – Chapter Five.	132
Book Two – Chapter Six.	142
Book Two – Chapter Seven.	156
Book Three – Chapter One.	169
Book Three – Chapter Two.	183
Book Three – Chapter Three.	197
Book Three – Chapter Four.	207
Book Three – Chapter Five.	222
Book Three – Chapter Six.	232
Book Three – Chapter Seven.	242
Book Four – Chapter One.	255
Book Four – Chapter Two.	269

Book Four – Chapter Three.	277
Book Four – Chapter Four.	288
Book Four – Chapter Five.	299
Book Four – Chapter Six.	308
Book Four – Chapter Seven.	316

Gordon Stables Harry Milvaine Or The Wanderings of a Wayward Boy

Book One – Chapter One. In the Land of Brown Heath. Child Harold

Young Harry Milvaine stood beside the water-tank, and the water-tank itself stood just outside the back kitchen door. He was hardly high enough, however, to look right over it and down into it, though it was full to the brim – overflowing in fact, and the water still pouring in from the spout that led from the house-top. But Harry was of an inventive turn of mind, young though he was, so he went and fetched a stable bucket, and very heavy he thought it; but when he turned this upside down and mounted on the bottom, he was possessed of a coign of vantage which was all that could be desired.

Harry had mastered the situation.

He now watched with intense interest the bright clear bubbles

that were floating about on the surface. Bright clear bubbles they were and large as well, and in them was a miniature reflection of all the surroundings, the Portuguese laurel trees, the Austrian pines, the vases on the stone pillars of the gate, with their trailing drapery of blood-red nasturtiums, the rose-clad gable of the stable, and last but not least his own wondering face itself. And a queer little face it was, no saying what it might turn like in after life. Neither fat nor lean was it, certainly not chubby, regular in features, and somewhat pale. But it was Harry's eyes that people admired; that is, whenever Harry stood long enough still to permit of admiration, but he was a restless child. His eyes then were very dark and almost round, and there was a depth of expression in them which sometimes made him look positively old.

Yes, those beautiful bubbles were mirrors, and looking into them was just like peeping through a looking-glass into fairyland. Harry clapped his tiny hands and crowed with delight. They went sailing about, here and there all over the surface; then a happy thought struck Harry and he called them his ships. The vat was the deep blue sea, and the bubbles were ships. Ships of war, mind you, and Harry was a king, and there were enemy's ships there also. Every now and then two or even three of these bubble-ships would meet and join; then of course there would be a desperate fight going on, and presently one would disappear, and that meant victory for the other. Sometimes one of the bubble-ships sailing all by itself would suddenly burst, and that meant a vessel gone

down, perhaps with all hands; for Harry had heard his father speak of such things.

On the whole it was altogether as good as a play or a pantomime.

It was raining – yes, it was pouring, and Harry was wet to the skin, and had been so for an hour or more. But he did not mind that a bit. In fact, I am not sure that he was even conscious of it; or if conscious of it, that he didn't prefer it. At any time, when a heavy shower came on, Harry loved to get out in it, and run about in it, and hold up his palms to catch the drops, and his face to feel them patter on it, only they fell on his eyes sometimes and made him wink.

Well, but one might get tired even of a pantomime after a while, so by and by Harry left the vat, and left his ships to shift for themselves.

“I won't be a king any more,” he said to himself. “I'll go and be a forester. Good-bye, ships,” he cried, “I'm off for a run. By and by I'll come back again and see you – if you're good.”

Eily, his long-haired Collie dog, who had been sitting wistfully watching her young master all the time that the naval warfare was going on, was quite as wet as he; and looked the picture of misery and forlornness; but when Harry proposed a romp and a run, she forgot her misery. First she shook pints of water out of her massive coat, then she jumped and capered for joy in the most ridiculous manner ever seen, making leaps right round and round like a teetotum and pretending to catch her tail.

The rain rained on, but away went the pair of them, running at full speed as if their very lives depended on it.

Down the lawn and through the shrubbery, and out at the gate, which they did not stop to shut, and across a road, and through a long field, and past the Old Monk oak, past the great mill-dam, past the mill itself, and they never checked their headlong speed till they were right into the forest.

Not a forest of oak but of pine-trees, with ne'er a bit of undergrowth, for Harry's home was in Scottish wilds. No, never a bit of undergrowth was there, and hardly a green thing under the tall, bare tree-stems, that looked for all the world like pillars in some vasty cave. And all the ground was bedded deep with the withered pine-needles that had fallen the year before. Among these grew great unsightly toad-stools, though some were pretty enough – bright crimson with white spots.

Now Harry had a pet toad that he kept in a little box deep hidden among the pine-needles at the foot of a tree. He went straight for him now, and pulled him out and placed him on one of the very biggest and flattest of the toad-stools. And there the toad squatted, and Eily barked at him and Harry laughed at him, but the great toad never moved a muscle, but simply sat and stared. He did not seem half awake. So Harry soon grew tired of him; he was not fast enough for Harry, who therefore put him back again in his box, covered him up with the withered needles, and told him to go to sleep; then away went he and Eily shouting and barking till the woods rang again. Soon they came to

a brawling stream. It was fuller than usual, and Harry got a great piece of pine bark, and launched it for a ship, and ran alongside of it, on and on and on till the streamlet joined the river itself, and Harry's ship was floated away far beyond his reach.

The river was greatly swollen and turbulent with the rains, and its waters were quite yellow. Trees were floating down and even corn-sheaves – for the season was autumn – and now and then stooks of golden grain. Harry paused and looked upon the great river with awe, not unmingled with admiration.

“Wouldn't I like to be a sailor, just,” he said, “that is,” he added, turning round and addressing Eily, “a real sailor you know, Eily; and go and see all the pretty countries that nurse reads to me about when I'm naughty and won't sleep.”

Eily wagged her tail, as much as to say, “It would be the finest thing in the world.” For Eily always coincided with everything her little master proposed or said.

“And you could go with me, Eily, of course.”

“Yes,” said Eily, talking with her tail.

“And there would be no more nasty copies to write, nor sums to do.”

“No,” said Eily.

“And, oh! such a lot of fruit and nuts, Eily; but, come on, I want to make faces at the bull.”

“Come on, then,” said Eily, speaking with her eyes this time. “Come on, I'm ready. We'll make faces at the bull.”

So off they ran once more.

The bull was a splendid Highland specimen, with a rough buff jacket, hair all over his face and eyes, and horns as long as both your arms outstretched. Just such an animal as Rosa Bonheur, that queen of artists, delights to paint.

He dwelt in a field all by himself because he was so fierce that no other creature or human being dare go near him except a certain sturdy cowherd, who had known Jock, as the bull was called, since he was a calf.

Jock was quite away at the other end of the field – which was well walled – when Harry and his canine companion arrived at the five-barred gate.

“I know how to fetch him down, Eily,” said Harry. Then he called out as loud as he could: “Towsie Jock! Towsie Jock! Towsie! Towsie! Towsie!”

The great bull lifted his head and sniffed the air.

“Towsie Jock! Towsie! Towsie! Towsie!”

With a roar that would have frightened many a child, he shook his great head, then came on towards the gate, growling all the while in a most alarming way.

“Towsie Jock! Towsie! Towsie?” cried the boy.

Jock was at the gate now.

His breath blew hot and thick from his nostrils, his red eyes seemed to flash fire.

“Towsie Jock! Towsie! Towsie!”

The bull was mad. He tore up the earth with his fore-feet, and the grass with his teeth.

“Towsie! Tow – ”

Before Harry could finish the word, greatly to his horror, the bull threw off the top bar with one of his horns, and in three seconds more had leapt clean over.

But Harry was too quick for him, and what followed spoke well for the presence of mind of our young hero.

To have attempted to run straight away from the bull would have meant a speedy and terrible death. He would have been torn limb from limb. But no sooner did the bar rattle down, than both Harry and Eily sprang to the stone fence and jumped over into the field, just as the bull jumped out of it.

Jock was considerably nonplussed at not finding his tormentor where he had expected to.

“Towsie! Towsie!” cried Harry, and the bull leapt back into the field, and Harry and Eily scrambled out of it. This game was kept up for some time, a sort of wild hide-and-seek, much to Harry’s delight; but each time he leapt the wall he edged farther and farther from the gate.

The bull got quieter now and kept inside the field, and pretended to browse, though I do not think he swallowed much. He followed along the stone fence all the same, but Harry knew he could not leap it. In the adjoining field, which belonged to Harry’s father, great turnips grew, and Harry went and pulled two of the very biggest, and threw over the wall to the bull.

“Poor Jock!” said the boy, “I didn’t mean to vex you.”

Jock eyed him a moment as if he did not know what to make

of it all, then began quietly to munch the turnips.

And Harry stole back and put up the top bar of the gate.

Meanwhile the rain continued unremittingly, but being wet to the skin, Harry could not well be wetter, and that is how he consoled himself. The afternoon was already far spent, by and by it would be dark, so he prepared to hurry home now.

He knew his way through the forest, but there were many attractions – a wild bee-hive for instance in a bank. He must stop and beat the ground above it, then bend his ear down to hear the bees buzz, till at last one was sent out to see what the matter was and whether or not the end of the world had come.

A hole where he knew a weasel lived; he would have liked to have seen it, only it would not come out. Rabbit's holes, that he crept towards on hands and knees, and laughed to see the bunnies scurry away. A deep water-pit where queer old-fashioned water-rats (voles) lived, some of whom came out to look at him and squeezed their eyes to clear their sight. And so on and so forth. It was quite gloaming before he got near the lawn gate; and then, when he did find his way inside among the shrubbery, he found the sparrows were just going to bed, and bickering and squabbling at a terrible rate, about who should have the dry boughs of the pines, and who should not.

Meanwhile he was missed. He was often missed for the matter of that, but he had seldom been so long away on such a night.

His father was an easy-minded farmer, who tilled his own acres; he was reading the newspaper in an easy chair, and his

mother, a delicate, somewhat nervous, lady, was sewing near the window.

When the evening shadows began to fall, the nurse tapped at the room door and entered. "Has Harry been here, mum?"

"No, Lizzie; don't you know where he is?"

"Haven't seen him for hours, mum. I made sure he was here."

"Oh! you silly child, to let him out of your sight like that. Go and look for him at once."

"Where *is* the child, I wonder," she continued, addressing her husband. "Where *can* Harold be?"

"Mm? what?" said Harry's father, looking lazily over his newspaper. "Child Harold? Gone on a pilgrimage perhaps."

"Oh! don't be foolish," said his wife, petulantly. "Well, my dear, how should I know. Very likely he is up in the dusty attic squatting among the cobwebs, or rummaging for curiosities in some old drawer or another."

But Harry was not upstairs among the cobwebs, nor rummaging in any drawer whatever, nor talking to John in the stable, nor playing with his toys in the loft, nor anywhere else that any one could think of.

So there was a pretty to do.

But in the midst of it all, lo! Eily and Harry both presented themselves at the hall door, and you could not have said which of the two was in the most miserable plight. Both were *so* wet and *so* bedraggled.

"Oh! please, dear mamma," said Harry, "I'm *so* hungry and

so is poor Eily.”

His mother was too happy to scold him, and his father laughed heartily at the whole affair. For Harry had neither sisters nor brothers.

While the boy was being stripped and re-dressed in dry clothes, the dog threw herself in front of the kitchen fire.

Presently they both had supper. If Harry was pale while playing at bubble-ships in the water-vat, he was rosy enough now, and verily his cheeks shone in the lamplight.

Before he knelt down that night by his mother's knee to say his prayers, she asked him if he had done much wrong to-day.

“Oh! yes, dear mamma,” was the reply, “I *did* tease Towsie so.”

Book One – Chapter Two.

Adventures in the Forest

At breakfast next morning young Harry was much surprised and concerned to be told that he was going to have a governess.

“A guv’niss,” he said, pausing in the act of raising a spoonful of oatmeal porridge to his mouth, “a guv’niss, papa? What’s a guv’niss? Something to eat?”

“No, child; a governess is a lady, who will do the duties of a teacher to you, learn you your lessons and – ”

“Mamma can do that.”

“And give you sums to do.”

“Ma does all that, papa.”

“And go with you wherever you go.”

Harry leant his chin upon his hand thoughtfully for a moment or two; then he said:

“Mm, will the guv’niss go high up the trees with me, papa, and will she make faces at Towsie?”

“I don’t think so, Harold.”

“I don’t want the old lady,” said Harry.

“Your leave will not be asked, my dear boy.”

“Then,” said Harry, in as determined a voice as he could command, “I shall *hate* her, and *beat* her, and *bite* her.”

“I’m afraid,” said Mr Milvaine, turning to his wife, “that you

spoil that child.”

“I’m afraid,” returned Mrs Milvaine mildly, “I have received assistance from you.”

Harry’s governess came in a week. It was surely a sad look-out for her, if she was to be hated and beaten and bitten.

She was not a prim, angular, starchy, “tawsey”-looking old maid by any means. At most she had seen but nineteen summers; fresh in face, blue-eyed, dimpled, and with beautiful hair.

Harry soon took to her.

“I sha’n’t beat you,” he said, “as long as you’re good.”

The attic was cleared of cobwebs and rubbish, and turned into a schoolroom, and studies at regular hours of the day commenced forthwith.

Harry determined to make his own terms with his “guv’niss.” He would be good, and learn his lessons, and do his sums, and write his copy and all that, if she would read out of a book to him every day, and describe to him a scene in some far-off land.

She promised.

Before commencing lessons of a forenoon, Miss Campbell read a portion of one of the Gospels to him, and then she prayed. Miss Campbell was one of those girls who are not ashamed to pray, not ashamed to ask mercy, help and guidance from Him from whom all blessings flow. Before leaving school Miss Campbell took the Book again, but now no other portion would he allow her to read except the Revelations. There was a charm about these that never, never palled upon the child.

But always in the evenings "Guvie" had to devote herself to a different kind of literature, and the books now were usually tales of adventure by land and at sea.

Miss Campbell did try her wee pupil with "Sandford and Merton." I am sorry to say he would have none of it. The "Arabian Nights" pleased better, but he could not quite understand them.

For Sunday reading nothing delighted Harry better than Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." I am happy in being able to put this on record, and boys who have not read the work, have a real treat in store for them.

So Miss Campbell and her pupil got on very well together indeed; and many a delightful walk, ay, and run too, they had in the forest. They were a trio-now, because Eily always made one of the number. She went to school as well as Harry, and if she did not learn anything, at all events she lay still and listened, and that is more than every dog would have done.

Harry introduced his "Guvie," as he called her, to his pet toad, which she pretended to admire, but was secretly somewhat afraid of.

"John told me, Guvie," he said one day, "that toadie would go to sleep all winter, so I'm going to put a biscuit in his box for his breakfast when he wakes, then we won't go near him till spring-time comes."

They say the child is the father of the man. I believe there is much truth in the statement, so that, in describing Harry's

character as a *young* boy, I am saving myself the trouble of doing so when he is very much older, and mingling in wilder life.

He was impulsive then and brave, fond to some extent of mischief of a mild, kind nature, but he was tender-hearted. One day in the forest he came to the foot of a great Scotch fir-tree.

“There is an old nest up there, Guvie. I’m off up.”

She would have held him, but he was far beyond her reach ere she could do so. He stopped when about ten feet above her.

“I knew, Guvie,” he cried, with a roguish smile on his countenance, “that you would try to catch me if you could. Now come, Guvie, catch me now, if you can.”

“Oh! do come down, Harry dear,” the poor girl exclaimed. “You frighten me nearly to death.”

“Don’t die, Guvie dear, there’s a good Guvie; I’m only going to the top of the tree, to the very top you know, no farther, to pull down the old nest, else the nasty lazy magpie will lay in it again next year, and not build a new one at all.”

“Do, Harry, come down,” cried Miss Campbell, “and I’ll give you anything.”

“No, no, Guvie; papa always says, ‘Do your duty, Harold boy, always do your duty.’ I’m going to do what papa bids me. Good-bye, Guvie, I’ll soon be back.”

And away he went. It seemed, several times ere he reached the top, that he would be back far sooner than even he himself expected, for little branches often gave way with a crack that sent a thrill of horror through Miss Campbell’s heart.

“Oh! what if he should fall and be killed,” she thought.

But presently Harry was high high up on the very point of the tree. He proceeded at once to throw down the great nest of sticks and grass and clay; no very easy task, as he had to work with one hand, while he held on with the other.

But he finished at last, and the nest lay at Miss Campbell’s feet.

The wind blew high to-day, and the tree swayed and swayed about, just like a ship’s mast at sea.

“Oh! Miss Guvie, do try to come up,” cried the boy, looking down. “It is so nice; and I can see all over the country. Wouldn’t I like to be a sailor. Do come up.”

But Miss Campbell only cried, “Do come down.”

When he did obey her at last, she could contain herself no longer. Down she must sit on a bank of withered pine-needles and give vent to sobs and tears.

Then the boy’s heart melted for her, and he went and threw his arms around her and kissed her, and said:

“Oh! Guvie dear, don’t cry, and Harry will never, never be *quite* so naughty again. Don’t cry, dear, and when Harry grows a big man, he will fight for you and then marry you.”

She was pacified at last, and they started for home.

“I’ll keep firm hold of your hand,” said Harry, “and then you won’t cry any more, and nothing can hurt you.”

“We’ll both want brushing, won’t we, Harry?” she said, smiling.

It was true. For Harry's jacket was altogether green, with the mould from the tree, and he had transferred a goodly portion of it to her velveteen jacket, while hugging her.

"Ha!" laughed Harry; "we are both foresters now, Guvie. What fun! All green, green, green."

But Harry had given his governess a terrible fright, and she tried to make him promise that he would not climb trees again.

The boy held his wise, wee head to one side for a few seconds and considered.

"That wouldn't do, Guvie," he said. "But when I go up a tree you shall come with me. There now!"

"But, dear child, *I* cannot climb trees."

"You could a beech?" quoth Harry.

"Well, I might a beech, a little way."

"If you don't climb a beech, I shall go a mile high up into a fir," said the young rascal.

So poor Miss Campbell had to consent, and in the depth of the forest where many lordly beeches grew, "Guvie" took lessons in climbing.

It certainly is no difficult operation for even a girl to get out on to the arm of a beech tree. One could almost walk there, and the branches are as clean as a table.

The governess was further commanded by her lord and pupil to take books with her up into the trees and read to him.

When summer came, and the beech trees were one mass of tender green leaves, with the bees all singing their songs, as they

flew from flower to flower, it was far from unpleasant to get up into leafland, and while away an hour or longer with a delightful book.

Sometimes indeed they went high enough to let a branch shut out the view of the earth entirely, and then it was like being in fairyland.

One beautiful evening in the latter end of June Miss Campbell and he went out for a stroll as usual.

Eily did not follow them. Truth to say, Harry had shut her up in the saddle-room.

There was much to be seen and noticed, and oceans of wild flowers to cull, and there were birds' nests to be visited, many of which contained only eggs, while others had in them little half-naked, hairy "gorbals," that opened such extraordinary big gaping yellow mouths, that they could have swallowed a church – that is, if the church were small enough.

There grew not far from the five-barred gate, mentioned in last chapter, an immensely large and beautiful beech tree; and it had its branches close to the ground, so that it presented no great difficulty to get up into it.

Miss Campbell had never been this way before, but to-night her guide led her hither, under pretence of showing her a tree with a hawk's nest in it.

The hawk's nest was up there in the pine tree-top right enough, and it was not an old one either, for when Harry kicked the tree and cried "Hush-oo-oo!" out and away flew the beautiful and

graceful bird. Then they came to the beech tree.

“Let us get up here and read,” said Harry; “the sun isn’t thinking of going down yet. I don’t think the sun is moving a bit. I don’t suppose he knows what o’clock it is.”

As soon as they were safely and securely seated, and Miss Campbell had read a short but stirring story to her pupil, Harry pulled aside a branch.

“Do you see that grass field?” he asked.

“Yes, dear.”

“Well, do you know who lives there?”

“No, Harry.”

“Towsie.”

“And who is Towsie?”

“Why, silly Guvie, Towsie is Towsie, of course; Towsie is his Christian name; Jock, I suppose, is his papa’s name. Towsie Jock, there now!”

“What nonsense *are* you talking, dear?” said Miss Campbell.

“Why, telling you about Towsie Jock, to be sure. Towsie Jock is *so* funny, and what faces he makes when I make faces at him! Mind you, Guvie, I don’t think he quite likes to be called Towsie Jock. And *I* wouldn’t either, would you, dear Guvie?”

“I haven’t the remotest idea, Harry, what it is all about, nor who or what Towsie Jock, as you call him, or *it*, is.”

“Oh, haven’t you, Guvie? Well, you shall see. Mind you it isn’t a hedgehog. Something, oh, ever so much bigger.”

As he spoke Harry slipped like an eel down from the tree.

He accomplished this by sliding out to the tip of the branch, out and out till it bent with his light weight, and dropped him on the ground.

Harry went straight to the gate, the top bar of which he had previously, in one of his lonely rambles, taken the precaution to tie down. He looked now to see that the fastening was all secure, then commenced to shout.

“Towsie Jock! Towsie Jock! Towsie! Towsie! Towsie!”

Jock was at a distant corner of the field, his favourite corner, on high ground, where he could see the country for miles around. He was standing there chewing his cud and looking at the sky. Perhaps he was wondering what kind of a day it was to be tomorrow.

Suddenly he thrust one ear back to listen.

“Towsie! Towsie!” came the shout in shrill treble.

“It is that monkey again,” said Towsie, to himself. “If I can only pin one horn through him, I’ll carry him all round and round the field, at the gallop too.”

Miss Campbell, from the tree, first heard a dreadful bellowing roar, which ended in one continuous stream of hoarse explosions, as it were.

“Wow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow,” and next moment, to her horror, she saw a gigantic horrid homed bull coming tearing towards the gate, his nose on the ground, and his tail like a corkscrew over his back.

“Harry, Harry!” she screamed. “Oh! fly, Harry, fly!”

“He can’t get over, Guvie,” cried Harry, coolly. “Let me introduce you, as papa says. That is Towsie Jock. Towsie! Towsie! Towsie Jock! Towsie Jock!”

“Wow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!”

On came the bull as mad as ever bull was.

Miss Campbell shouted again, and screamed with terror.

“Harry, come, oh, dear Harry, come up. For my sake then.”

“But he *can’t* get over, I tell you, Guvie.”

“But I’m fainting, Harry.”

“Oh, in that case I’ll come, Guvie. Papa says, ‘Always, whatever you do, Harry, be kind and polite to ladies.’ I’m coming, Guvie. Don’t fall till I get hold of you.”

And none too soon.

“Wow-ow —*woa!*”

Next moment the gate flew in splinters with the awful charge of that Highland bull.

Miss Campbell’s head swam, but she clutched the rash boy to her breast, and thanked God he was saved.

Meanwhile the bull was at the foot of the tree. He first commenced an attack upon it with head and horns; every time, he battered it he shook it to its uttermost twig and leaf. But Miss Campbell and Harry had a safe seat in a strong niche between two great branches, with another branch to sit on and one behind.

At every blow the bull reeled back again.

The governess was white and trembling.

Harry was as cool as a hero.

He looked down and enjoyed the performance.

“Isn’t he naughty and wicked!” he said.

“Won’t he have a headache in the morning, Guvie!”

While attacking and battering the tree, Towsie Jock was silent, only the noise of the “thuds” resounded through the forest.

“If I had a big turnip now,” said the boy, “to throw down, Towsie would eat it and go away, oh! *so* well pleased, and not naughty at all.”

Towsie soon saw that to knock down that sturdy old beech was impossible; he commenced, therefore, with angry bellowings to root round it with his feet.

But even of this he soon tired. He stood up, red-eyed and furious-looking, and sniffed and snorted.

“May I cry ‘Towsie’ again, Guvie?”

“Oh, no, no, no.”

“He can’t climb the tree, you know. He’ll go away presently, then we can get down and run, Guvie dear.”

But Towsie had evidently no such intentions. He stood there for quite half an hour, then he began to chew his cud again. That was a pacific sign, and Miss Campbell gave a sigh of relief.

Towsie Jock was a good general. He had tried and tried in vain to storm the citadel, that is, the tree; he had tried to batter it down, and he had tried to undermine it; now the only thing to do was simply to lay siege to it.

And this he did by quietly lying down.

Meanwhile, far away in the east, they could see, through the

greenery of the branches, red or crimson streaky clouds, and they knew that gloaming was falling, and that gloaming would soon be followed by night.

The red clouds grew a lurid purple, then grey, then seemed to melt away, and only a gleam of light remained in the west. That also faded, and next a bright, bright star peeped in through the leaves at them, and all grew gloomy around.

Still the bull lay still.

Miss Campbell took a scarf from her neck and bound one of Harry's arms tightly to a branch, lest he might sleep and slip from her grasp. For Harry had grown very silent.

"Harry, dear," said Miss Campbell, "say your prayers."

"Guvie," replied the boy, "papa tells me I should bless my enemies; must I pray for Towsie Jock?"

"If you like, dear."

Then Miss Campbell bethought her of a story, the funniest she could remember, and began it.

Harry laughed for a time. But he soon grew suddenly silent.

He was fast asleep!

Meanwhile more and more stars came out, cushat's croodle and song of bird gave place to the deep mournful notes of the brown owl, and the gloaming deepened into night.

Book One – Chapter Three.

The Search for the Lost Ones – an Ugly Fight

Great was the anxiety at Beaufort Hall, as Harry's home was called, when the shadows fell and the stars peeped out from the sky's blue vault. Poor fragile Mrs Milvaine was almost distracted, but her husband took matters more easily, more philosophically let us call it.

"Don't fidget, my darling," he said, "they'll turn up all right in a short time. Just you see now, and it won't do the triflingest morsel of good to worry yourself. No, nor it won't bring them a minute sooner."

"They may have fallen into the river," said Mrs Milvaine.

"Well, I don't deny that people have fallen into rivers before now, but the probability is, they haven't," replied the farmer-laird. (A farmer who owns the acres he tills.)

"They may have lost themselves in the forest, and may wander in it till they die."

"Nonsense, my love."

"Harry may have climbed a tree, fallen down and been killed, and Miss Campbell may even now –"

"Stop, stop, dear! what an imagination you have, to be sure?"

"They may both be gored to death by that fearful bull, their

mangled bodies may – ”

Mr Milvaine put his fingers in his ears.

But when eleven o'clock rang out from the stable tower, and still the lost ones did not appear, then even the laird himself got fidgety. He threw down his newspaper.

But he did not permit his wife to notice his uneasiness. He quietly lit his pipe.

“I'll go and look for them,” he said, and left the room. He returned presently wrapped in a Highland plaid, with a shepherd's crook in his hand, much taller than himself, and that is saying a good deal, for this Scottish laird stood six feet two in his boots, and was well made in proportion.

He bent down and kissed his wife.

“Don't fret, I'll soon find them,” he said. “They have gone botanising, I suppose, and have lost themselves, and are doubtless in Widow McGregor's cottage, or in the cleerach's hut.”

Out he went. Rob Roy McGregor himself never had a more manly stride.

He went to the stable gallery first, or rather to the foot of the stair.

“John!” he cried, – “John! John!”

“Yes, yes, sir,” was the reply, and a stream of light shot out into the darkness as John threw open the door.

“Miss Campbell and Master Harry are lost somewhere in the forest. Bring a bull's-eye lantern, and let us look for them. Bring the rhinoceros-hide whip, too; we may come across some

poachers.”

In five minutes more master and man had started.

John was nearly as tall as his master. This was partly the reason why the laird had engaged him. Coachmen do not often have great brown beards and moustaches, but John had; coachmen do not often wear the Highland dress, but John did, and a fine-looking fellow he was when so arrayed. But every horse and every cart about this farmer-laird's place was big. The dog-cart had been specially built for him, and there was not another such in the country.

Away they went then.

It was half-past eleven when they started, and twelve by watch when they found themselves in the forest.

“It is always hereabout they do be,” said John. “Just hereabouts, sir.”

Then they shouted, singly.

Then they shouted again – together this time; shouted and listened, but there was no answering call.

There was a rushing sound among the tall spruces, and a flap-flap-flapping of wings, as startled wild pigeons fled from their nests away out into the dreary depths of the forest.

There was the too-whit, to-who-oo-oo of an owl in the distance, but no other sound responded to their shouting.

“We'll go straight on to the widow's,” said the laird.

“Right, laird.”

So on they went again, often pausing to wave the bull's-eye,

to shout, and to listen.

All in vain.

When they reached Widow McGregor's cottage all was darkness and silence within.

They knocked nevertheless, knocked again and again, and at last had the satisfaction of hearing a match lighted, then a light shone through the door seams, and a voice – a somewhat timorous and quavering one – demanded:

“Wha's there at this untimeous hoor o' nicht?”

“It's me, Mrs McGregor; me, Laird Milvaine. Don't be alarmed.”

The bolt flew back, and master and man entered.

Of course the lost ones were not there, and the widow shook and trembled with fear when she heard the story.

She had only to say that the cleerach, who was a kind of forest ranger or keeper, had seen both the lost ones that afternoon gathering wild flowers.

“We'll go to his house at once.”

It was only two miles farther on.

They bade the widow good-night, and started. She told them, last thing, that she would go to her bed and pray for them.

But they had not gone quite one mile and a half, when a brawny figure sprang from behind a tree, and a stentorian voice shouted:

“You thieving scoundrels, I have you now! Stop, and hold up your arms, or by the powers above us I'll blow the legs of you

off!”

The flash of John’s lantern revealed a stalwart keeper with double-barrelled gun presented full towards them.

“It’s me and my man John,” said the farmer, quietly. (The author is not to blame for the honest laird’s bad grammar.)

“Heaven have a care of me, sir,” cried the cleerach. “If I’d fired I’d ne’er have been forgiving mysel’. Sure it was after the poachers I was. But bless me, laird, what brings you into the forest at such an hour?”

The story was soon told, and together they marched to the cleerach’s cottage. A one-roomed wooden hut it was, built in a clearing, and almost like that of a backwoodsman. The only portion not wood was the hearth and the chimney.

All the information the cleerach could give them was hardly worth having, only he had seen Miss Campbell and young Harry, and they were then taking the path through the forest that led away to the river and past the field where the bull was.

“Then goodness help us,” exclaimed the farmer. “I fear something has happened to them.”

Nothing could be done till daylight. So the three sat by the fire, on which the cleerach heaped more logs; for, summer though it was, the night was chill, and a dew was falling. It was quite a keeper’s cottage, no pictures on the walls except a Christmas gift-plate or two from the London Illustrated Weeklies, and some Christmas cards. But stuffed heads and animals stood here and there in the corners, and skins of wild creatures were nailed up

everywhere. Skins of whitterit or weasel, of fougart or pole-cat, of the wild cat itself, of great unsightly rats, of moles and of voles, and hawks and owls galore.

Scotchmen do not easily let down their hearts, so these men – and men they were in every sense of the word – sat there by the fire telling each other wild, weird forest tales and stories of folklore until at length the daylight streamed in at the window – cold and comfortless-looking – and almost put out the fire. “Will you have breakfast, laird, before you start?” The laird said, “Yes.”

The fire was replenished, and soon the keeper’s great kettle was boiling. Then in less than five minutes three huge dishes of oatmeal brose was made, and – that was the breakfast, with milk and butter.

Towsie Jock never moved from under the tree all the night long. Poor Miss Campbell was weary, tired, and cramped, but she dared not sleep. Once or twice she caught herself half-dreaming, and started up again in fright, and thanked Heaven she had not gone quite to sleep.

How long, long the stars seemed to shine, she thought! Would they never fade? Would morning never, never come?

But see, through the green leafy veil a glimmer of dawn at last, and she lifts up her thoughts in prayer to Him who has preserved them.

How soundly Harry sleeps in her arms! How beautiful the boy looks, too, in his sleep! The young image of his stalwart father.

The light in the east spreads up and up, and the stars pale

before it, and disappear. Then the few clouds there are, begin to light up, and finally to glow in dazzling crimson and yellow.

She is wondering when assistance will come. But the sun shoots up, and help appears as far away as ever.

“Towsie, Towsie,” mutters the boy in his sleep, and smiles.

A whole hour passes, and hope itself begins to die in the poor girl’s breast, when oh! joy, from far away in the forest comes a shout.

“Coo-ee-ee!”

Then a shrill whistle. Then silence. She knows that assistance is not far off, if she can only make them hear. She knows that the silence which succeeds the shouting means that they are listening for a response.

She tries to answer, but no sound much louder than a whisper can she emit. The cold dews have rendered her almost voiceless.

Now she shakes and tries to arouse Harry.

“Harry, Harry, awake, dear!”

“Whe – where am I?” cries the boy, rubbing his eyes.

“In the forest, Harry; in a tree.”

“Oh, I remember now,” says Harry, smiling, and looking down; “and there’s Towsie. What a jolly sleep I’ve had, Guvie! Have you?”

Again came the shout, this time somewhat nearer.

“Answer, dear; answer, I’m *so* hoarse. Cry as loud as you can.”

Harry did as told. It would hardly be heard fifty yards away, however.

But it had one effect. It roused Towsie Jock. All his wrath seemed at once to return, and he prepared once more to attack the tree.

“Towsie Jock, Towsie, Towsie!” sang the boy.

For the life of him he could not help it.

“Wow-ow-ow-wo-ah!” roared the bull.

That was a sound that could be heard for one good mile at least.

The three men advancing to the rescue heard it.

For the first time since he had left home the farmer-laird felt real dread and fear. In his imagination he could see the mangled bodies of his son and the governess, with the bull standing guard over them.

“Come on, men. Great heavens! I fear the worst now.”

Milvaine had his strong, tall crook, John his terribly – punishing hide whip, the cleerach had a double-barrelled gun.

The bull – infuriated now beyond measure – came roaring to meet them.

The cleerach fired at his legs. The shot but made him stumble for a moment; it had no other effect. On he came wilder than ever. He seemed to single the farmer himself out, and charged him head down. Mr Milvaine met the charge manfully enough. He leapt nimbly to one side, striking straight home with the iron-shod end of the crook. It wounded the bull in the neck, but ill would it have fared with the farmer had he not got speedily behind a tree.

Whack, whack, whack. John is behind the bull with his whip of hide.

The bull wheels round upon him ere ever he can escape, and runs him between his horns against a tree.

John has seized the horns, and thus they stand man and brute locked in a death grip.

The farmer has stumbled and fallen in running to John's assistance. The cleerach is loading again, when help comes from a most unexpected quarter, and Eily herself rushes on the scene.

She at once seizes the bull by the hock. The roar he emits is one of agony and rage, but John is free.

Eily easily eludes the bull's charge. He follows a little way towards the gate, then turns, when she fixes him again. And this game continues until the bull is fairly into the field.

Whenever the bull turns Eily seizes his hock; whenever he gives her chase she runs farther into the field, barking defiantly.

"I think, men, we may safely leave the brute to Eily," said Laird Milvaine; "but where *can* the dear children be!"

"Safe, safe, safe!" cried a voice from the tree.

Miss Campbell could speak now.

"Thank God!" was the fervent ejaculation breathed by every lip.

An hour afterwards Harry was in his mother's arms, laughing and crowing with delight as he related to his mamma all the fun of what he called the jolly match with Towsie.

His mother's eyes were red with weeping, but she was laughing

now nevertheless.

Book One – Chapter Four.

Harry Milvaine, Landed Proprietor – His Bungalow, and how he Built it – “I’ll be a Sailor, to be Sure.”

Were I to tell one-half of the adventures of the child Harold, as his father called him, I would fill this whole book with them, and would not have space to say a word about his career as a youth and young man. So I shall not begin.

No more vivacious reader of books of biography, travel, and adventure, perhaps ever existed than Harry Milvaine was when about the age of ten. I have often wondered when he slept.

At midsummer in the far north of Scotland there is light enough all night to read by. Harry took advantage of this, and would continue at a book from sunset till sunrise.

The boy had a deal of independence of character and real good feeling.

“I must have light to read by all night in winter,” he said to himself, “but it would be unfair to burn my father’s candles. I’ll make some.”

There was an odd old volume in Mr Milvaine’s library, called “The Arts and Sciences,” which was a very great favourite with Harry because it told him everything.

It taught him how to make moulded candles. He possessed a tin pen-and-pencil case. This made a first-rate mould. He collected fat, he got a wick and fixed it to the bottom of the case and held it in the position described by the book, then he poured in the melted fat, and lo! and behold, when it cooled, a candle was the result. He worked, in his own little tool-house, away down among the shrubbery at the bottom of the lawn, and made many candles. John, the coachman, admired them very much, and so did the female servants.

“Dear me?” said one old milk-maid, “it’s your father, Master Harry, that should be proud of his bonnie, bonnie boy.”

This old milk-maid had a beard and moustache that many a city clerk would have envied, and she was reputed to be a witch accordingly, but she dearly loved little Harry, and Harry loved her, and made a regular confidante of her.

She did not give him bad advice either. One example in proof of this. Harry came to her one day in great grief. He was not crying, but his mouth was pursed up very much, and he was very red in the face.

“Oh, Yonitch, Yonitch!” he exclaimed, in bitterness, “what *shall* I do? I’ve shot papa’s favourite cock.”

“Shot him dead? Have you, dear?” said Yonitch.

“Oh, dead enough, Yonitch. I fired at him, and my arrow has gone clean through his breast. I don’t think I really meant it, though.”

Yonitch ran down with him to the paddock to view the body,

and there certainly never was a much “deader” cock. The arrow was still sticking in his breast.

“What shall I do? Shall I bury the cock and run away?”

“That would not be brave, dear. No Highlander runs away. Go straight to your father and tell him.”

Harry did so.

“What’s the matter, lad?” said his father. “Hold up your head. What is it?”

“Papa,” replied the boy, not daring to look up, but speaking to a plough that stood near. “Papa, I took my bow and arrows – ”

“Yes, boy.”

“And I went down the paddock.”

“Well?”

“And I fired at the cock.”

“Yes.”

“And I’m afraid he – wants to be – buried.”

“Well, well, well, never mind, boy; I forgive you because you’ve come like a man and like a Highlander and told me. We’ll put the poor cock in the pot and have him for dinner.”

“Oh, no, no, dear papa,” cried Harry, looking up now for the first time, “I could not bear to see him cooked.”

“Well, go and bury him yourself, then.”

Harry ran off happy, and Yonitch and he dug a grave and buried the poor cock’s corpse, and it took Harry a whole week’s work in the tool-house to fashion him a “wooden tombstone,” and write an epitaph. The epitaph ran as follows: —

here lies
papa's poor coting chiney cock
croolly slane by harry
with his bow and arrie.

he sleeps in peas.

That tool-house and workshop of Harry's was quite a wonderful place. And wonderful, indeed, were the things Harry turned out of it. I'm not joking. He really did make good useful articles – boxes, picture frames, a footstool for his mother, a milking-stool for Yonitch, and an extraordinary rustic-looking, but comfortable, arm-chair for his father. It had a high back and a carpet bottom, and seated in it, on the verandah on a summer's evening, with his pipe and his paper, papa did look the very quintessence of comfort and jollity.

But Harry might often have been seen at the village carpenter's shop, taking lessons in the useful art of joinery.

In return for the high-backed chair, his father presented him, when Christmas came round, with a turning lathe. Then I think that Harry's cup of bliss was full to overflowing.

But his workshop soon proved too small to hold all his belongings. He secured a piece of ground from his father in a quiet and sheltered corner of the paddock, and within this he determined to do great things, as soon as spring brought out the daisies, and the ground was dry.

Now let me tell the reader, before I go a line farther on with my story, that though I am bound, in justice to my young hero, to say that he never neglected his lessons, nor his prayers, dear lad, still I do not wish to make him out a greater saint than perhaps most boys of his age are.

He is painted from the life, mind you, and I have not hid his failings from you. Nor need I hesitate to say that a fight between Harry and some village lad was of no very rare occurrence, and it was no uncommon thing to meet him coming homewards after one of these tulzies, with his jacket all covered with mud and his face all covered with blood.

So there! I hide nothing, good or bad.

Harry was going to do great things then with his bit of ground. He felt himself to be a small landed proprietor, a laird in miniature. He thought and planned in his spare moments all the livelong winter. He even put his plans on paper. This he did in the stillness of night, by the light of his own moulded candles.

Harry was immensely rich – at least he thought himself so. He had a money-box in the shape of a dog-kennel that stood on the mantelpiece of his own room, and goodness only knows how much money it did *not* contain. For years back, whenever he had received sixpence or a shilling from a relation or friend, pop! it had gone into the kennel. Half-crowns were too big to go in, but he changed them for smaller coins, and in they went. There was one whole sovereign in and one half one.

But Harry had not depended altogether for his riches on the

charity of friends and relations. No, for he was a wealthy dealer in live stock. Not cattle and horses, nor sheep and pigs. Harry's was a London market, and a world-wide market. His medium for sale was a paper called *The Exchange and Mart*, and his stock consisted of canaries, siskins, and British birds of all kinds. The latter he found in the woods and wilds, and reared by hand. He also sold guinea-pigs, white rats, piebald mice, hedgehogs, and snakes.

So no wonder he had amassed wealth.

And now spring came. The robin left the gateway where he had been singing so sweetly all the winter, and went away to the woods to build himself a nest. The primroses came out in the copses, and as soon as the blackbird and thrush saw them they started singing at once.

The trees all burst into bud and then into leaf. The young corn grew green in the fields, seeing which the lark tried how high he could mount and how loud he could sing.

And the wind blew soft and warm from the west, and the sun shone forth bright and clear, and dried up the roads and the fields, and chased every bit of snow away from the glens and straths, only permitting it to remain here and there in the hollows on the mountain tops.

Then Harry prepared for action.

It may be thought strange that Harry had no companions of his own age. But I am writing the history of a strange and wayward boy, a boy who never wanted or sought for companionship, a

kind of miniature edition of Robinson Crusoe he was, only he liked Yonitch to come and look at his work sometimes. There was also the joiner's man, who used to come up now and then and give Harry hints about "this, that, or t'other." So the boy did not feel lonely.

Andrew was this joiner's man's name. He was a kind of Jack-of-all-trades.

And never went about without his snuff-box.

He was very fond of Harry. In two evenings he dug and levelled and raked all Harry's estate for him, and Harry was duly thankful, because digging is very hard work.

Harry bought snuff for Andrew, and Andrew was happy.

Wire fencing now occupied our hero's attention. He went all by himself (accompanied by Eily, of course) to a neighbouring town to buy the galvanised iron mesh, and found that the money he had taken from his kennel for this purpose was more than sufficient.

Next he planned his garden, and laid out and gravelled his walks, bordering them nicely with old bricks. He gravelled quite a large space at one end, because here he was to build his house.

The floor of this was laid first and plastered over with a mixture of Portland cement and sand, and when dry it was as hard and firm as marble.

Then the uprights were put in, one for each corner, and the roof put on. At this work he received valuable assistance from Andrew, and paid him in snuff.

The roof Andrew thatched, and when the house was built, it was a very rustic and very romantic one indeed; partly bungalow, partly summer-house.

Lovely flowering climbers were planted, quick growing ones, wild convolvulus and clematis, with a few roses, and before the summer was half done all the walls were covered with a wealth of floral beauty.

Inside everything was neatness and regulation. One end was the working end, tool-bench, and lathe. All the rest of the house or room was like a boudoir, a sofa, chairs, a bookcase, brackets, candlesticks, a mirror or two, flower vases – all perfect and beautiful.

And all devised by Harry's own hands.

Am I not right in saying he was a kind of second edition of Robinson Crusoe?

The garden, too, was well planted, and all along the wire fence, entirely covering it, were wild convolvuluses.

Miss Campbell was permitted to visit the hermit Harry in his charming abode. But *not* to mention *lessons*. Harry's was quite a pleasure-house, and lessons would have been out of keeping altogether in it. But she had to read stories to him.

Yonitch was another invited guest. *She* did not read stories. But she told the most wonderful fairy tales, and even ghost stories, that ever any one listened to.

One day, when Harry was away fishing, his father happened to look into his quarters and took the liberty of having a peep

through his books. They were nearly all books of adventure and travel, and mostly sea stories, with just a sprinkling of poetry.

Harry's father went away – thinking.

How was this to end? He wished his son, his only son, to remain at home with him, to grow up with him, and help to farm his little estate. But those books? What could the boy's bent be?

That evening, after supper, he asked Harry straight what he would like to be.

Harry had an old-fashioned way of speaking, as boys have who are brought up by themselves, and only hear their elders talk.

He cocked his head consideringly on one side and replied —
“Oh! a sailor, papa. There can't be any question about that.”

“Ah! boy, I'll send you to school, and that'll knock all that nonsense out of your head.”

Harry looked at his father wonderingly. He could not understand what his father meant any more than if he had talked Greek.

“Draw your stool near my knee, my lad, and I'll suggest to you what you'll be, and you shall choose. Well, then, first and foremost, how would you like to be a doctor? Fine thing to be a doctor, drive about in a beautiful white-lined carriage, have the entrée of all the best houses, have a splendid house yourself, and —”

“Nasty man!” said Harry.

“Who?” said Mr Milvaine.

“Why, the doctor to be sure. Dear papa, I wouldn't take physic

myself even, and I'm sure I wouldn't ask anybody else to. No, papa, I'll be a sailor."

"Well, how would you like to enter the Church? how would you like to be a clergyman? No one in the world so highly respected as a clergyman. He is fit to sit down side by side with royalty itself, and his holy mission, Harold – "

"Stop, stop, papa. I say my prayers every morning and I say my prayers every night, but somehow I go and do naughty things just the same. You know I tree'd poor guvie for a whole night, and I tease poor Towsie, and I slew the Cochin China cock. No, no, dear papa; I'm not good enough to be a clergyman. I'll be a sailor."

"Well, how would you like to enter business, and rise, perhaps, to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in a gilded coach, and live in a house like a palace – "

"Papa, papa, don't; I would rather live in the beech tree in the forest than in a palace. I'll be a sailor."

His father bent down, and took Harry's hand in his. "Wouldn't you like to stay at home and help your papa, when he grows old, to farm, and take your poor old mother to church every Sunday on your arm?"

"If you wished it very much, papa; but you see, papa – "

The boy ceased speaking, and gazed into the fire for fully a minute.

Then up he jumped and clapped his hands.

"Ha?" he laughed, "I have it, dear papa. I have it. I'll do both."

“Both what?”

“Why, I’ll go to sea first, and visit all kinds of strange places and strange countries, and kill, oh! such lots of lions and tigers and savages; and then, papa, come back and help you to farm, and take my mamma to church. Isn’t it fun?”

His father laughed, and took up his pipe. Shouldn’t wonder, he thought to himself, but there may be some little truth in that old saying: “The child is the father of the man.”

Book One – Chapter Five.

The Story that the Swallow Told

That garden and that bungalow was a continual source of delight to young Harry. All the improvements which he was constantly carrying out inside the room itself, he planned and executed without assistance, but Andrew the joiner used to come up of an evening pretty frequently, and give him advice about the garden. So it flourished, and was very beautiful.

Andrew was often out and about the country doing odd jobs at the residences of the gentry, and whenever he could beg a root of some rare plant or flower he did so, and brought it straight home to the young laird, as he called Harry.

And Harry would give him snuff.

Not, mind you, that it was for sake of the snuff that Andrew did these little kindnesses to Harry. Truth is he dearly loved the boy.

A harum-scarum sort of a young man was Andrew, and there were people in the parish who said he was only half-witted, but this was all nonsense. Andrew came out with droll sayings at times – he was an original, and that is next door to a genius; but the truth is he had more wit and a deal more brains than many, or most of his detractors.

Andrew was tall and lank, and not an over-graceful walker,

but he had a kind face of his own and black beads of eyes, round which smiles were nearly always dancing, and it did not take much to make Andrew laugh right out. A right merry guffaw it was too. Sometimes it made the dogs bark, and the cocks all crow, and the peacock scream like a thousand cats all knocked into one. That is the kind of young man Andrew was. He came from the low country, and spoke a trifle broad. But that did not matter, his heart was as good as any Highlander's.

Harry and his friend frequently went to the forest together, but never again near Towsie's gate, because the boy had promised not to tease the bull any more. A promise is a sacred thing, and Harry knew this. The boy had a hundred friends in the forest. Yes, and far more.

For he loved nature.

And there was not a bush or tree he did not know all about: when they budded, when they broke into leaf, and even when those leaves would fade and fall and die.

There was not a flower he did not know, nor a bird he could not recognise by name, by note or song, by its nest or by its eggs.

He was no wanton nest-robber, though; a boy who is so has no manliness or fairness or gentlemanly feeling about him. Harry never robbed a nest, but more than once he pitched into other boys for doing so, and fought sturdy battles in the forest in defence of his friends the birds.

Did you ever notice, dear reader, what a sweet sweet song that of the house-martin is? With its coat of dusky black, the little

crimson blush on its breast, and its graceful form, the martin is a charming bird altogether. But its song is to my ears ineffably sweet.

It is not a loud song, and the bird always sits down to sing. It is not loud for this reason: away in the wilds of Africa, where this birdie frequently goes, there are so many enemies about that to sing very loudly would lead to the discovery of its whereabouts, and it would probably be killed and devoured.

For this very reason many of the birds in Africa sing not at all. Gay and lovely are they even as the flowers, the glorious flowers that adorn the hillside and forest and plain, but silently they flit from bough to bough.

One evening Harry was seated on his sofa, or rather he was half reclining thereon, reading a volume of his favourite poet – Campbell, I think. It was very still and quiet. His little window, round which the roses and the clematis clung, was open, and the sweet breath of flowers floated in with the gentle breeze.

It was so still and silent that Harry could hear the soft foot-fall of Eily the collie, as she came along the gravelled path towards the bungalow door.

“Come, in Eily,” he said, “and lie down, I’m reading.”

“Oh?” he added, as he looked up, “what have you in your mouth? A bone?”

Eily advanced, and put her chin ever so gently on, her young master’s knee.

No, it was not a bone, but a bird, a lovely martin.

Not a tooth had Eily put in it, not a feather had she ruffled, and hardly had she wetted its plumage.

Harry took it tenderly in his hand.

“Where did you get it, Eily? In the loft?”

Eily wagged her tail.

Swift as lightning though they may fly out of doors, no bird is more easily captured inside than the house-martin. If found in a loft they appear to lose presence of mind at once, and after flying about for a short time usually alight against the glass. When one is taken its little heart may be felt beating against the hand, as if it verily would break.

And no wonder.

Fancy, reader, how you should feel were you captured by some great ogre, taller than a steeple, and carried away, expecting death every minute.

“Give it to me, Eily. Give it quick. I hope you haven’t dragged its plumage very much. Now shut the door.”

Eily went and did as she was told. (It is very seldom a dog is taught this trick, but it is a very handy one. – G.S.)

Harry admired it for a little while. Then he gently kissed its brow. Its wee beak was half upturned, and its black beads of eyes appeared to look appealingly at him.

“What are you going to do with me?” it seemed to ask. “Are you going to kill me, or swallow me alive as we martins do the flies?”

“*I’m* not going to harm you a bit,” said Harry.

“I’m only going to hold you in my hand for a short time to admire you. How soft and warm you feel, and what a pretty dusky red patch you have on your breast! I’ve often listened to your song as you sat on the apple tree. But why do you sing so soft and low?”

“Because,” replied the bird, talking with its eyes – at least Harry thought he could read the answer there – “because in our country if we sang too loudly our enemies would hear us and come and kill us.”

“And who are your enemies?”

“Big birds with terrible claws and beaks, that want to fly at us and devour us. And terrible snakes that glide silently up the branches on which we are perched, and sometimes strike us dead, as quick as a lightning’s flash.”

“And I suppose you *must* sing?”

“Oh yes, we must sing, because we are so very happy, and we love each other so.”

“And why are your wings and back so dusky and dark?”

“That our enemies may not see us.”

“But I’ve read,” said Harry, “that many tropical birds were all bright and gay with colours of every hue.”

“Oh yes, so they are, but then these live all their lives among flowers as gorgeous in colour as they themselves are, and so their enemies mistake them for the flowers among which they dwell.”

“Do you come from a very far-off land?”

“Yes, a very very far-off land.”

“And is it very beautiful there?”

“Very *very* beautiful.”

“I *would* like to go to that far-off beautiful land. How do you get there?”

“We fly.”

“Yes, I know, but I can’t, though I once tried I made a pair of wings out of an old umbrella; they were so awkward, though, and would not work.

“But I meant,” continued Harry, “which way do you go?”

“Southward and southward and southward, and westward and westward and southward again.”

“What a funny road! I should get dead tired before I was halfway.”

“So do we: then we look about for a ship or a rock, if at sea, and alight to rest.”

“And aren’t you afraid the sailors may shoot you?”

“Oh no; for sailors do so love to see us on the yards. (How true! G.S.) They dearly love us. We remind them of England and their cottage homes and their wives and little ones, and of apple orchards and flowery meadows and crimson poppies in the fields of green waving corn, and all kinds of beautiful things.”

“No wonder they love you!”

“Yes; they do so love us; I’ve seen the tears start to the eyes of little sailor lads as they gazed at us. And I know the men tread more lightly on the deck for fear of scaring us away.”

“And when rested you just go on again?”

“Yes, on and on and on.”

“I should lose my head.”

“We don’t – something seems to guide us onward.”

“I suppose you see some terrible sights? Have you seen a shipwreck? *I* should like to.”

“Oh no, no, you would not. If you once saw a shipwreck, or a ship foundering at sea, you would never never forget it.”

“Tell me.”

“I cannot. No one could. But somehow it is usually at night we witness these awful scenes. I have seen a ship sailing silently over the moonlit water, the yellow light streaming from her ports, and I have heard the sounds of music and laughter, and the voices of glad children at play. And I have seen the same vessel, but a short hour after, drifting on in the darkness to the pitiless rocks before a white squall. Ah! white was the squall, white were the waves, but not more white than the scared, dazed faces of those poor shrinking, moaning beings who rushed on deck when she struck.”

“What did you do?”

“Flew away. Just flew away.”

“Tell me more.”

“What shall I tell you of?”

“About your own bright home in the far-off land.”

“Shall I speak to you of the coralline sea that laves the tree-fringed shores of Africa?”

“Yes, yes, tell me of that.”

“Rippling up through the snakey roots of the mangrove trees, bathing the green branches that stoop down to kiss them – oh! ’tis a lovely sea, when the great sun shines, and the cyclone and squall are far away, calm and soft and blue. Yet not all blue, for on the coral flats it is a tender green, and grey where the cloud shadows fall on it. But all placid, all warm and dreamy as if fairies dwelt in caves beneath. Then the little green islands seem to float above the sea as if only just let down from heaven.

“Sometimes great sharks float upwards from the dark depths beneath, and bask on the surface with their fins above the water, and white sea-gulls come and perch upon them just as starlings do on sheep at home.”

“How strange! Don’t the sharks try to kill the birds?”

“No, they like it, and I think the birds sing to them and lull them to sleep, or that they tell them tales of far-off lands as I am speaking now to you.

“But on the coral reefs, where the sea, at a distance, looks so sweetly green, if you were there in a boat and looked away down to the bottom, oh! what a sight would be spread out before you! A garden of shrubs and waving flowers more lovely than anything ever seen on land.”

“How I should like to go there! But the interior of Africa is very gorgeous too, is it not?”

“Yes, to us who can fly quickly from place to place, through flowery groves, where birds and blossoms vie with each other in the beauty of their colours, where the butterflies are like fans,

of crimson and green where the very lizards and every creeping thing, are adorned with rainbow tints and ever-changing bright metallic sheen.”

“There are dark corners, though, in this strange land of yours, are there not?”

“Yes, dark, dark corners; but I must not tell you of these, of the deep gloomy forest, where the gorilla howls, and wretched dwarfs have their abode, or of the great swamp lands in which the dreadful crocodile and a thousand other slimy creatures dwell, and where, in patches of forest, the mighty anacondas sleep. Nor of the wondrous deserts of sand, nor of the storms that rise sometimes and bury caravans of camels and men alive. No, we swallows think only of the beauty of our African home, of its roaring cataracts, its wooded hills, its peaceful lakes and broad shining rivers, and of the glorious sunshine that gladdens all.

“But now I must go. Pray let me free. I have much to do before the summer is over, and that kind something beckons me back again – back to the land of the sun.”

“Go, birdie, go, and some day I too will take my flight to the Land of the Sun.”

Book One – Chapter Six.

Harry’s School-Days – Lost in a Snowstorm

Harry Milvaine had aunts and uncles in abundance, and about as many cousins as there are gooseberries on an ordinary-sized bush; for he had first cousins and second and third cousins, and on and on to, I verily believe, forty-second cousins. They count kinship a long way off in the Scottish Highlands.

And they used all to visit occasionally at Beaufort Hall. They did not all come at once, to be sure, else, if they had, there would have been no beds to hold them. They would have had to sleep in barns and byres, under the hayricks and out on the heather.

Oh, it was no uncommon thing now for Harry to sleep on the heather. On summer nights he would often steal out through the casement window of his bedroom, which opened on to the lawn, and go quietly away to a healthy hill not far off. Here he would pull a bundle of heather for a pillow, and lie down rolled in his plaid with Eily in his arms and a book in his hand. As long as there was light he would read. When it grew semi-dark he would sleep, and awake in the morning as fresh as a blackbird.

Once only he had what some boys would consider an ugly adventure. On awaking one morning he felt something damp and cold touch his knee – he wore the kilt. He quickly threw off

the plaid, and there, close by him, was an immense green-yellow snake. The creature was coiled up somewhat in the form of the letter W. It was fully as thick as the neck part of an ordinary violin, and it glittered all over as if varnished. A wholesome, healthy snake, I assure you. He raised his head and hissed at Harry. That snake would have fain got away. Very likely he had said to himself the night before:

“I’ll creep in here for warmth and get away again in the morning, before the human being is awake.”

But the snake had overslept himself and was caught napping.

Now there are two animals that do not like to turn tail when fairly faced – a cat and a snake. Both feel they are at a disadvantage when running away.

I have often proved this with snakes. Give them a fair offing, and they will glide quickly off; but catch them unawares, and get close up to them, and they will face you and fight.

Harry knew this and lay perfectly still. Granting that these great green-yellow Highland snakes are not poisonous, they *bite*, and it is not nice to be bitten by a snake of any kind.

Just at that moment, however, Eily returned from the woods where she had been hunting on her own account. She took in the situation at a glance. Next moment she had whirled the snake round her head and dashed it yards away, where it lay writhing with a broken back. Many dogs are clever at killing snakes. Then she came and licked her master’s hand.

Every time any of Harry’s aunts came they made this remark:

“How the boy does grow, to be sure!” Every time one of Harry’s uncles came he made some such remark as this:

“He’ll be as big a man as his father. He is a true Highlander and a true Milvaine.”

Harry liked his uncles and aunts very well after a fashion, but he cared little or nothing for his cousins. Some of them called him the hermit. Harry did not mind. But he would coolly lock his garden gate and sit down to read or to write, or begin working at his lathe, while his cousins would be playing cricket in the paddock; then perhaps he would come out, look for a moment, with an air of indifference, at the game, then whistle on Eily and go off to the woods or the river. This was exceedingly inhospitable of Harry, I must confess, only I must paint my hero in his true colours.

“Why don’t you play with your cousins, dear?” his mother would ask.

“Oh, mamma!” Harry would reply, “what *are* they to me? I have books, a gun, and a fishing-rod, and I have Eily; what more should I want?”

The name of Hermit followed him to the parish school. Our tale dates back to the days before School Boards were thought of.

Harry was eleven now, and therefore somewhat too old for a governess. So Miss Campbell had gone. I’m afraid that Harry had already forgotten his promise to marry her when he “grew a great big man.” At all events he did not repeat it even when he kissed her good-bye.

What a long, long walk Harry had to that parish school! How would the average English boy like to trudge o'er hill and dale, through moor and moss and forest, four long miles every morning? But that is precisely what Harry had to do, carrying with him, too, a pile of books one foot high, including a large Latin dictionary.

Harry thought it delightful in summer; he used to start very early so as to be able to study nature by the way, study birds and their nests, study trees and shrubs and ferns and flowers.

Scottish schoolboy fashion, he took his dinner with him. A meagre meal enough, only some bread-and-butter in a little bag, and a tin of sweet milk which he carried in his hand.

Eily always went along with him, but she waited at a neighbouring farm until school came out in the forenoon, when she had part of Harry's dinner; then she was invariably at the gate at four o'clock, and wild with joy when the homeward journey commenced.

Several other boys went Harry's road for more than two miles, but it was the custom of the "Hermit" to start off at a race with his dog as soon as he got out, and never halt until he put a good half-mile betwixt himself and the lads, who would gladly have borne him company.

No wonder he was called "Harry the Hermit!"

Dominie Roberts, the parish schoolmaster, was a pedagogue of the old school. And there exist many such in Scotland still.

He would no more think of teaching a class without the tawse

in his hand, than a huntsman would of entering the kennels without his whip. As my English readers may not know what a “tawse” is, I herewith give them a recipe for making one.

Take, then, a piece of leather two feet long, and one inch and a half wide. The leather ought to be the thickest a shoemaker can give you, of the same sort as he makes the uppers of a navy’s boots with. Now at one end make a slit or buttonhole to pass two fingers through, and cut up the other into three tags of equal breadth and about three inches long.

Then your tawse is complete, or will be so as soon as you have heated the ends for a short time in the fire to harden them.

It is a fearful instrument of torture, as my experience can testify. It is not quite so much used in schools now, however, as it was thirty years ago, when the writer was a boy. But it *is* still used. Such a thing as hoisting and flogging, I do not believe, was ever known in a Scottish school. It would result in mutiny.

You have to hold out your hand. The teacher says “*Pande*” (in Latin). Then he lets you have it again and again, sometimes till he is out of breath, and your hands and wrists are all blistered.

I remember receiving six-and-thirty “pandey’s,” because I had smashed a tyrant boy who had bullied me for months. It was a cruel injustice; for the bully got no punishment except that which I had given him.

Dominie Roberts was a pedagogue, then, of this class.

All the boys were afraid of him. Harry was not. Though only eleven years of age, Harry was nearly as tall as the dominie.

There was a consultation one day as to who should steal the tawse.

No boy would venture, but at length —

“I will,” said Harry.

“Hurrah! for the Hermit!” was the shout.

The dominie went out of the schoolroom every forenoon for half an hour to smoke. A pretty hubbub and din there was then, you may be sure.

The day after the theft of the tawse was determined on, as soon as the pedagogue had stumped out of the school — he wore a wooden leg from the knee — Harry went boldly up to the desk and seized the tawse.

“What shall I do with it?” he asked a schoolboy.

“Pitch it out of the window.”

“No,” cried another, “he would get it again. Put it in the fire.”

Harry did so, and covered it up with burning coals.

By and by back stumped the dominie. He held his nose in the air and sniffed. There was a shocking smell of burning leather.

The dominie went straight to the fire, and with the poker discovered the almost shapeless cinders of his pet tawse!

He grew red and white, time about, with rage.

“Who has done this thing?” he thundered.

No reply, and the dominie thumped on the floor with his wooden leg, and repeated the question.

Still no answer.

“I shall punish the entire school,” cried Dominie Roberts.

He stumped out again, and many of the boys grew pale with fear, and the smaller ones began to cry.

Presently the dominie returned. In his hand he bore a long piece of a bridle rein, and this he fashioned into a tawse in sight of the whole school. Then he called the biggest class, and once more demanded the name of the culprit.

No reply, but every lad in the class began to wet his hands and pull down his sleeves.

“All hands up,” was the terrible command.

The punishment was about to commence when forth stepped Harry the Hermit into the middle of the circle.

“Stay a moment, if you please, sir,” said Harry.

“You know, then, who committed the crime?” asked the dominie, sternly.

“I do; it was myself.”

“And why?”

“Because the other boys wanted to, but were afraid.”

“Which other boys? Name them.”

“I will not.”

“*Pande, sir, Pande.*”

Five minutes afterwards Harry staggered back to his seat, pale-faced and sick.

He sat down beside his class-mate, and was soon so far recovered as to be able to whisper —

“How many did I have?”

“Two-and-twenty,” was the reply. “I counted.”

“And that new tawse is a tickler, I can tell you,” said Harry.

He did not climb any trees that day going home. He could not have held on. Nor was he able to eat much supper, but he did not tell the reason why.

But, apart from his fondness for corporal or palmar punishment, Dominie Roberts was a clever teacher, and Harry made excellent progress.

Autumn came round, and stormy wet days, and many a cold drenching our hero got, both coming to and going from school. But he did not mind them. They only seemed to render him hardier and sturdier, and make his cheeks the ruddier.

Then winter arrived “on his snow-white car,” as poets say, and often such storms blew that even grown-up people feared to face them. But Harry would not give in. On evenings like these John would be dispatched to meet Harry, and many an anxious glance from the dining-room window would his mother cast, until she saw them coming up the long avenue, Eily always first, feathering through the snow, and barking for very joy as she neared the house.

Sometimes the roads would be so blocked with snow, that Harry found it far more convenient to walk along on the top of the stone fences, often missing his feet, and getting plunged nearly over his head in a snow-bank.

In the early part of January, 186-, I forget the exact day and date, one of the most fierce and terrible snowstorms that old men ever remembered, swept over the northern shires of Scotland.

When Harry left for school that morning there seemed little cause for alarm. There was no sunshine however, and the whole sky was covered by an unbroken wall of blue-grey cloud. Towards the forenoon snow began to fall – a kind of soft hail like millet seeds. The ground was hard and dry to receive it, so it did not melt.

The schoolboys tried to mould it into snowballs, but it would not “make,” it would not stick together – evidence in itself that the frost was intense.

Gradually this soft, fine hail changed to big, dry flakes. Then the wind began to rise, and moan around the chimneys, and go shrieking through the leafless boughs of the ash trees and elms. The snowfall increased in density every minute. Looking up through the falling flakes, you could not have seen three yards.

Dominie Roberts at two o'clock began to get uneasy, and gave many an anxious glance towards the windows, now getting quickly snowed up. So great, too, was the frost that, though a roaring fire of wood and peats burned on the hearth, the panes were flowered and frozen.

At half-past two it began to get rapidly dark, so the dominie dismissed his class with earnest injunctions to those boys who had far to go, not to delay on the road, but to hurry home at once.

It might have been thought that on an evening like this, Harry would have been glad of companionship on the road. Not he. He went off like a young colt, with Eily galloping round him, as soon as ever he got outside the gate.

The wind blew right in his face, however, and the drift was whirling like smoke right over every fence. The roads were also barricaded every few yards with high wreaths of snow, blown off the fields and hills.

The wind blew wilder, and every minute the cold seemed to grow more and more intense.

Harry's face and hands were blue and benumbed before he had gone a mile and a half, Eily's coat was white and frozen hard; but on went the pair of them, battling with the storm, Harry holding his head well down, and keeping his plaid up over his nostrils.

Often he had to turn round and walk backwards by way of resting himself.

The snow-wreaths were most difficult to get through, the smoking drift cutting his breath and nearly suffocating him.

So ere long his strength began to fail. Hardy though he was, Highlander though he was, bred and born among the wild, bleak mountains, and reared in the forests, his powers of endurance gave out.

He crouched down and took the half-frozen dog in his arms. He talked to her as if she had been a human being, and the probability is that she *did* know what he said.

"Oh, Eily," he said, "I do feel tired."

The kindly collie licked his face.

"But come on," he cried, starting up again; "we must not give in. We have only about a mile and a half to go if we cross through the wood. We'll soon get home. Come on, Eily, come on."

In a short time he had reached the wood. It was mostly spruce and fir, and the branches were borne half to the ground with the weight of snow at one side, while the other was bare, and the wind tearing through them.

He leaped the “dyke,” (a stone fence) and was glad he had done so. There was far more shelter here, and the blasts were less fierce and cutting. He walked faster now. The wood was about half a mile wide. Arrived at the other side, a path by a stone fence led all the way down to his own home in the glen beneath.

He hurried on. How strange the wood looked under its mantle of snow! But he could not see any distance ahead owing to the drift. Sometimes the wind would catch a tree and roar through it, and for the moment he would be almost suffocated with the smother of falling snow.

He had gone on quite a long way, when he suddenly came to a clearing. He had never seen it before; never been here before. Then the awful truth flashed at once across the boy’s mind — *he was lost!*

How long he wandered in the wood before he sank exhausted beside a tree he never could tell.

Night and darkness came on, the storm roared through the wood with ever-increasing force, but Harry knew nothing of it. He slept – slept that sleep that seldom knows a waking in this world.

And the drift banked up – the cruel drift – up around him. It hid his legs, his arms, his shoulders, and at last his head itself.

Still the snow fell and the wind blew. It blew with a moaning, whistling sound through the tall pine-trees, as it does through rigging and cordage of a ship in a gale. It blew with a rushing noise through the closer-branched spruce trees, and ever in a momentary lull you might have heard the frozen tips of the branches knocking together as if glass rattled.

It was a terrible night.

As usual on stormy evenings, stalwart John had gone to meet young Harry; but he kept the road. It never struck him that the boy would have ventured through the wood in such a night.

Harry's parents were sitting in the parlour anxious beyond all expression, when suddenly the quick, sharp, impatient bark of the collie rang out high above the howling wind.

In she rushed whining when the door was opened. But out she flew again.

"Oh, come quickly," she seemed to say, "and save poor young master!"

Mr Milvaine well knew what it meant. Five minutes after, with lanterns and poles, he and two trusty servants were following close at the honest dog's heels.

Up the hill by the fence side, up and up and into the wood, and never did the faithful animal halt until she led them to the tree where she had left the boy.

For a moment or two now she seemed lost. She went galloping round and round the tree; while with their lanterns Mr Milvaine and his servants looked in vain for poor Harry.

But back Eily came, and at once began to scrape in the snow. Then something dark appeared, and Eily barked for joy.

Her master was found.

Was he dead? They thought so at first. But the covering of snow had saved him.

They poured a little brandy over his throat, wrapped him tenderly in a Highland plaid, and bore him home. Yet it was days before he spoke.

Dear reader, did ever you consider what a blessing our loving Father has given us in a faithful dog? How kind we ought to be, and how considerate for the comfort of such a noble animal! And ever as they get older our thoughtfulness for their welfare and care of them ought to increase. Mind, too, that most good thinking men believe that dogs have a hereafter.

“I canna but believe,” says the Ettrick shepherd, in his broad Doric, “that dowgs hae souls.”

My friend, the Rev. J.G. Wood, in his book called “Man and Beast,” has proved beyond dispute that there is nothing in Scripture against the theory that the lower animals will have a hereafter.

And note how the goodly poet Tupper writes about his dear dog Sandy:

“Shall noble fidelity, courage and love,
Obedience and conscience – all rot in the ground?
No room be found for them beneath or above,
Nor anywhere in all the universe round?”

Can Fatherhood cease? or the Judge be unjust?
Or changefulness mark any counsel of God?
Shall a butterfly's beauty be lost in the dust?
Or the skill of a spider be crushed as a clod?

“I cannot believe it: Creation still lives;
The Maker of all things made nothing in vain:
The Spirit His gracious ubiquity gives,
Though seeming to die, ever lives on again.
We ‘rise with our bodies,’ and reason may hope
That truth, highest truth, may sink humbly to this,
That ‘Lo, the poor Indian’ was wiser than Pope
When he longed for his dog to be with him in bliss!”

Book One – Chapter Seven.

Leaving Home

From what I have already told the reader about Harry Milvaine, it will readily be gathered that he was a lad of decided character and of some considerable determination. A boy, too, who was apt to take action at the first touch of the spur of a thought or an idea.

What I have now to relate will, I think, prove this still further.

He left his uncle – a younger brother of his mother – and his father one evening talking in the dining-room. He had bidden them good-night and glided away upstairs to bed. He was partially undressed before he noticed that he had left a favourite book down in the library.

So he stole silently down to fetch it.

He had to pass the dining-room door, and in doing so the mention of his own name caused him to pause and listen.

Listeners, they say, seldom hear any good about themselves. Perhaps not, but the following is what Harry heard:

“Ha!” laughed Uncle Robert, “I tell you, brother, I’d do it. That would take the fun out of him. That would knock all notions of a sailor’s life out of the lad. It has been done before, and most successfully too, I can tell you.”

“And,” replied Harry’s father, “you would really advise me to

“I would really advise you to do as I say,” said uncle, interrupting his brother-in-law. “I’d send him to sea for a voyage in a whaler. They sail in February, and they return in May – barely three months, you see.”

“Indeed, then I do think I’ll take your advice. But his mother loves the dear, brave boy so, that I’m sure she’ll feel the parting very much.”

“Well, well, my sister’ll soon get over that.”

Harry stayed to hear no more. He went back to his room without the book, and, instead of going to bed, lay down upon his sofa with the intention of what he called “doing a good think.”

For fully an hour he lies there with his round eyes fixed on the ceiling.

Then he starts up.

“Yes,” he cries, half aloud, “I’ll do it, I’ll do it. My father will see whether I have any courage or not.”

He goes straight to the little money-box kennel that stood on the mantelpiece.

The canary and pigeon business had been profitable with Harry for some time past.

He was very wealthy indeed. More so even than he imagined, for now when he counted his horde it ran up to 4 pounds, 15 shillings, 6 pence.

“Splendid!” said Harry to himself; “I couldn’t have believed I was so rich.”

Then he knelt down and said his prayers, far more fervently than he was wont to do. Especially did he pray for blessings to fall on his dear mother and father.

“I don’t think it is quite right,” he said to himself, “what I am going to do, but it will be all right again in a few months.”

He lay down in bed and slept soundly for hours. But the stars were still shining thickly when he awoke and looked out of the window.

There was snow on the ground, hard, crisp snow.

Harry lit his candle, then he got out his small writing-case, and, after some time and considerable pains, succeeded in writing a letter, which he carefully folded and addressed.

Young though he was – with his tiny fowling-piece – a gift from one of his uncles – the boy could tumble either rabbit or hare, or bring down a bird on the wing, but he was not particularly clever with the pen. I wish I could say that he was.

He now got a small bag out of the cupboard, and into this he put a change of clothes. Having washed and dressed, he was ready for the road.

He opened his door quietly, and walked silently along the passage, boots in hand. He had to pass his mother’s room door. His heart beat high, it thumped against his ribs so that he could almost hear it. How he would have liked to have gone in, and kissed his dear mother good-bye! But he dared not.

Not until he was quite out of doors among the snow did he put on his boots. Eily, not knowing him, made a rush, barking

and fiercely growling.

“Hush, Eily! hush!” he cried; “it’s me, it’s Harry, your master.”

Eily changed her tune now, and also her attitude. The hair that had been standing up all along her back was smoothed down at once, and as the boy bent to tie his boots she licked his hands and cheek. The poor dog seemed really to know that something more than usual was in the wind.

There was a glimmer of light in the east, but the stars everywhere else were still very bright.

Harry stood up.

Eily sat motionless, looking eagerly up into his face, and her eyes sparkled in the starlight.

She was waiting for her master’s invitation to go along with him. One word would have been enough to have sent her wild with joy.

“Where can he be going?” she was asking herself. “Not surely to the forest at this time of night! But wherever he goes, I’ll go too.”

“Eily,” said the boy, seriously, even sadly, “I’m going away, far, far away.”

The dog listened, never moving ear nor tail.

“And, Eily, you *cannot* come with me, dear, dear doggie.”

Eily threw herself at his feet, or rather fell; she looked lost in grief.

He patted her kindly.

This only made matters worse. She thought he was relenting,

that his words had been only spoken in fun. She jumped up, sprang on his shoulder, licked his ear, then went gambolling round and round him, and so made her way to the gate.

It was very apparent, however, that all these antics were assumed, there was no joy at the dog's heart. She was but trying to overcome her master's scruples to take her along with him.

Harry followed her to the gate.

"It must not be, Eily," he said again; "I'm going where you cannot come. But I will come back, remember that."

His hand was on her head, and he was gazing earnestly down at her.

"Yes, I'll come back in a few months, and you will meet me, oh! so joyfully. Then we'll roam and rove and run in the beautiful forest once more, and fish by the river, and shoot on the moorland and hill. Goodbye, Eily. Be good, and watch. Good-bye, goodbye."

A great tear fell on Eily's mane as he bent down and kissed her brow.

Eily stood there by the gate in the starlight, watching the dark retreating figure of her beloved young master, until a distant corner hid him from view, and she could see him no more.

Then she threw herself down on the snow; and, reader, if you could have heard the big, sobbing sigh she gave, you would believe with me, that the mind of a dog is sometimes almost human, and their griefs and sorrows very real.

Hastily brushing the tears from his eyes, Harry made the best

of his way along the road, not daring to look behind him, lest his feelings should overcome him.

He kept repeating to himself the words he had heard his uncle make use of the evening before. This kept his courage up. When he had gone about a mile he left the main road and turned into a field. A little winding church-path soon brought him to a wooded hollow, where there was a very tiny cottage and garden.

He opened the gate and entered.

He went straight to the right-hand window, and, wetting his forefinger, rubbed it up and down on the pane.

The noise it made was enough to awaken some one inside, for presently there was a cough, and a voice said —

“Who’s there?”

“It is I, Andrew: rise, I want to speak to you.”

“Man! is it you, Harry? I’ll be out in a jiffy.”

And sure enough a light was struck and a candle lit. Harry could see poor faithful Andrew hurrying on his clothes, and in two minutes more he had opened the door and admitted his young friend.

“Man! Harry,” he said, “you scared me. You are early on the road. Have ye traps set in the forest? D’ye want me to go wi’ ye?”

“No such luck, Andrew,” replied the boy. “I’ve no traps set. I won’t see the forest for many a long day again.”

“Haud your tongue, man!” cried Andrew, looking very serious and pretending to be angry. “Haud your tongue. Are ye takin’ leave o’ your reason? What have ye in that bag? Why are ye no

dressed in the kilt, but in your Sunday braws?”

Then Harry told him all – told him of the determination he had for many a day to go to sea, and of the conversation he had overheard on the previous evening.

Andrew used all the arguments he could think of or muster to dissuade him from his purpose, and enlarged upon the many dangers to be encountered on the stormy main, as he called it, but all to no purpose.

“Mind ye,” said Andrew, “I’ve been to sea myself, and know something about it.”

Honest, innocent Andrew, all the experience he had of the stormy main was what he had gained in a six hours’ voyage betwixt Granton and Aberdeen.

But when Andrew found that nothing which he could adduce made the slightest impression on his young friend, he pulled out his snuff-horn, took two enormously large pinches, and sat down in silence to look at Harry.

The boy pulled out a letter from his breast-pocket.

“This is for my dear mother,” he said. “Give it to her to-day. Tell her how sorry I was to go away. Tell her – tell her – .”

Here the boy fairly broke down, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

My hero crying? Yes, I do not feel shame for him either. The soldier or sailor, ere journeying far away to foreign lands, is none the less brave if he does pause on the brow of the hill, and, looking back to his little cottage in the glen, drop a tear.

Do you remember the words of the beautiful song —

“Mid pleasures and palaces tho’ we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home;
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek thro’ the world, is ne’er met elsewhere.

“An exile from home, splendour dazzles in vain,
Oh! give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gaily that came at my call,
And give me the peace of mind dearer than all?”

Andrew, when he saw Harry crying, felt very much inclined to join him. There was a big lump in his throat that he could hardly gulp down. But then Andrew was a bit simple.

Harry jumped up presently and took two or three strides up and down the floor of the little room, and so mastered his grief.

“It won’t be for such a very long time, you know, Andrew,” he said.

“No,” said Andrew, brightening up. “And I’ll look after your garden, Harry.”

“Thank you, Andrew, and the turning lathe and the tools?”

“I’ll see to them. You’ll find them all as bright as new pins on your return.”

“And my pets, Andrew?”

“Yes.”

“Well, look after those too. Sell them all as soon as you can —

rats, mice, guinea-pigs, and pigeons, and all.”

“Yes.”

“And, Andrew, keep the money you get for them to buy snuff.”

“Good-bye, Andrew.”

“Good-bye. Mind you take care of yourself.”

“I’ll do that for my mother’s sake.”

Andrew pressed Harry’s soft hand between his two horny palms for just a moment.

“God bless you, Harry!” he muttered.

He could not trust himself to say more, his heart was too full.

Then away went Harry, grasping his stick in his hand and trudging on manfully over the hills, with his face to the east.

By and by the sun rose, and with it rose Harry’s spirits. He thought no more of the past. That was gone. He felt a man now; he felt he had a future before him, and on this alone he permitted his thoughts to rest.

Now I do not mean to vindicate that which my hero has done – quite the reverse. Obedience to the wishes of his parents is a boy’s first duty.

Still, I cannot help thinking that my young hero had a bold heart in his breast.

See him now, with the sun glinting down on his ruddy face, on which is a smile, and on his stalwart figure; he is more like a boy of fifteen than a child under twelve. How firm his tread on the crisp and dazzling snow, how square his shoulders, how

springy and lithe his gait and movement! No, I'm not ashamed of my hero. Hear him. He is singing —

“There is many a man of the Cameron clan
That has followed his chief to the field,
And sworn to support him or die by his side,
For a Cameron never can yield.

“The moon has arisen, it shines on that path,
Now trod by the gallant and true —
High, high are their hopes, for their chieftain has said,
That whatever men dare they can do.
I hear the pibroch, sounding, sounding,
Deep o'er the mountains and glens,
While light-springing footsteps are trampling the heath —
’Tis the march of the Cameron men.”

Poor brave, but rather wayward, boy! the gallant ship is even now lying in Lerwick Bay that soon shall bear him far o'er Arctic seas.

Book Two – Chapter One.

A Life on the Ocean Wave.

Harry in a Queer Position

Very picturesque and beautiful does the Greenland fleet of the sealers and whalers appear from any of the neighbouring hills which enclosed Lerwick Sound in their midst, giving it the appearance of some great Highland lake. The dark blue rippling water is to-day – as Harry gazes on it – studded with threescore gallant ships, many of them steamers, but each and all having tall and tapering masts. Then the bare, treeless, rugged mountains; the romantic little town with its time-worn fort; the boats flitting hither and thither like birds on the water, and lofty Ben Brassa – capped in snow – looking down upon all, form a scene of impressive beauty and quiet grandeur that once beheld is not easily forgotten.

The town, however, like many others in this world, looks immensely better at a distance than it does upon close inspection. The streets, or rather lanes, are close and confined. Indeed, there is but one principal street, which is transversed by a multitude of lanes, which on one side lead down to the sea, and on the other scramble up a steep hill. And in the rainy season these lanes are converted into brawling streams which pour their roaring floods down into the tide-way.

The houses in the street are built in the Danish or Scandinavian style, and are mostly built with their gables to the front, while at every ten or twelve yards' distance, one of these buildings stands threateningly forth across the path in a thus-far-shalt-thou-go sort of fashion, giving to the street a very awkward appearance, and on dark nights seriously endangering the noses of the pedestrians.

Harry had come by steamboat from Aberdeen, to which fair granite city he had trudged all the way on foot. He had to harbour his funds, rich and all though he thought himself, and I believe that during all that long, weary walk to the city, he subsisted almost entirely on bread and cheese washed down with milk. But he was young and strong and hardy.

He had taken steerage fare to Lerwick, and no sooner had he ensconced himself on the locker than he fell sound asleep, and never lifted his head for twelve whole hours.

In most books of travel by sea the author says nothing about seasickness. This is something very real and very dreadful nevertheless. There is no cure for it, nor ever will be, till the world is at an end. Only its effects can be mitigated by fresh air and exercise on deck. One must fight the fearful malady, and, as you fight it, it will flee from you. Intending sailor-boys would do well to remember this.

The passage to Lerwick had been a stormy one; unable to remain below, owing to the heat and the unsavoury nature of the atmosphere, Harry had gone on deck. It was night, but there was

never a star to be seen, only the blackness of darkness overhead, pierced by the white light that streamed from the funnel, only the wild waves on every side, their white crests flashing and shimmering here and there as if they were living monsters. Sometimes one would hit the ship with a dull, dreary thud, and the spray would dash on board, and anon the steamer would duck her head and ship a great green sea that came tumbling aft, carrying everything movable before it, and drenching every one to the skin whom it met in its passage.

Poor Harry was too sick and ill to care much what became of him.

He had crawled in under a tarpaulin, and there, with his head on a coil of ropes, fallen soundly asleep once more.

It was a painful first experience of the sea, and to tell you the truth, even at the expense of my young hero's reputation, more than once he *almost* wished he had not left his Highland home. Almost, but not quite.

And now here he was standing looking down from a hill-top, and wishing himself safe and sound on board one of these stately Greenland ships. But how to get there?

That was the difficulty.

There was no great hurry for a week. He had secured cheap lodgings in a quiet private house, so he must keep still and think fortune might favour him.

The object of the captains of these Greenland whalers in lying for a time at Lerwick is to ship additional hands, for here they

can be obtained at a cheaper rate than in Scotland.

All day the streets were crowded to excess with seamen, and at night the place was like a bedlam newly let loose. It was not a pleasant scene to look upon.

Now Harry Milvaine had read so much, that he knew quite a deal about the manners and customs of seafarers, and also of the laws that govern ships, their masters, and their crews.

“If I go straight to the captain of some ship,” he said to himself, “and ask him to take me, then, instead of taking me, he will hand me over to the authorities, and they will send me home. That would not do.”

For a moment, but only a moment, it crossed his mind to become a stowaway.

But there was something most abhorrent in the idea. A mean, sneaking stowaway! Never.

“I’ll do things in a gentlemanly kind of way, whatever happens,” he said to himself.

Well, anyhow, he would go and buy some addition to his outfit. He had read books about Greenland, and he knew what to purchase. Everything must be rough and warm.

When he had made his purchases he found he had only thirty shillings remaining of all his savings.

As he was bargaining for a pair of thick mitts a gentleman entered the shop and bade the young woman who had been serving Harry a kindly good morning.

“What can I do for you to-day, Captain Hardy?” asked the

woman, with a smile.

“Ah! well,” returned the captain, “I really didn’t want anything, you know. Just looked in to have a peep at your pretty face, that’s all.”

“Oh, Captain Hardy, you’re not a bit changed since you were here last season.”

“No, Miss Mitford, no; the seasons may change, but Captain Hardy – never. Well, I’ll have a couple of pairs of worsted gloves; no fingers in them, only a thumb.”

“Anything else?”

“Come, now to think of it, May-day will come before many months, and – ”

“Oh, sly Captain Hardy,” said Miss Mitford, with a bit of a blush, “you want some ribbons to hang on the garland¹. Now I daresay you have quite a pocketful, the gifts of other young ladies.”

“Pon honour, Miss Mitford, I – ”

“No more, Captain Hardy. There?” she added, handing him a little packet, “they are of all the new colours, too.”

“Well, well, well, I daresay they are delightfully pretty, but I’m sure I sha’n’t remember the names of one-half of them.”

“And when do you sail?”

“Oh, I was going to tell you. The *Inuita* is going first this year. Will be first among the seals, Miss Mitford, and first home.”

¹ In Greenland ships, on May-day, there is great rejoicing, and a garland bedecked with ribbons – every one contributing – is hung from the stays high aloft.

“And I trust with a full ship.”

“God bless you for saying that, my birdie. Well, we’re off the day after to-morrow at four o’clock. Good-bye; come and see you again before I sail.”

And off dashed Captain Hardy of the good ship *Inuita*.

A great kindly-eyed man he was, with an enormous brown beard, which I daresay he oiled, for it glittered in the winter sunshine like the back of a boatman beetle.

“One of the best-hearted men that ever lived,” said Miss Mitford to Harry, as soon as he was gone; “strict in discipline, though; but his officers and men all love him, and he has the same first mate every year. May Providence protect the dear man, for he has a wild and stormy sea to cross!”

Harry soon after left the shop.

“The *Inuita*,” he said to himself – “the *Inuita*, Captain Hardy, sails the day after to-morrow at four o’clock. Well, I’ll try, and if I fail, then – I must fail, that’s all.”

This was on a Thursday, next day was Friday. On this day it is supposed to be unlucky to sail. At all events, Captain Hardy did not mean to. Not that he was superstitious, but his men might be, and sure enough, if they afterwards came to grief in any way, they would lose heart and make such remarks as the following:

“Nothing more than we could have expected.”

“What luck *could* happen to us, when we sailed on a Friday?”

Captain Hardy was a man who always kept a promise and an appointment. He had told his mate that he would sail on Saturday

at two in the afternoon, and his mate got all ready long before that time.

The captain was dining with friends on shore.

About half-past one a boat with two lazy-looking Shetland men pulled off to the ship.

“Well,” cried Mr Menzies, the mate, “bright young men you are! Why weren’t you here at twelve o’clock, eh? There, don’t answer; for’ard with you. Don’t dare to speak, or I’ll take a belaying-pin to you.”

About a quarter before two another boat was seen coming off.

“More Shetlanders, I suppose,” said the mate to the spectioneer.

“I don’t think so. There is only the boatman and a lad, and the lad has an oar. You never see a Shetlander take an oar, if he can help it.”

“By gum! though,” cried the mate, enthusiastically, “that youngster does pull nimbly. Why he feathers his oar like one of an Oxford eight!”

“He seems a genteel lad,” replied the spectioneer; “but it won’t do to tell him he rows well. Make him too proud, and spoil him.”

“Trust *me*,” said the mate, with a grim smile. “I’ll talk to him in quite a different fashion.”

He lowered his brows as he spoke, and tried to look old and fierce.

“Boat there!” he shouted, as she was nearly alongside.

“Ay, ay, sir,” sang Harry, standing up and saluting.

Harry believed this was the correct thing to do, and he was not *very* far wrong.

“What do you mean, sir, by coming here at this time of day? The orders were, Mr Young Griffin, that every one should be on board by ten o’clock this forenoon; and look you here, I’ve a jolly good mind to bundle you on shore again, bag and baggage.”

“Don’t, sir,” began Harry; “I wish to – ”

“Don’t answer me. Up you tumble. Here, one o’ you greenhorns, standing there with your fingers in your mouths, up with the boy’s bag, and send it below.”

“If you please, sir, I want to speak with the captain, I – ”

“Oh, you do, do you?” sneered the mate, in a mocking tone. “He wants to speak to the captain, does he? Perhaps he wants to make a complaint, and say the first mate scolded him. Never been to sea before, poor boy. Has he brought his feather-bed and his night-cap, and a bottle of hot water to put at his feet? A pretty ticket you’d be to go and speak to the captain.”

“But, sir, I – ”

“*Don’t* answer me,” cried the mate, talking now in a loud, commanding voice. “If you say as much as one word more, or half a word, I’ll rope’s-end you within an inch of your life. Now for’ard you fly. Down below till we’re clear off. You are no use on deck. Only have your toes tramped.”

Harry opened his mouth to speak.

The mate made a rush for a rope.

Harry ran, and dived down the fore-hatch.

There was a little old man poking the huge galley fire and stirring soup with a ladle at one and the same time. He had no more hair on his head than the lid of a copper kettle, and he did not wear a cap either.

“Are you the cook?” said Harry.

“No, I’m the doctor.” (Greenlandmen usually call the cook “doctor.”)

“Well, doctor,” began Harry, “I want to tell you something. I’m in a very queer position – ”

“Don’t bother *me!*” roared the grim old man, turning so fiercely round on him, ladle in hand, that Harry started and quaked with fear. “Don’t bother *me,*” he roared, “or I’ll pop you into the boiling copper, then you’ll be in a queerer position.”

Harry fell back. He did not know well what to do. So he went and sat down on a locker.

Presently past came a young sailor.

“I say, common sailor!” cried Harry.

The youth turned sharply round.

“I’m in a queer position.”

The youth pulled him clean off the locker and threw him straight across the deck, where he lay nearly stunned and doubled up.

“That’s a queerer position, ain’t it, eh? Well, don’t you come for to go to call me a common sailor again, drat ye.”

A great mastiff dog came along and licked Harry’s face, and then lay down beside him. Harry put an arm round the noble

dog's neck and patted and caressed him.

By and by there arose on deck an immense noise and shouting, rattling of chains, and trampling of feet, and high above all this din the merry notes of a fiddle and a fife, playing lively airs. (When heaving windlass or capstan in Greenland ships the fiddler is nearly always ordered to play.)

Said Harry to himself, "It is evident they are having a dance, and no doubt they will keep it up quite a long time. Well, there is little chance of the ship sailing to-night. By and by I'll slip quietly up and go straight to the captain's cabin and tell him all and ask him to take me."

Then he began to think of home, of his mother and father, of Eily and of Andrew – and in a few minutes, lo and behold! our hero was fast asleep.

When he awoke it was inky dark where he lay, only at some distance he could see the glimmer of the galley fire, and see the old, bald cook moving about at his duties.

The great dog still lay beside him, and some kind hand had thrown a rug over the pair of them.

But the vessel was no longer still, she was slowly pitching and rolling, in a way that told Harry, novice though he was, that they were at sea.

There was no noise on deck now, only occasionally the steady tread of heavy footsteps was audible, or the flop-flap of canvas, or a quick, sharp word of command, followed by an "Ay, ay, sir," and the rattling of the rudder-chains.

“Heaven help me!” said Harry to himself. “I was in a queer position before, I’m in a queerer now. Oh! dear me, dear me, I’ll be taken for a stowaway.”

This thought so overcame him, that he almost burst into tears.

Some time afterwards there came towards him with a lantern a red-haired and red-bearded little man. He had a kind and smiling face. He bent down, and Harry sat up on his elbow.

“Don’t move, my sonny,” he said. “You’ll be a bit sick, I suppose?”

“No.”

“No? Well, I’ve brought you a bit of a sandwich, and I don’t know whose watch you’re in, but we always give green hands some days’ grace. I’m the second mate, and I advise you not to turn out to-night, but just to eat your supper and lie still till eight bells in the morning watch.”

“But oh, sir,” cried Harry, “I’m in such a queer position!”

“I’ll remedy that,” said the second mate.

Away he went, and in a minute back he came again, and in his hand a huge flock pillow. This he placed under Harry’s head and shoulders.

“There,” he said, “that’s a better position. Keep still and you won’t get sick, and Harold there will keep you warm.”

“Is the dog’s name Harold?”

“Yes, boy.”

“And mine is Harry. How strange!”

“Well, there are two of you. Good-night, sonny.” And off went

the fiery-whiskered but kindly little second mate.

Book Two – Chapter Two.

First Experiences of Life at Sea

Harry awoke next morning cold and shivering; his companion, Harold, the mastiff, had left him. He started up. It was broad daylight, and the men were having breakfast, and chaffing and laughing, and all as happy as sailors can be.

It was not long before he noticed his friend the second mate coming below, so he started up and went to meet him.

“What cheer, my sonny!” said Wilson – for that was his name.

“Come along through to the half-deck,” he continued, “and have some coffee. That’ll put you straight.”

He led Harry on deck.

The sea seemed mountains high. Great green waves, with combing, curling tops, that every moment threatened the good ship with destruction, so it seemed to Harry.

“What an awful sea?”

“Awful sea, sonny?” laughed Mr Wilson. “Call that an awful sea? Ha! ha! Wait a bit, my boy.”

They went down another ladder into the second officer’s quarters. Here also lived the spectioneer or third mate, the carpenter, and the cooper, and an extra gunner.

A rough kind of a cabin, with a table in the middle a stove with a roaring fire in it, and bunks all round.

“Mates,” said Mr Wilson, “this is the youngster I was speaking about; I’m going to have him in my watch. He doesn’t know much; in fact, I don’t think he knows he’s born yet.”

“What’s your name, sonny?”

“Harold Milvaine.”

“Well, Harold Milvaine, have some breakfast; you look as white as a churchyard deserter.”

“Because – because I’ve such a dreadful story to tell you.”

“Well, eat first.”

Harry did so, and felt better.

“Now sit down on the locker, put your toes to the fire. That’s right. Now, heave round with this dreadful yarn of yours. Listen, mates.”

Without a moment’s hesitation, though looking very serious, Harry told them all his story from the commencement.

“Well,” said the mate, “it isn’t so very dreadful after all, but I think you ought to see Captain Hardy at once. What say you, mates?”

“That’s right,” said the carpenter; “I’d go at once.”

The captain was in his cabin, and kindly bade them both sit down.

Then, at the instigation of the second mate, Harry told all his story over again.

“A plain, unvarnished tale,” said Captain Hardy, when he had finished. “There is truth in the lad’s eyes, Mr Wilson. But tell me, youngster, why did you not explain to the mate the purpose

for which you came on board?”

“He would not let me say one single word, sir.”

“True enough,” said the mate, coming out of his state-room laughing. “The boy is right, sir; I took him for some hand you had engaged and sent him flying for’ard.”

“But look here, lad, when you heard us stamping round and heaving in the anchor, why did you not come up and speak to me? I would have put you on shore again at once.”

“Oh, thank you, sir, but I didn’t know. I heard music, and I thought you were all dancing, and wouldn’t sail till Monday, and then – I fell asleep.”

“Ha! ha! ha! there will be little dancing in our heads, boy, till we’re full to the hatches with skins and blubber; then we’ll dance, won’t we, Wilson?”

“That we will, sir.”

“Well, well, boy, it is curious. I’m half inclined to be angry, but I daresay you couldn’t help it. And I don’t know what to do with you.”

“Oh, I don’t want wages; only just let me remain in the ship.”

“Let you remain in the ship? Why, what else can I do? We’ll never touch land again, lad, till we go back to Lerwick. Do you think I’d pitch you overboard as they did Jonah?”

“As for wages,” he continued, “nobody stops in my ship that isn’t paid. But tell me now, I seem to know your face – have I seen you before?”

“I saw you at Miss Mitford’s, sir.”

“Whew-w-w,” whistled the captain, “that accounts for the milk in the cocoanut.”

“She gave you some beautiful rib – ”

“That’ll do, boy, that’ll do,” cried Captain Hardy, interrupting him. “Well I’ll rate you as second steward, and as you say you want to learn to be a sailor you can join the second mate’s watch.”

“I’ll have him, sir,” said Wilson, briskly.

Harry’s heart was too full to speak, but from that moment he determined to do his duty and prove his gratitude.

Duty! what a sacred thing it is, and how noble the man or boy who never shirks it, be that duty what it may!

Duty – though thy lot be lowly,
God’s broad arrow though art seen,
Making very triflers holy,
And exalting what were mean;
In this thought the poor may revel,
That, obeying Duty’s word,
Lowliness is on a level
With my lady or my lord.

Captain Hardy soon found out Harry’s worth. He could trust him implicitly, for the boy was far too manly to tell a falsehood, even to hide a fault.

The worthy captain, however, seemed really astonished when the boy told him he was not twelve years of age.

He had guessed him at nearly sixteen.

“Never mind,” he said, with a smile, “you’ve been growing too fast, you’ve been growing to the length. The cold will alter that, and you’ll grow to the breadth.”

Cold? It was indeed cold, and the farther north the good ship went the colder it got, the more fiercely blew the wind, and the higher and wilder were the seas. Harry slept in a bunk in the half-deck, and used to amuse his mates by telling them stories, composed on the spot; he had an excellent imagination, and on these occasions made good use of it.

The fire was kept in all the livelong night, but, notwithstanding, the bunks and the counterpane used to be thickly snowed over long before morning with the frozen breath of the sleepers.

The days were terribly short, and the nights dark and gloomy in the extreme.

About a week after the good ship sailed she fell in with streams, first of wet snow, then of small pieces of ice that cannonaded against the ship’s side with a terrific noise.

Now the crow’s nest or look-out barrel was hoisted at the main-truck.

Harry astonished the second mate, and every one who saw him, by getting up to this giddy altitude the very second day.

The captain had been up there for hours and sang down for a cup of coffee.

The steward was too much of a landsman to venture, so Harry volunteered.

“My sonny,” said Wilson, “you’ll break your neck.”

“I’ve climbed trees as tall as that in Benbuie forest,” was Harry’s reply.

The warm coffee was put in a tin bottle, and up Harry spun with it. Hand over hand he went with all the agility of a monkey.

He sat in the nest till the captain had finished. Sat delightedly too, for the sea-scape, visible all around, was splendid, and he had a feeling that he was flying in the air with no ship beneath him whatever, as happy and free as the wild sea-birds that were whirling and screaming around him in the sky. The lovely sea-gulls, the malleys, the dusky skuas, and the snow-white sea-swallows – they charmed Harry beyond measure.

But a fierce gale of wind blew from the north-east, and lying to, the *Inuita* was drifted away off from the ice and far, far out of her course.

This gale continued for ten days off and on. Boats were smashed, a top-mast carried away, the bulwarks were splintered, and two poor fellows were washed overboard.

Their cries for assistance – the assistance that none could render them – were heart-rending. They were both strong swimmers, which only made the bitterness of death ten times more bitter.

But the sky cleared at last, the wind blew fair, and in ten days more they had sighted the main pack of ice lying to the north and east of the lonely island of Jan Mayen. Named after its discoverer – rugged, rocky, and snowy – it rises boldly from

the frozen sea, and after forming a number of smaller hills, or rather mountains, shoots abruptly into the clear icy sky to a height of 6,000 feet, shaped like a cone or an immense loaf of sugar. Although volcanic fires once have gleamed from the lofty summit of this mountain, old King Winter now sits here alone, Vulcan has deserted him, without leaving him a spark to heat his toes. This is indeed the throne of King Winter, and looking down, his cold eye scans his icy region, stretching for many and many a mile over the Greenland sea. On this isle of desolation few have ever trod, and the few who have visited it have no desire to return. Around its crags flutters the snow-bird, and the ice-bear crouches in his den among its rocks; the great black seal, the sea-horse, and the lonely walrus float around it, or find shelter near it from the storm or tempest; but nothing else of life is ever found on its deserted and inhospitable shores.

Seals were seen on the ice the very next day, and the work of destruction commenced. It was a sickening scene. So thought young Harry.

Many years ago the present writer described it in the following language:

Great is the cruelty practised during young sealing. Seldom do the men take time to kill the creatures they catch, but set about flaying them alive, and a young seal is so much more pretty and innocent-looking than even a lamb. This they say they do to save time, but could they not kill so many seals first, say a thousand, and then commence to flay those first struck, which would then

be quite dead? As an experiment, I have seen the flayed body, red and quivering, thrown into the sea, and seen it swim with its own mother beside it. This is no exaggeration, and any sealer will tell you the same. It is strange why the sight of blood should stimulate men to acts of cruelty; but it is none the less a fact, for I have seen men on these occasions behaving with all the brutality of wild beasts.

One could not easily fancy a scene more impressive and wild than that which is presented by the crews of a few ships at work on the ice. The incessant moaning of the innocent victims, mingled with the laugh and joke of their murderers; the timid and affrighted, although loving look of the mothers, so different from the earnest, blood-thirsty stare of the authors of their grief. Some are flaying; some are stabbing; some are dragging the fruits of their labour towards the ships; and some are drinking at the ship's side; but over all there is blood – blood on the decks, blood on the bulwarks; the men's hands are steeped in it, and the blood is dripping from their clothes. The snow – the beautiful snow, which but yesterday sparkled and glittered in the sunshine, as only the snows of Greenland can, to-day is deluged in blood. Nothing but blood, blood wherever we look! The meat which the men are eating and the glass from which they are drinking are bloody; and the very rudder-wheel has been touched by bloody hands. But then there is joy in that bloody scene – joy to master and joy to man; and the sight of the blood proves a stimulant for still greater exertions and more cruelty.

Yes, it is years since I wrote in this strain, but the cruelties go on now as then. Oh! boys of happy England, raise your voices whenever opportunity occurs against cruelty and against oppression of every kind, whether against the tyranny that crushes the poor that the rich may live luxuriously, or cowardly crime that ties a helpless dog or cat to the vivisection table.

Harry managed to endear himself to all hands. He was, indeed, the favourite of the ship. But he did not neglect his education; Mr Wilson was a good teacher of practical navigation and practical ship's work, and in a month or two he had made a man of Harry, or a sailor at all events.

Captain Hardy soon found out that the boy could shoot, so he gave him a short, light double-barrelled rifle, and Harry used to go out regularly to stalk seals, when the old sealing commenced. Dangerous work at times, and our hero had more than one ducking by slipping into the sea between the icebergs.

The dog Harold always went with the boy Harry, and although mastiffs are not called water-dogs, still on one occasion, when his young master fell into the sea, dog Harold sprang after him, and supported him until assistance came.

Harry's opportunity of proving his gratitude came soon after this.

While out walking one day with the dog, they were suddenly startled by the awful roar of a huge bear. The brute appeared immediately after from behind a hummock of ice, and prepared for instant action.

The great mastiff's hair stood on end with rage, from skull to tail. He gave Bruin no time to think, but sprang at once for his throat.

It was indeed an unequal contest, and would speedily have been all over had not young Harry shown both pluck and presence of mind. He rushed forward, and, biding his chance, fired both barrels of his rifle at once into the bear's neck behind the ear.

He actually clapped the muzzle there before he drew the triggers.

What mattered it that the recoil threw him on his back, Bruin was slain, and Harold the dog was saved, though sadly wounded and torn.

Before the month of May the *Inuita* had a good voyage on board. She continued, however, to follow the old seals north as far round as Spitzbergen. The character of the ice now entirely changed: instead of fields of flat floe, with hummocks here and there, which put Harry in mind, as he traversed them, of a Highland moorland in mid-winter, there were pieces large enough to have crushed a ship as big as Saint Paul's Cathedral.

The mountains, too, on the islands among which the *Inuita* sailed were rugged and grand in the extreme, and the colours displayed from the terraced cliffs of ice and rock, when the sun shone on them, were more resplendent than any pen or pencil could describe.

Around these islands were walruses in abundance, and many

fell to the guns.

Going shoreward one day over the thick bay ice, to enjoy with Mr Wilson and some others some sport among the bears, Harry, who was foremost, was startled beyond measure to notice the ice ahead first heave, then crack and splinter, while a moment afterwards a head, more awful than a nightmare, was protruded.

Harry's fear – if fear it could be called – was however but momentarily: next moment his rifle was at the shoulder, and the monster paid his life as the penalty for his curiosity.

In a month the *Inuita* was – what her captain wished her to be – full to the hatches with blubber and skins.

Then all sail was set for merry England.

There was nothing but joy now on board, nothing but jollity and fun.

The men had a ball almost every night, with singing and story-telling to follow.

“I do believe, my dear boy,” said Captain Hardy to Harry one evening, “that *you* have brought all the luck on board. Well, now, I'm going to tell you a secret.”

“I don't want you to, you know.”

“Oh, but I want to tell somebody,” said the captain, “and it may as well be you. It is this: As soon as I get my ship cleared and paid off at Hull, I am going straight back to Lerwick to ask Miss Mitford if she will be my wife.”

“Oh, I'm sure she will be glad to!” Harry said.

“Tell me, boy, what makes you think so?”

“Well, because she told me you were the best man in the service, and the tears were in her eyes when she said so.”

“God bless you for these words, dear lad. And you’ll come and see us sometimes, won’t you? I’m going to leave the sea and settle down in a pretty little farm near Hull.”

“That I will, gladly,” said Harry.

In course of time the ship arrived safely in harbour. Her owners were delighted at Captain Hardy’s success, and made him a very handsome present.

Some weeks after this, when the *Inuita* was dismantled and lying in dock, Hardy, with Harry and Harold the mastiff, suddenly appeared at Beaufort Hall.

I leave the reader to imagine the joy that their presence elicited. But it was quite affecting to see how his mother pressed her boy to her breast, while the tears chased each other over her cheeks.

Eily went wild with joy, and when honest Andrew met his friend Harry again, and shook him by the hand, he could not speak, so much was he affected, and he had to take five or six enormous pinches of snuff by way of accounting for the moisture in his eyes.

Captain Hardy was a welcome guest at Beaufort Hall for many days.

“Your dear boy,” he said, “has had a terribly rough first experience of a life on the ocean wave, but he has braved it well, and that is more than many boys of his age would have done. But

I tell you what it is," he added, "Harry Milvaine *will* be a sailor."

"I fear so," said his mother, sadly.

"Ah, my dear lady, there is many a worse profession than that of an honest sailor."

"But the dangers of the deep are so great, Captain Hardy."

"Dangers of the deep?" repeated this kindly-hearted sailor.

"Ay, and there are dangers on the dry land as well. Think of your terrible railway smashes, to say nothing, madam, of the tiles and chimney-pots that go flying about on a stormy day."

Mrs Milvaine could not keep from smiling.

But our wilful, wayward Harry had it all his own way, and three months after this he was treading the decks of a Royal Navy training ship, a bold and brisk-looking naval cadet.

From the training ship, in good time, after having passed a very creditable examination indeed, he was duly entered into the grand old service.

His first ship – if ship it could be called – was H.M. gunboat, the *Bunting*.

Harry was going to a part of the world where he was bound soon to get the gilt rubbed off his dirk.

Book Two – Chapter Three.

H.M. Gunboat “Bunting” in Chase – A Dark Night’s Dismal Work

It was a night of inky darkness. All day it had been squally, with a more or less steady breeze blowing between each squall, and the sea had been greatly troubled; but now the wind had nearly fallen, the waves were crestless, foamless, but still they tossed and tumbled about so that the motion on board Her Majesty’s gunboat the *Bunting* was anything but an agreeable one. There could be but little danger, however, for she was well off the land, pretty far out, indeed, in the Indian Ocean.

Every now and then there was the growling of distant thunder; every now and then a bright flash of lurid lightning. But between these flashes was a darkness that could be felt, and never a star was visible. Nor could there be, for at sunset the clouds seemed a good mile thick.

The *Bunting* had been in chase most of the afternoon, but nightfall put an end to it.

It was in the days – not so long ago – when Said Maja reigned Sultan of Zanzibar, and all the coast line from near Delagoa Bay in the south to beyond Bareda in the north was more or less his sea-board. It was in the days when the slave trade in this strange wild city of the coast was flourishing in all its glory, the Sultan

having liberty from our government to take slaves from any one portion of his dominions to another. Hundreds of dhows, nay, but thousands, then covered that portion of the Indian Ocean which laves the forest shores of Eastern Africa. They were either laden with slaves, or returning empty to fetch another cargo.

Our cruisers boarded all they met, but it was but seldom one fell into our hands as a prize, for these cruel and reckless dealers in human flesh found no difficulty in obtaining a permit from the Sultan's ministers to carry on their inhuman traffic. A bribe was all that was necessary, and the words, "Household slaves of H.M. the Sultan," in the certificate, were all that was necessary to set British law and British cruisers at defiance.

These dhows were and are still manned and officered by Arabs – gentlemen Arabs they term themselves. Many of these men are exceedingly handsome. I have often admired them in the slave market, both the old and the young. Let me try to describe them:

Here, then, is a young gentleman Arab, probably about twenty-five years of age.

He wears a kind of gilded night-dress of snow-white linen, which reaches some distance below the knee; around the waist of this is a gilded and jewelled sword-belt, supporting a splendid sword, and probably jewelled pistols. Over this linen garment may be a little jacket of crimson with gold braid, worn loose, and hardly visible, because over all is an immense flowing toga of camel's hair of some dark colour. This is also worn open.

On the head is a gigantic turban, gilded or even jewelled, and

the naked feet are placed in beautiful sandals.

He is very tall, lithe, wiry, and stately, and his face is goodly to behold, his nose being well chiselled, and mouth not large.

His colour is usually white or brown, though sometimes black, and dark hair in beautiful ringlets, escaping from under the turban, flows down nearly to the waist.

In his hand he bears a tall spear, on which he leans or touches the ground withal when walking, as a Highland mountaineer does with his long crook.

The carriage and walk of this Arab is grace itself, and gives the individual a noble and majestic appearance, which it is difficult to describe.

Except the Scottish costume, I know of no dress half so picturesque as that of the gentleman Arab and slave-owner.

But here is an old gentleman. Is he bent and decrepit? Nay, but sturdy and stately as his son, he walks with the same bold grace, is dressed in the same fashion, keeps quite as firm a hold of his spear, and could draw his powerful sword and wield it with equal if not greater skill and agility.

But his long beard and moustache are as white as the paper on which I am writing. His brow is wrinkled, and the eyes that glint and glare from beneath the bushy eye-brows are as quick and fierce as those of a golden eagle.

Those Arabs hate the English with a deadly hatred. Even the sight of a blue-jacket makes them scowl. I have passed – more than once – a doorway in Zanzibar, in which one of these men

stood, and I have seen him gnash his teeth at the sight of my uniform, and finger his sword or knife, nervously, restlessly, as if he hardly could keep from plucking it out and plunging it into my heart.

It was in pursuit of one of the dhows manned by such gentleman Arabs that the *Bunting* had been all the previous afternoon.

Had the wind fallen earlier, this dhow would soon have been a prize; but as it did not, she had shown them a clean pair of heels, and might now be anywhere.

That she was a slaver without papers there was not a doubt, and well laden too, for she was deep in the water.

I am going to make a terrible statement, but it is a true one, and if it only has the effect of causing even one of my readers to hate slavery half as much as I do, it will not be made in vain.

Just then, as American traders in crossing the Atlantic, when a dangerous gale comes on, lighten the ship by throwing the cattle overboard, so, at times, do these gentleman Arabs lighten their dhows when chased.

It is a terrible sight to see poor oxen hoisted up in straps with block and tackle and whirled into the storm-lashed ocean. O God, how mournfully they moan, how they seem to plead for mercy! That moan once heard can never, never be forgotten.

The loading of a slave-ship is a terrible sight, but ah! the ruthless cruelty of lightening a dhow of slaves. They are got up one by one or two by two. Children, poor young girls and boys,

are pitched screaming into the sea, probably to be devoured by sharks next moment. And sharks speedily come to a feast of blood of this kind.

But whether men or women – if they struggle, and sometimes whether they struggle or not – they are ruthlessly slain on the deck before being thrown overboard. The knife across the neck is used for this terrible butchery. I have been told by eye-witnesses, themselves prisoners, and expecting every minute that their turn would come, that the victims are handed on deck to those who do the work, and that these latter think less about it than a farm servant does of killing a fowl, sometimes laughing and joking with their companions the while; and if telling a story of any kind, they do not even permit the murder they are committing from interrupting their discourse for a single moment.

It is far more unpleasant for me to write these lines than it can possibly be for any one to read them.

“I think,” said Mr Dewar, the navigating sub-lieutenant, as he entered the captain’s cabin after a preliminary service tap at the door – “I think I’ve done all for the best, and done right, sir.”

“Well?” replied Captain Wayland – captain by courtesy, remember, for he really was but a first lieutenant by rank, though in command of the bold and saucy *Bunting*. He was seated now in his beautiful little saloon, which was situated right aft, right abaft the gun-room or ward-room – the *Bunting* had, of course, only one living deck, under that being the holds, and above it the main or upper deck, with no other covering except the sky, and

now and then a sun awning. This last was not only a luxury but a positive necessity in these seas, where the sun blisters the paint, causes the pitch in the seams to bubble and boil, and takes the skin as effectually off one's face as if a red-hot iron were passed over it.

I have called Captain Wayland's quarters a beautiful little saloon. So it was, but do not imagine, dear reader, that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had anything to do with the decorating of it. No, they supplied a table, cushioned lockers, and a few chairs, also cushioned, but so hot and clumsy that sitting on one was like sitting on a large linseed-meal poultice.

Captain Wayland returned them to the dockyard, and bought himself others that could boast of elegance and comfort; he repainted his saloon, too, and hung a few tasteful pictures in it and no end of curtains, to say nothing of a great punkah over the table, which was waving back and fore now, the propelling power being a little curly-headed nigger-boy who squatted in a far-off corner, string in hand.

"Well, sir," replied Mr Dewar, in answer to the captain's single word of inquiry, "I've douced every glim."

"In mercy's name," cried the captain, "do speak English, Mr Dewar!"

"Well, sir, pardon me, I quite forgot myself, but really we've got into a slangy habit in the ward-room; the only one who does speak decent English is young Milvaine, and he is a Highland Scotchman."

“Sit down,” said the captain, “and have a glass of claret. You’ll find it good.”

“Raggy Muffin!” he continued, turning half round in his easy chair.

The nigger-boy let go the punkah string and sprang to his feet.

“Raggy Muffin stand befoh you, sah!” he said, bowing his towsie head.

“Right, Raggy. Now bring a bottle of claret.”

“Right you are, sah. I fetchee he plenty quick.”

“And I’ll bring myself to an anchor,” said Mr Dewar, “and have a glass of grog with pleasure.”

Respect of person was not the crowning virtue of this warlike youth.

The captain fidgeted uneasily.

“Well, sir, I’ve douced – I mean I’ve put out all lights. I have men in the chains – not that we’re likely to fall in with shoal water here, you know – ”

“Oh, bother, you’re right to be safe. The *Wasp* ran aground in about this same place. Well, who’s watch is it?”

“Young Milvaine’s.”

“Right, we’re safe.”

Mr Dewar looked at Captain Wayland for a few moments.

“You believe in that youngster, sir?” he asked.

“I do. He’s faithful, bold, or rather brave – ”

“Yes, sir, he’s as plucky as a bantam. He thrashed big Crawford the first day he came on board. Crawford has been

good-natured ever since. He showed fine fighting form when we brushed against those Arabs above 'Mbasas, and he jumped overboard, you know, and saved Raggy's life off the Quillimane river."

"Raggy die some day for Massa Milvaine," put in the nigger-boy.

"Hush, Raggy, when your betters are talking."

"Raggy die all same, though," the boy persisted.

"The young scamp will have the last word. Yes, Mr Dewar, young Milvaine ought to have a medal for that; but, poor fellow, he won't, though I'm told there were sharks about by the dozen."

"I saw it all," said young Dewar. "It was my cap that fell off, just before we crossed the bar. Raggy made a plunge for it, and over he went; Milvaine threw off his coat, and over he went. The coolness of the beggar, too, amused me."

"Don't say 'beggar.'"

"Well, *fellow*.' There was a basking shark in the offing, with its fin above the water, and a bird perching on it like a starling on the back of a sheep. The cap – the very one I wear now, sir – was between this brute and Milvaine, but no sooner had he got Raggy – cockerty-kosie, as he called it – on his shoulder, than he swam away out and seized the cap with his teeth, then handed it to Raggy. And the young monkey put it on, too. We picked him up just in time, for the sharks looked hungry, and angry as well."

Mr Dewar helped himself to another half-tumbler full of claret.

“There is a wine-glass at your elbow,” said the captain, with a mild kind of a smile.

“Bother the wine-glass!” replied the midddy. “Pardon me, sir, but I’d have to fill it so often. My dear Captain Wayland, there’s no more pith and fooshion in this stuff than there is in sour buttermilk.”

The captain laughed outright. Mr Dewar was an officer of a very old and obsolete type.

“Why, my dear sir, that is my very best claret. Claret Lagrange, Mr Dewar; I paid seventy-five shillings a dozen for it.”

“Raggy,” he added; “bring the rum, Raggy.”

“Try a drop of that, then.”

“Ah! that indeed, captain,” exclaimed Mr Dewar, with beaming eyes. “That’s a drop o’ real ship’s.”

He was moderate, though, but he smacked his lips. “I feel in famous form now,” he said. “I hope we’ll come up with that rascally dhow before long. With my good sword now, Captain Wayland, and a brace of colts, I think – ”

At this moment Midshipman Milvaine – our Harry – entered, cap in hand.

He has greatly improved since we last saw him, almost a giant, with a bright and fearless eye and a most handsome face and agile figure. His shoulders are square and broad. He is very pliant in the waist; indeed, the body above the hips seems to move independent of hips or legs. Harry had now been four years in the service, and was but little over sixteen years of age.

“Anything occurred, Mr Milvaine?”

“Yes, sir, something is occurring, something terrible, murder or mutiny. The night is now very still, and the stars are out I can’t see anything, but from away over yonder, two or three points off the port bow, there is fearful screaming, and I can even hear splashing in the water.”

Captain Wayland sprang up, so did young Dewar.

“The scoundrels!” cried the former. “It is the dhow. They are lightening ship to get away from us with the morning breeze.”

“Mr Milvaine,” he added, hurriedly, “we’ll go to quarters. Do not sound the bugle. – Let all be done quietly. Keep her, Mr Milvaine, straight for the sounds you hear, and tell the engineers to go ahead at full speed.”

“The moon will rise in half an hour,” said Harry.

“Thank Heaven for that,” was the captain’s reply.

For the boats of a small ship like the *Bunting* to board a heavily armed fighting dhow like the one they had been giving chase to, is no mean exploit even by day: by night such an adventure requires both tact and skill and determination as well.

But the thing has been done before, and it was going to be tried again now.

The captain himself went on deck.

There was already a faint glimmer of light from the rising moon on the south-eastern sky.

But the sea was all as silent as the grave; there was the rattling of the revolving screw and the noise of the rushing,

bubbling, lapping waves as the vessel cleaved her way through them. Further than this, for the space of many minutes, sound there was none.

“In what direction did you say you heard the cries?” asked Captain Wayland of young Harry Milvaine.

“We are steering straight for it now, sir, and – ”

Suddenly he was interrupted. From a point still a little on the port bow, and apparently a mile distant, came a series of screams, so mournful, so pleading, so pitiful, as almost to freeze one’s blood.

“Ah-h! Oh-h-h! Oh! Oh! Oo-oo-ok!”

The last cry was wildly despairing, and cut suddenly short, as I have tried to describe, by the letters “ok.”

A moment or two afterwards there came across the water the sound of a splash, and next minute there was a repetition of the dreadful yells and cries.

The captain took two or three hasty turns up and down the deck. He was a very humane and kindly-hearted officer.

“I hardly know what to do for the best,” he said.

“Suppose, sir,” replied Mr Dewar, whom he seemed to be addressing, “we fire a gun to let her know we are near?”

“No,” replied the captain; “there is still wind enough, and time enough, for her to escape in the dark. We’ll keep on yet a short time. Stand by to lower the boats. They are already armed?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Escape in the dark!” muttered the captain to himself through

his set teeth. “Dark indeed will be the work as soon as our lads get on board of this fiend’s ship.”

Book Two – Chapter Four.

Life in a Gunboat – The Captain's Birthday

Mr Dewar had charge of the first cutter, Mr Mavers, sub-lieutenant, of the second, and Harry himself commanded the whaler.

These were all the boats told off for the fight, about five-and-thirty men all told.

Five-and-thirty men? Yes, but they were five-and-thirty broad-shouldered British blue-jackets, armed with cutlass and revolver. And what is it, pray, that blue-jackets will not dare, ay, and *do* as well as dare?

Even Dr Scott and the other officers had left their swords behind them, preferring the ship's cutlass.

Every man had stripped to the waist before starting, for the night was sultry and hot.

The boats were silently lowered before they came in sight of the dhow, therefore before the dhow could see the *Bunting*.

With muffled oars, nearer and nearer they sweep to the spot from whence the sounds proceed.

The whaler, being lighter, well-manned and well-steered by Harry, took the lead.

The *Bunting* came slowly on after the boats.

But behold! the latter are seen from the dhow's decks, and lights spring up at once, and a rattling volley flies harmlessly over the heads of our advancing heroes. At the same time it is evident that boarding-nets are being quickly placed along the bulwarks of the slaver.

In a few minutes the whaler is at the bows of the dhow. This was unprotected by netting, and low in the water, for the vessel was deep. Harry was the first to spring on board, followed instantly by his fellows.

He speedily parried an ugly thrust made at his throat by a spear, and next moment his assailant fell on his face with a gash on his neck and his life's blood welling away. For a few seconds this part of the dhow bristled with spears, and one or two of Harry's men succumbed to the lunges and fell to the deck.

But the Arabs retreated before the charge, fighting for every inch of deck, however.

Meanwhile the cutters were boarding. They were cutters in more ways than one, for they had not only to defend themselves against spear-lunging, but to slash through the netting.

A bright white light now gleamed over the dhow's deck. The *Bunting* was nearly alongside, and burning lights.

It was well this was so, for on the deck of that slave dhow stood fully seventy as brave Arabs as ever drew a sword or carried a spear.

They went down before our blue-jackets, nevertheless, in twos and threes. The modern colt is a glorious weapon when held in a

cool hand and backed by a steady eye.

Their very numbers told against these Arabs, but they fought well and desperately, for they were fighting with the pirate-rope around their necks. Arab dhows who fire on our British cruisers are treated as pirates, and, when taken red-handed, have a short shrift and a long drop.

That they fought with determined courage cannot be gainsaid – gentlemen Arabs always do – but they have not the bull-dog pluck of our fellows. They cannot hang on, so to speak; they lack what is technically called “stay.” Nor were they fighting in a good cause, and they knew it.

They knew or felt that they could not, if killed, walk straight from that blood-slippery battle-deck into the paradise of Mahomed.

Add to this that their weapons were far inferior to ours. Their spears were easily shattered, and even their swords; while their pistols could scarcely be called arms of precision.

So after a brave but ineffectual attempt to stem the wild, stern rush of our British blue-jackets, they fell back towards the poop, so huddled together that the fire of our men riddled two at a time. They finally sought refuge in the poop saloon, and even down below among the remainder of those poor trembling slaves who had not been butchered or forced to walk the plank.

Many were driven overboard, or preferred the deadly plunge into the ocean to falling into the hands of the British.

The captain surrendered his sword, standing by the mainmast.

He was a tall and somewhat swarthy Arab, and spoke good English.

“Slay me now, if so minded, you infidel dogs,” he shouted, “or keep me to satiate your revenge?”

Meanwhile, up rose the moon – a vermilion moon – a moon that seemed to stain all the waves with long quivering ribbons of blood, and the shadows of the two ships were cast darkling on the water far to the west.

A wretched half-caste Arab was found skulking under the poop, and dragged forth by one of the *Bunting's* men. He had *not* been in the fight, yet he had a most terrible appearance.

He was very black and ferocious-looking, dressed only in one white cotton garment, with a rope for a girdle, from which dangled an ugly knife.

This fiend in human form was dabbled in blood; his face, hands, bare arms, and all the front of his garment were wet with gore. He had been the butcher of the innocent slaves.

He was dragged forth and dragged forward, but suddenly, with an unearthly yell, he sprang from the sailor's grasp, and next moment had leapt into the sea.

He was watched for a few moments swimming quickly away from the ship, then a strange commotion was seen near him, and the wretch threw up his arms and disappeared.

He had been dragged under by the sharks.

It is through no love of the sensational I pen these lines, reader, nor describe the capture of this blood-stained dhow. The story

is almost from the life, and I deem it not wrong that my young readers should know something of the horrors of the slave trade.

Two hundred living slaves were found in the hold of the dhow, many dead were among the living, and many dying. And it will never be known in this world how many poor creatures were butchered or thrown overboard to lighten the ship.

The vessel was condemned at Zanzibar, and taken away out to sea and set on fire. Nothing was taken out of her except a few shields and spears that the men got by way of curios. She was simply burned, and sank hissing and flaming beneath the waves.

The slaves were liberated. Well, even their liberty was something. But that would not restore them their far-off happy homes amid the wild and beautiful scenery in the African interior: no, nor restore them their friends and kindred. Henceforward they must languish in a foreign land.

“What became of the captain of the dhow?” I fancy I hear some of my readers ask. Have I not, I reply, given you horrors enough in this chapter? But, nevertheless, I will tell you. He and five others were hanged. This end was at all events less revolting than an Arab execution as sometimes carried out. Fancy five political offenders tied hand and foot, and placed on their backs all in a row in the prison yard, an Arab executioner with a sharp sword leisurely stepping from one to another and half-beheading them!

It was a very lovely morning. Harry came on the quarter-deck just as a great gun was fired from the bows of the *Bunting*;

making every window in the front part of the town rattle, and multiplying its echo among the distant coral islands. That gun told the condemned men that their day had come.

“What a lovely morning!” said Harry to Mavers, who was leaning over the bows, looking seaward and eastward where the sun was silvering a broad belt of long rippling wavelets.

“Charming,” replied Mavers; “but bother it all, Milvaine, old man, I fell asleep last night thinking about those poor beggars that have to die this morning.”

“So did I,” said Harry, “and I dreamt about them.”

“You see,” continued Mavers, “it is one thing dying sword in hand on a battle-deck, and another being coolly hanged. But notwithstanding, Milvaine, don’t let us fall into the blues over the matter; the villains richly deserve their fate.”

“Yes,” he added, after a pause, “it is a lovely morning. What a beautiful world it would be if there was neither sin nor sorrow in it!”

The doctor joined them. He was a young man of a somewhat poetical temperament, curiously blended with an intense love for anatomy and post-mortems, and a very good fellow on the whole.

“Talking about the condemned criminals? Eh?” he said. Then he laughed such a happy laugh.

“I’m going to post-mortem them. Will you come and see the operation?”

“Horrible – no!”

“Oh, it is all for the good of science. Shall I describe it?”

“No, no, no?” cried Harry.

“Then come below to breakfast, boys.”

“Why,” said Mavers, “you’ve almost taken away my appetite.”

“And mine too,” said Harry Milvaine.

“Stay,” exclaimed the doctor, “I will restore it. Listen.”

He threw himself into an attitude as he spoke.

“Sweetly, oh, sweetly the morning breaks

With roseate streaks,

Like the first faint blush on a maiden’s cheeks.

Alas! that ever so fair a sun

As that which its course has now begun

Should gild with rays, so light and free,

That dismal dark-frowning gallows-tree.”

“I’m not sure,” said Mavers, laughing, “that you haven’t made matters worse. But come along, we’ll go below, anyhow.”

The *Bunting*, as her name implies, was only a little bit of a gunboat, but to the slave-dealing dhows she became the scourge of the seas in the Indian Ocean, all the way south from Delagoa Bay, to Brava and Magadoxa in the north.

She was always appearing where least expected, sometimes far out at sea, at other times inland on rivers or wooded creeks. She could sail as well as any dhow, and that is saying a good deal, and she could steam well also.

Many a prize fell to her lot, many a cutting-out expedition the boats had, and right bravely they did their work. So the prize

money that would fall to the share of even the ordinary seamen when the commission was completed, would be rather more than a trifle.

On Saturday nights, when, after dancing for a time to the merry tunes the doctor played on his fiddle, the sailors would assemble round the fo'c's'le to smoke their pipes and quaff the modest drop of rum they had saved to toast their sweethearts and wives in, they might be heard building castles in the air as to what they would do with their prize money.

Perhaps the conversation would be somewhat as follows: —

“I'm going to pour all my prize money into my old mother's lap straight away as soon as I gets it.”

“Ah! well, Jack, you *have* a mother, I hain't, but I'll give mine to my Soosie. My eye! maties, but she's a slick fine lass. Talk about a figure! Soosie's is the finest ever you saw. Blow'd if two arms would meet round her waist, fact I tells ye, mates. I've seen a rye-nosser-oss with not 'arf so fine a figure as Soosie's got.”

“But,” another would say, “I'm going to keep all my prize money in the bank till I serves my time out in the service; then I'll take a public-house.”

“That's my ambition too, Bill.”

“Yes, and ain't it a proper ambition too?”

“That it be.”

“And if ever any of you old chums drops round to see Jack behind his bar counter — ahem! my eye! maties, won't I be glad to see you just! Won't I get out the longest clay pipe in the shanty,

and the best nigger head! And won't I draw ye a drop o' summut as will make all the 'air on your 'eads stand straight up like a frightful porkeypine's! And maybe there won't be much to pay for it either?"

It will be noted from the above conversation that the aims in life of the British man-o'-war sailor are seldom of a very exalted character.

But even in the little ward-room prize money was not altogether left out of count in conversation on Saturday nights.

"I believe," said the doctor once, "I shall have over a thousand pounds when I get home. I think I'll cut the service, buy a shore practice, and settle down."

"Bah!" cried Mavers, "you're too old a sailor for that, Mr Sawbones. Don't talk twaddle. Take out your old fiddle and give us a tune."

The worthy medico never required two biddings to make him obey a behest like this.

Out would come the violin, and his messmates would speedily be in dreamland as they listened; for the doctor played well on that king of instruments.

Songs were sure to follow, during which very often the door would open, and there would be seen standing smiling the captain himself.

You may be sure that room was speedily made for him, and so these happy evenings would pass away till eight bells (twelve o'clock) rang out Ding-ding, ding-ding, ding-ding, ding-ding –

that is the way they went, and this warned every one it was time to turn in.

The *Bunting* could not be said to be a very well-found ship, as far as the officers' mess was concerned. There is as much difference usually between the mess in a gunboat and a flagship as between that of a humble cottage and a lord mayor's mansion.

So the *Buntings*, as the other ships called them, roughed it rather. They *could* have bought nice things about big towns like the city of the Cape, or even at Zanzibar, but they had only the ship's cook, and the steward was a half-caste Portuguese, whose only strong point was an excellent curry, into which, however, he often slipped more garlic than was palatable to English tastes.

For three more years the *Bunting* carried it with a high hand among the slavers on the Eastern coast. Even Harry himself now began to long for home, and to see his dear mother and father again.

Letters came but about once in three months, and the mail never failed to bring Harry a bundle that kept him reading for a week, because he read them all over and over again, put them aside for days, took them out once more, and again read them.

His old friend Andrew's letters were always comical, and his good-natured, simple face invariably rose up before our hero's mind's eye as he perused them.

Even his old dominie did not forget Harry. By almost every mail now the *Buntings* expected a letter from their lordships ordering them home.

It came at last, and, strange to say, it came on. Captain Wayland's birthday.

"Putting both events together, boys," said the doctor to his messmates, "I really don't think we can do better than invite the skipper to dinner."

"Good?" cried Harry.

"Hurrah!" cried another.

"Steward!" cried Dewar.

"Ess, sir; Ise here, sir."

"Well, come here, you dingy son of a Portuguese cook."

The steward threw his apron over his left shoulder and entered from the steerage.

"Can you give us a ripping good feed to-night, and have it all on the table smart at half-past six?"

"Let me see, sir," said the steward, placing a forefinger on the corner of his mouth and looking profoundly wise. "What I would propose, sir, would be diss ting."

"Well? – out with it."

"Der is French Charlie on shore here."

The ship, by the bye, was lying off the Sultan's Palace, in the roadstead at Zanzibar.

"Yes – French Charlie?"

"Well, sir, he cook one excellent dinner, and wait too; and myself, sir, vill make de curry."

"Very well, steward, but mind this, if there be one-sixth of a grain of garlic in the whole boiling of it, you shall swing at the

yard's arm."

"Ver goot, sir."

"Now, off with you on shore, and give your orders. Don't forget to be off in time. Take the dingy and bring off quickly a boat-load of flowers and green stuff."

Mr Dewar was just as quick at work as he was with his tongue and sword, and both of the latter, it was universally allowed, he could make the best of.

He was ably supported on this occasion by the whole strength of the mess, including Simmonds, the clerk – they were but five in all – and the engineer himself.

The captain cheerfully accepted the invitation, and proposed to the surgeon that forward in the course of the evening they should splice the main-brace.

The doctor assented with alacrity, and the ship's stores thus expended were afterwards put down as sick-bay comforts.

The steward was off in good time, with foliage and flowers. Then a huge awning was rigged on deck, and lined with flags and candles stuck amidst the flowers, and branching bayonets and cutlasses.

The steward did his duty nobly; so did French Charlie.

For once there smoked on the tables of the *Bunting* a banquet that the Sultan himself would have enjoyed.

The toast of the evening, after the loyal ones, was of course Captain Wayland; and that gentleman replied in the neatest little speech that had ever been heard on the deck of a man-o'-war.

The dessert on the table deserves especial notice. No place in the world can vie with Zanzibar for its fruit, and here were samples of probably a score of different sorts, almost unknown in England. The pine-apples were especially delightful, appealing to eye, to scent, and taste all at once. But probably the king of fruits was the mango. If this is indeed Eve's apple, one can hardly wonder our first parent fell. The trees these grow on in the forest of this beautiful isle of the sea are a picture. Fancy an enormous chestnut with its branches weighted to the ground with fragrant fruit somewhat like peaches, but each as big as a cocoanut!

The sides of the deck-tent were decorated with flowers, but on the table itself stood the choicest of all. Shall I describe them? I cannot, for —

Here my muse her wings must cower,
'Twere far indeed beyond her power
To praise enough e'en one sweet flower.

When dessert had been done moderate justice to, then the end of the curtain was drawn aside, the steward brought up the "sick-bay comforts," and in due form the main-brace was spliced; and every man as he raised the cup to his lips wished long life and prosperity to their jolly captain.

After this there was a wild hurrah! and in the very midst of it the doctor started playing.

Well, some of my readers may have seen sham sailors dancing on the stage. But never on any stage is such wild footing

witnessed as that which graces the deck of a man-of-war on a night like the present.

But everything has an end. The men retired at last to the bows and fo'c's'le to talk of home and spin yarns till long past midnight.

Meanwhile the officers once more surrounded the festive board, and after a few songs story-telling commenced.

As one at least of the yarns spun was not devoid of humour, I do not think I need apologise for repeating it.

It was the doctor's yarn.

He helped himself to an orange and a mango and a handful of nuts and raisins, to pare, to eat, to crack, and to pick, because the truth is the doctor was a Scotchman, and Scotchmen never talk half so well as when they are doing something, if it be only whittling a stick.

“Ahem!” began the doctor, clearing his throat.

“Attention, gentlemen,” said Mr Dewar, the president.

Book Two – Chapter Five.

The Surgeon's Yarn

“You must know, then,” said Dr Scott, “that though I do not vouch for the absolute truth of this story, the reason is that I was not myself one of the actors therein. But I have it on what I call indisputable authority, for old Brackenbury, who is the principal hero, told it to me one evening in his little place down in sunny Devonshire. And I do not believe that Brackenbury ever told an untrue tale in his life.

“A funny old fellow was Brackenbury, and it seemed to me that he must always have been old – must have been *born* old. He wasn't a handsome man, nor had he a pretty face; his nearest and dearest wouldn't have said he had. Yet, gentlemen, it is truly wonderful what a change for the better the play of a good-natured smile throws over even the plainest countenance. And Brackenbury used to smile from his very heart. Then he had such honest, truthful eyes that you couldn't have helped liking the man.

“But to my tale, as Burns says.

“Goodness knows how long ago it is, but Brackenbury was then about in his prime, and commanded a fine vessel, that, after discharging a mixed cargo at Sydney, was ordered on a kind of a mixed cruise round to San Francisco, which was only a small village then, but had the gold fever rampant. Here he had to take

on board specie, with a gentleman as supercargo. They were then to slip southwards along the western shores of South America, calling at Callao for goods from Lima, and so onwards round the Horn and home.

“I don’t think that Brackenbury and the supercargo, Mr O’Brady, liked each other over much. There was a natural jealousy between them. Brackenbury looked upon O’Brady as a kind of spy on his actions, and O’Brady didn’t like Brackenbury’s airs, as he was pleased to call them.

“Never mind, they were shipmates and messmates, and they settled down together as well as they could.

“Lima was in those days a hot place, socially speaking, but Brackenbury and his supercargo found themselves most hospitably treated. There was one tall, dark, handsome gentleman, called Pedro Dolosa, whom they frequently met at dinner-parties, who used to smoke much with them and hob-nob in the cool verandahs after dessert. He took to them very much apparently, and they were both flattered by his attention, for was he not a count, Le Comte Pedro de Dolosa? That was his tally complete.

“Brackenbury opened his heart to him; O’Brady was jealous, and opened his heart still more wide to Le Comte Pedro de Dolosa; and these two old fools did what they had no right to do – they told this strange count what their cargo was.

“However, the *Adelaide* left Callao at last, and after encountering a gale that blew them a long way out of their course,

they lost their reckoning; but one day they found themselves pretty close to the shore again, and, the weather being now fine, they managed to find out their whereabouts.

“They were south the line, and on a lovely coast.

“‘I move,’ said Brackenbury, ‘that we enjoy ourselves a bit; I’m fond of shooting and botany.’

“‘So am I,’ replied O’Brady.

“Now more than once they had seen a very pretty little yacht careering about, as if watching them, but they had no suspicion of anything like foul play.

“It was seen again and again after this, but when one day it stood away in through an island-bound creek —

“‘I’ll bet a penny,’ said Brackenbury, ‘that that is some English lord out on the sport; what’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, let’s follow him.’

“‘Agreed,’ said O’Brady.

“And so they did.

“They soon found themselves in an unusually romantic spot. A little bay it was, with a native village at the head of it, which looked imposing as seen from the sea. Then there was a beautiful river meandering down through a well-wooded, rolling valley, and far inland were hills and mountains.

“The yacht lay there at anchor, but she had hoisted Spanish colours. Next morning at breakfast —

“‘I feel unusually young this morning,’ said Brackenbury.

“‘So do I,’ replied O’Brady. ‘It’s the air, I suppose, but I do feel

as gay as a lark.’

“Suppose we have a little lark, then, all by ourselves up in this valley – eh? What say? A kind of private picnic?”

“Is it safe?”

“Yes, safe as anything. We’ll take a few blue-jackets with us and a big hamper.’

“Well, I’m with you,’ said O’Brady, briskly.

“The spot looked so sweetly peaceful. Who could ever have dreamed that danger lurked in those lovely woods? The whole scene was more like one in our own delightful Devonshire than in the wilds of South America.

“Nor had the usual crowd of boats surrounded the vessel, and when the gig from the *Adelaide* landed the supercargo and captain, so well clad were the natives, and so peaceful did they seem, that Brackenbury felt half inclined to apologise to them for his armed escort.

“Two padres met them and saluted, and when told the errand that had brought them on shore, at once agreed to escort them to the head of the valley, where, the padres assured their illustrious visitors, there was the finest scenery in the world. This interpreter was a tall Chilian, a by-no-means prepossessing fellow either. He was enveloped in a kind of blanket cloak, carried a pole in his hand, and wore a broad, peak-crowned sombrero of very greasy straw. His pointed beard and long black locks were greasy also. In fact he was altogether grim and greasy, and his speech was too oily to be pleasant.

“The coach that the padres had provided was apparently about a hundred years old, but the four horses attached to it seemed fit for anything.

“They took their seats at last, the padres crowded in beside them, and the great hamper was put up on top, the Chilian interpreter sat down beside the driver, and away they rumbled and rattled.

“Rumbled? Yes, rumbled; that is the exact word. Brackenbury and O’Brady had never got such a shaking and jolting before. But the higher up the valley the coach went, the grander grew the scenery. Every now and then at a turn of the road, away beneath them they caught glimpses of the green glen basking in the summer sunshine, the river gliding through it like a silver thread, falling at last into the bright blue bay, where lay the ship with its little white boats floating peacefully astern.

“But the scene grew wilder still, and oh! what a wealth of woodland beauty was all around them, covering the tops of the round hills, climbing halfway up the sides of precipitous mountains, clinging over cliffs and waterfalls, and fringing lovely lakes, the water of which was so pellucid that the sandy bottom was seen yards and yards from the shore.

“Anon the coach would plunge into a wood of pines and mimosa, draped in the most gorgeous of creeping flowers, while down beneath lovely snow-white heather showed in charming contrast to the mantle of scarlet and green, that half hid the sun from them.

“It was well into the afternoon before the coach drew up at the ruins of an ancient monastery, and our pleasure-seekers descended. Close by was a splendid waterfall; it came foaming down from a precipice in a gorge, and descended past them into a gloomy pool that looked dark as midnight, so far beneath was it.

“But the thunders of the falling cataract shook the ground on which the two sailors stood gazing almost awestruck. Far beneath was a forest glen that bore terrible evidence to the fury of a recent storm.

“And now the lunch was spread on the green grass, and the padres waxed quite merry over it. O’Brady had never seen priests drink wine before, as these fellows did, and he now began to entertain a suspicion that they were not quite what they pretended to be. He could not now help wondering at their own folly in trusting themselves so far inland without having brought the blue-jackets to protect them.

“‘Why,’ said Brackenbury, starting up at last, ‘the sun is almost setting. We must be going. Where are the horses?’

“‘The horses,’ cried the Chilian, suddenly showing a pistol, ‘are round the corner, and our way now lies up the valley.’

“Both Brackenbury and O’Brady attempted to draw revolvers, but were immediately surrounded and disarmed by a crowd of cut-throat Chilians, who sprang from a neighbouring thicket.

“‘What means this indignity?’ shouted Brackenbury, purple with rage.

“‘It means, gentlemen,’ said the Chilian, ‘dat you are now de

preesoners of Le Comte Pedro de Dolosa.’

“‘Pedro de Dolosa!’ cried O’Brady, aghast. ‘Curses on our folly! we are ruined men! This count is a bandit.’

“‘Your master shall live to rue this outrage!’ cried Brackenbury, as he and his companion, with cords around their wrists, were dragged away and thrust into the carriage.

“Their companions, the two sham padres, had now quite altered in their bearing towards their prisoners. They talked and laughed with each other, and although neither Brackenbury nor O’Brady knew the exact meaning of the words, their looks and smiles of derision were easily enough translated.

“At sunset the carriage stopped, and the villainous-looking interpreter informed the two officers that they were already in bed, and must remain there all night.

“So they made the best of a bad job and slumbered away in their respective corners till daylight. If ever during the night any thought of escape rose in their minds, one glance out at the carriage windows, where the vigilant and fierce-looking armed sentries stood statue-like in the starlight, was enough to banish it.

“The journey was resumed at daybreak, and continued without intermission until they arrived at this very place. Here the carriage was stopped, and they were ordered to descend.

“Standing like an equestrian statue at the edge of the forest was a tall, dark, armed man on horseback. As soon as the officers alighted he rode forward, and, taking off his sombrero, bowed until his face almost touched his splendid horse’s mane.

“The face was Dolosa’s.

“‘Is it really yourself, then, you robber chief?’ cried the bold captain of the *Adelaide*.

“‘It is I,’ was the answer – ‘Le Comte Pedro de Dolosa. But let me advise you to study civility while in my power. We know not the meaning of the term robber chief. Beware how you provoke me!’

“All the horses were now taken out of the carriage, except one. This was blindfolded and led to the very brink of the terrible precipice. Then a shout was raised, the whip descended with force across the poor doomed animals’ flanks, they made a plunge forward, and next moment carriage and all had disappeared.

“Dolosa turned laughingly round to his prisoners.

“‘Now, gentlemen,’ he said, ‘you see what has happened; I’m sorry to inform you, you will have to walk all the rest of the way to my little cottage among the mountains. Good-bye, my men will see you safe.’

“And away rode the robber chief.

“‘What does the destruction of the carriage mean, I wonder?’ said O’Brady.

“‘Without doubt,’ replied Brackenbury, ‘it is to put our fellows off the scent.’

“Brackenbury was right for once in his lifetime.

“The march inland was soon resumed by the officers and their captors. A little distance farther on and the road ended in a series

of narrow footpaths, like the tracks of deer or other wild animals. These led in different directions into the forest, and one was chosen by the leader of the band. They walked in single file, and care was apparently taken to destroy all trail.

“All that day the journey was continued, through jungle and forest, across streams, and up through dreary glens, till, as night fell, they found themselves at the gate of an ancient wall. It was opened to admit them, and immediately re-closed with a ponderous bang.

“In a quarter of an hour afterwards they were issued into a kind of armoury, and thence into a lofty and well-lighted supper-room.

“Tired and weary from wandering in forest wilds, here had they arrived, and suddenly found themselves plunged into the very midst of luxury of *every* imaginable kind. A room with gilded cornices and hand-painted roof, carpets soft as cushions, furniture as chaste and refined as modern art could produce, servants in livery to wait on them, and a supper-table laid out with viands the most tempting, and wines from every part of the world.

“They fell to like wise and hungry men, and did justice to the good things set before them.

“They supped alone, the count never appeared.

“After a few hours a servant came to conduct them to their bed-chamber, and they followed him in silence.

“The servant was as silent as they were.

“He showed them the room, pointed to the beds, and left them in the dark.

“This wasn’t pleasant, nor was it pleasant to hear the key turned in the door.

“But there was no help for it.”

Book Two – Chapter Six.

The Surgeon’s Yarn Continued – The Pleasant Home of a Robber chief – Face to Face with Death

“The poet Daniel calls sleep ‘son of the sable night,’ and brother to Death.

“Care charmer sleep, son of the sable night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born.’

“I might add that sleep is also the brother to sorrow and care, and a kind and gentle brother he is.

“No sooner had Captain Brackenbury and his supercargo, O’Brady, been shown to their apartment on that memorable night, and left in the dark, than —

“Well, Brackenbury,’ said O’Brady, ‘here’s a nice wind-up to a windy day. But I vote we make the best of a bad job. I’m dog-tired and as sleepy as an old owl. I’m going to turn in, even if I have to turn out in the morning to get my head taken off.’

“So shall I,’ replied Brackenbury. ‘But what an uncivil brute of a black servant that is! Why, he might as well have left the light!’

“No doubt he’s acting according to orders, my friend,’ said

O'Brady. 'And duty is duty, of course, on board a ship or out of it.'

"'Oh yes,' Brackenbury acquiesced, 'duty is duty, as you say. But can you find the head of your bed?'

"'Yes, mine is towards the fireplace, and yours is towards the door.'

"'Good-night,' said Brackenbury.

"'Umph!' grunted O'Brady, for he was all but asleep already.

"'Hark!' cried Brackenbury, a few minutes after. 'Are you asleep, O'Brady?'

"'No, I'm listening. Hush!'

"'Had anyone come into the apartment with a light just then, they would have seen both men sitting bolt upright in bed, with not only their eyes, but even their mouths open.

"'I heard footsteps in the passage,' hissed Brackenbury; 'they surely can't be going to hang us to-night!'

"'His voice was somewhat shaky.

"'Hang us! no! Nonsense, Brackenbury! Dolosa knows much better than to hang us. You're not afraid, are you?'

"'Hark!' was the reply; 'but now I heard a whisper. It seems in the room. Sure you locked the door? You see, O'Brady, that with a sword in my hand, in daylight, and with my foot on my own quarter-deck, I'm fit for anything. But I'm not a rat, jigger me if I am. I believe Dolosa would do anything. Now those monster niggers of his, what would hinder half a dozen of them from smothering us, time about, with a feather-bed? Ugh! fancy

a feather-bed on top of you, and half a dozen hulking black murderers on top o' that. Ugh, I say!

"The sound of whispering and of footsteps had ceased, but both officers still sat up, straining their ears.

"O'Brady laughed low. 'Bedad, Brackenbury, it wouldn't take half a dozen hulking niggers to cook your goose. I guess two would do it, bedad, I do; *Honolulu!*' The last word was almost shrieked.

"'Goodness be near us!' cried Brackenbury, now fairly chattering with fear. 'What *is* the matter, my friend?'

"'My hand,' replied O'Brady, 'was lying over the edge of the bed, and a cold nose touched it. Egad! Brackenbury, it did give me the shivers!'

"'Hullo!' cried Brackenbury next. 'What's this? Murder! Police! Guard! Fire!' he roared.

"Then Captain Brackenbury became suddenly quiet.

"'What is it at all, at all? Speak, friend, speak! Are the niggers killing you? Have they smothered you alive? Are you dead entirely? Speak, then!'

"But his friend did not answer immediately; when he did reply, O'Brady was more puzzled than ever, and would have given a whole month's pay for a farthing box of matches, or half a second's light from a purser's dip, just to see what his companion in darkness and misery was about.

"'My pretty darling, then,' Brackenbury was saying, in a fond and wheedling voice. 'Come into my arms, then, you cosy-mosy

little pet. Now, now then, now then, now!’

“‘Brackenbury,’ cried O’Brady, ‘what *are* you saying? Is it leave of your seven senses you’re taking? Have the trials of the day been too much for you? Or is it asleep and dreaming you are?’

“‘Ha! ha! ha!’ laughed the captain. ‘Pon my soul, O’Brady, I’m astonished at *you*, being afraid of a mongoose. Ha! ha! ha!’

“‘A mongoose! eh? What? Who’s afraid?’ spluttered O’Brady.

“‘Yes, a mongoose! That was the cold nose you felt. It jumped on top of my bed, it is now nestling round my neck. Darling, then, pretty pet!’

“‘Very well explained,’ said the old captain, ‘very well indeed. Quite accounts for the milk in the cocoanut. Good-night – good-night!’

“Both awoke at the same moment next morning, sat up in their beds – facing each other – and rubbed their eyes. They gave one glance up at the tall window, through which the sunlight was streaming in many-coloured rays, then rubbed their eyes, then looked at each other again.

“‘I couldn’t make out where I was for a moment,’ said O’Brady.

“‘Nor I,’ replied Brackenbury.

“‘There was a knock at the door.

“‘Can I come in, gentlemen?’ said a voice with a strong foreign accent.

“‘Pull the latch,’ said O’Brady, seeing that his companion hesitated.

“Brackenbury did as told, and a servant glided into the room, a dark little pale-faced Portuguese.

“I bring you de water for shave,’ he said, mildly. ‘Also de *navája*, what you call it, de knife for rasp. Shall I rasp you?’

“Thanks, no,’ said both; ‘we will prefer to rasp ourselves.’

“Vell den, geentlemans, I have also for you de compliments of de great Count de Dolosa, and he will be mooch please to see you at breekwust. In one leetle half-hour de gong veel soun’, den I come again and conduct you to de breekwust-room.’

“By the way,’ cried Brackenbury, as the polite little man was about to leave, ‘what is your name?’

“Name, señor? si señor, my name ees Marco.’

“Here’s an odd half-sovereign I’ve got no use for, Marco.’

“Gracias!’ muttered Marco, slipping the coin into his waistcoat pocket.

“Now, Marco,’ continued Brackenbury, ‘you’re a kind-hearted sort of a chap, I know.’

“*Si, señor, hombre de chapa.*’ (man of sense.)

“Yes; well, have you heard anything about us? No preparations to hang us, or anything of that sort, is there, Marco?’

“Marco came in again, and quietly closed the door. Then he listened a moment.

“See, geentlemans,’ he said, ‘I veel not tell a false-dad. You veel *die*—perhaps. Perhaps you veel not.’

“Well,’ grunted O’Brady, ‘we could have guessed as much. Thank you for nothing. Give him another yellow boy,

Brackenbury, I'll pay you some day – perhaps.'

"The additional coin made Marco smile.

"Now,' he said, 'I tell you *all de trut*'. De trut' is dis: you veel not die for two tree week. Suppose your people pay plenty *libertad* monies for you, den you not die at all. Suppose dey not veel pay de plenty mooch *libertad* monies, and suppose, instead, de coome and fight here, den you die ver' quick indeed.'

"Thank you, thank you!' cried O'Brady. 'Give him one more yellow boy, Brackenbury.'

"Dash my buttons, sir,' said Brackenbury, 'how free you can make with other people's cash, O'Brady!'

"Marco retired, smiling sweetly on his third yellow boy, and the two officers began to think of getting up.

"Ahem!' said Brackenbury.

"What?' said O'Brady.

"I'm a little shy,' said Brackenbury, 'in dressing in the same apartment with any one else. Ahem! did you ever know, O'Brady, that I wore a wig?'

"No,' grunted O'Brady. "Pon my soul, you're as shy as a girl, Brackenbury. I ain't shy. Now look here, did it ever strike you that I had a glass eye?'

"Well, no – ahem! – I've noticed, though, that you squinted a bit. Fact is, to put it straight, I've observed you looking very steadily at the main-truck with one eye, and apparently looking at the compass with the other. Ha! ha! ha!'

"Well, what does it matter?' said O'Brady. 'I'm going on for

sixty years of age, man.’

“And I,’ said Brackenbury, ‘am precious near fifty – ’

“Just on the other side o’ the hedge, eh? Ha! ha! You gay young dog. Look here!’ he continued, ‘perhaps you wouldn’t believe it, but I have a cork leg!’

“Well,’ cried Brackenbury, springing out of bed and preparing to shave, ‘I’m glad we’ve both made a clean breast of it.’

“They both laughed hearty now; fact is, they felt lighter in spirits since Marco told them there was no immediate cause for apprehension.

“And Brackenbury pulled out his false teeth, and O’Brady pulled out his, and Brackenbury threw his wig on the top of his bed, and appeared in all the beauty of his baldness, while O’Brady laid his glass eye on the table, and brandished his cork leg by way of showing the captain what he could do with it.

“Silly old fogies, weren’t they? But by the time the gong went roaring and clanging through the halls they were both dressed and waiting for Marco.

“This individual glided silently on in front of them; for the carpets in the corridors were as soft as moss itself.

“Splendid mansion it looks in daylight, don’t it?’ whispered O’Brady. ‘What a noble corridor! Just look at those chandeliers, look at the stained windows, and those frescoes! Must have cost a power o’ money, eh?’

“Didn’t cost *him* much, I expect,’ muttered his friend. ‘You forget you’re not in a hotel, but in the house of a robber chief.’

“Hush, hush, hush! not so loud, please; every whisper is heard in this strange place.”

“Black servants or slaves, with white garments, squatted here and there in the hall, pulling punkah strings, and rolling chalk-white eyes at the two officers as they passed. They came at length to an immensely tall door. At each side of it stood a sentry, dressed in blue and scarlet – niggers both, savage-looking, armed to the teeth, and over six feet high.

“They each pulled back a curtain, and our friends found themselves in the breakfast-room.

“Three great windows looked out upon a noble park, in which were strange and beautiful trees, marble figures, miniature lakes, gushing fountains, and many a lovely bird and curious quadruped.

“Dressed in a crimson gown, the folds of which he grasped in one hand across his chest, the count himself advanced to meet them. He stopped halfway and bowed low.

“I hope my guests slept well?” he said.

“The breakfast was eaten in silence almost. Afterwards —

“Gentlemen,” said the count, ‘let us understand each other. You are my prisoners —’

“*Our* time may come,’ interrupted Brackenbury.

“You are a bold man to talk thus. I have but to hold up a finger and you would be dragged hence and strangled. But you are my guests as well as prisoners. If ransomed you will leave this house unharmed. If not —’

“You will kill us, eh?”

“Dolosa shrugged his shoulders.

“‘Tis the fortune of war,’ he said.

“An hour or two after dinner on the same night Dolosa was lounging on the broad terrace along with his prisoner guests. A round moon was mirrored in a lake some distance beneath them, where antlered deer could be seen drinking; stars were shining in the sky, and on earth as well, for fireflies flitted refulgent from bush to bush.

“Hidden somewhere behind the foliage of an upper balcony was a string band that had been discoursing music of a strange, half-wild, but dreamy nature that accorded well with scene and time. The music had just died away, and there was nothing to be heard but an occasional splash in the lake, the hum of insects, and the steady hiss of the gushing fountains.

“‘Pon my word,’ said Brackenbury, who had dined well, ‘you have a very nice little place here. Pity you’re such a rase –’

“‘A what – eh?’ said Dolosa, quietly, interrupting him.

“‘A recluse, I mean.’

“Dolosa smiled, and resumed his cigar.

“‘I feel sure,’ continued Brackenbury, ‘that we will be ransomed, but if not you wouldn’t hang us, would you? Eh, Count? No, no; I’m sure you wouldn’t. You’re much too good a fellow for that.’

“Dolosa laughed.

“‘Oh, no!’ he replied, ‘of course not. *You* wouldn’t hang *me* at the yard-arm if you had me on the *Adelaide*, eh, captain? No, no;

I'm sure you wouldn't. You're *much* too good a fellow for that.'

"'Ah, my friends,' he added, 'business is business. Now if my fellows return from your ship to-morrow with an unsatisfactory answer, I shall cut off both your ears, captain, and send them; then your nose. That's business. Have another cigar?'"

"But poor Brackenbury was far too sick at heart to smoke any more.

"At bedtime that night two immensely tall negroes entered the room silently and stood waiting for orders.

"'Why don't you speak, eh?'" said Brackenbury.

"Both suddenly knelt in front of Brackenbury and opened great, red, cavernous mouths.

"'Why,' cried O'Brady, aghast, 'never a tongue have they between the pair of them! Horrible! Shut your mouths, ye sturgeons! Here, put us to bed. We come all in pieces, you know. You'll see.'

"And now Brackenbury pulled out his teeth. O'Brady did the same.

"The blackamoors looked scared.

"Then Brackenbury took off his wig and threw it on the bed.

"Both negroes glared at him.

"O'Brady quietly removed a glass eye and placed it on the table.

"The negroes edged towards the door.

"But it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. The last straw in this case was O'Brady's cork leg. When he sat down and

whipped that off, the blackamoors rushed headlong to the door and fled howling along the corridor.

“Then Marco came in, all smiles and politeness.

“‘They will neever, neever come again,’ said Marco, laughing, when Dolosa’s guests explained what had happened.

“Two mornings after this the crisis came, for Marco politely informed them that the first officer of the *Adelaide* had refused to hand over the specie to ransom his captain.

“‘So,’ said Marco, ‘one of you veel have de ears cut off dis morning. But neever mind, geentlemans, neever mind,’ he added, consolingly.

“Dolosa was as polite as if nothing were about to happen. It was a breakfast fit for a king, but, singular to say, neither Brackenbury nor O’Brady had the least bit of appetite. They felt sick at heart with the shadow of some coming evil.

“They retired soon after to their room, but hardly had they entered ere the urbane Marco glided in and tapped each on the shoulder.

“He pointed smilingly to his own ears with his two thumbs.

“‘De time is coome, geentlemans,’ he said; ‘but it is nodings, geentlemans. Neever mind, neever mind.’

“‘But I do mind,’ spluttered Brackenbury. ‘Confound it all, even if we don’t bleed to death right away, what will our wives say to us when we return to them with no more ears than an adder? I tell you, Marco, your master is a diabolical scoundrel.’

“‘Hush! hush! capitan,’ cried Marco. ‘Do not speak so. De

walls have ears.’

“Yes, and I want to keep mine.’

“See, see,’ continued Marco, as two stalwart blacks opened the door and beckoned to the unfortunate prisoners.

“The courtyard into which they were led was a gloomy one indeed, surrounded by high bare walls on three sides, with a cliff on the other going sheer down to the river’s side black and dismal.

“Le Comte Pedro de Dolosa lifted his hat.

“So sorry to trouble you, gentlemen,’ he said, ‘but the case is urgent. Who comes first?’

“He pointed to the executioners as he spoke. They were the same negroes who had led them to the yard.

“Brackenbury confessed afterwards that he now felt as pale as death. It did not tend to restore his equanimity to observe one hulking negro heating an iron to redness in a charcoal stove. This he knew was to cauterise the awful wound after the ear had been severed.

“Who comes first?’ repeated the count, sharply.

“Captain Brackenbury, of course,’ said O’Brady. ‘He has the honour to be captain of the ship.’

“No, no, no!’ cried Brackenbury; ‘you first, O’Brady; honour be hanged, you’re ten years older than I. Age before honour any day.’

“Gentlemen,’ said Dolosa, ‘as *you* cannot agree, *I* will solve the difficulty. Captain Brackenbury, stand forw – ’

“He never finished the sentence.

“Such a yell suddenly rang through and around his mansion, accompanied by the clashing of swords and cracking of pistols. It was —

“As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air.’

“‘Hurrah!’ cried Brackenbury. ‘Our ears are saved.’

“‘Off with them – quick,’ cried Dolosa, ‘to the dungeon, and garrote them both.’

“He pulled a pistol from his belt as he spoke and rushed away to join the *melée*.

“Meanwhile the black giants – not the two whom they had so frightened in their bedroom – hurried Brackenbury and O’Brady along a corridor.

“But little did they know the mettle that O’Brady was made of.

“All at once he stopped short. He quickly bent down, and, to the utter astonishment of his would-be executioners, he undid a leg.

“That leg, Brackenbury said, was a good old-fashioned one, and of considerable weight.

“Before the hulking negroes recovered their fright, one was felled to the ground.

“‘Poor old O’Brady,’ said Brackenbury, while telling the story, ‘tumbled on top of him, but I got the leg, and with it I quickly smashed the other. In less than a minute both were senseless, and

we bound them hand and foot with the very cords they would have strangled us with.’

“Dolosa was shot, his house was fired, for the *Adelaide*’s men had come in time.

“In two weeks more Brackenbury told me the *Adelaide* had rounded the Horn, and was bearing merrily up for home, with a spanking breeze and stunsails set. For ships could sail in those days.”

Everybody thanked the doctor for his story, and now, as it was wearing late, as they had passed —

“The wee short hour ayout the twal.”

Good-nights were said, and hands were shaken, and in half an hour all but those on watch were sound asleep or dreaming of their far-off homes.

The southern stars were very bright; there was not a sound to be heard save the lapping of the waves at the ship’s side, the far-off beating of the eternal tom-toms, or the occasional shrill shriek of an Arab sentinel walking his rounds within the palace walls.

Book Two – Chapter Seven.

Caught Aback in a White Squall – on a Reef in Mid Ocean – The Lost Dhow

The *Bunting* had orders to take dispatches for the East India station before bearing up for England by way of the Cape, for the Suez Canal was not yet open.

To be sure they would much have preferred to turn southwards at once.

But after all a month or so more could make but little difference after so long a commission – they had been away from England now nearly five long years.

On the very next day, however, after the dinner-party, steam was got up, and the *Bunting* departed from Zanzibar.

How merrily the men worked now! How cheerfully they sang! Everybody seemed in better temper than his neighbour. For were they not, virtually speaking, homeward bound.

“If we do happen to come across another prize you know,” said Captain Wayland to Mr Dewar, “we won’t say no to her, will we?”

“That we won’t, sir,” was the laughing reply; “the more the merrier, and it won’t be my fault if a good outlook isn’t kept both by night and day.”

Sailors love the sea, and quite delight, as the old song tells us,

“A wet sheet and a flowing sail.”

But there are times when even a sailor may feel weary on the ocean. My experience leads me to believe that so long as a ship is positively doing something, and going somewhere in particular, Jack-a-tar is perfectly contented and happy. In such a case – a sailing ship on a long voyage, for example – if the wind blows dead ahead, dead in the good chip’s eye, Jack may feel thrown back a bit in his reckoning, but he eats and sleeps and doesn’t say much, he has got to work to windward, and this brings out all the craft’s good sailing capacity. If it blows a gale in a wrong direction – well, she is laid to, and however rough the weather be, Jack comforts himself and his mates with the assurance that it can’t go on blowing in the same direction for ever. Neither it does; and no sooner is the vessel lying her course again, with her stem cleaving through the blue water, than Jack begins to sing, like a blackbird just let loose from a pie.

If the ship gets caught in a tornado, then there is so much to do that there is really no time for grumbling.

But what Jack can *not* stand, with anything like equanimity, is inaction. Being in the doldrums, for instance, on or about the line.

“As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.”

In such a case Jack does growl, and, in my humble opinion, no one has a better right to do so.

The day after that joyful evening described in last chapter, when, by this time, the men had not only read their letters o'er and o'er, but had almost got them by heart, as the long row of white palatial-looking buildings that forms the frontage of that strange city, Zanzibar, was left behind, and the greenery of trees was presently lost to view, the men's spirits grew buoyant indeed. For fires were now ordered to be banked, as a breeze sprang up – quickly, too, as breezes are wont to in these latitudes.

Sail was set, pretty close hauled she had to be, but away went the *Bunting* nevertheless, cutting through the bright sparkling water like a knife. It was a wind to make the heart of a true sailor jump for joy. It cut the pyramidal heads of the waves off, and the spray so formed glittered in the sunshine like showers of molten silver; it sang rather than roared through the rigging, it kept the vane extended like a railway signal arm, it kept the pennant in a constant state of flutter, it kept the sails all full and free from wrinkle, and every sheet as taut as a fiddle-string. It was a “ripping” breeze, a happy bracing breeze, a breeze that gave one strength of nerve and muscle, and light and joy of mind.

The officers were all on deck, from the captain to the clerk, walking rapidly up and down as if doing a record or winning a bet.

The breeze continued for days till, indeed, the ship was degrees north of the line.

But one lovely night, with a clear sky and the moon shimmering on the wave crests, and dyeing the water with streaks like molten gold, it fell calm. The wind went away as suddenly almost as it had sprung up.

There were men in the chains. Every now and then their voices rang up from near the bows in that mournful kind of chant that none can forget who have ever heard it “And a half fi – ive.”

“And a quarter less six.” And so on. They had just come over an ugly bit of shoal water, and from the mast-head, where Harry himself – it was his watch – had gone to view the situation, he could notice that there were patches of the same kind of coral shoals almost everywhere around.

It was an ugly situation. He could not help wishing that the wind had continued but a little longer, or that it would again spring up from the same quarter. But there were the sails flapping sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, and taking desperate pulls and jerks at the sheets, causing the *Bunting* to kick about in a manner that was far from agreeable.

Harry was just about to order sail to be taken in, for he knew not in what direction the wind would come from.

He had already taken the liberty of rousing the sleeping engineer, and telling him to get up steam with all possible speed.

“Hands, shorten sail!”

“Ready about.”

For the wind seemed now commencing to blow from off the land.

He ran up to the maintop once more to take a view of the situation.

Heavens! what was coming yonder? Away on the horizon a long bank of snow-white fog or foam, high as poplar trees it seemed; and as he listened for a moment spellbound, he could hear a distant roar like that which breakers make on a sandy beach on a windless, frosty night in winter, only more continuous. It was the scourge of the Indian Ocean. It was the dreaded white squall.

It came on in foam and fury, lightning even playing athwart and behind it.

“All hands on deck!” roared Harry. In his excitement he hardly knew what he was saying. “Stand by to let go everything! Hard a port!”

Everything indeed! Hardly had he spoken ere the squall was on them, the wind roaring like a den of wild beasts, the sea around them like a maelstrom, ropes snapped like worsted threads, sails in ribbons, and rattling like platoon fire, blocks adrift, sheets streaming like pennants, and the canvas that held out-bellying to the dreadful blast and carrying the vessel astern at the rate of knots.

Caught aback in a white squall! no situation can be more dangerous or appalling! Well for them was it that the *Bunting* was long and low and rakish; a brig would have gone down stern first, giving those on board hardly time to utter a prayer.

For five long minutes astern she sped. Two men were knocked

down dangerously wounded, and washed into the lee scuppers, where they would have been drowned, but for the almost superhuman exertions of the surgeon and steward.

Five long minutes, but see, good seamanship has triumphed! She is round at last, all sail off that could be got off. She is scudding almost under bare poles – scudding whither?

Scudding straight apparently to destruction. Through the mist and the rain that swallows the moonlight, they cannot make out a reef that lies right ahead of them, till she is on it, till she rasps and bumps, till every man is thrown flat on deck, and the man pitched over the wheel.

It is all up with the *Bunting!*

Ah! many a half-despairing prayer went heavenward then, many a half-smothered cry for mercy from Him to whom all things are possible, and who holds the sea in the hollow of His hand.

Bending over his bleeding patients down below in the steerage, the doctor never ceases his work, albeit the ship has struck, and the seas are making a clear breach over, albeit he is up to the ankles in the water that is pouring down green through the hatchway.

The steward is frantic.

Little Raggy in the captain's cabin, to whom Harry himself had taken pains to teach the things of a better life and a better world, is on his knees.

“O! big Fader in heaven,” he is saying, “don't let de ship sinkee

for true. Dis chile no want to die to-night. De waves make plenty much bobbery, de masts dey break and fall. Take us out ob de gulp (gulph). Lor, take us out ob de gulp, and save us for true.”

It is all up with the *Bunting*, is it?

No, for even now from away to windward yonder, unseen by those on board, comes the bore, the hurricane wave. High as houses is it, fleet almost as the wind itself, onward it rolls, downward it comes; and now it is on the reef, it lifts the ship aloft as gently, as easily as a mother lifts her baby and bears her away to safety.

Almost immediately afterwards the fury of the squall is completely spent, the waves no longer break on board, nor the foam and the froth, and the spume. Men can see each other now, and hear each other talk, and orders are given by the captain himself to cut away the wreck, for the foremast has gone five feet above the board.

Half an hour afterwards steam was up, and all was still around the ship, while in the sky calmly shone the moon and stars. But a narrow escape indeed it had been for the good little vessel and the gallant crew that were in her. Though not scathless, the ship had escaped destruction on the reef in that terrible hurricane-squall.

“If ever,” said Captain Wayland, solemnly, “we have had cause for thankfulness to that great Being who rules on earth and sea, it is this night.”

The captain was standing near the wheel with uncovered head and upturned gaze, the soft light of the moon falling on his face.

There was something very beautiful in this simple, silent, thankful adoration; both the doctor and Dewar, who were standing not far off, felt its influence. Ay, and rough old sailors, who had weathered many a storm and braved many a danger, bared their heads even as the captain did, and breathed that little word that means so much – “Amen?”

The loss of her foremast did not improve the appearance of the *Bunting*, but as they would now complete the voyage under steam, and repair damages at Calcutta, it did not matter very much.

She was kept more in towards the low sandy coast, for north here never a tree or shrub may be seen, while away down south of the line the ocean is edged with a cloudland of green, the leafy mangroves growing on the beach – yes, and in the water itself.

Low sandy hills, and mountains and rocks beyond. Sometimes they come in sight of a squalid Somali-Arab village, but there was no inducement to land.

But see, what is that stealing out round the point? A dhow, and a very large one; a two-masted vessel.

She notices the *Bunting* as soon as they notice her, and immediately puts about and stands away northward before the breeze.

This is suspicious, and the *Bunting* gives chase. The dhow has a four miles' start and goes swinging along at a wonderful rate.

“Go ahead at full speed,” is the order.

The *Bunting* is gaining on the dhow, but in another hour it will be dark.

Mr Dewar slips slyly down below. He goes to the store-room, and a few minutes afterwards he appears at the engine-room door, bearing in his arms half a side of fat bacon.

He winks to the engineer. The latter cuts off a huge junk and sticks it in the fire.

“If you’d like Raggy to come and sit on the safety valve,” says Mr Dewar, “I’ll send him.”

The engineer laughs heartily at the idea, and answers —

“The fat’ll do the job,” Mr Dewar, “without poor Raggy.”

So it does, and just as the sun is dropping like a red-hot cannon-ball into the sea, and turning the waves to blood, the first shot goes roaring through the rigging of that doomed dhow.

Another and another follow, still she cracks on. Then a shell or two are fired and burst right over her.

The Arabs cannot stand that. They lower sails at once.

But behold! almost at the same moment a boat leaves the dhow, and impelled by sturdy arms goes bounding away shoreward.

“Ah!” says Captain Wayland, “the Arabs won’t stop to reckon with us, and they will soon be where we can’t follow them.”

“Never mind,” replies Mr Dewar, laughing, “we’ll have the prize.”

“And, sir,” he adds, “it is all owing to a bit of fat.”

“All through what, Mr Dewar?”

“A bit of fat, sir. I’ll tell you again, and beg forgiveness in due form.”

The saloon of this huge dhow was furnished with truly oriental magnificence.

Lamps, mirrors, carpets, curtains, ottomans, and bijouterie, all in taste, all luxurious in the extreme.

The hold was filled to the hatches with moaning, pining slaves. Hardly was there enough rice on board her to keep them alive for even a three weeks' voyage, and scarcely water enough to keep them out of agony for a week.

But all this was changed now. The poor creatures were had up in batches, their irons were knocked off, they were washed and fed. Finally, everything was made clean and comfortable for them below, and when all was done that could be done, a prize crew was put on board, under the command of Harry Milvaine, and the dhow and the *Bunting* parted company with three ringing cheers three times repeated.

The gunboat steamed away north and by east, while the dhow spread her great wings to the breeze and went tacking away for Zanzibar.

Just two months after this, the *Bunting* was nearing Symon's Town, all having gone as merrily with her, since leaving Calcutta, as marriage bells. Dr Scott and Dewar were chaffing each other, as they very frequently did.

The doctor had a long string floating overboard from the stern, and every now and then he caught and hauled on board a Cape pigeon, which he had managed by skilful manoeuvring to entangle with his tackle.

He had them running about the deck to the number of twenty or more.

“What are you going to do with all these birds?” asked Dewar. “You silly old Sawbones!”

“I’m merely catching them for sport, you mouldy old logarithm,” replied Scott. “I’ll let them off again presently, that will be more sport.”

“Strange, isn’t it, my dear Dr Fungus,” said Dewar, “that they can’t fly away after they once alight on deck?”

“Not at all,” returned the surgeon, “not at all strange, Mr Five-knots-an-hour; the explanation is simple. They are attacked by *mal de mer*— seasickness, you know – ”

“Yes, yes, I know that much French, Mr Sawbones.”

“Well, old Binnacle-lamp, I’m glad you do know something. The birds get seasick and can’t fly, and don’t care much what becomes of themselves.”

“Humph!” said Mr Dewar, walking away laughing. “Very little is fun to fools – beg pardon, doctor, I mean to foolosophers.”

In another twenty-four hours the saucy little *Bunting* was lying safely at anchor in Symon’s Bay. And what a lovely place is this same bay with its surrounding scenery! Oh! the beauty, the summer beauty, the spring and autumn beauty of those grand old hills that mirror their purple heath-clad heads in the placid waters of that enchanting bay! How gorgeous the flowers that blaze on its trees, how golden the sands on which the waves break in streaks of snowy foam! Its very rocks are tinted, and bronzed

with the sunshine of ages, even its most barren spots, where, high up among the mountains, the soil peeps through, are rich in brooms and lichen-grey, for Time himself has been the artist here.

Captain Wayland had half, or nearly wholly expected to find Midshipman Milvaine here waiting for him. He was quite uneasy when a steamer straight from Zanzibar and Seychelles came in, and reported that no slave dhow with a prize crew had been seen at the former town.

The *Bunting* lay at Symon's Bay a fortnight, and during that time, first a French man-o'-war, and next an English trading steamer arrived from Zanzibar straight away. But still no tidings of the missing dhow.

The *Bunting* then bore up for home, arriving in good time in Plymouth Sound, duly reported herself, and in less than a week was paid off.

Captain Wayland took the pains to go all the way to the Highlands of Scotland to report correctly the story of the dhow.

He was most hospitably received, and did not get away for nearly three weeks.

Both Harry's parents were plunged into grief at the captain's tidings, but his reason for coming north was to make the best of matters that he could, and he left them at last resigned and hopeful, Harry's mother especially assuring him that she felt certain her son would turn up again safely and soon.

But alas! and alas! weeks flew by, and months passed into a

year, and a year into long years, but no tidings ever were received of that lost dhow and her unhappy crew.

Then hope died out of even the mother's heart, and she even began to look old, and grow grey under the pressure of her woeful grief.

Book Three – Chapter One.

Alone in the Wilderness.

'Tis Justice, not Revenge

“Call it not revenge, my brother; say it is but an act of justice, stern justice, and I am with you.”

“Allah is great, Allah is good,” replied the Arab whom his companion had addressed as brother.

They were both talking in their own language, a language at once so forcible and flowery, that all attempts to render it into English ends but in a poverty-stricken paraphrase.

“Yes, Allah is good.”

The difference between the two speakers was very remarkable. They were brothers only by courtesy.

One sat on the edge of a kind of wooden sofa or dais; in front of him was a small table of Hindoo manufacture, on which there stood a brown earthenware water chatty, some glasses, and a bottle of sherbet². He was fair in skin, delicate in complexion, with a mild and almost benevolent aspect. He was unarmed, and though he wore the usual dress of an Arab gentleman, over all he wore a cloak of green camel's hair, probably denoting him to be

² What is called sherbet on the Eastern shore of Africa is a fruit syrup of most delicious flavour and odour. It is mixed with water and drunk as a beverage. Certainly a great improvement on the *eau sucre* of our ancestors.

a scion of the great prophet.

The other Arab was tall, stately, swarthy, nay, but almost black. He was armed *cap-a-pie*, and ever as he spoke he strode rapidly up and down the floor of the room. A large apartment it was, in an upper room of a great square flat-roofed house in Brava, a village or town close by the sea, and some distance north of the line.

The room had no signs of luxury or even comfort about it, and no more furniture than a gaol. The walls were of clay, and unadorned except by creeping lizards; the one little window looked out towards the ocean, and a long reef of rocks that lay like a gigantic breakwater – from north to south – about a mile out.

There were a few clouds in the sky that looked like gigantic ostrich feathers; now and then these would flit across the sun, casting patches of green shade on the otherwise blue sea.

That a breeze was blowing, or had been blowing far away out, and far away eastwards, was evident enough, even on the beach at Brava, for here the breakers were as tall as trees, they came curling onwards with the fleetness of desert horses, with the strength of a thousand cataracts, then broke on the sands with a noise like thunder, retreating again in a chaos of brown froth, with a hurtling, sucking sound, as if they would fain draw the very town itself into their grasp.

On the beach itself “the boys” were at play.

What was their play? What was their game? Was it football,

tip-cat, or modest marbles? Not quite.

Just behold them in imagination, as I have done in reality. There cannot be fewer than a hundred of those boys scattered in groups all along the shore. Tall, lank, sharp-featured lads of all ages, from twelve to twenty. Naked they are except for the smallest of cummerbunds, and the sun is glittering on their well-greased skins.

Black? No, not quite black, rather of the colour of tarnished copper, their mouths are small and cruel-like, their features sharp and well-defined, their eyes twinkling with ill-concealed cunning and malice, and their heads surmounted by great hassocks of hair, in which clay has been mixed to make it stand well out. They use clay for the same purpose as ladies of civilisation used the perfumed bandoline.

They are Somali Indians, of the lowest caste, if, indeed, there be any caste among them.

Here are two engaged in what seems a mortal combat, a deadly duel. They are standing confronting each other at a distance of some twenty or thirty paces. Each is armed with a little round shield, made from the hardened skin of a water buffalo's hump, and studded with big brass nails. Each holds in his hand a long and deadly-looking spear – not a broad-bladed one, this latter being only used for hand-to-hand fighting. The game is that each may hurl his spear at the other when and how he pleases. The other has either to dodge it or receive its point on the small strong shield. The quick, rapid, snake-like movements of the body, and

the strange but graceful attitudes assumed, are truly wonderful to behold. The agility of these Indians, their skill in parrying and strength in hurling these deadly spears if once witnessed can never be forgotten.

But wounds are not unfrequent, and on rare occasions a spear may pierce the body of a friendly antagonist. Blood is staunched by styptics, which Arab merchants vend them, and if a lad is slain, he does not obtain the comfort of a coroner's inquest, he is simply buried in the sand, or even exposed on the beach itself. Then at night wild dogs come and quarrel and fight over his remains, crabs creep up out of the sea to the awful feast, and what the dogs and crabs leave is speedily disposed of by colonies of ants. So the bones are picked clean enough; for a time they lie bleaching in the sun, till the tide comes up and gradually buries them in the soft sand.

Look again. Here are some half a dozen younger boys – guiltless of clothing of any sort; they have been playing in the sea, dashing in under the breakers with the speed of eels, and coming up far beyond in smooth but rolling water, disappearing under the surface, and remaining under for long minutes, bobbing up again, riding in upon the very curling sharp crests of the breakers themselves, and being floated and rolled up upon the beach in the smother of surf and spume, laughing, yelling, and turning head over heels with delight. And now they are fighting with bones, or pelting each other with them, laughing and yelling as loudly as ever.

Just one other *tableau*. Two tall youths engaged in a frenzied combat with Somali swords, terrible-looking long knives, as broad almost as a spade. The swiftness of stroke and parry or shield is truly marvellous; but at last, as if by a single accord, the awful knives and eke the shields are cast aside, and they clutch each other with deadly grip and fierce: they fight for the throats. See, they are both rolling on the sand, but one at last is victorious, his talonlike, long bony fingers have closed upon his adversary's neck. He beats his head against the sand, till eyeballs and tongue protrude, then he slowly rises, and retreats a pace or two, still with his eyes on his supposed foe. He feels backwards with his hand till he touches a sword, he seizes it, and with a yell springs forward again and stands triumphant over his fallen fellow, the deadly knife just grazing his neck. Will he strike? No, for here the combat ends. By and by the vanquished Indian lad will gasp and sigh, and presently rise, slowly and feebly, and creeping seawards, refresh himself with a dip beneath the waves.

But to return to the room where the Arabs are.

“They do tell me at Zanzibar,” said the dark and soldier Arab, “that in Europe they place machines beneath the waves, which, if a ship do but strike, she is blown to death and destruction. Could we not import these? Money would not be wanting, and you, Mahmoud, have the key to good foreign society. Oh I fancy the glory of blowing up a British cruiser – !”

“Talk not thus,” was the reply, “nor let us even dream of forsaking the form in which our fathers fought. With sword and

spear, and Allah's help, they conquered the North, they overran the West, and laid even the might of Spain in the dust. Let us bide our time. Long has it been dark, but the dawn will come. A prophet will arise. He will conquer the world in Allah's name, and every man, woman, or child who adopts not the true faith will be put to the knife."

"Oh! these will be glorious times, Mahmoud."

"Gloat not over them, Suliemon. It is still with the spirit of revenge you speak. Think of future wars and executions as but necessities, the darkness of the inevitable clouds, that will be dispelled by the glorious rising sun of peace and joy."

"Revenge," muttered Suliemon, through his set teeth. "Curb not my feelings, Mahmoud. They are just. Think what I have suffered from British cruisers. Thrice have they run me on shore, twice have they burned my dhows. To-day I would be wealthy but for them. Curses on them, I say!" he thundered, half drawing his sword, and sending it ringing back into the sheath again.

"Stay, brother, stay; I will not sit and hear such exclamations. Allah is good, but tempt him not, or he may leave you to a fate worse than that which befel your own brother in Zanzibar."

"Yes, my brother was hanged, hanged at the hands of those infidel dogs. Oh! Mahmoud, Mahmoud, can you wonder if I sometimes forget myself, forget your teaching, and loose grip of our religion? My wife, too, Mahmoud, chased on shore – death by jungle fever. Would you have me forget that also, Mahmoud?"

"Yes," said Mahmoud, solemnly; "I'd have you forget even

that.”

Sulieimon was standing by the little window, gazing seawards, and as Mahmoud spoke the last word —

“Look, look!” he shouted, or almost yelled. “It is she — it is my dhow — deep, deep, in the water — scudding northwards before the breeze; they are going to beach her ere she sinks — Allah! Allah be praised! I’ll have my wish!”

He girded his sword-belt more tightly as he spoke, and, without even a word of farewell to Mahmoud, rushed out, and down the Stone stairs. They ended in a little narrow lane which conducted him to the sands.

At once, on his appearance, all games were stopped. The boys dropped their bones, the young men sheathed their swords and shouldered their spears, and next minute he was surrounded. They knew by the face of their warlike chief he had something of much importance to communicate.

His words were brief and to the point. “Fifty of you I want,” he said. “You, Saleedin,” he continued, “will be captain. Be well-armed, bring irons and surf-boats, and carry with you water, boiled rice, and dates. Bid your friends farewell, the journey may be a long one.

“Saleedin, keep along on the brow of the hill, but keep the boys out of sight behind, keep abreast of yonder dhow, and when she is beached come quickly to me: I shall be on the shore.”

Right well had the captain of the double-masted slave dhow — captured by the *Bunting* — played his game. Right well and right

cleverly.

As speedily as possible the dhow had been put in charge of Harry Milvaine; probably three hours had scarcely elapsed ere she and the gunboat parted company.

Knowing well that he could rely on his men, Harry retired about eleven o'clock to the beautiful saloon, and having caused Doomah, the Arab interpreter and spy who was acting steward, to light the lamps, he threw himself on a couch and gave way to thought. He did not feel at all inclined to sleep, and somehow or other, he, to-night, felt under the shadow of a cloud of melancholy. He could not account for it, he was seldom otherwise than light and bright and happy.

Being a Highlander, he was naturally somewhat superstitious.

"I would give worlds," he said to himself, "to know what is doing at home to-night, and to be sure that my dear mother and father are well. Dear old father, sitting even now, perhaps, smoking his everlasting meerschaum behind his *Scotsman*. And mother – reading. Oh! would I could sit beside her for a moment, and tell her how often her boy thinks of her!"

Then all the events of his young days rose up before his mind – his governess and Towsie Jock; he laughed, melancholy though he was, when he thought of that night in the tree – his garden, his summer-house, and pets, and his dear friend Andrew.

He touched a gong and Doomah appeared.

"Are you sleepy?"

"No, sir, I not sleepy."

“Then come and tell me a story – the story of your life.”

“Ah! dat is not mooch, sir. Plenty time I be in action. I have many wounds from Arab guns.”

“Because you’re a spy, you know.”

“A spy, sir! Not I, sir. No, I am interpreter; I fight in de interests of de Breetish Queen of England.”

“Well, well, have it so.”

“Pah! I no care dat mooch for de Arabs. Pah! When dey catch me den dey kill me. What matter? Some day all die. I am happy, I have one, two, tree wife, and dey all love Doomah, ebery one mooch more dan de oder. And when I go home I shall marry Number 4. Ha! ha!”

Doomah kept talking to Harry till all his melancholy had almost if not quite gone.

It was now about four bells in the middle watch, and Harry was thinking of sleep, when the curtain was drawn aside and Nicholls the bo’s’n entered. He was Harry’s lieutenant.

“Sorry to say, sir, the ship is leaking like a sieve, sir.”

“That is bad news, Nicholls,” said Harry, starting up.

“It be, sir; but what makes matters worse is that I believe she is scuttled.”

“But there were no signs of leakage before we parted with the *Bunting*.”

“No, indeed, sir, these rascally slaver Arabs know what they are about. The scuttling was filled up with paper, sure to come out after she had a few hours of way on her.”

“This is serious indeed. Think you – can we keep her afloat till we reach Zanzibar?”

“If we could pump, yes.”

“Well, rig the pump.”

“*It is gone, sir. Doubtless* thrown overboard.”

“That is indeed serious, Mr Nicholls.”

By daybreak the breeze had freshened considerably, but veered a bit, and was now dead ahead. The water had gained so much that the slaves had all to be taken on deck. Bailing was kept up, but seemed to do comparatively little good.

Harry walked up and down the deck for some time in deep thought. At last he called Mr Nicholls.

“Put her about,” he said, “she’ll make less water, then we will try to run for Magadoxa. We know the Parsee merchant there. And the Somalis are civil.”

“As civil,” said Nicholls, “as Somalis can be, when you are not standing under the lee of British bayonets. Trust a Somali and make friends with a fiend.”

The dhow went round with terrible flapping of her enormous sails, and much creaking of blocks, her great wings almost dragging the vessel on her beam ends.

But she went fast enough now. Dhows do fly before the wind, and, water-logged though this vessel was, her speed was marvellous.

She was far out at sea, however, and soon had to be hauled closer to the wind in order to gain the shore.

By midday they were about fifteen miles south of Brava, but the wind was falling, and the dhow now fast filling. They staggered past the ancient little town, but all hopes of reaching Magadoxa soon fled, and it became evident to every one that they must soon beach her or sink.

The coast here is most dangerous, owing to the number of sunken rocks, and to the long stretches of shallow water — water on which the breakers sometimes run mountains high, as the saying is, but where between the waves the bottom was everywhere close to the surface. Only the native surf-boats could get over shoals like these.

Looking for a place on a lee-shore on which to beach a vessel is sad work, and trying to the nerves; you may pass a fairly good spot, thinking to come to a better; you may go farther and fare worse.

Harry's, however, was a decided character, and when he came, some ten miles to the north of Brava, to a spot where the breakers did not seem to run extremely high —

“Here it must be, Nicholls. Stand by to lower both our boats.”

“Starboard, as hard as she'll go.”

Up went the tiller, round came her head, and a minute afterwards she struck with such fearful violence on a coral rock, that her masts, none of the strongest, went thundering over the side.

“We must try to save the slaves first, Nicholls.”

“That will we, sir. Never a white man should cease to work

until these poor abject creatures are safely on shore.”

“Bravo! Nicholls. Well spoken, my brave man! I will not forget you when opportunity offers.”

Harry cast his eyes shorewards, the breakers were thundering on the beach, but no one was visible except a solitary armed Arab.

“Lower away the boats. Gently.”

The dhow was already bumping fearfully on the reef and rapidly going to pieces.

To stand on deck without clinging to bulwarks or rigging was impossible. The condition of the slaves was now pitiable in the extreme. They were huddled together, buried together, one might say, in one long cluster, dying, smothering each other, and drowning in the lee scuppers, for the sea was breaking clean over the wrecked and dismasted dhow.

Our fellows – bold blue-jackets – took them one by one as they came; they had almost to lift them down into the boats, so utterly prostrated with fear were they.

At last a boat got clear away.

Hardly had they left the dhow’s side, when high over the moaning and cries of the poor negroes, high over the sound of roaring tumbling waves and broken hissing water, arose a shout of triumph, and looking in the direction from which it proceeded, Harry could see the previously all but deserted beach swarming with armed and naked Indians.

The boat rode in on the top of a breaker, and was speedily

seized and hauled up high and dry. The men were roped and thrown on their backs, and the slaves placed in a corner among rocks and guarded by spear-armed Somalis.

Then surf-boats were launched, and speedily got alongside the dhow.

Thinking nothing about his own safety, Harry was nevertheless glad to see that the slaves were being taken off, and saved from a watery grave, whatever their ultimate fate might be.

His men and himself were rowed on shore in the last boat that left that doomed slave dhow.

In this boat sat that grim dark Arab I have introduced to the reader at the commencement of this chapter.

For some time he sat sternly regarding Harry. The young Highlander returned the gaze with interest.

“Would you not like,” he said at last, “to know your fate?”

“No. And if it be death, I know how to face it.”

“It *is* death. It *is* justice, not revenge. I am Suliemon. I was captain of that dhow. Now you know all and can prepare.”

Like his poor men, Harry was bound hands and feet and placed by their side, fully exposed to the fierce glare of the tropical sun.

How very long the day seemed! But the evening came at last. Then great fires were lighted on the beach, the flare falling far athwart the waves, and giving the breaking waters the appearance of newly drawn blood.

The scene was wild in the extreme; only the pen of a Dickens

and the pencil of a Rembrandt could have done justice to it. The trembling group of slaves – the waves had sadly thinned their ranks – lying, squatting, or standing on the sands, the poor white men, with pained, sad faces, the rude cords cutting into ankles and wrists, the wild gesticulating armed Indians, and the tall figure in white gliding, ghostlike, here, there, and everywhere.

One of the boats belonging to the *Bunting* was now carried to the rear, and on his back across the thwarts, still bound, Harry was placed. Dry wood was piled beneath him. Dry wood was piled all round the boat.

He shut his eyes and commended himself to Heaven. Even then he thought of his poor father and mother far away in their bonnie Highland home, and he prayed that they might never know the fate that had befallen him.

The Indians formed themselves into a fiendish circle, and danced, yelling, around him, brandishing sword and spear.

But the dark Arab commanded silence.

“Your hour has come,” he said, solemnly.

“This,” he added, “*is* justice, not revenge.”

Book Three – Chapter Two. Harry is Made a Slave – The Journey Inland – Escape

As he spoke these dread words the dark-skinned Arab seized a lighted torch from an Indian, and was about to apply it to the pyre, when his arm was struck upwards, and the torch alighted harmlessly on the soft sand.

It was Mahmoud who had struck the blow.

For a moment the two men stood confronting each other. Even Mahmoud now had a drawn sword in his hand.

“For his worthless life,” cried the latter, “I care not, but for your eternal welfare, brother, I do. I have saved you from a deadly sin. Take not thus rashly away the life you cannot give.”

“Back!” he shouted to the Somali Indians, and they shrank cowering and silent before the wrath of this strange being whom they called a prophet.

With a sharp knife he now severed Harry’s cords, and bade him stand up.

“You are my prisoner,” said Mahmoud in good English; “you are *my slave*. If you make no attempt to escape, you shall be comparatively free; attempt to fly, and – ”

He tapped the hilt of his sword as he spoke, and Harry knew only too well what was meant.

He passed a sleepless night until within an hour or two of morning, when he dozed off into a pained and dreamful slumber, from which he was roused at daybreak by Mahmoud himself. To his great surprise and grief, the beach was almost deserted. Some armed Indians still lay near the white ashes of the dead fires, but his men, the other Arab, and all the rest of the Somalis were gone.

“Eat,” said Mahmoud, “you have far to go.” He placed a dish of fragrant curry before him as he spoke, and Harry partook of it mechanically.

“Where am I to be taken to?” he inquired of this warlike priest.

“Ask nothing,” was the reply. “I have saved your life, be thankful to Allah. Prepare to march.”

Surrounded by armed, grinning Somalis, many bearing parcels on their heads, with Mahmoud trudging on in front, the journey was commenced, straight away across the sandy hills, where only here and there some little tuft of grass or some pale green weed was growing.

At the top of the ridge Harry, in spite of his guard, paused for a moment to look back. Never, he thought, had the sea looked more lovely. Save where in whitish yellow patches the coral shoals were showing, the whole surface, unrippled by a wavelet, was of a deep cerulean blue. Here and there a shark’s fin made the water tremble, and here and there a white bird floated.

“Oh,” he thought, “could he only be as free as one of those happy sea-birds! But never again,” he sighed; “no, never again!”

Even in the morning the sun was fiercely hot, but towards noon it became almost insupportable, and Harry was glad indeed when green things appeared at last, and the halt was made in the shade of a little forest land – a kind of oasis in a barren desert. Here was a cool spring and a few cocoanut trees.

Some of the Somalis climbed these as one climbs a ladder, holding on like monkeys to little stirrup-like steps that ran all up one side of the trees. They then cut and threw down some of the greenest, and Harry, in grief though he was, was glad enough to regale himself on the proffered fruit. They were filled principally with “milk,” for the nut itself was hardly yet formed, otherwise than as a transparent jelly.

It may interest some of my young readers to know how the water or milk of the cocoanut is got at, after the great nut has been thrown to the ground by the monkey-like boy in the tree.

Cocoanut trees grow all over the tropical world, and their appearance must be familiar to every one – immensely tall stems with feathery-like tops formed of great palmate leaves. The stems are hardly as thick as an ordinary larch, and they are seldom altogether straight. Close to the tree-top, and in under the leaves, as if to hide from the blazing sun, grow the nuts. When large enough for use one or two are culled. The nut itself is covered by the thick, green husk – that which Sally scrubs the kitchen floor with at home here in England; it is young now, however, but tough enough. The “nigger” at the tree-foot, who has been very careful to look after his own nut while the fruit

came tumbling down, now thrusts a stake pointed at both ends into the ground; against the protruding point he strikes the top of the cocoanut with all his force again and again till he has forced open a portion of husk. Then his knife comes into play, and presently he has quite cut away the top of the husk and nut as well, for the shell is still soft. Then he hands you the cool green cup, and before drinking you look inside and see only water with just a little clear jelly adhering to the inside of the shell. You drink and drink and drink again – there is probably about a pint and a quarter of it. Oh, how sweet, how cold – yes, *cold*– how delicious it is! Probably after you have drunk all the water, you may care to eat some of the jelly, which you scoop out with your knife the best way you can. Well, you will confess when you try it that you never really tasted cocoanut before. Neither Christmas pudding, nor custard, nor anything ever you ate in life is anything to be compared to it.

Yes, the cocoanut tree is well suited to the climate in which it grows; it is a God-gift to the native and to travellers from foreign lands. I may add that it is chiefly near the sea you find the cocoanut tree, for it is a thirsty soul. And no wonder. Look at those broad, green leaves expanded to the sun, from which the sap must be constantly evaporating.

When cruising on the shores of Africa in open boats, towards evening we used to look out for a part of the coast, where we saw cocoanut trees rearing their nodding heads high in air. There we used to land, certain that we would find native huts and human

beings at the foot of them, from whom we could buy fowls to make our cock-a-leekie soup and stew, previously to pulling off from the shore and lying at anchor to wait the coming morn.

All this is a digression, still I have no doubt it will be found interesting to some, and the others are welcome to skip it.

After a few hours of grateful rest, on went the caravan, Mahmoud himself at its head, trudging steadily, sturdily along, his eyes for the most part cast on the ground, and leaning on his spear. He never deigned to address a word to Harry – not that Harry cared much for that, for his back was turned to the sea, he was leaving all he cared for in the world, and going into exile, going he knew not whither. His prospects were as dreary as the scenery around him, and what is more heartless to behold than a barren plain stretching away apparently to the illimitable, without hill and with hardly rising ground, stunted bushes here and there, and beneath one's feet the everlasting scrubby, "benty," half-scorched grass? He thought this day would never end, that the sun would never decline towards the hazy horizon. But it did at last. It went round and stared them in the face; then it seemed to sink more rapidly, and finally – all a blaze of purple red – it went down.

The short twilight was occupied by Mahmoud and his yellow-skinned minions in preparing for the night's bivouac.

Wood was collected, a clearing was found on which to build a fire, and by and by supper was cooked.

Then Mahmoud retired to prayers!

He took a little carpet, and, going to a distance away, knelt down, then threw himself on his face in a devotion which I doubt not was sincere enough. We ought not to despise the Mahometan religion, nor any religion, for *any* religion is better than none. Oh! woe is me for the boy or girl who retires to bed without having first felt grateful for the past, and commended his or her soul to Him for the night!

Harry Milvaine did not forget to pray.

No, he did not; and, like a Scotch boy, he always concluded his devotions with our Lord's Prayer; but ah! how hard he thought it to-night to breathe those words, "Thy will be done"! It seemed that Heaven itself had deserted him.

For Harry was very low in spirits.

Whither did his thoughts revert? Home, of course. It was a pleasure to think of the dear ones far away, even although something seemed to whisper to him that he would never see them more.

Presently he fell into a kind of stupor. He had collected the withered grass in his immediate neighbourhood and formed it into a sort of pillow, and on this his head lay.

When he awoke – if he really had been asleep – the moon was shining very bright and clearly, the camp-fire had died to red shining embers, around it in various positions lay the Somali Indians, not far off was Mahmoud himself, while beside Harry's grass pillow, leaning on his rifle, stood the sentinel. This rifle had belonged to one of Harry's own men, so had the belt and

well-filled pouch.

Harry raised himself on his elbow.

The sentinel never moved. There was a deep, death-like stillness over all the place, broken only now and then by the eldritch laugh of some prowling hyaena.

For a moment thoughts of escape came into Harry's mind. He was unfettered; he was, indeed, on a kind of parole. In so far only as this: the Arab Mahmoud had told him he should be free from fetters unless he attempted to escape; if he did so, he would either be shot down at once, or, if captured alive, manacled as a slave. Harry's answer had been bold enough.

"I accept parole," he had said, "on those conditions, and if I attempt to escape you may shoot me."

He sat up now and looked about him. The sentinel moved a few paces off and stood ready. But hearing his prisoner cough, and observing his perfect nonchalance, he stood at ease once more. Harry threw himself back. He shuddered a little, for dew was falling, and the night air was chill. Instead of sleeping it was his purpose now to think, but his thoughts soon resolved themselves into confused and ugly dreams, in which scenes on board ship were strangely mixed up and jumbled with those of his life at home and at school.

When he awoke again it was broad daylight, and all the camp was astir.

He ate his breakfast of boiled rice and dates in silence, and shortly after this a start was made.

Another long weary day.

Another weary night.

What the caravan suffered most from was the want of water. It was small in quantity and of such wretched quality, being thick, dark, and smelling, that Harry turned from his short allowance in loathing and disgust.

The route was ever inland, day after day. Knowing what he did of the country, Harry thought it strange they were following no direct road or caravan path. Sometimes they bore a little south, at other times almost directly north.

It was evident enough, however, that Mahmoud, their bold and stern leader, knew what he was about, and knew the country he was traversing, for he never failed to find water, without which a journey in this strange land is an impossibility.

The thought of escaping – the wish to escape – grew and grew in Harry's mind till it formed itself into a fixed resolve.

He would have carried it out at the earliest moment had he deemed it prudent, but there was the want of water to be considered. What good escaping, only to perish miserably in the wilderness? He would wait till the country became less barren.

The caravan in its route inland forded more than one broad stream. By the banks of these they sometimes journeyed for many miles, rested by day or camped at night.

Where, Harry often wondered, were his poor men? What fate was theirs, and what would his own fate be?

That he was to be sold into slavery, he had little, if any, doubt;

and the truth was rendered more patent to him one evening by overhearing a conversation in Swahili between two of the Somalis. It referred to him, and mention was repeatedly made of the name of a great chief called 'Ngaloo, a name he had never heard before.

“Perhaps,” thought Harry, “my men, too, are being driven to this king’s country, though by a different route.”

But this was improbable. Had he believed it at all likely he would have gone on patiently with his captors, and have shared the fortune of the poor fellows, whether that might be death or slavery.

No, he determined to escape.

His chance came sooner than he had anticipated.

The caravan was encamped one night by the banks of a stream – a deep and ugly stream it was, its banks bordered by gigantic euphorbia trees or shrubs, so shapeless and ugly, that betwixt Harry and the moonlight they looked living uncanny things, and it needed but little imagination on his part to make them wave their arms and make motions that were both fantastic and fiend-like.

Harry was lying with his eyes half-shut looking at them when suddenly the sentinel bent down and gazed for a moment earnestly into his face. Suspecting something, but not knowing what, he pretended to sleep, breathing heavily, with an occasional sob or sigh, but ready to spring in a moment if foul play were meant.

The sentinel now left his side and strode away on tiptoe – though with many a stealthy backward glance – around the sleeping caravan. He went so far as to touch several of the Somali Indians with his foot. But when a Somali does sleep it takes a deal to rouse him. Seemingly satisfied, he came back and had one other look at Harry, then walked straight away to the river's brink.

He was only going to quench his thirst after all, but well he knew that to have been found but five yards from his post would have cost him his life. No wonder he was careful. Harry's mind was made up in a moment, and more quickly than lightning's flash. How fast one must think on occasions like the present! He sprang lightly but silently to his feet the very moment he saw the Somali deposit his rifle and shot-belt on the bank and bend down towards a pool.

Next minute Harry, exerting all his young strength, had seized and flung him far into the stream.

A splash by night in an African river is but little likely to awake any one encamped by its banks. So far Harry was safe, but would the Indian give the alarm?

He did not wait to think, he only snatched up the weapons and the shot-belt and darted away like a red deer swiftly along the riverside. He wondered to hear no shout.

The truth is, the Somali sentinel feared to give it; to him it would have meant death, whatever it might be to Harry.

But looking round shortly, he was hardly surprised to find

he was hotly pursued by the sentinel. He ran on for about two hundred yards farther, and, on looking round again, he noticed that the Somali was fast gaining on him. So Harry stopped.

His Highland blood was up.

“I won’t run from one man,” he said, “neither will I kill him, I’ll give him a throw, though, if he likes, after the manner of Donald Dinnie.”

So he stood and waited.

He had not long to wait. The Indian had divested himself of the linen jacket he wore, and next moment confronted him, panting, but with gleaming eyes and on murder intent. That is, murder if he could manage it quietly.

“Halt!” cried Harry, in Swahili, as he came to the charge. “No farther, or you die!”

The rest of his speech to the Somali he continued, partly in Swahili, partly in English, the former language being rather meagre in phraseology. But this is the gist of what he did say:

“I could kill you if I liked. It would be mean, however. Now take your time and get your breath, then if you like I’ll give it to you English fashion.”

He paused, and the Somali stood there glaring and foaming with fury.

After a minute —

“Time’s up,” said Harry, and, taking two or three paces to the rear, he threw rifle and shot-belt on the ground; then, pointing to them —

“Touch these, my friend, if you dare,” he said.

No two biddings did the Somali require. He sprang towards the rifle as springs the jungle cat on its prey. Harry’s blow was finely planted, and I am sure that Indian must have imagined, for the time being, that there were considerably more stars in the sky than ever he had seen before.

He rose and flew at Harry. He flew but to fall, and he rose and rose again, only to fall and fall again!

Harry could not help admiring his pluck.

He was conquered at last, though.

Then, getting up, half stunned, from the grass, he extended his arms towards Harry.

“Kill me,” he said, “kill me, but not thus. Kill me with the English sword, for if I go back to my people without my prisoner, they will kill me with fire.”

“Come to think of it, my good fellow,” said Harry, “there need be no killing in the matter. You can’t go back. Come with me. The tables are turned: *you* shall now be the slave, *I* the master. I will be good and kind to you if you are faithful; if not, I will let the daylight into you.”

The reply of the savage was affecting enough. He bowed himself to the earth first; then, still on his knees, took Harry’s right hand and bent his head until his brow touched it.

“That will do, my good fellow. I don’t care for palaver, you know. But let us have action. Now you shall prove how far you are willing to serve me. Go back to your fellows, a rascally crew

they are, and fetch another rifle and more ammunition, and just a little provisions if you can.”

The Somali knew what he meant, even if he did not understand precisely all that was said.

He was up and away in a moment.

Harry Milvaine waited and listened. He thought the time would never pass. Would the Somali be true or be treacherous? He might rouse his sleeping companions, and, while he was still standing here in the broad staring light of the moon, stealthily surround and re-capture him.

The very thought made him change his ground. He drew himself away under the shade of some mimosa trees and waited there.

At last a single figure, armed with a rifle and carrying a bag, drew up in the clearing that Harry had left, and looked about him in some surprise. It was Harry's ex-foe.

Harry soon joined him.

“You have stayed long,” he said.

“I have plenty of ammunition, something to eat, and the rifle, and – ”

“Well, and what else?”

“Nothing else,” said the Indian, showing a row of teeth like alabaster; “I have floated all the rest of the ammunition down stream.”

“You are clever, but hark! did you not hear some sound? I believe they are stirring.”

“No, no, that was a lion miles away.”

“Come, then, lead on.”

“Which way?”

“West. They are sure to think I have gone in the direction of the coast.”

“Come, then.”

And away went Nanungamanoo. And by daybreak they were many, many miles from the camp of Mahmoud.

Book Three – Chapter Three.

A Chapter of Surprises – A Mysterious Pack, and a Mysterious Appearance

Danger sharpens one's wits. It makes the old young again, and the young old – in judgment.

Harry was no fool from the commencement, and he now reasoned rightly enough, that Mahmoud with his savage caravan, as soon as he missed the runaways, would naturally conclude that they had gone back towards the coast.

This, however, was precisely the thing that Harry had no present intention of doing. And why? it may be asked. Ought he not to be glad of the freedom he had once more obtained, and make the best of his way to some friendly village or town by the sea-shore? Perhaps; but then Harry was a wayward youth. He was wayward and headstrong, but on this occasion I think he had right on his side.

“I cannot and will not return,” he said to himself, “without making some effort to find my poor fellows – if, indeed, they be still alive. Besides, this is a strange and a lovely land, and there are strange adventures to be met with. I must see a little of it while I am here.”

You will notice, reader, that hope was already throwing its glamour over the poor lad's mind. He dearly loved nature, but while being dragged away as a prisoner, although some parts of the country through which he passed had been charming enough, he could not bear to gaze on their beauty while *he* was a slave.

Flowers grew in abundance on many parts of the plains; they grew in patches, in beds of gorgeous colour, here, there, and everywhere – pale blue, dark blue, yellow, crimson, and modest brown; they carpetted the ground, and even trailed up over and beautified the stunted scrub bushes. As Burns hath it, these flowers —

“Sprang wanton to be pressed.”

At another time their sunlit glory would have dazzled him, now they had seemed to mock him in his misery, and he had crushed them under foot.

Great birds sailed majestically and slowly overhead, or flew with that lazy indifference peculiar to some of the African species, ascending some distance, then letting themselves fall again, putting no more exertion into the action of flight than was absolutely necessary, but sauntering along through the air, as it were. Never mind, they were happy, and Harry had hated them because they were so happy – and free. Long after the caravan had left the coast, sea-birds even came floating round them.

“Come away, Harry!” they seemed to scream. “Come away – away – away!”

They were happy too. Oh, he had thought, if he could only be

as free, and had their lithesome, lissom wings!

Monster butterflies like painted fans, browns, vermilions, and ultramarines hovered indolently over the flowers. How *they* appeared to enjoy the sunshine!

Even the bronzy green or black beetles that moved about among the grass or over the bare patches of ground had something to do, something to engross their minds, thoroughly to the exclusion of every other consideration in life.

As for the lovely sea-green lizards with broad arrows of crimson on their shoulders, they simply squatted, panting, on stones, or lay along reed-stalks, making the very most of life and sunshine; while as for the giant cicadas, their happiness considerably interfered with the business of their little lives, because they were so very, very, *very* happy that they had to stop about every two minutes to sing.

But now, why Harry was free and as happy as any of them – at present, at all events.

As he trudged along in the moonlight he could not help making a little joke to himself.

“Go back!” he said, half aloud. “No, Scotchmen never go back.”

Well, then, Mahmoud, after retreating for some distance towards the coast, would no doubt resume his journey. Of this Harry felt sure enough, because Nanungamanoo told his new master, before they had gone very far that night, that the Arab priest was on his way to a far distant country, quite unknown to

any other trader, there to purchase a gang of slaves from a king, who would sell his people for fire-water.

“The scoundrels!” said Harry.

“Yes, sahib.”

“Both I mean; both king and priest. I’d tie them neck to neck and drown them as one drowns kittens.”

“Yes, sahib.”

“And no one else knows of this territory?”

“No white man, sahib.”

“The villain! A little nest of his own that he robs periodically. A happy hunting-ground all to himself. So you think Mahmoud will shortly come on this way?”

“Sure to, sahib.”

Harry considered a short time, then —

“Well, Nanungamanoo, my good fellow, it won’t do to get in front of him. He would soon find our trail.”

“Yes, sahib, and kill us with fire.”

“Would he now? That would not be pleasant, Nanungamanoo. By the way, Nanungamanoo, what an awful name you have! Excuse me, Nanungamanoo, but we must really try to find you a shorter. Do you understand, Mr Nanungamanoo? We’ll boil that name of yours down, or extract the essence of it and let you have that. But touching this pretty priest, this amiable individual, who hesitates not to buy poor slaves for rum, although he is far too good to fight for them. He’ll be along this way in a day or two. Now I greatly object to be hurried, especially when I am out upon

a little pleasure trip like the present – ha! ha! I don't think for a moment that either an Arab or any of you Somali fellows are half so clever at picking up a trail as your genuine North American backwoods Indian; but then, you know, even an Arab or a Somali couldn't go past the mark of an old camp-fire without smelling a rat. Do you understand, Mr Nanungamanoo? – bother your name, it's a regular twice-round the clock business!"

"I understand," replied Nanungamanoo, "much that you say even in English."

"Well, Mr Nanungamanoo, if you behave yourself and are long with me, I'll put you to school and teach you myself – good English. But," continued Harry, "we must have this angelic Mahmoud on ahead of us. So if you can find a place to hide, we will let him pass and give him a fair start. For, as you say that you know this route well, and no other, we must be content to keep it for some time to come at all events."

"Yes, sahib; and I know the place to hide. Come."

"I'll follow as fast as you like, Mr Nanungamanoo. But, first and foremost, just let us see what you have in that bundle of yours – to eat, I mean. I haven't really felt so genuinely hungry since I was taken prisoner. My eyes! Nanungamanoo, what a size your bundle is! You seem to have looted the whole camp."

The Somali laid down the burden and prepared to open it. It was wrapped in a kind of coarse blue-striped cloth, much admired by certain tribes of savages.

They had reached a patch of high clearing in the jungle, the

moon was shining very brightly, so, although there were lions about, there was very little fear of an attack, these gentry much preferring to catch their foes unawares and by daylight.

The Somali undid his bundle precisely like a packman of olden times, showing off the wares he had for sale.

“This is the food,” he said.

“What! dry rice? Why, my good fellow, I’m not a fowl.”

“Fowl – yes, yes,” cried Nanungamanoo, the first words he had spoken in English. “Here is fowl and rice curry.”

“Ha! glorious!” cried Harry. “Capitally cooked too, done to a turn, tastes delicious. Have a bit yourself, old man. No doubt Mahmoud had intended this for his own little breakfast. I feel double the individual now, Nanungamanoo,” said Harry, after he had done ample justice to the viands of his late lord and master, “double the individual. Now suppose we proceed to investigate still further the contents of your mysterious pack? That’s the ammunition, is it? A goodly lot too! But what is in that other pack? There are wheels within wheels, and packs within packs, my clever Nanungamanoo. You are afraid to touch it – to open it. Give it to me, I will.”

So saying he quickly undid the lashing.

“Why,” he continued in astonishment, as he lifted the things up one by one, “my own best uniform jacket – two pairs of white duck pants – my Sunday-go-meeting pairs – one – two – three – four flannel shirts, my best ones too – a pair of canvas shoes – a packet of new uniform buttons, and a yard of gold lace –

three cakes of eating chocolate, and a box of cough drops that old Yonitch gave me as a parting gift. Why, Nanungamanoo, as sure as we're squatting here, and the moon shining down over us both, that old thief has been and gone and robbed my sea-chest! I see his little game, Nanungamanoo: he was taking these things of mine away into the interior to that happy hunting-ground of his, to swop them away along with myself to the drunken old king for slaves. Yes, and they would have stripped me of the uniform I now wear, and given me an old cow's hide instead with the horns stuck over my brow and the tail hanging down behind. Oh! Mr Mahmoud, but I have spoiled your fun. But there they are, goodness be praised, and I must not be too hard on old Mahmie after all, for he did save my life."

Nanungamanoo laughed a sneering laugh.

"You were too valuable to burn," he said.

"Do you really suppose then, my worthy Nanungamanoo, that Mahmoud looked upon the matter as a commercial transaction?"

"Now you speak Hindustanee. I do not know."

"Never mind, make up the bundle again, and let us trudge. From the position of the moon it must be getting on towards morning."

Nanungamanoo held up three fingers and proceeded with his work.

"Three o'clock, is it? Well, heave round, let us up anchor and be off."

After re-establishing his valuable pack, Nanungamanoo

carefully collected the bones of the feast and threw them under a bush, and was proceeding to obliterate the marks they had made on the withered grass by raising it again with his foot, when a twig cracked in a neighbouring thicket. Both Harry and Nanungamanoo speedily clutched their rifles.

Almost immediately after a black and nearly naked figure emerged slowly into the moonlight, and stood at some little distance, holding up one arm across his face as if to protect it from the blow of the bullet Nanungamanoo would have fired, but Harry thrust his arm up.

Then Raggy Muffin advanced.

“Golla-mussy, massa! What for you want to shoot poor Raggy?”

“But, Raggy,” cried Harry, “in the name of mystery how came you here?”

“I came, massa, to cut your cords ob bondage, all same as de little mouse cut de cords ob de great big lion.”

“But where did you come from, Raggy? Sit down, poor boy, your cheeks are thin, sit down and pick a bone.”

“No, no, massa, not here, not here. Dey am all alive in Mahmoud’s camp, I can ’ssure you ob dat.”

“You came through there?”

“I came to cut your cords ob bondage, massa.”

“Well?”

“Well, den I see dat de bird hab flown.”

“Yes, Raggy.”

“Den I pick up ebery ting I see lying about handy, massa. Den I follow your trail.”

“Ha! ha! ha! So you’ve been looting too, have you? Well, Raggy, get your parcel and let us be off. Lead on, Nanungamanoo.”

“La! massa,” said Raggy, grinning all over, “suppose I hab one long name like dat nigger, I cut it all up into leetle pieces, and hab one for ebery day in de week.”

The march was now recommenced.

The Somali trode gingerly on ahead, picking his way through the flowery sward, as if afraid to leave the slightest trail.

Harry and Raggy came up behind.

It was evident the Somali was now making a *détour*; at all events they shortly found themselves at the river, which was here broad and shallow. This they forded, taking care to keep their packs and rifles dry.

Into a weird-looking bit of forest they now plunged.

A weird-looking forest indeed. Every tree seemed an ogre in the moonlight. Yet the air was heavily odorous with the sweet breath of some species of mimosa bloom, and the ground was for the most part free from undergrowth.

The forest grew darker and darker as they proceeded, and they could hear a lion growl in the distance. He was far away, yet Harry clutched his rifle and drew little Raggy close up to his side.

He was not sorry when the moonlight shone down on them once more through the branches of a baobab tree. Here they

stopped to breathe.

On again, and now the way began to ascend, still in the forest, and still comparatively in the gloom.

Up and up and up they went. It was quite a mountain for this district. At last the trees and then the bushes deserted them; then they were on the bluff, and Harry turned round to look.

Why, away down yonder – close under them it appeared – they could see the blazing camp-fire of Mahmoud's caravan.

“Are we not too near, Nanungamanoo?”

“No. They will not stir till daylight Arabs are not brave at night. When they do start they will go towards the sun. We will wait and watch and see.”

And so it fell out, for no sooner had the clouds begun to turn bright yellow and crimson than the stir commenced in the camp.

Somalis ran hither and thither, it is true.

The babel of voices was terrible.

Mahmoud himself was here, there, and everywhere, and the whacks he freely dealt his soldiers with a bamboo cane were audible even to our friends on the hill-top. But when all was said and done, the caravan started back towards the coast, and in a few minutes there was silence all over the beautiful landscape.

Book Three – Chapter Four.

In African Wilds – Adventure with a Lion

A little way down the hill, and looking towards the north, was a cave in the rocks, and a cool delightful corner our friends found it, soon as the sun “got some weigh” on him, and his beams no longer slanted over the plain.

While Raggy was eating his modest breakfast Harry went some distance apart, and, taking out a little Book – it was a gift from his mother – he read a portion where a leaf was turned down.

Seems funny that a boy should carry a Bible with him, does it not? Well, reader, I can tell you this much: I have known many and many a sailor boy do so, and I never found that they were a bit the worse for it.

Mind you this, I have no patience with superstition, and I do hate cant; nor do I for a moment mean to say that our Book acts as a kind of amulet: but putting the matter in a plain, practical, common sense kind of a way, you and I have both immortal souls, you know, and we want to be guided how to save them. Well, the Book tells us the way. But that is not all. In times of danger – and a sailor comes across these pretty often – a blink into the Bible often gives a fellow heartening. You open it probably at the very

passage that does so, and, even if you do not, you know where to find such passage.

And this *does* do good. Oh! I have proved it over and over again. I have a little old Book there that I have carried about the world for years and years. It has many a dog's-ear, but they are intentional, for each one marks a passage, and to every dog's-ear a story is attached. All point to little crumbs of comfort I have had in scenes of danger or even pestilence – here and there in many lands. Some day, if spared, I mean to write the story of this particular old Book of mine, and I do not think it will be devoid of interest to those who may care to peruse it.

But there! I am digressing, and I humbly beg my readers pardon; it was all owing to Harry's getting away, in behind that bit of tangled scrub, in order to perform his morning devotions. Well, the truth is he did feel very, very grateful to be free.

But stay, will he be able to retain that freedom? And this brings me back to my tale.

He went back to the place where he had left Raggy enjoying the leg of a fowl.

The boy was sitting near the mouth of the cave.

“Enjoyed it, Raggy?”

“Ah!” and Raggy smacked his lips and rolled his eyes, “he am plenty much sweet, massa.”

“There's a wing there too, Raggy. There you are, have that.”

“Tank you, massa. You am bery good, massa.”

I dare say Raggy would have eaten a whole fowl had it been

offered to him. After all African fowls are not very big, nor very fat; but very matter-of-fact and self-possessed – that is their moral character.

I have gone into an African village in the evening, just as the fowls were all going to roost in the trees, my object being to buy half a dozen for the pot. As soon as the natives were convinced that the white man had not come to eat a baby, but that he really wanted to buy “tuck-tuck-chow-chow,” and had copper money in his hand to pay for the dainty, then all hands would turn out, and such a hunt you never saw, and such fluttering of wings and skraiching. I have felt sorry for the fowls.

When I got what I wanted, the rest of the “tuck-tucks” would go quietly to roost again as if nothing had happened. I envy such equanimity.

I remember that two fowls got loose in the boat once. It was blowing stiff, and the white spray was dashing over us. Well, any other birds would have jumped overboard. Not so these African fowls. They simply got on the gun’ale, and, as soon as the squall was over, coolly commenced to arrange their feathers. This regard for personal appearance in a scene of such danger – for they must have known they were going to pot – is something that one does not know whether most to admire or wonder at.

Having fully satisfied the needs of nature, Raggy was prepared to give some little account of his adventures. Briefly they were as follows, and in Raggy’s own language.

“You see, massa, befoh de sun rise on dat drefful night on

de shore, de Somali Indians, all plenty well-armed, plenty big knife, plenty spear and gun, dey come and wake all our poor blue-jackets. ‘Come quiet,’ dey say; ‘suppose you make bobbery, den we kill you quick.’ Dey tak us all away behind de sandhills, and I tink first and fohmost dey am goin’ to obfuscate us.”

“Suffocate us you mean, Raggy.”

“All de same meaning, massa. But dey tie our arms till de blood tingle all down de fingers, and dey tie us roun’ de neck till we all feel chickey-chokey, and our eyes want to bust and relieve demselves. Den away we all go. I look back, and see dat poor massa not follow, and my heart am bery sad. Ober de hills and de plains we walk. Poor white man’s feet soon get tire and blister all, and in two tree day dey walk all de same’s one chicken on de stove-top. Dey Somalis and de big Arab – he one bad, *bad* man – dey talk. Dey not tink I understand what dey say. Dey speak ob where dey am going to de country ob King Kara-Kara, to sell all de men for slaves and get a tousand niggers foh ’em. Den dey speak ob you. You, dey say, am wo’th de lot Raggy heah all, and listen, and tink, and I want to set you free. One day one man he fall sick – one ohdinary seaman, massa, name is Davis – he fall bery, bery sick. Den de Arab soldier look at him and look at him. You nebah get well, he say. Den he take him by de two leg and pull him along de grass to a bush; and oh! it was drefful, massa, to heah poor Davis crying for mussy ’cause he hab a wife and piccanninies at home, he tole ’em. No mussy in dat Arab’s eye. No mussy in his heart, he take de ugly spear and stab – stab –

stab – Poor Davis jes say ‘Oh!’ once or twice, den he die. Plenty oder men sick after dis, but dey not lie down. Dey jes walk on weary, weary. Byemby we come to wells. Den de men get better. But Raggy hab eno’ ob dis. He steal away at night. How de lion roah in de jungle, and how de tiger (the leopard is frequently so called in Africa) jump about, and de wild hyaenas come out in de moonlight and laugh at poor Raggy. Raggy’s heart bery full ob feah. But he no say much. Suppose dey only laugh, dat not hurt much. Suppose dey bite, den Raggy die. I walk and walk foh days. I not hab much food. But I catch de mole and de mouse, I eatee he plenty quick. Den byemby I come to Mahmoud’s trail, and I follow on and up till one day I see de caravan on de hill, den I lie and sleep till night Massa knows all de rest.”

“Yes, Raggy, I know all the rest, and very grateful I am for your pluck, and all that, and if ever we get back again, I’ll report your good and brave conduct, and you’ll be well rewarded. Perhaps they’ll make you a captain, Raggy.”

“Massa is joking.”

“You go home now at once?” the boy asked, after a pause.

“Oh! no, Raggy. That would not be doing my duty. I’m going inland, and I’m going to try to find and redeem, or rescue our poor fellows. It would not be plucky nor brave to go back without them – at all events without trying to find them. Now, Raggy, as we are sure, if spared, to be some considerable time together, I wish you to do me the favour to teach Nanungamanoo to speak English.”

“De yellor nigger wi’ de long name, massa?”

“That is he, Raggy – Nanungamanoo.”

“Oh! lah! massa, I teachee he plenty propah, and suppose he no speak good, I give him five, six, ten stick all same as de schoolmastah ob de *Bunting* switchee me.”

“You better not try,” said Harry, laughing, “or you may find yourself in the wrong box. But here,” he cried aloud, “Nanungamanoo, where are you?”

Next moment Nanungamanoo stood silently before him awaiting his commands.

“You’ve got too long a name, Nanungamanoo.”

“Yes, sahib.”

“Well, we’ll shorten it. We’ll call you Jack. It’s free and easy.”

Jack expressed his pleasure to have an English name, so Jack he became.

“On all ‘occasions of ceremony or state,’ as the Navy List says, Jack, we will resort to your original designation, and you will be Nanungamanoo again.”

For three days and nights Harry and his merry men occupied the cave on the hillside.

At the end of this time they had the satisfaction one evening of seeing a red light gleaming on the western horizon. It was the reflection of the camp-fire of the returning caravan.

Early next morning, almost as soon as sunrise, Mahmoud and his followers passed through the forest at the foot of the hill. Harry could even hear them talking, so close were they.

He had the rifles loaded and everything ready to give them a warm reception should they dare to ascend. But they did not. They went through the forest and on their way across a broad sandy plain.

When they had quite disappeared beyond the horizon, Harry gave a sigh of relief. The danger was, comparatively speaking, over for a time. He would now give them a few days' start, then go on behind, for Jack assured him this caravan route was the only practical way into the interior.

Every night the lions could be heard growling and roaring with that awe-inspiring cough, which they emit, in the woods around the hill. It was well they had a cave to sleep in, for to have lit fires on the hill-top would have ensured the return of Mahmoud and his savage Somalis, and they would have been captured. But a sentinel was set – and Harry took the post time about with Raggy and Somali Jack.

Was Jack really to be trusted? The answer to this is, that the faithfulness of a Somali Indian will be sold to the highest bidder, just like a picture at an auction mart, but it may in time be cemented to the purchaser if he is worthy of it. I have always found that there is a great deal of similarity betwixt the human nature as displayed by Indians and white men, which only proves that the world is much the same all over.

I must add, however, that white men as a rule treat savages with less ceremony and far less justice than they would mete out to one of their own dogs at home. Take an example.

Some scoundrelly white trader has been murdered (it is called “murdered,” but I should say “killed”) by some islanders of the Pacific. This trading fellow had been on shore – probably not sober – abusing the hospitality held out to him, bullying and swaggering, and doing deeds that, if committed in this country, would secure for him a lengthened period of penal servitude. The worm turns at last and resents. The trader calls his men and a fight ensues; the savages are victorious, the white men slain. By and by in comes a British man-o’-war and demands the surrender of the murderers by the chief or king. Perhaps he does not even know them, refuses to give them up, and therein ensues a wholesale butchery of men, women, and children, and the burning of towns and villages.

I have known this happen over and over again, and I have asked myself, Who is to blame? Certainly not the so-called savages.

Well, boy-readers, if ever any of you happen to be away abroad, in Africa or the Pacific, and have a native as a servant, take my advice: treat him as a human being and a fellow-creature, and you will have no cause to complain, but quite the reverse.

Harry had a good long talk with Jack; he told him he should let him go away any time he wished, but that if he did stay he would have no cause to repent it.

Once more Jack took Harry’s hand in both his and bent himself down until his brow touched it, and our hero was satisfied.

On leaving the hill – which, by the way, Harry took possession of in the Queen’s name, and called it Mount Andrew, to show he had not forgotten his old friend in the Highlands – they journeyed on through the forest and followed in the very footsteps of Mahmoud’s caravan, across plains, through woods, through rivers and mountain glens, camping every night where Mahmoud had camped, and lighting a fire in the very same spot. The fire was very necessary now, and it had to be kept up all night, for they were in a country inhabited by and given up to, one might say, wild beasts.

Here were lions in scores, hyaenas and jungle-cats.

So all night long these animals made the bush resound with their cries.

Sometimes Harry found it almost impossible to sleep, so terrible was the quarrelling and din. He fell upon a plan at last that in some measure remedied the infliction – that of leaving the bullock or two, or the deer or hartebeest slain for food, a good two or three miles behind. Where the carrion is, there cometh the kite; and so it was in this case – to some extent at all events.

The store of rice that Jack had looted from Mahmoud’s camp very soon was done, but they did not want for provisions for all that.

There were fruits of so many kinds, and roots that they dug up, or rather that Jack dug up and roasted in the camp-fire. Then there were plantains, which are excellent cooked in the same primitive style. Some of the forest trees were laden with fruit;

the danger lay in eating too much of it. Many of these fruits were quite unknown to Harry, but he was guided by his best man, Jack. With so much fruit, salt was hardly missed, though at first Harry thought it strange to eat meat without it.

Slices from the most tender portions of the animals killed were cut and carried along with them, and towards evening, when the bivouac ground was chosen, and the fire of wood gathered and kindled by Jack and Raggy, the former set to work to prepare the supper.

The roots, yams principally, were simply buried among the fiery ashes, but a far more artistic method was adopted in grilling the steak: a triangle of green wood was built over the fire as soon as it had died down to red embers, across the triangle bars were fastened, and on this were hung the pieces of juicy flesh. When the bars were nearly burned through, and the wooden triangle itself falling to pieces, then the steak was cooked.

They had fresh air and exercise, and consequently the appetite of mighty hunters. It is hardly necessary, therefore, to add that they really enjoyed their dinners. Fruit followed, then water, which was not always good.

The country they traversed now, though a hilly and fertile one, was, strange to say, deserted.

Still, this is not so strange when we remember that in all probability it has been depopulated by the Arab slaver. Indeed, many parts of the forest gave evidence of having been ravished by fire.

Bravery, I take it, is not a very uncommon quality in the human breast of any inhabitant of our British islands, yet he is the bravest man who *knows* his danger and still does not fear to face it. In the matter of danger, where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. Your first-voyage sailor will retain his presence of mind and coolness, at times when old seafarers are pale with the coldness of a coming evil. Why? Because he does not know the worst. This is not bravery. It is – nothing.

If, however, one is so positioned as to know there is danger, but remains in ignorance as to its amount or extent, then he has a bold heart who can quietly meet or court it. I have hinted before in this tale of mine that I claim for my wayward boy, Harry, no *extraordinary* qualities of mind, and that he had his faults just as you have, reader; so now I need not apologise for him when I confess to you that in the wild African jungle there were many times that his heart beat high with fear. Especially was this so at first. All bold, brave natures are finely strung and sensitive. Harry's was. He did not like the dangers of the darkness, and he dreaded snakes. At the commencement, then, of his wanderings on the dark continent he expected to see one whenever a bunch of grass quivered or moved, though only a mole might have been at the bottom of it. And I believe at night he heard sounds and saw sights in the bush and on the plains, that had no existence except in his own fervid imagination.

However, a month or two of nomad life hardened him. He noticed that even serpents do not go out of their way to bite

people, and that you have only to observe a certain amount of caution, then you may put your hands in your pockets and whistle.

As far as that goes, I believe you might put your hands in your pockets and go whistling up to a lion “on the roam.” My illustrious countryman, the great General Gordon, did this or something very like it once. *I* would not, nor would I advise you to do so, reader; but I have to say, as regards my hero, Harry, that familiarity bred in him a contempt for danger that led him to grief.

I will tell you the story after making just one remark. It is this – and happy I would be this minute if I thought you would lay it to heart and remember it. We are apt to pray to our Father to keep us from evil, and then, when something occurs to us, some accident, perhaps, turn round and murmur and say —

“Oh! my prayers have not been heard. God loves me not.”

How know you, I ask, that He in His mercy has not allowed this *little* misfortune to befall us in order to save us from a *greater*?

Harry was carelessly walking one evening – he was waiting for dinner – in a grove of rugged euphorbias. The evening was very beautiful, the sun declining in the west towards a range of high hills which they had that day passed. There was a great bank of purple-grey clouds loftier than the hills; these were fringed with pale gold, else you could not have told which was mountain and which was cloud. There was also a breeze blowing, just enough to make a rustling sound among the cactuses and scrub. This

it was probably that prevented Harry from hearing the stealthy footsteps of an enormous lion, until startled by a roar that made the blood tingle in his very shoes.

There he was – the African king of beasts – not twenty yards away – crouched, swishing his tail on the grass, and preparing for a spring.

Harry stood spellbound.

Then he tried to raise his rifle.

“No, you don’t,” the lion must have thought. For at that very moment he sprang, and next Harry was down under him.

He remembered a confused shout, and the sharp ring of a rifle. Then all was a mist of oblivion till he found himself lying near the camp-fire, with Jack kneeling by his side holding his arm.

“I’m not hurt, am I?” said Harry.

“Oh, massa, you am dun killed completely,” sobbed little Raggy. “All de blood in you body hab run out. You quite killed. You not lib. What den will poor Raggy do?”

It was not so bad as Raggy made out, however. But Harry’s wounds were dreadful enough, back and shoulder lacerated and arm bitten through.

Harry had made it a point all the journey since leaving the hill he called Mount Andrew to camp each night on the same place Mahmoud had left days before, and to build the fire in the self-same spot, and on departing in the morning to leave nothing behind that could tell the Arab’s sharp-eyed Somalis the ground had been used.

It was well he had taken this precaution, for now he was wounded and ill, and must remain near this place for weeks at least.

Jack, the Somali, was equal to the occasion.

He went away to the forest, and was not long in finding a site for the invalid's camp.

Like that upon Mount Andrew, it was on a hill or eminence, from which the country eastwards could be seen for many, many miles. And here also was a shelter under a rock from the direct rays of the sun.

Next day, and for several days, poor Harry tossed about on his couch in a raging fever.

But Jack proved an excellent surgeon, and Raggy the best of nurses. The former applied cooling and healing antiseptic leaves to Harry's wounds, and bound them tenderly up with bundles of grass, while the latter hardly ever left his master's couch, except to seek for and bring him the most luscious fruit the forest could afford.

Long, long weary weeks passed away, but still Harry lay there in his cave on the hillside too weak to stand, too ill to move.

Between them his two faithful servants had built him a hut of branches and grass, which not only defended him against the sun, but against the rain as well – for the wet season had now set in. Thunders rolled over the plains and reverberated from the mountain sides, and at times the rain came down in terrible “spatters” that in volume far exceeded anything Harry could ever

have dreamt of.

But the rain cooled and purified the atmosphere, and seemed to so revive Harry, that his wounds took on what surgeons call the healing intention.

Raggy was a joyful boy then, and honest Jack, the Somali – for he had proved himself honest by this time – was doubly assiduous in his endeavours to perfect a cure.

One afternoon, while Jack was talking to his master, Raggy, who had been in the forest, ran in breathless and scared.

“Golly-mussy!” he cried, “dey come, dey come. Where shall we hide poor massa? Dey come, dey come.”

Book Three – Chapter Five.

The Return of the Caravans – Night in the Forest – The Dying Slave Boy

Mahmoud had not found the slave-dealing king in quite so good a temper on this journey. The reason was not far to seek. A brother potentate, who dwelt just beyond a range of mountains to the east of him, had by some means or other possessed himself of two white slaves – Greeks they were, and had been brought from very far north. This king was his greatest enemy – near neighbours though they were – and many and deadly were the combats that used to rage among the hills. In fact, their two imperial highnesses lived in a state of continual warfare. Sentinels of both parties were placed day and night on the highest mountains, to spy out the actions of the opposite kingdoms. It was no unusual thing for these sentinels to get to lighting on their own account, and when they did they never failed to chew each other up, though not quite so much so as the Kilkenny cats, of which, as you know, nothing was left but two little morsels of fluff, one tooth and one toe-nail – but very nearly as bad as that. The rival kings did not care a bit; they looked upon the affair as a natural *dénouement*, and set more sentinels, while the vultures gobbled up whatsoever remained of the last.

But this rival king beyond the hills owned those white slaves,

and the king, who loved rum, was very jealous and greatly incensed in consequence. Thrice he had made war upon him with a view of possessing himself of the coveted Greeks, and thrice had he been hurled back with infinite slaughter.

Then Mahmoud had come to him, and the king stated his case while he drank some rum, and Mahmoud promised that next time he returned he would bring him one or more white slaves, that would far outshine those possessed by the king beyond the hills, whose name, by the way, was King Kara-Kara.

But behold Mahmoud had returned, and no white slave with him! Harry, as we know, having escaped.

No wonder, then, that King 'Ngaloo had raged and stormed. This he did despite the fact that the Somalis were called to witness that it was no fault of Mahmoud's, and that their prisoner had really and truly escaped. King 'Ngaloo had serious thoughts of ordering the priest Mahmoud to instant execution, but was so mollified at the sight of the other gifts brought him that he forgave him.

These gifts were many and varied. Rum came first, then beads, blue, crimson, white and black, and of various sizes, then jack-knives and daggers, white-iron whistles, a drum of large dimensions, a concertina, and a pair of brass lacquered tongs. These last two gifts were the best fun of all, for King 'Ngaloo, squatting in the middle of his tent floor with his wives all round him or near him, would sip rum and play the concertina time about. His playing was peculiar. After he had finished about half

a bottle of the fire-water he began to feel his heart warm enough to have some fun, on which he would jump up and with his brass tongs seize one of his wives by the nose, drawing her round and round the tent, she screaming with pain, he with laughter, till one would have thought all bedlam was let loose.

Yes, the king was pacified, and Mahmoud was allowed to depart, with an addition to his caravan of one hundred poor victims who were to be dragged away into slavery.

He went away much sooner than he had intended had he been successful in getting more slaves. And besides, the truth is, Mahmoud was a little afraid that the king might take it into his head to pull him round the tent with the tongs, and Mahmoud had a profound respect for his nose.

I really think it was a pity the king did not do so.

Only it was evident the king had other thoughts in his head, for one day he jumped up, and after practising the tongs exercise on his prime minister for five minutes, he held the instrument of torture aloft and snapped it wildly in the air.

“Teiah roota Kara-Kara yalla golla,” he shouted, or some such words, “I’ll never be content till I seize Kara-Kara by the nose, and the tongs shall be made red-hot for the purpose.”

“I’d send and tell him so,” that is what Mahmoud had suggested.

“Dee a beeseeta – I’ll do so,” said the king.

And away the messenger was sent to King Kara-Kara.

The messenger obeyed his instructions, and King Kara-Kara

took much pleasure in cutting off his head, but as this was no more than the messenger had expected there was not much harm done.

But, and it is a big “but,” had King ’Ngaloo only known that at the very time Mahmoud was in *his* camp or village, his “brother” Suliemon was in that of the rival potentate, and that he had sold him the unfortunate men of the *Bunting*, Mahmoud would not have been allowed to depart, unless he could have done so without his head. For both Mahmoud and his “brother” were excellent business men, and were not at all averse to playing into each other’s hands.

Before Mahmoud had left the town of this African potentate he was allowed to choose his slaves. He chose, to begin with, a day on which King Kara-Kara had imbibed even more rum than usual. Indeed, he was so absurdly tipsy that he could not hold the tongs.

He was determined to see that he was not cheated for all that, and so, supported on one side by his prime minister, and on the other by one of his priests, the chief executioner, sword in hand, coming up behind, he waddled out to the great square in which the poor unhappy souls, men and women, from whom Mahmoud was to make his choice were drawn up.

The first thing the king did after getting outside was to give vent to an uncontrollable fit of laughing. Nobody knew what he was laughing at, nor, I dare say, did he himself. But he suddenly grew serious, hit his prime minister on the face with his open

palm, and asked why he dared laugh in his august presence.

Though his nose bled a little, the minister said nothing; he was used to all the king's little eccentricities, and this was one of them.

After he had got into the square, the king desired to be informed what the meeting was all about.

“Execution, isn't it?” That is what he said in his own language.

“That fellow Mahmoud's white head is coming off, isn't it? Turban and all? Turban and all, ha! ha! ha! I told him I would do it. And I will.”

No wonder Mahmoud had trembled in his sandals.

But King 'Ngaloo was soon put right.

Then Mahmoud made his choice.

He hesitated not to tear asunder mother and child, husband and wife, sister and brother. It was merely a case of youth and strength with him.

When he had finished, the slaves were at once chained together, and soon after, having bidden farewell to this pretty king, the march was commenced.

There was weeping and wailing among the new-made slaves, and there was weeping and wailing among those left behind.

But what cared Mahmoud?

As they marched away, while 'Ngaloo's warlike tom-toms were beating, and his chanters sounding, a music that was almost demoniacal, the poor captives as with one accord cast a glance around them at the village – which, savage though it was, had

been their home – but which they would never, never see again. Just one wild despairing glance, nothing more. Then heavily fell the lash on the naked shoulders of the last pairs, and on they went.

“Dey come, dey come!” cried Raggy, in despair.

Yes, they were coming – Mahmoud’s caravan and his wretched slaves. They were soon in sight, looking just the same as when last seen, only with that dark and mournful chained line between the swarthy spear-armed Somalis.

Harry prayed inwardly that they might pass on. They did not, but stopped to bivouac on the old camping ground.

And yet our hero could not help admitting to himself that his adventure with the lion that had delayed his journey had really been meant for his good. It had saved his life to all appearance, for Mahmoud had returned far sooner than even Jack – who knew the road and the work before his old master – could have dreamed of.

This only proves, I think, reader, that we are shortsighted mortals, and that our prayers may truly be answered, although things may not turn out just as we would have desired them.

In the morning Mahmoud seemed in no hurry to leave, and the day wore on without very much stir in his camp. It was an anxious day for Harry and his companions, just as it had been a long and anxious night. They never knew the moment the sharp-sighted Somalis might find their trail and track them to their cave on the hill.

The recent rains alone probably prevented so great a

catastrophe, else beside that camp-fire a scene of blood would have been enacted that makes one shudder even to think about.

In the afternoon there rushed into Mahmoud's camp, wildly waving his spear aloft, one of the Somali spies. Then the commotion in the camp grew intense. Mahmoud shortly after left the place all alone, and in less than twenty minutes returned with his so-called brother Suliemon.

This very spot there was the rendezvous for these slave-dealers on their return from their expedition. Behind Suliemon came a vast crowd of chained slaves. There could not have been less than a thousand. How tired they appeared! No sooner was the order to halt given, than they threw themselves on the grass, just as weary sheep would have done returning from a fair.

There was no movement that night, so Harry and his merry men had to lie close like foxes in their lair.

Next morning, however, as early as daybreak, the whole camp was astir, and for nearly two hours the shouting and howling, the firing of guns and cracking of whips were hideous to hear. The scene near the camp-fire was like some awful pandemonium.

But by ten o'clock, as nearly as Harry could judge, every one had gone, and silence once more reigned over forest and plain.

Our hero breathed more freely now, yet it would have been madness for any of them to have ventured forth even yet. Some loitering Somali might have seen him and given instant alarm.

Strange to say, the excitement appeared to have almost restored Harry to health. He no longer felt weak, and he longed

to be away on the road again.

He knew enough of the climate, however, not to venture for a week or two longer, for a man needs all the nerve and strength that the human frame can possess to battle against the odds presented to him on such a journey as that which he was now making.

The day wore away, the sun set in a cloudscape of indescribable glory, the short twilight succeeded, then the stars peeped out through the blue rifts in the sky.

After a supper of fruit and roasted yams, Harry lay down on his couch of grass and fell into a dreamless sleep.

When he awoke, the stars were still shining and the sky was far more clear. A brightly burning scimitar of a moon was declining towards the horizon, and not far from it, to the west and north, the well-known constellation of Orion. Yonder also, blinking red and green, was the great Mars himself.

But it was not to study the stars that Harry had crept out of the tent, but to breathe fresher air, for there was no wind to-night. Not a branch stirred in the forest, not a leaf moved. The wild beasts had been scared far away, only now and then a lion roared, and the screams of the wild birds filled up the intervals. Dreadfully eerie they are to listen to on a night like this, and in such a lonely scene.

“Eeah – eee – ah – eeah – eeah – ah!” screamed one bird.

“Tak – tak – tak – tak!” – cried another.

“Willikin, willikin, willikin, willikin?” shrieked a third.

Then there are mournful unearthly yells and groans that would make the heart of a novice stand still with dread. He would feel convinced foul murder was being done in the gloomy depths of the forest. (It is possible the monkeys take their part in producing the cries one hears by night in forests of the tropics.)

But Harry could sleep no more.

The sentries were being relieved. Raggy had just turned up, and Somali Jack was about to turn in.

“Let us take a stroll down by the camp-fire,” said Harry. “I feel I must stretch my legs, night though it be.”

Together they went as far as the old camping ground, and were about to leave when a pained and weary groan fell on Harry’s ear.

He soon discovered whence it issued. From the lips of a poor half-naked dark figure, lying stabbed and dying on the grass.

All this he could see by the light of moon and stars. He sat down beside the poor creature and took his head on his lap. The white eyes rolled up towards him, the lips were parted in a grateful smile.

One word was all he said or could say.

“What is it, Jack?” asked Harry. “Interpret, please.”

“It only says thanks, sahib.”

“Run for water, Raggy.”

The dying slave boy drinks just one gulp of the water. Again the white eyes are turned towards Harry, again the lips are parted in a smile – and then he is still.

For ever still.

Perhaps it is because Harry was nervous and ill; but he cannot prevent a gush of tears to his eyes as he bends over this murdered boy.

“What a demon’s heart the man must have to commit a sin like this!”

Book Three – Chapter Six.

The Land of Depopulation – In a Beast-Haunted Wilderness – A Mystery – A Strange King

Three months have elapsed since the night Harry found the dying slave lad on the grass, near the old camp-fire Harry is as strong now as ever. Nay, he is even stronger. He has had a birthday since then, and now in his own mind calls himself a man.

He is a man in heart at all events, a man in pluck and a man in manliness.

The trio – Somali Jack, Raggy, and Harry – are very friendly now.

Only once did Jack allude to that night when they fled from Mahmoud's camp. It is in terms of admiration and in broken English.

“You give me proper trashing that night. I think I feel your shut hand on my nose now. Wah-ee! he do make him smart, and my eyes all fill with water hat hat ha!”

Yes, Jack could afford to laugh now, for Harry was not a bad master to him.

Somali Jack is happier, and, to use his own words —

“I have one stake in de world now. I all same as one Arab, I

have a soul. You, master, have said so. I believe what my master says. Of course I believe what he tell me. I not all same as one koodoo – die on de hill and rot. No, I float away, away, away, past de clouds, and past de stars to de bright land of love, where Jesu reigns. Oh yes, Somali Jack is happy and proud.”

The trio are now in an unknown land.

It might be called the Land of Depopulation, for long ago the few natives that slavery left have died or fled away. There is hardly a vestige of the remains of their villages, only here and there a kind of clearing with what appears to be a hedge around it. But if you pulled away the creepers on top of this you would find old rotten palisades – indication enough that those poor creatures had made some vain attempts at defending themselves against the inroads of the Arab invader.

Harry had not long continued in the caravan route that led to the land of the drunken king. The sights he came upon every now and then while following it were sickening. It was quite evident that of the hundred slaves whom Mahmoud had chosen, at least twenty had fallen by the way, in rather less than three weeks, and been left to perish in the bush or on the grass beneath a blazing sun.

He would have followed the more southern route, and endeavour to find out the whereabouts of his fellows, but such a proceeding would have been absurdly impracticable. A white slave is thought worth a thousand black at some of the courts of African kings. He could not have redeemed his men, and to

have attempted to rescue them in any other way would have only ended in failure, and in slavery to himself and companions. No, there was at present no hope. But he had more than one plan which he meant to try when a chance should occur.

For the three months past they had had plenty of sport, and a world of adventures far too numerous to mention. Harry, however, had only a very scant supply of ammunition, and but little likelihood of obtaining any further supply. Every cartridge was therefore carefully hoarded, and only used either for the purpose of protection against wild beasts or to secure themselves food.

As to this latter they managed in a great measure without firing a shot. For, first and foremost, Somali Jack had a most nimble way of catching fish. He did it by getting into shallow streams, sometimes diving in under the water and dragging a fish out from under bank or rock where it had sought shelter.

Then he could twine grass ropes; these were stretched along in certain likely places, near which Jack concealed himself, spear in hand, all alert and ready. The other part of this peculiar hunt was performed by Harry and the boy Raggy. They managed, and that very successfully, as a rule, to chase wild deer, of which there were so many different sorts and sizes, down towards the clever Somali. In their headlong hurry one at least was almost sure to trip over the rope and fall. In a moment Jack was up and on him, and next minute – there was something good for dinner.

I wish I could describe to you one-thousandth part of all the

curious things Harry noticed in natural history, not only among the larger animals, but among the smaller, namely, the birds, and among the smallest – the creeping creatures of the earth.

I wish I could describe to you a few of the lovely scenes he witnessed in this beast-haunted wilderness: the landscapes, the cloudscapes, the lovely sunsets, the wilderies of fruit and flower, and the scenes among the mountains, some of which, high, high up in the air, were even snow-capped, and ever at sunrise assumed that pearl-pink hue with purple shadow which once witnessed can never be forgotten in life. The scenes by river and lake were also most enchanting at times.

But do not think these wanderers had it all their own way. No, they went with their lives in their hands, and these lives were very often in jeopardy.

Poor little Raggy was once tossed by a herd of buffaloes. I say a herd of buffaloes advisedly, for really they seemed nearly all to have a fling at him. The last one pitched him up into a tree, where, for a time, he was an object of the most profound interest to a band of chattering apes. They could not conceive who or what the new arrival was, nor where he had come from.

Well, then, Somali Jack had to climb up and shake the branch to dislodge Raggy's apparently dead body, while Harry stood under to catch it and break the fall.

But Raggy was not dead. Not a bit of him; and presently he got up and scratched his poll and gazed about him like a somnambulist.

“Am de buffaloes all gone, massa?” he inquired.

“The buffaloes, Rag? Yes, and it seems to me you are made of indiarubber; why, they played lawn tennis with you.”

“Well, massa,” said Raggy, “it was some fun to de buffaloes anyhow, and it not hurt Raggy much.”

Another day Harry had narrowly escaped being killed by a rhinoceros. Quiet enough these animals are at times, but whatever other travellers may say, I advise you to keep out of their track when they lose temper.

Somali Jack was one day posted behind his rope when down thundered a small herd of giraffes. Over went number three. Out came Jack and attacked him, but, like the witch in Tam o’ Shanter —

“Little wist he that beast’s mettle.”

One kick sent Jack flying yards and yards away; the blow alighted on his chest, and, strange to say, the blood sprang from his nose and mouth.

Jack said nobody could hit so hard as a giraffe unless his master, and he never tried again to spear a —

“Roebuck run to seed.”

They had now many rivers to cross and miles on miles to walk sometimes before they could find a ford. But the current seldom ran very strong. The worst of it was that often, even after they

found the ford and got over, there was a marsh to cross, worse than any bog in old Ireland.

Many of these marshes were infested with crocodiles. Oh, how innocent these brutes can appear, basking in the sunshine on the banks, or lying in shallow streams with nothing out and up except their hideous heads!

Yonder, for example, is one immense skull, not far from the bank. He is asleep, is he not? Go a little closer. He never moves. You feel sure he is good-natured, and that the crocodile is a much-libelled reptile. Go closer still and look at him. Ugly enough he is, but so innocent-looking! You would like to smoothe him, wouldn't you, little boy?

Snap! Where are you now? It is sincerely to be hoped that your mamma has another good little boy like you to supply your place, for *you* will never be seen again.

And your great "good-natured" crocodile is very playful now, and goes away swishing through the water to tell all the other crocodiles how very happy he feels, because he has a little boy in his stomach.

They came, at length, to a range of rugged hills which it took them a whole day to get across. They encamped at night in a dreary glen, and had to keep a great fire burning until the sun rose over the mountains, for this glen seemed to be the home *par excellence* of the lions. These monsters, many of which they saw, were the largest they had yet fallen in with.

They were evidently filled with resentment at the daring

invasion of their territory, and made not only night hideous with their threatening and growling, but sleep quite impossible.

Harry was glad enough to continue the journey next day as early as possible, but they had not got far before a terrible thunderstorm made all pedal progression quite impossible for the time being. It was well they were pretty high up among the hills, for with the thunder and lightning came a wind of hurricane force; they could hear the great trees smashing in the forest beneath them, and noticed scores of wild beasts seeking sheltered corners in which to hide till the violence of the storm should abate.

Another night in this mountain forest; another night among the wild beasts.

Next day was bright and fine, but not for hours after did the sun appear, owing to the mists that were rising all over the land.

On the evening of that same day they came to the margin of what appeared at first to be a broad rolling river. There were a few native canoes on it.

One immensely large dug-out was soon observed coming towards them, so it was evident they were already seen. In the stern sheets, when it came near enough, Harry could descry a single figure sitting under the broad canopy of an umbrella.

No one else in the boat, and the figure astern not moving a muscle!

“How is it done?” said Harry to himself. “It is a mystery. Can these savages have invented electricity as a motor power?”

Nearer and nearer came the boat, but the mystery was as far from being explained as ever.

The individual who sat in the boat was a portly negro, very black, very comely and jolly-looking. He was dressed from the shoulders to the knees in a loose blue robe of cotton cloth. This appeared to be simply rolled round the loins and then carried over the shoulder. On his head he wore a skin hat with the hairy side out and a long tail hanging down behind it. Round his neck was a string of lions' tusks, in his ears immense copper rings, in one hand a broad-bladed spear, and in the other a long shield of hide studded with copper nails.

The umbrella was a fixture behind him.

While Harry and his companions were still gazing at this singular being with a good deal of curiosity, not unmixed with apprehension, the prow of the boat touched land, and immediately the motor power was explained. This was, after all, only a big hulking negro who had been wading behind and pushing with his head. He had not come here unguarded, however. For dozens of armed canoes now made an appearance, and took up a position in two rows, one at each side of what was undoubtedly the royal barge.

The king stepped boldly on shore, and nodded and smiled to Harry in the most friendly way.

"Good morning," said Harry, nodding and smiling in turn; "fine day, isn't it?"

Of course the king could not reply, but leaning on his spear he

walked three times round Harry and his companions, then three times round Harry alone. It was pretty evident he had never seen a white man before.

Then he touched Harry's clothes, and felt all along them as one smooths a dog. Then he said:

“Lobo! Lobo!” (Strange, or wonderful.)

He next proceeded to an examination of Harry's face. He wetted the end of his blue robe in the lake and tried to rub the bloom off Harry's cheeks.

“I don't paint,” Harry said, quietly.

“Lobo!” said the king again.

Harry's buttons now fixed the king's attention.

He pulled the jacket towards him and tried to cut one off with the end of his spear.

Then Harry smacked his fingers for him, and the king started back with a fierce look in his eye.

“Lobo! Lobo!” he cried, excitedly.

“Keep your fingers to yourself, then,” said Harry.

But thinking he had gone too far, he immediately cut two buttons off and presented them to this queer king.

His majesty was all smiles again in a moment. He intimated his pleasure and gratitude in a neat little speech that Harry could make neither head nor tail of, but was glad to find that little Raggy could translate it even more freely than Somali Jack.

For from somewhere near these regions Raggy had originally come. So he told Harry; he also said, “I 'spect I has a mudder

livin' hereabouts some-where's."

"Would you know her, Raggy, if you saw her?"

"I not know her from any oder black lady," replied Raggy, grandly; "sides," he added, "dis chile Raggy hab no wish to renew de 'quaintance."

The warriors in the king's canoes sat as motionless as if they had been made out of wood, and then tarred over and glued to their seats. They looked friendly, but it was quite evident they would take their cue from his majesty, and were just as ready to drown Harry in the lake as to give him a welcome.

"Peace at any price is the best policy in this case," said Harry. "Eh, Raggy, what say you?"

"Suppose massa want to fight, den Raggy fight; suppose we fight, dey gobble us all up plenty quick; suppose we not fight, den dey make much of us and give us curry and chicken."

"All right, Raggy, we'll go in for the curried chicken. Tell this sable king that we have come a long long way to see him, and to give him some presents, and that we then want to pass through his country and go on our way in peace."

All this Raggy duly translated, and Harry strongly suspected that he added a little bit of his own to it. But this is a liberty that interpreters very often take.

The king was laughing. The king was pleased. He pointed to the boat and led the way towards it and without a moment's hesitation Harry stepped on board, and in another minute they were all away out in the open lake.

Book Three – Chapter Seven.

Amazons – The Lake of the Hundred Isles – The Feast of Flowers

When the king's barge left the shore, shoved slowly along by the head of the big hulking negro, Harry, of course, had not the faintest notion whence he was being taken.

Perhaps he was just a trifle reckless. He was so at most times, but in this case I imagine he was in the right. For the worst thing one can do on meeting strange savages is to show mistrust or fear of them. If you mistrust them, they at once suspect you, and the consequences may sometimes be anything but pleasant.

It was not long before our hero found out that it was indeed a lake, and not a broad river, on which he was embarked, and that it was studded with about a hundred islands, over all of which this black host of theirs was evidently the potentate.

He landed on one of the largest of them, and on a kind of rude pier where nearly a hundred armed amazons were drawn up to receive their lord and his guests.

Harry afterwards found out that he kept ten amazons for every island, but they all lived near the royal residence, and were his especial body-guard. Fierce-looking, stalwart hussies they were, with knives in their girdles, spears in their hands, and leather-covered shields, that were nearly as big and wide as barn doors.

Over these shields they grinned and glared in a way that was really hideous. They rolled their eyes round and round incessantly, as if they had been moved like clock-work. Perhaps, thought Harry, they go in for eye-drill in this queer country. The reason of this optical movement, he was afterwards told, was to prove to the king that danger could come to him from no direction without their seeing it.

These amazons were dressed in sacks of cocoa-cloth, and wore tippets of skins not unlike those of your dandy coachmen in Hyde Park. From their legs and arms, behind and below, feathers stuck out, and as head-dresses their own hair was done up into an immense dome, which stood straight up and was adorned with the feathers of the red ibis.

All this Harry took in at a glance as he walked on behind the king, through an avenue of most splendid trees, towards his palace.

I must dismiss the palace with a single sentence. It was not unlike a haycock of immense size, with a door in the side, or like the half of a cocoanut turned upside down. It was in an enclosure, in the very middle of the island, and near it were the huts of the king's amazons, the whole being defended by a strong palisade of roughly hewn wood.

The huts of his other warriors – and every one appeared to be a warrior in this island – were outside the fort and different in shape and appearance. They were, if anything, more elaborately built, and had verandahs supporting their roofs, which only proved that

his majesty was a man of simple tastes, and preferred looking after the well-being of his subjects rather than his own.

One of the largest tents in the enclosure was set aside for Harry and his companions. It contained a dais-bed, covered with grass matting, an immense grass-stuffed pillow, and mats on the floor besides.

He had not been long in this tent ere an unarmed amazon entered, bearing a huge leafen basket, laden with the most delicious fruit, the perfume of which filled the whole room. She also brought and placed near it a huge pitcher of water.

This was all very gratifying, and Harry began to wonder where this strange king learned all his civility and hospitality, and he really felt a little sorry now that he had taken the liberty of smacking his majesty on the fingers when he was attempting to cut off a button.

“How, on the other hand,” he asked himself, “have this curious people escaped the raids and ravages of the plundering slaver Arabs?”

Perhaps the Arabs had not yet found them out, or, having found them out, deemed it impossible to attack them, so well protected were they by water.

Nothing was done to-day by Harry except to wander about all over this lovely island.

Indeed, the adjective “lovely” but poorly expresses the wealth and beauty of flower and foliage that met his gaze at every turn.

It seemed a veritable garden of Eden. It must have been miles

in extent, yet the king assured him he might wander everywhere, and he would find neither wild beast nor loathsome dangerous reptile.

His majesty went to his tent and did not appear again that day, nor was he visible until late into the next.

Harry was walking about making friends with the cocks and hens, the goats and the pigs, and with several charmingly plumaged birds of the guinea-hen species, when he was summoned into the king's presence.

The dusky monarch was seated in the middle of his tent on a mat. So black was he, and so dark was the hut, that, coming right in from the glare of the noonday sun, it was some time before Harry could see him or anything else. He heard the king's hearty laugh, however, and went towards it.

He was beckoned to a mat on the floor, and fruit was handed to him.

Then the royal host began to show all the inquisitiveness of a child, and evinced so much curiosity that Harry could not answer his questions fast enough. But he delighted him greatly by saying that at home he too lived on an island.

The king was exceedingly tickled, though, when told through Raggy that we were subjects to a queen.

He laughed so immoderately that he was obliged to lie back and roll on his mat, and for quite three minutes could say nothing but "Lobo! Lobo! Lobo!"

In the midst of all this pleasant discourse two amazons

entered, and helped the king to rise.

He said something which Raggy translated, "Come on for true."

They went on "for true," and soon found themselves in a grove and under a canopy of grass-cloth. On the green-sward they all squatted down to a banquet, the like of which Harry had not seen for many days.

It was not served on china, you may be sure, and there were no forks, only knives. The plates were of yellow-brown clay, and as soft as a brick. In the centre was a huge dish of curried rice; before each of his guests was placed a curried fowl. Then there were floury and well-cooked yams, sweet potatoes and plantains, and a large chattee of water.

Raggy ate up his fowl every bit, so did Somali Jack. Harry failed on his last drumstick, and the king laughed again, and cried, "Lobo! Lobo!"

Then there was more wandering about the island, and another banquet or fried fish and fruit on their return.

All the time Harry and Jack stuck to their rifles. One never knows what savages may turn out to be, and had anything occurred they were determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

Next day, and next, and next, were simply repetitions of the first, with this difference – that the king took his guests round his islands in his barge, rowed now by five dark-skinned boatmen on each side, and this will give you some idea of the size of it.

Every evening after supper, sitting out under the stars, the king being only dimly visible as a kind of shape, Harry had to tell stories of all the kings and potentates and countries in the world.

He got a little tired at last, and found it better and easier to invent tales of imagination, based upon the stories he had read, such as the novels of Cooper and Walter Scott, than to stick to plain geography and pure history. This pleased this strange king even better, and he was constantly saying, "Lobo!" during Harry's recitals.

I dare say, however, that Raggy, through whom, as a medium, the stories had to pass, embellished them somewhat on his own account.

Among the gifts from Somali Jack's packet that Harry presented to his majesty was a shirt and a pair of pyjamas. These he wore until they were black, albeit Harry had several times suggested that they should be washed.

A whole month flew by. Very quickly indeed the days went too, for the air made Harry lazy, and he felt as if he had eaten the lotus leaf. He roused himself at last, and, fearful that he might be outstaying his welcome, he told the king he must go.

"Go! did you not come here to stay and talk to me for ever and ever? Go! No, no! Lobo! Lobo!"

It began gradually to dawn upon Harry that he really and virtually was a prisoner in these friendly islands. He certainly could not leave them without his majesty's permission. To steal a boat and try to escape was out of the question, the amazons with

the rolling eyes would effectually prevent this.

So he stayed on quietly another month. Then, firm in the belief that a constant drop will wear away a stone, he began persistently to tease the king into letting him go on his journey.

The king would promise one day, and retract the next.

Three months passed away, then four. Harry was getting desperate. At the risk of giving mortal offence he refused to tell any more stories. And his majesty got so sad and morose that he felt grieved to see him.

“I will let you go,” he said at length, “if you will promise to return and bring me more gifts.”

Harry gladly promised that he would do everything in his power to come back that way.

The king had most minutely examined the rifles, but hitherto not a shot had been fired. Ammunition was far too valuable.

But one day Harry determined to give the king a treat. He took his rifle, and pointing to a great vulture that was slowly floating around the village, fired, and to his own surprise brought it down.

But the consternation among the natives was intense. It was a strange, superstitious dread, and if they could have turned pale with fear I feel sure they would have done so. Harry had made thunder and lightning, smoke and flame, and killed an evil bird. No wonder the king capsized on his back on the mat, and said “Lobo!” more than a dozen times!

But Harry explained everything to him, and his majesty was satisfied.

The day before Harry's departure from the Lake of the Hundred Isles was devoted to feasting and dancing. The king even proposed killing one or two of his subjects in honour of the occasion.

Harry would not hear of this.

"Well," the king said, "he would put them up at a distance, and his guest should bring them down, with his rifle."

"No, no, no," laughed Harry; "kill hens and we can eat them, but not human beings."

It was such a drowsy island this that Harry never thought of turning out of bed till about eight o'clock.

When he got up next day, and went forth to breathe the balmy morning air, the sight that was presented to him made him open his eyes wide with astonishment. It was like a scene of enchantment.

The king's hut, and every other hut, and even the palisade around this camp, was completely covered with flowers of the most gorgeous hues and sweetest perfume, while all the ground was deeply bedded with green leaves and boughs. Even the shields and spears of the amazons were decorated with flowers, and they wore garlands around their necks and heads. Near the king's tent sat a few musicians, beating low on tom-toms, and singing a dreamy kind of a chant.

It was late before the king put in an appearance; he did so at last, however, and very pleased he seemed when he gazed about him. Then his eye sought Harry's; he was anxious to know if he

was also pleased with —

The Feast of Flowers

Harry hastened to assure him that he was more than pleased, he was delighted.

Would the queen of his country be pleased if she were here? That was his next question, and he laughed as he put it till his sides shook again. The answer was, “Undoubtedly.”

I do not intend to give a complete description of all the performances of the day — they were far too numerous. Suffice it to say that there was a grand procession of warriors, headed by the flower-bedecked amazons; after the soldiers came the king’s butchers or executioners; and next a crew of naked natives, bearing a pig, a goat, and several cocks and hens for the slaughter. The goat looked rather astonished and kicked a little at times; the cocks looked boldly unconcerned; but the pig was a lusty one, he was not content with kicking and biting, but he screamed so loudly that the sound, or bleating one might call it, of the chanters was hardly heard. All this, accompanied by the beating of tom-toms and the occasional unearthly yells of the amazons, made up a concert that it is far beyond my powers of description to give the reader any correct notion of.

The animals were slain. The amazons danced around the hole into which the creatures’ blood had been poured, frequently dipping their fingers therein and besmearing their faces, which

certainly did not improve their grim beauty.

Then the procession returned to the king's enclosure, and more wild dancing was carried on, much to the delectation of his majesty.

Suddenly he wheeled round to the mat where Harry and Raggy were squatted.

“Can you dance?” said the king. “Yes, you must dance.”

When Raggy translated his majesty's words Harry could not keep from laughing aloud.

The idea, he thought, of his leading one of those bloody-faced amazons through a mazy dance, or of his dancing in her majesty's uniform to please a savage king!

“No,” he said, “he could not dance; but Raggy would.”

Raggy whispered something to his master, and the reply was

—
“So you have, Raggy; I had quite forgotten. Go and fetch it.”

Raggy was back in less than a minute with a German concertina, which he had looted from Mahmoud, and which had been intended for King 'Ngaloo.

The effect of Harry's playing on this instrument was magical. There was a half-frightened silence at first, succeeded by murmurs of delight.

“Lobo! Lobo!! Lobo!!!” cried the king, emphatically, and when Harry finished he smoothed the back of his hand with one finger, as if he had been a pet rat, and Harry could have sworn he saw tears in the poor man's eyes.

“Now, Raggy,” cried Harry, striking into a hornpipe, “now for your breakdown.”

Raggy required no second bidding, and I am sure no stage nigger ever could have gone through one half the capers Raggy did, in that wonderful breakdown of his.

During the dance the king’s face was something to behold and wonder at, his excitement was intense, and when Raggy finished he had simply to begin again. So it was “encore” and “encore” till the poor boy fairly sank on the ground panting from exertion, and the king shouted “Lobo! Lobo! Lobo! Lobo!”

To change the programme, Harry commenced to sing “Rule Britannia,” and somewhat to his surprise, while the king beat time with his hand on his knee, several of the amazons joined the chorus and actually followed the tune.

The amazons after this took chains of flowers and threw over Harry’s head till he was nearly choked.

The concert ended at last and feasting began, and after this the king was led away and deposited on a couch of leaves and flowers, and at once went off to sleep.

“And no wonder,” said Harry to himself, “for he has picked the bones of a couple of fowls, and eaten nearly half a goat.”

Next morning his majesty was up betimes, and as bright as a lark.

He was full of business. There was Harry’s boat to get ready, and also his own, for he meant to send his guest away in state.

“Ask or me anything,” he said to Harry, “and I will give it if

you promise to return.”

“I will assuredly return,” replied Harry, “if the Great Father spares me.”

“And now, when I think of it, I shall be for ever grateful to you for your hospitality. Will you add to it by lending me two of your people to help me as carriers on my march?”

The answer was made in the following way. The king ran rapidly along the ranks of his amazons, and dragged out two of the sturdiest, whom he almost flung into Harry’s arms.

Harry stepped back laughing.

“Oh, no, your majesty,” he said, “not the ladies, please.”

“Lobo! Lobo!” said his majesty.

The boat in which Harry and his companions embarked for the distant eastern shore, was bedded with beautiful flowers, and when he bade the king goodbye on the shore he took away with him three sturdy islanders to act as guides, and to help to carry his guns and packages.

These last contained a supply of rice sufficient to last the little expedition for many months.

When he reached the hill-top and looked back, lo! there on the beach still stood the honest king. Once more adieus were waved; then Harry and his people went down over the mountain side, and bore away to the West.

It was when in bivouac that night, halfway up a hill, with the moon and stars shining in a clear blue sky and brilliantly reflected in a little lake down beneath, that Harry remembered that all the

time he had been a guest of the island king, he had never spoken to either him or his people of the good tidings of the Gospel.

He felt his face burn red as he thought of his neglect. But he vowed to himself that if spared to return he would try to make amends for such thoughtlessness.

“You should sow good seed when you can,” something seemed to whisper to Harry; “the ground may be rough, the soil may be hard, but *good seed often makes good soil for itself.*”

Book Four – Chapter One.
On the War Path.
Adventure with a Python – The
Unwholesome Fen – The Village of
the Dismal Swamp – The Man-Eater

Not only as guides and carriers, but in a variety of other ways did Harry find his new men useful. They were undoubtedly honest, they were just as undoubtedly brave, and last, but not least, they were willing.

Well, they were servants and subjects of the island king, and depend upon it a good master always makes a good servant.

It was but two men that Harry desired to have lent to him, but his majesty insisted on sending three, wisely observing that while the two could carry the packages, the other could act as guide and scout.

At the time, then, that the last “act” in this tale of ours opens, Harry had already been three months on the road.

Three months only? Why it seemed like three years, so filled had the days been with toil and adventure. No wonder that Harry felt a man when he looked back to all he had come through. He had seen many strange sights, and been among many strange tribes and peoples, and yet he could have told you truthfully that

he had not as yet made an enemy. To do so needs that wonderful skill and judgment, tact and calmness of mind, which only men like Stanley and Cameron possess.

My own impression is that one is more safe among the really unsophisticated tribes of the far interior, than among those that lie more near the coast, and who have been leavened with a modicum of civilisation – and mayhap a modicum of rum. I would rather trust myself among savages who had never seen a white man before, than among the Somali Indians to the north of the line – whose tricks and manners, by the way, I have good cause to remember.

Harry inquired the names of his islanders, but found they were so difficult to pronounce, unless he tried to swallow his tongue, and screwed his mouth out of all shape, that he determined to give them English ones, so he called them Walter – the scout – and Bob and Bill – the carriers. But in the mouths of these Indians Walter became “Walda,” Bob became “Popa,” and Bill became “Peela;” so let them stand: Walda, Popa, and Peela.

They were so much alike that it was quite a long time before Harry could tell the one from the other – tell Popa from Peela, I mean.

As for Walda, though he was quite as tall, quite as straight, and every bit as jetty black as his companions, his teeth had been filed into triangles, and stained crimson by some mysterious means or other, and as he was always on the grin there was no mistaking him.

Walda had a wondrous way of his own of making his peace with native tribes. He seemed to know the whole country well, and used to run on miles in front of the company, and by the time Harry got up it was no uncommon thing to find everything prepared and ready, and even a rude tent made for the white man's reception.

So that life became now a deal easier for our hero.

Poor Walda, though, had one day a narrow escape from a most terrible death.

It was well for him that Harry and the rest of his people were near to save him.

I cannot tell you whether or not the python or marsh boa of Central Africa is a spiteful reptile, for I have never seen but one, and he made no attempt to attack me, although I stood not twenty yards away. I cannot believe all the fearful tales I have read and been told about the creature, of its enormous length – sometimes sixty feet – of its power to swallow a small bullock, and of its chasing travellers till they heard its panting behind them, and felt its fulsome breath beating warm between their shoulders. This would surely be more fearsome than any nightmare. It puts one in mind of the words of the immortal Coleridge —

“Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend

Doth close behind him tread.”

Walda was only a little way ahead of the rest on the day he was attacked by the python. Nor was it of very large size, else would I not have Walda’s adventures to write.

The guide was near a tree when suddenly, with a loud hiss, the monster sprang upon him. It seized the unfortunate man by the naked shoulder with its fangs, and, twisting its tail round a tree, commenced to roll Walda up in its coils.

His companions dropped their burdens and rushed to his rescue.

None too soon. Yet the attack and relief both together could hardly have occupied more than twenty seconds. It was evident from the quickness with which Peela and Popa commenced untwisting the coils from the tree, that they had been actors in a scene like this before. They at the same time hacked at the tail with their knives.

Meanwhile Harry had run his sword-bayonet, which luckily was fixed to the end of the rifle, through the boa constrictor’s body. Its folds were instantly released, and Walda fell forward insensible, only to be speedily dragged away by Somali Jack.

It was time for all to run now, to escape the lashings and writhings of the monster. It coiled round the tree, and uncoiled again. It lay for moments dormant, then sprang high in air.

Harry now took steady aim with his rifle and shot it through the neck, close to the head, and soon after it expired.

In journeying on and on, ever towards the west, Harry and his people had met with many a wild beast; sometimes, indeed, they were far too close to lions to feel quite at home with their position. Very few, however, fell to the guns, for the simplest of all reasons, they only fired when really obliged to.

They found themselves one day on a hill-top, overlooking a vast stretch of level country that extended towards the then setting sun as far as the eye could reach.

In some places it seemed bare and sandy, while in others there were clumps of forest trees, but for the most part it was treeless. Here and there little lakes of water glittered in the sun's parting rays, and looked like pools of blood.

It was an eerisome and ugly-looking district to cross, and Harry looked north and south in the hope of seeing hills which he might reach, and thus make a *détour* and avoid it. He consulted Walda on the subject.

But Walda shook his head.

"No, no," he said; "no way round. Must cross."

They entered on this dismal swamp early next morning.

It appeared like going down into a black and dreary ocean, and Harry could not help a feeling of hopelessness and melancholy stealing over him before he had walked for an hour, and the farther on he went the more gloomy and depressed in spirits did he become.

Perhaps this was the effects of breathing the tainted and unwholesome air.

“Why am I toiling and moiling here,” he asked himself peevishly, again and again, “when I might be far away and happy? This is no pleasure,” he said, half aloud; “better by far I were dead.”

Then he remembered he had a duty to perform – that of endeavouring to find out and rescue his poor men.

But was he doing it? No, he was only bent on his own pleasure and enjoyment. Enjoyment indeed! He was a fool for his pains, and a great sinner besides. What were his parents doing all this weary time? The *Bunting* must be home long ago. And he would have been given up for lost. They must have thought the dhow foundered at sea, or been lost among the breakers and every one drowned. Well, then, if he was given up for lost, the bitterness of his mother’s grief must already be nearly assuaged. What mattered a year or two more of wandering? He *would* wander. He *would* find his men or perish in the attempt. So ran his thoughts.

And thus moodily, and half angrily, did Harry muse as he marched over the dismal waste at the heels of his faithful guide Walda.

It was not easy walking here either; there were darksome murky pools to go round, and brown unwholesome streams to wade through.

Nothing could have been more depressing than the view around him, look where he would.

As far as wild beasts were concerned, the dismal swamp was untenanted. Here were no lordly elephants, no sturdy

rhinoceroses, no giraffes towering in their strength, nor deer, nor gnu, nor hartbeeste, nor the herds of swift-footed ambling zebras they had been so used to behold.

But in the great pools, and in the sluggish mud-stained streams, wallowed crocodiles more large and loathsome than Harry could have imagined even in his dreams, while often several of these at one time could be seen on the banks huddled together asleep or basking in the sunshine.

They walked onwards as fast as they could, hardly pausing to eat, but there seemed no end to the horrible fen. It seemed to Harry as if he was bound to go on, and still go on, but never come to anything.

The sun began to set at last, glaring purple through a watery-looking sky.

There was nothing for it but sleep in the swamp till another day dawned. Harry and his men now sought the shelter of a clump of stunted trees which they reached after some difficulty.

While daylight lasted they were careful to beat the bush well before they thought of lighting the camp-fire, for close under the trees in places like this the giant anaconda or python often lies coiled up till roused to fury by the presence of man or other animals.

The sun went down, and gloaming and gloom settled down over the marsh. The very stars seemed to give a feebler light than was their wont, for their rays were shorn by a rising haze.

It took quite a long time to-night to light the camp-fire, for

the materials had got damp.

The process of making fire is very simple to appearance, but requires no little skill; it is, however, common among nearly all savage nations, and my readers may, if they please, try their hands at it. Suppose yourself a savage and have another savage to assist you. Well, you are possessed of a round piece of hard dry wood about the length but not nearly so thick as an ebony ruler, it is tapered to a point at one end. Your companion savage sits in front of you holding firmly a bit of softer wood, flat at the bottom for steadiness' sake, and with a little hole in the top. Into this hole you insert the point of your hard wood drill, then you have only to roll it rapidly back and fore between your two palms, till sparks are emitted and smoke, then fanning or blowing with your breath, and partially surrounding the hole with dried meadow grass, or anything that will catch easily, will do the rest. If you try it, I hope you will be successful; I myself lack two important essentials to success – patience and dexterity.

But Jack and the guide “made fire” at last, and supper was cooked and eaten.

During the time it was being got ready Harry had taken a little walk in the dim starlight. He did not go far, for he soon got into a miry place. Here he almost trampled upon a gigantic eel creature – it could hardly have been a snake – it was slowly dragging its body through the slime.

While he was looking at it there was the sound of wings in the sky right above him. It was a great vulture of some kind:

birds of this kind are scarcely ever a mile distant from a party of African travellers, and have the lion's share of all that is killed. The flapping of wings was very loud and accompanied by a rustling noise; so close overhead was it that he could hear it breathe hoarsely – so at least he thought. But hardly had he turned away ere the great bird swooped down, and next moment it had re-ascended carrying the great eel with it. Seeing the latter, though but for a moment, wriggling in the talons of the unclean bird was quite enough for Harry. He walked no farther that way, but speedily returned to the camp.

The fire and his supper rendered him a shade more comfortable; his people went into the wood to collect dry material to make their master a bed. They beat the grass first with their spears before they ventured to put their hands down, for several deadly-looking, triangular-headed snakes had been seen before sunset, rustling through the undergrowth or hanging to the branches of the trees.

Harry lay down at last, but he slept but little. How could he in such a place, with the horrid bellowing of crocodiles ever and anon rising on the night air, the intervals being filled up with the continuous hoarse snoring of some creatures in the marsh, probably gigantic frogs! (*Dactylathrae*.)

Next morning there was no chance of proceeding so early as they had wished, for all the swamp was enveloped in a dark grey fog or mist, and it was nearly noon before the sun had succeeded in dispelling it.

On they journeyed now, happy to be able to start at last, for Harry shuddered to think what the consequences would be if the mist did not lift for days.

They had not gone above five miles ere a village came into view.

Harry made Raggy ask the guide why he had not mentioned the existence of this town.

The guide only shook his head and said —

“No good – no good.”

The place was built among trees, palms there were of many strange kinds, and an undergrowth of broad-leaved plantains and gigantic feathery ferns, but some of the trees were so weirdly fantastic in shape that in his present depressed state of mind they pained Harry to look at.

The ground here was somewhat higher, but it certainly was no oasis in a desert.

If Harry expected his spirits to rise on entering this village he was soon undeceived. It was the abode *par excellence* of gloom and misery.

The leaf-built huts were mere kennels, the people themselves were black, naked, decrepit, and puny, and the very children were paunchy and old-looking.

Not a sign of welcome did they make, not the slightest show of resistance; they but gazed on the expedition as it passed along with the lack-lustre eyes of chronic apathy.

It was evident that here was a tribe or people slowly but surely

dying off the face of the earth. Harry soon found that they were cannibals, and that they actually ate their dead. They had no king, no law, no order; they were socialists, nihilists, and soon, doubtless, to be annihilated.

Harry sought out an open space under the shelter of a splendid spreading tree.

This tree was really a thing of beauty. It was larger than any oak, and its branches were literally bathed in the beauty of trailing flowers, while colonies of bees and birds made sweet soft music in its foliage. Harry thought if he was a bird, it would not be anywhere near this village he would build his nest and make his home.

Presently a native or two came round and stood up to stare, and after a time one with more alacrity than the rest brought some squash-apples and a chattee of beautiful honey.

There was something human after all even in this degraded race. Harry did not care to eat honey from the hands of a cannibal, so he gave it to his people.

The intelligent native soon squatted down beside Raggy, and from his rolling eyes and woebegone face it was evident he was telling the boy a dismal story.

“What is it, Raggy?” said Harry.

“Ebery night, sah, it is de same,” replied Raggy. “He come now foh more’n tree week, and ebery night he take somebody.”

“What are you driving at, boy?”

“De lion, sa! De lion what come here ebery night, gobble

up some poor soul, den smack his lips and go away back to de jungle.”

Now though much against his inclination, Harry had not the heart to go away and leave this wretched tribe to the mercy of a relentless man-eater.

This lion was evidently some very old and wily king of the forest, too old to stalk bigger game. In this village he had “struck oil,” as the Yankees say, and was making the very best of it.

Harry determined to “spoil his game.”

All day he wandered about this swamp-island, wondering at the beauty of the flowers and the richness of their perfume, and admiring the many strange birds and their nests.

When night began to fall he prepared to watch for the foe.

The lion invariably walked on to the stage at the same spot. When shown this, to his horror he found a poor boy there tied to a stake, agony depicted in his staring eyes, and the sweat standing in beads on his brow and dragging his curly hair.

The poor lad was a sop for Cerberus, and every night it seemed to be the custom thus to sacrifice one poor victim to save others in the village. Whether they drew lots for it, or how it was arranged, Harry could not find out.

There was little fog here to-night, but it lay low down all over the marsh, which thus looked like one vast sheet of water glimmering in the starlight. Harry lay in concealment behind a tree, the two rifles loaded and ready, with Jack, Raggy, and the guide spear-armed and not far off.

He had released the boy, who looked quite bewildered on first gaining his freedom, but soon regained his presence of mind, and went off scampering and shouting into the village.

Hours and hours passed by.

Harry was often startled by noises above him, and looking up saw gigantic bats flitting from tree to tree.

Would the lion never come?

Hark! a footstep deep down in the marsh; soft though it was, it could be heard distinctly enough creeping nearer and nearer, pausing often as if to listen, then coming on and on again through the rustling grass.

At last he is in sight.

A monster white-muzzled he-lion.

For a moment he stands 'twixt Harry and the starlight.

Our hero's hand is shaking. All his nerves are a-quiver, for truth is he is far from well, and the night air is damp and chilly.

Will he miss? The starlight is confusing.

He takes steady aim and fires.

The lion stands erect roaring, maddened with pain.

Quick as a thought Harry seizes the other rifle, and while the lion is still half erect fires again, and the man-eater staggers forward, falling first on his knees, then on his nose, and there remaining – dead.

Harry was a god now in the eyes of these poor people.

In the midst of a large clearing in this swamp-island stood a strange forked, withered tree. Up in this tree a fire was built and

lit. Into the open space the dead lion was dragged, and with many an eldritch shout and scream, for hours and hours these savages danced round the dead lion, and the fire that burned in the tree-top.

But Harry was glad when morning came, and happy indeed when next evening he found himself once more among the tree-clad mountains with the marsh far in the rear.

When he lay down to sleep that night he tried to think of the lake with its hundred isles, and of the feast of flowers, but even in his dreams he was haunted by the scenes he had recently passed through, and —

The Village in the Dismal Swamp

Book Four – Chapter Two.

Weary Wanderings – Prisoner in a Savage Land – The Escape by Night – Down with Fever in the Marsh

Nearly a whole year has passed away since the events described in last chapter, and the wayward, wandering Harry has seen many strange sights, had many a wild adventure, and been among many strange tribes and peoples.

He would hardly have travelled so far, he would have returned much sooner towards the east had he not been following up a will-o'-the-wisp. For again and again he was told by natives with whom he came in contact of white men who were held captive by kings of tribes, sometimes it would be to the north, at other times to the south or to the west.

He hoped against hope, and never failed to hunt up these tribes, but disappointment had always been his lot.

So, tired and disheartened at last, he had determined to return, and to strike once more for the lake of the hundred isles.

This returning, however, was not such an easy matter as he had anticipated. For in journeying westwards he found the chiefs with whom he came in contact not unwilling to let him go onwards because he assured them he was coming back. This, and gifts

of buttons, etc., procured him liberty to advance, though several times he had to fall back on his rifle, and usually succeeded in scaring warlike chieftains out of their wits.

But on his way back every effort was made to detain him as a slave till he should die, or, as the kings phrased it, “for ever and for ever.”

All this resulted in very slow progress indeed in his backward journey, and constituted a far greater danger than even that from wild beasts.

As an instance of how quickly an African chief can change his tactics, I may tell you of a really warlike tribe whom Harry encountered, who dwelt among the hills in the middle of a vast forest land.

At first the chief of this clan hardly knew how kind to be to Harry and his people. He fêted them and feasted them, brought presents of roasted goat-flesh, of honey, fruit, and of cocoanut beer. Harry much preferred the feasts to the fêtes, for these hardly ever passed without a human sacrifice. He could not tell whether the victims were political offenders or not.

However that may be, had the doomed wretches been simply beheaded it would not have been so awful, but they were first tortured.

In one instance a living chain was made by tying seven unhappy beings head to heels. The tallest branch of a kind of lithe poplar tree was then by great force bent to the ground. To this the living, writhing chain was attached; the branch was then

let suddenly free, and up the victims swung.

It is to be hoped they did not suffer long, but they appeared to.

I would not horrify my young readers by describing the orgies that took place at some of those dreadful fêtes. The little I have said will surely suffice to make them thank God they are born in a favoured land, and to pray the Father to hasten the time when the dark continent shall be opened up to commerce, and all such dreadful scenes become things of the gloomy past.

But this chief, when he found that Harry was determined to go, turned his back upon him, and went and shut himself up for a whole day in his tent.

The wanderer well knew what this meant. He knew the chief would send for him next day and give him an ultimatum, and on his refusing compliance therewith would at once slay his followers and put Harry in chains.

But Harry determined to take time by the forelock, and to escape that very evening.

He communicated his intentions to his people, and all were ready. No one slept, though all pretended to.

The night was very dark; a storm was brewing; the sky was covered with a deep, solid canopy of slowly moving clouds, but never a star was visible.

About midnight, when all was still in the camp, Harry arose and touched his men. They knew the signal. He then crawled to the back of the tent and with his knife cut a hole in it and crept out. On their hands and their knees they glided along till they

came to the palisade, which they proceeded to mount one by one.

Here lay the greatest danger, and this was soon apparent enough, for the last man stumbled, and slight though the sound he made was, it was quite sufficient to awake the whole camp.

As the fugitives bounded away to the forest Harry thanked Heaven for the darkness of that dismal night.

They could soon hear the yells of the foe as they pressed onwards in pursuit.

They would reach the shelter of the trees in another minute, but one dark form was before all the rest, and was nearing on the guide when Harry fired.

It was a random shot, but the savage fell: the first man that Harry had killed in Africa, and he felt grieved, but still it was in self-defence.

They found themselves in a ravine, and crossed the stream at a place where, from the noise it made among the stones, they could tell it was not deep.

Now the road lay along this glen – such road as it was – but the fugitives went straight on up the mountain side. The hills here were fully three thousand feet high, but they reached the top at last, and felt safe, for far down beneath them, but well up the glen, they heard the shouts of the chief's people and knew they were off the scent. Then the storm came on, and such a storm! From hill to hill and from rock to rock the thunder rattled and reverberated, while as for the lightning the whole world seemed to be on fire.

Down below them in the forest the scene was singularly grand, for by the light of the flashes they could see each moment the giant tree-tops stand out as clear and distinctly as at midday. Anon they would find themselves blinded or dazzled for a moment, everything about them being either a dark bright blue, dotted with sparks, or a blood-red or crimson.

The very hills on which they stood appeared to shake beneath their feet.

Then came the rain; it descended in streams, and made every one shiver, so ice-cold was it.

But in less than an hour this strange but fearful storm had passed away on the wings of a moaning wind, and the stars shone forth.

They found a cave in which to rest that night, and next day continued the journey through the forest.

To his change of raiment, despite the modest demands of many a savage chief or king, Harry had resolutely stuck, so he did not suffer from the drenching.

Yes, he had a change of raiment, but not one single button or inch of gold lace on his uniform jackets.

Both buttons and lace had long since been gifted away.

About this stage of his wanderings Harry was as tough in muscle as if he had been made of guttapercha, while his hands and face were of a colour somewhat between brick-dust and bronze.

Another month found the little band back once more in the

village of the dismal swamp.

The poor creatures there seemed, if anything, glad to see them. On making inquiry, it was found that no more lions had sought to molest them since the man-eater had been shot.

Harry rested here a night, resolving to push on next day, and by a forced march get quite clear of the marsh.

But lo! next day not only the swamp but the village itself was enveloped in a dark, wet mist, and the day wore away without the sun once appearing.

“No good, no good,” was the answer of the guide to Harry’s repeated queries whether it was not possible to make straight headway in spite of the fog.

“No good, no good.”

And the next day showed no improvement nor the next week even.

The outlook was now very dreary indeed.

To make matters worse, the hopelessness of his situation brought a prostration of mind and body, and the hardships and privations he had undergone in his wanderings began to tell upon Harry.

Besides, there was the dread marsh miasma to be breathed day after day, while the very appearance and dejectedness of the people he found himself among was not calculated to mend matters. He found himself growing ill, he struggled against it with all the force of his mind. But alas! a struggle of this kind is like that of floundering in a miry bog – the more you struggle the

deeper you sink.

One morning, after a restless night of pained and dreamful slumber, Harry found himself unable to rise from his couch of grass under the flower-clad, creeper-hung baobab tree.

He was sick at heart, racked with pain in every limb, and oh, *so* cold.

The cold was worse to bear than anything, yet his pulse was bounding along, his skin was hot, and his brow was burning.

Before night he was delirious – dreaming of home, raving in his waking moments about his father, his mother, about Andrew, and Eily, the forest of Balbuie, and the far-off Highland hills.

No nurse could have been kinder to Harry than Somali Jack, no one more attentive than he and Raggy.

Even in this strange swamp-island Jack managed to find herbs, and exercised all his native skill to bring his patient round.

But nights went by, and days that were like nights to Harry, and he grew worse and worse.

At last even Somali Jack gave up all hope.

“Master will never speak again. Master will never shoot and never fight again,” he said, mournfully, “till he shoots and fights in the land beyond the clouds.”

Jack sat down and gazed long and intently at Harry, whose jaw had dropped, and whose breath came in long-drawn sighs or sobs.

He lay on his back, his knees half drawn up, and his hands extended on the grass.

For a long, long time Somali Jack sat looking mournfully at his master; then he seemed to lose all control of himself: he threw out his arms, fell down on his face on the ground, and sobbed as though his heart were breaking.

Book Four – Chapter Three.
Back Again at the Hundred Isles
– The King as a Nurse – Harry
Tells the Story of the World –
News of the “Bunting’s” Men
– Preparing for the War-Path

But the worst was past, and the fever had spent itself before the dawn of another day; even the terrible marsh miasmata had been repelled by the strength and resiliency of Harry’s constitution.

He was weak now, very. But he was sensible and able to swallow a little honey and milk, that Jack had culled and drawn with his own hands.

And that day, lo! the sun again shone out, the birds that had been mute for weeks once more remembered their low but beautiful songs, and surely in this swamp-island never did the wealth of flowers that grew everywhere put forth a more dazzling show. Twisted and pinched they had been while the dank fog hung over them, but now they opened in all their wild wanton glory, and vied with each other in the brightness of their colours, their vivid blues, whites, pinks, and crimsons, and velvety sulphurs, and chocolate browns.

They grew up over the trees, borne aloft on climbing stems, they canopied the bushes, they carpeted the ground, and hung their charming festoons round the fruit itself.

But yet in spite of all this wealth of beauty Harry longed to be off, and almost the first words he spoke, though in a voice but little louder than a whisper, were —

“Take me away. Take me away out of here.”

Those words made Somali Jack and Raggy very happy, and even the other boys were rejoiced, for truth to tell, they all dearly loved their brave young master.

All that day Jack and his comrades were very busy indeed. They were making an ambulance hammock. When complete it was simplicity itself.

Only a couple of strong bamboos of great length, and between them a sheet of grass-cloth, add to this a rude pillow stuffed with withered moss, and the whole is complete.

It was a long and a slow journey which they started on next morning, before even the stars had paled before the advancing beams of the sun. But ere ever he had set behind the western hills it had been safely accomplished.

And so by degrees, as Harry's strength could bear it, stage after stage of the return march was got over and at length, to the invalid's inexpressible joy, they arrived once more at the banks of the lake of the hundred isles. Walda quickly gathered together an immense heap of withered grass, and quickly had it on flame; then he put on top of it green branches, so that a dense volume

of white-blue smoke rose up on the evening air.

They saw it from the king's island.

King Googagoo – they have strange names, these chiefs of the interior, the repetition of syllables and even words in names is very common – King Googagoo himself came to meet Harry in his barge, but he brought no retinue. He was a very simple king.

As soon as he landed Walda, Peela, and Popa went and threw themselves on their faces in front of his majesty, burying their knives in the earth as they did so. Nor did they rise until he had thrice touched each one with the flat of his spear.

He now went speedily towards Harry, and scanned him very anxiously.

Harry smiled feebly, and held out a hand which the king took and pressed.

“My son has been ill,” he said, “my son has been at the door of the cave of death. No matter, he lives; my son will soon be well. The king will make him well; he shall eat honey and milk, and drink of the blood of she-goats until he is once more strong.”

When landed at the island, the king led the way to his own tent, and Harry was brought here and laid on a bed or dais covered with lions' skins.

As he shivered with cold, a fire was lit in the middle of the floor. The smoke found its way up almost spirally, and out through a hole in the roof, over which was placed a triple fan kept in constant motion by slaves without.

Another warm lion's skin was spread over Harry, Somali Jack

prepared him a decoction of boiled milk mixed with honey and some pleasant bitter herb. After swallowing this Harry remembered seeing the king squatting on a mat by the fire, and his own boys in a corner; he noticed that whenever any one entered the tent his majesty lifted a beckoning finger, warning them to keep silence. He remembered little more that day, for he fell into a soothing perspiration, and soon after into a deep and dreamless sleep.

It was broad daylight when he wakened, and he felt so much better that he even attempted to rise. It was then he noticed how feeble and weak he was.

Whether or not the bitter medicine mingled with the warm and honeyed milk partook of the nature of an opiate or not, Harry had no means of ascertaining, but for nearly three days he did little else but sleep – and perspire during the intervals of taking nourishment.

He was aware, however, that the great kind-hearted king was almost constantly in the tent, and that he moved about on tiptoe, and talked in whispers, never failing to lift his finger and shake it at any one who entered.

Sometimes an amazon came in and looked at Harry, then smiled a grim smile and retired, and once a terrible-looking old man with triangular teeth like Walda's put in an appearance. He had a fowl in his arm, which after many strange antics – that showed he was working a fetish – he slew. He then dipped his finger in the blood and smeared Harry's forehead.

After this another fowl was brought to him, and he then made motions with his hand and arm over the patient, of a semi-mesmeric kind, or as if he were drawing something invisible towards the fowl in his arms. The latter was immediately after chased out of the tent, and from the noise out of doors it was evidently being hunted out of the enclosure entirely.

Next morning a cocoanut shell full of pure warm blood was handed to him; this was not unpleasant to drink, and was repeated three times a day, and day after day for a week. (The blood-cure is not unknown in Europe, but I believe some of the African tribes used it ages and ages ago. – G.S.)

Every hour now, almost, Harry felt himself getting stronger. He was soon able to sit up for hours, then the king exhibited all the exuberant joy of a child of six. With his own hands he brought his patient a small dish of delightfully curried chicken and rice, and as Harry ate it King Googadoo laughed till his black, fat sides shook again.

With returning health came returning hope and happiness, and when, leaning on the king's arm, Harry made his first venture out of doors it seemed for all the world like going into a new world. Everything was so inexpressibly bright and lovely, the drooping palm trees, the banana groves the greenest of the green, the splendid flowers that grew everywhere, the bright-plumaged birds, the cloudless sky, the blue and placid lake, and the purple hills on the far horizon. It was all like a beautiful dream, it was all a scene of enchantment, and to breathe the balmy air was verily

life itself.

How grateful he felt to this simple-minded king; ah! yes, and how grateful to the Great Father above, who had spared his life, and brought him safely through countless dangers.

Harry soon found the air was almost too strong for him, it flushed his cheeks and quickened his breathing, so he retired again, and was almost immediately after asleep on his lion-skin couch.

Next evening a hammock was slung for him near the fire, and lying there he found himself strong enough to entertain the king with a little music on the concertina, which “through thick and thin” Raggy had kept possession of.

Only some sweet old-fashioned Scottish lilt he played, but they pleased his majesty immensely, and after each he rubbed his hands and said, “Lobo! Lobo! Lobo!”

Could Harry now tell him more of the story of the world?

Yes, Harry could and would. He laid the concertina gently down by his side, and, turning half round to where the king was squatting, began to tell him through Raggy the simple Bible story of the creation.

Raggy had heard it all before, and was quite capable of translating it.

Next night Harry was even stronger; King Googagoo brought into the tent quite a crowd of his favourite amazons, and the young historian had to begin at the beginning again.

To have seen the boy preacher leaning half up in his hammock

as he told in earnest language his wondrous tale, and the innocent looks of the simple king with the firelight playing over his face, and the background of terrible-looking but listening amazons, would have suggested a picture to many an artist which might have made him famous.

The story of Joseph seemed, next to that of Eden's garden, particularly to interest his hearers, and many an interjection, many a marvelling "Lobo?" did the king utter while Harry spoke through Raggy.

His remarks, too, were innocent, not to say childish, but very much to the point.

Almost every night for weeks Harry had to tell the Bible and New Testament tale. And one day, when now nearly strong again, he was gratified to find the king himself repeating the story to his people.

And they seemed spellbound.

Harry determined to make the islands his home for many months to come.

Meanwhile scouts were employed to scour the country in many different directions, and endeavour if possible to find out the whereabouts or news at least of the white men.

For a very long time they were unsuccessful. At last, however, much to Harry's joy, one man returned, bringing with him a vague rumour that he had heard of five men belonging to a foreign country, who lived at the court of a chief not very far from the lakes, but in the fastnesses of a mountain-studded wilderness.

So fierce and terrible was this chief reported to be that no one would dare to enter his territory. If any one did – so it was said – he would assuredly be crucified, or hoisted by the heels into a sapling tree, there to hang in the sun until the great grey kites ate the flesh from off his bones.

News of an equally important nature was soon after brought by another and probably braver scout. He *had* entered the chief's wild country, he had even seen and conversed with one of the white men, and found out that there were six more in captivity, and that until now they had given up all hopes of ever being able to regain their freedom.

King Googagoo was as much delighted with the news as was Harry.

And the king, moreover, now showed all the fierce impetuosity of his nature.

He smote the ground with the staff of his spear.

“I will go,” he cried, “with all the strength of my amazons and fight this king, and deliver your friends from bondage.”

But Harry saw that whatever was to be done must be done with care and caution. For failure would mean the death – probably by torture – of the unfortunate white captives.

To please King Googagoo he at once accepted his assistance, but said they must prepare.

“All the men of war and all the amazons,” replied the king, “are at your disposal. You have brought everlasting joy to my heart, do with us what you will.”

Harry at once set about operations. He held a great review in one of the largest islands. Every man, he found, was a soldier, but they were sadly deficient in armour of an effective kind. Spears there were, though, in abundance – nothing else save these and knives.

Then it occurred to Harry to regularly drill them as sailors are drilled on shore, in companies, in squares of various kinds, and in battalions or – impis.

He guessed, rightly too, that the fine old Highland triangle-formation would do well with these people³. So he taught them that.

But his teaching did not end here. He must furnish his little army with some weapon far more effective than either dagger or spear; so he set himself to think.

How he wished he had but a hundred rifles and ammunition! But wishes in this case were vain enough.

Why not bows and arrows?

Why not, indeed. The idea struck him as he lay in bed one night, and so excited him that he did not steep a wink till nearly sunrise.

He was up betimes all the same, and made haste to communicate his notion to the king.

His majesty was delighted, as, indeed, he was with all Harry's

³ The Scottish Highlanders of old used almost invariably to charge in this fashion; as the triangular phalanx neared the foe, pistols were fired, then dashed among them, claymores were then drawn, and while wild slogans rent the air, the charge was delivered, with a vigour and aim that made success all but certain.

proposals. So that very day a branch was cut from a species of yew-tree, and with the aid of a string composed of hide the first rude bow was made.

This was improved upon day after day. The king's forgemen and artificers were summoned, and after many trials of different kinds of wood for the bows and for the arrows, a very useful and very deadly kind of Cross-bow was eventually fashioned and duly approved of by the king.

The arrow-heads presented the greatest difficulty, but this was finally got over, and they fell upon a plan of not only forging good serviceable, ones, but of fastening them on so that the arrow itself would break before the head could come off.

King Googagoo's, people now went in for the study of war in downright earnest, and gradually the army was supplied with finely-made cross-bows.

Many months went on in these preparations. Meanwhile the arts of peace were not forgotten. Googagoo's men were very far ahead of any other tribe that ever Harry in his wanderings had met, in the pursuits of agriculture. There grew on many of the islands immense fields of paddy, or rice, and fields of sugarcane, all of which were duly hoed with hard wood instruments, and duly watered by hand in season.

They were so close to the water, and there were so many field hands, that any complicated system of irrigation was not required.

Harry taught this simple, innocent and frugal people many

useful hints.

His youthful education, and the lessons honest Andrew had taught him when quite a boy, now came in very handy indeed, which only shows that no lad, whatever his position in life, should hesitate to learn a trade.

Harry, assisted by Raggy and Jack, made chairs for the king's tent, and an extra couch. He also made rude but useful candlesticks, and with the fat of goats and pigs rude and useful candles to place in them; so that when the rainy season returned, it was quite a treat to sit in the palace tent with lights burning, and read, tell stories, and sing songs till it was time to go to bed.

The king was so easily pleased, so good-tempered, and so generally jolly, that Harry really could not help liking him.

He also proved a very apt pupil, and before his guest had been fully four months in his island, could speak fairly good English.

So all went well, but the trouble was on ahead. Harry often thought of that, and it gave him many and many an anxious moment.

One day a scout returned from the mainland with news of so startling a nature that – that I cannot do better than defer it for another chapter.

Book Four – Chapter Four.

King Kara-Kara’s Armada – The Battle on the Lake – Terrible fighting

Briefly stated, the news which the scout had brought from the mainland was to the effect that King Kara-Kara, who held the white men at his court as slaves, having heard of the prosperity and wealth of the king of the hundred isles, and that he also owned a white slave, had determined to invade the island territory.

From the hill-top, at a safe distance, this scout had beheld Kara-Kara’s camp with his own eyes, and he assured King Googagoo that the army was a well-armed and a vast one, and that they were already busily engaged in cutting down trees and making dug-outs.⁴

“So,” said Harry, “the tables are turned. Instead of our making war on Kara-Kara, Kara-Kara is going to make war upon us.”

“Let them come,” replied Googagoo, “I care not; you have taught me to put my trust in Heaven. I do so, and feel sure that the Great Eye which looks upon us from beyond the clouds, will keep us safe and give us the victory.”

Although there were now thunderstorms and rain almost every

⁴ Dug-out – a kind of large canoe made from a single tree hollowed by hatchet and fire.

day, Harry made himself busier with his little army than ever.

He picked out the best, quickest, and boldest men for officers – and I need hardly say that both Walda and Somali Jack had high appointments – and he kept drilling the men and amazons from morning till night.

Nor did he forget the commissariat This was to be very simple – little else, in fact, save dates and rice and water.

Often now of a night great fires could be seen gleaming among the wooded hills on the distant horizon, showing plainly enough that King Kara-Kara's men were far from idle.

So the time wore on, and the wet season passed; the lake was no longer lashed into foam by driving squalls, but slept as peacefully under the blue sky as if waves had never yet been invented.

Harry was now wholly ready for action, and he had almost made up his mind to carry the war into the enemy's country before he had time to attack the islands.

The king and he had a long palaver over the particulars of this plan. His majesty had very great faith in his navy.

“My boys,” he said, “can fight as well on the water as they and my brave amazons can do on shore. Let them come. We will cripple them, sink them, then the work of utterly destroying them on their own shore will be easy indeed.”

Harry, on second thoughts, would have preferred surprising Kara-Kara by night, but he acquiesced in the king's wishes.

They would be ready, therefore, and wait. How or when would

the enemy come? By night or by day? and in what formation?

Tall signal-posts were built on every island, to give warning of the approach of the foe, and round every isle sentinels were stationed day and night, with great fires built and ready to light.

For there was no saying from what direction the attack might be made. In all probability they would steal round the lake under the shadow of the land, and under the cover of the darkness, and attack Googagoo at the place where he was most vulnerable.

More than once, in the starlight, small canoes had been detected gliding about at night, but were speedily chased and put to flight. They were spies without a doubt.

The island fleet had been by no means a first-class one, consisting for the most part of large dug-outs with outriggers, like great gates at each side. This last certainly gave them extra stability and prevented their turning over, but it greatly lessened their speed.

Even the flagship, which the king's barge might well be called, was rather an unwieldy craft. She was the only one that had sailing power, and that was merely a clumsy square sail, on one centre mast.

But Harry had gone in for naval reform – as far as practicable, and with all the enthusiasm of a British sailor.

He had the men – for every one of these islanders was amphibious in a manner of speaking – what he wanted was the ships.

Some new boats were accordingly made of a light wood that

had been cut down years ago. He made these broader in the beam, so that he managed to dispense with the abominable way-stopping outriggers. Seven in all of these were constructed, the bottoms being made shapely and smooth, the sides light and thin, and the whole arrangement capable of double the speed.

These new boats were to contain a crew of picked archers, the very best shots in his little army, which consisted of eight thousand men all told. There were also one thousand amazons.

Harry, in the forthcoming expedition to the mainland, wanted to leave these women folks – “leave the ladies” – that is how he politely worded it – at home. But the king, who was to command in person, would not hear of such a thing. They were his body-guard, and so go they must.

Attention was now turned to the royal barge, and she lay bottom upwards for a week to be strengthened by skin and pieces of thin iron, so that when she was again launched, she looked a sturdy, useful craft indeed.

Extra oars or paddles were placed in every war-boat, and spears and daggers innumerable.

Between a few of the islands, and quite out of view of the enemy, a great naval review was held, and everything passed off in a most satisfactory way.

Still, by taking away the outriggers Harry had considerably increased the risk of capsizing in his boats. So he took the matter into still more serious consideration, the result of which was that he constructed a small fleet of special war-boats, each one

consisting of two of the ordinary dug-outs lashed together side by side, and he found to his great joy that even these had as much speed in them as the clumsy outrigger canoes.

The islanders were now ready for battle either by land or water.

Scouts were sent to the hills to spy out the doings of the enemy.

They returned with tidings to the effect that they had over two hundred large dug-outs afloat, and that each of these had outriggers. That their army consisted of nearly 20,000 warriors, armed with spears, and clubs, and broad knives.

It was only a question now of time, so Harry waited. He himself was to command in the naval engagement, the king would be otherwise engaged as we shall presently see.

Whether it was that King Kara-Kara did not possess much ingenuity, or was a staunch Conservative of the old school, or trusted entirely to his great numbers and power, I know not; certain it is, however, that he chose to make the attack upon the islanders in the simplest fashion possible.

He put to sea one morning early with all his fleet of over one hundred and fifty large boats, each containing about twenty oarsmen and warriors, and in three extended lines began slowly pulling towards Googagoo's private island.

Harry saw through his tactics at once, for after all war is very much like a game of draughts, and skill goes a long way, while the more you can guess your opponent's thoughts the surer you are of victory: so Harry rightly guessed that Kara-Kara's plan of

action was first to capture the island king's palace and stronghold, king and all, then take the other islands one by one.

"It is a very pretty arrangement," said Harry to his host, "if it can be successfully carried out."

"Let them try," cried the king, who was dressed in his war clothes, with spear, and sword, and short stout battle-axe, and really looked imposing.

"Let them come on; I am now burning for the fight."

"So am I," cried Harry, laughing and spitting in his hand – the hand that held a drawn ship's cutlass.

"I go away into my tent now to pray," continued the king. "Then I make my army kneel and pray. Oh, I do not fear. See, the clouds are rolling up and hiding the sun. The sun fears to look on the battle: but the Eye, the Eye that will guide us to victory, is far beyond the sun. Your Book tells me so."

"It is," said Harry, solemnly. "Good-bye."

Then he shook hands with the king and hurried away to action.

He had had a skiff of great speed built expressly for this great day. His oarsmen were two, with a child to steer, and Somali Jack with the rifles in the stern sheets.

There were only fifty cartridges left!

On came Kara's great fleet.

They had three miles and over to row, and they were allowed to do more than two-thirds of the distance before ever Harry ordered his boats to shove off to meet them.

Greatly to his surprise and joy he noticed that the enemy's

boats were far too much crowded to permit anything like freedom of action among the men.

“That scores one for us,” he said to himself.

The swift boats were now ordered off. These – as already stated – were manned with archers, and were now told to meet and harass the foe with clouds of arrows, but on no condition to close with them.

They were to hang on both flanks of the approaching fleet, and fire low, well, and steadily. These were in command of Walda.

The king’s barge was next ordered out. She was manned by thirty of the bravest and biggest of the islanders, and each had, in addition to a spear, a ponderous battle-axe.

Her duty was to capsize the enemy’s boats by seizing the outriggers, or at least to try to do so.

Away sped the archery boats with just one wild hurrah! and to see the swiftness with which they bounded along to meet Kara-Kara’s fleet considerably astonished its sailors. They were still more astonished however, when, while still about two hundred yards distant, the archery boats divided into two lines, one skimming along each flank and pouring in a murderous fire of arrows.

It was evident the foe was taken aback. Men were being pierced through body and head, and falling dead in all quarters.

A side movement was made by the enemy with the view of crushing the venomous little archery boats. But Walda’s voice

was now heard shouting, “Boro! Boro!” (back! back!) high over the din of the battle.

The enemy now saw the inutility of any flank movement, and once more advanced in lines, redoubling their efforts to reach the island.

King Googagoo’s barge got round and advanced in the rear, and then out came Harry with his fleet.

He took his time.

There was no need for hurry, it was to be a hand-to-hand engagement, and the longer that cloud of arrows fell on the foe the better. The more fatigued the enemy the more chance would Googagoo’s fleet have of coming off triumphant.

At last the hostile canoes met with a terrible rush.

By Harry’s orders the outriggers were to be cut away from Kara-Kara’s boats as soon as possible, and every effort made to capsize them. But above all were they to beware of getting their own double boats boarded and carried by storm.

The battle now raged with terrible fury. Boat after boat of the enemy had her outriggers hacked away and got capsized.

Harry was here, there, and everywhere, shouting orders, guiding and encouraging his fleet.

He was a fleet in himself – the very genius of the battle.

The commander of the hostile canoes was a huge savage, who stood in the bows of a large canoe and shouted his orders in a voice so sonorous that it was heard everywhere. He seemed to bear a charmed life, for again and again Somali Jack fired at him,

but no bullet found a billet in that fierce giant's body.

But canoe after canoe – by this captain's orders – was detached to attack Harry's boat, for well the fellow knew that could he but silence our hero the battle would soon be won.

Each and all of the boats sent on this detached duty came to grief. In vain spears were hurled towards the skiff, for Jack's rifle instantly came into deadly play, and at close quarters he liberally drilled them by twos.

On the other hand, the archers were not idle, and any boat that got out of line was their particular prey.

The fiercest fighting of all raged around the king's bark with its giant seamen. Its captain was a man of herculean strength and all a savage's wild ferocity. Wielding aloft a mighty battle-axe he dealt death and destruction around him wherever he went. Many a canoe the barge capsized. Many were the attempts made to board her, not only from the warlike canoes, but by the drowning wretches in the lake; the latter were ruthlessly hacked down, the former hurled back bleeding into the water or into their dug-outs.

At last the barge found itself inside the enemy's line, and alongside the stalwart commander's big canoe.

In a moment the outriggers at one side were broken into splinters, then the giants found themselves face to face, Kara-Kara's naval commander having leaped, panther-fashion, on board the barge and closed with its captain.

It was a fearful tussle while it lasted, but soon the giant rose bleeding but triumphant, and Kara-Kara's chief lay dead with his

head hanging over the gunnel of the boat.

Then the barge fought its way back into the open water, and the battle was continued boat to boat and breast to breast.

But it was soon evident to Harry that, deprived of their captain, the enemy were getting the worst of it and giving way.

Presently oars were seized by the foe, their dead and even their wounded were pitched into the lake, and the retreat began.

Harry at once called off his men. He meant to cripple, if not destroy, the foe in a way that would save the lives of his own fellows. The double boats fell back at once, and the enemy, or what remained of them – for at least five hundred must have fallen in this terrible *melée*—commenced pulling away with might and main towards their own camp on the distant shore.

“Follow and harass them halfway to their own shore.”

This was the order given to the archers.

I draw a veil over the terrible scene that followed.

The blood of the archers was up. All their savage nature was on flame.

They saw red, so to speak, and red enough they made it for those unhappy boats.

Not only halfway towards their own shore, but nearly all the way did they chase them, until their arrows were completely expended.

Then back came the archer-fleet, having hardly lost a single man.

Back they came, bending merrily to their paddles and singing

some wild chant that mingled strangely with the scream of the carrion birds that now nearly darkened the air, or, perching upon the floating bodies, had already begun their fearful feast.

Book Four – Chapter Five.

The Battle on the Mainland

– Death or Victory

From an elevated plateau on his private island, King Googagoo had witnessed all the battle. His whole army stood around him, ready, if need should be, to repel the enemy.

But the enemy were beaten, routed, and almost annihilated.

Harry had always been a hero with this kindly-hearted king, now he was almost a god.

“You are a great man!” the king shouted, rushing to meet and shake him by the hand. “Oh, brother, what should I have done but for you! Our warriors would have been tortured, burned, slain, and our wives and little ones dragged away into a captivity worse than death.”

Harry pointed skywards.

“Yes, yes, I know,” cried the king. “It was the Eye; I knew He would give us the victory.”

“Stay,” said Harry, seriously, “I fear the worst fighting is still before us. On shore I mean, for hardly will the enemy care to or dare to attack you by water again. We must land this very evening. The foe is now beaten and demoralised, let us follow up our success without a moment’s delay.”

And so it was arranged.

The wounded were seen to, and as soon as the sun went down, which he did in a flood of calm beauty that night, just as if no bloodshed, grief, and murder was on the earth, the expedition started.

It started not in boats altogether, but along the strange sunken natural roadway, where from the shore Harry had first seen the king's barge moving apparently of its own accord. Had the enemy known of this expedition from the hundred islands, things might have turned out differently from what they had done.

Enough men and amazons were left to defend the island in case of a repulse, the boats took the arms of all sorts and the provisions, the men themselves walked through the water or swam.

By midnight the whole army to the number of nearly seven thousand, all included, stood on the shore, and the boats were hauled up and hidden among the trees.

Raggy had been left at home in charge of the island, and a very proud Raggy he was in consequence.

"I nebber was a king befoh," he said to himself, as he strutted about and gave orders to the Amazons, any one of which might have laid him cross-knees and flogged him. "I nebber was a king befoh, and now I means to be one king all over."

If being a king all over meant occupying Googagoo's tent, being led out to dinner precisely as his majesty had been, and eating as much curry as he could get down, then undoubtedly Raggy was a king all over.

Long before the dawn appeared in the east, Googagoo's army had commenced the march towards the enemy's camp, guided by Walda.

At the king's right hand was Harry, who was generalissimo in all but name. His majesty might fight well, but he could hardly be expected to direct the manoeuvres of a great battle so well as a British officer.

By daybreak Harry had drawn up his men in battle array on the brow of a hill, almost within stone's throw of the enemy's big camp beneath.

In numbers Kara-Kara's men were as three to one of Harry's army, but, having vantage ground, the latter hoped to provoke the foe to attack.

In this they were disappointed, for although there was skirmishing, as the day went on, between the outposts, nothing serious occurred; King Kara-Kara made no attempt to storm and capture the hill. His motto seemed to be "Wait."

By twelve o'clock Googagoo's patience was exhausted.

"I love to fight," he said to Harry, "but to lie idle with the spear in my hand is not good for Googagoo. Let it be now."

Then Harry, after visiting all his lines, speaking words of encouragement and issuing commands, gave the order to advance, he himself leading in person, sword in hand.

Kara's army lay at arms, in vast squares or impis, along a wide and sparsely wooded valley, Harry's hill being on the east of him, the lake to the north, and a dense forest land behind and to the

west. It was a difficult position to attack, but they had come here to fight and must face every odds.

It must also be to a great extent a hand-to-hand engagement.

Now unlike a battle with guns and rifles, a fight of the nature Googagoo was now to engage in could not be of long duration. Harry knew that, and resolved to make his onset as telling as possible. He had two advantages over Kara: his men were well drilled, and they possessed a most deadly weapon in the cross-bow.

At the very moment the signal of advance was given by Harry, wild shouting arose from the ranks of the enemy, accompanied by the rattle of tom-toms and the blaring of innumerable chanters. But the foe showed no intention of coming on, so the Googagoo men and amazons marched steadily to meet them.

There was no racing or shouting. To have run would have meant to lose wind, and Harry knew well the value of breath in a hand-to-hand fight. A movement was first made towards the south with the view of out-flanking the enemy. This had the desired effect, and Kara's swarms now came on in that direction.

Harry threw his archery-men out in skirmishing order now, in two lines, and the orders were to advance steadily to within a hundred yards of the enemy, then commence firing, one line supporting the other, but the whole army falling back towards the hills as the foe advanced.

This was to prevent the latter closing, when of course the cross-bows would be of no more use.

The battle began, and for a time raged on two sides, the amazons having partially out-flanked the foe. The army as at present might be represented by the capital letter L, the short limb being the side facing southwards and fronting the terrible amazons, the long limb the main body of Kara's army driving back – as they thought – Googagoo's archers towards the hills.

But while this driving back process was taking place, Harry's side was not losing a man, while the field was soon strewn with the dead and wounded of the enemy.

The latter began to stop short and waver, the arrows poured in upon them in clouds, and for a time victory appeared to be inclining towards the side of the island king.

Soon, however, Kara-Kara himself was seen running along behind his lines and shouting wild words of command to his men.

Their charge was now redoubled in fury as well as in speed, and it became at once evident to Harry that the cross-bows would in a few minutes more become useless in line, and his ranks be broken by the enemy through force of numbers.

He quickly, therefore, formed up into two English squares with the Scottish triangle in the centre, both he and the king being inside the latter.

Hardly had he done so, ere the impis of the savage foe closed on them, those on the outsides of each phalanx receiving the shock at spear's point, while archers from the interior poured in a steady fire from their murderous cross-bows.

The Karaites fell back after a time, defeated and foiled, and

Harry's triangle then charged into their very midst, delivering by far and away the most furious and successful charge of the day.

For a time now it seemed to be a drawn battle.

It might have been well, now for Harry had he retreated farther, and probably gained the eastern hills, for, excited by fighting, Kara's army would undoubtedly have followed them.

He did not, however, and in less than an hour he lost all opportunity of ever being able to do so.

On came the enemy once again, and this time they managed completely to surround Googagoo's army.

Not his amazons, though; these fought with spear and axe in the rear of the enemy, and it is quite impossible to describe the terrible fury of each of their onsets.

For three long hours the battle raged.

The sun was now beginning to decline. The enemy seemed as determined as ferocious, and as numerous as before, while Googagoo's ranks were sadly thinned.

They still kept their stand, however, against all the odds that Kara could fling in front of them.

Fight they must.

It was victory or death with them.

For defeat meant annihilation, it meant that not one man or amazon would ever return to the islands to tell the terrible tale, and that the islands themselves would soon have to capitulate, and come under the sway of the cruel King Kara-Kara.

The sun began to decline towards the western woods, but still

the battle raged on. The words of Scott came into Harry's head even now as he saw his brave fellows falling on all sides.

“What 'vails the vain knight-errand's brand?
Oh! Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph for thy speed!
Oh! for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skilled Bruce to rule the fight,
And cry Saint Andrew and our right.”

The battle raged on.

One of Harry's squares had already been broken, and it being impossible to re-form again, the men had fought their way through the cloud of savages around them and joined the ranks of the amazons.

Hope was beginning to fade even from Harry's heart.

He could not bear to hear the plaint of poor King Googagoo.

“Where is He who fights for the right?” he was saying.

“Where is the Eye who beholds all things?”

Where is the Eye? Look. Whither shall we look? Look far away towards the western horizon yonder. Are those the crimson clouds that herald the sunset? No, they are too low down on the plain, and a rolling canopy of blue is rising up and meeting the sun.

The southern woods are all on fire. The battlefield itself is soon —

“Wreathed in sable smoke.”

And out from the fire, it would seem, there now rushes an enemy that King Kara-Kara has but little reckoned on meeting.

No wonder he withdraws his men from the sadly weakened phalanxes of the island king, and tries to make his way southwards.

Here he is opposed by the stern fierce amazons, and their ranks are soon strengthened by a cloud of savages, spear-armed, who rush up behind them and fall upon the enemy in their front.

“Scarcely can they see their foes,
Until at weapon’s point they close,
They close in clouds of dust and smoke,
With sword-sway and with lance’s thrust;
And such a yell is there
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death are in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.”

Neither King Googagoo nor Harry could tell what the meaning of this sudden attack on the ranks of Kara-Kara meant. It seemed like an interposition of Providence. So, indeed, they both considered it, and doubtless they were right.

Meanwhile Kara’s army, now sadly thinned, fought like

veritable fiends.

Escape there seemed none.

The hills to the east were guarded by the island men, there was the lake behind them, the new foe in front, and the woods in the west were all ablaze.

The route was soon complete and the carnage dreadful to contemplate.

So terrible are these fights between African kings that it is no exaggeration to say, that out of all the thousands that Kara-Kara had brought into the field hardly one thousand escaped alive, and they had to force their way through the burning forest, many falling by fire who had come scathless from the field.

King Kara-Kara was among the killed.

He was found, next day, in the midst of a heap of the bodies of those who had rallied round him to the last —

“His back to the field, and his feet to the foe.”

In his hand he still clasped the spear he would never use again.

“Reckless of life, he'd desperate fought,

And fallen on the plain;

And well in death his trusty brand,

Firm clenched within his manly hand,

Beseemed the monarch slain.”

Book Four – Chapter Six.

The Mystery Explained – After the Battle – Death of Somali Jack

Before we can understand the seeming mystery that clings to the end of the last chapter of this tale, we must go a little way back, both as regards time and space.

All the men Harry had with him in the unfortunate scuttled dhow at the time she was beached were taken, along with little Raggy, by the so-called brother of Mahmoud into the far interior of Africa, and there sold or bartered away as slaves, and, as we already know, Suliemon made what dealers term “a pretty penny” out of the nefarious transaction.

Escape for the poor fellows so banished seemed impossible, for, although they had had an idea, from the appearance of the sun and stars, that they had been all the time journeying steadily west, with either a little angle of south or of north in it, so cruelly long had the route been, so terrible had been their hardships, and so great their dangers, that the idea of returning was considered by them as entirely out of the question. Hope did not quite forsake them, however, but they had no means of communicating with the outer world – that is, the world beyond this dark continent. Occasionally they cut letters in the hides of the wild beasts that had been slain, as these skins often found

their way to the markets of Zanzibar and Lamoo.

Who knows, they told each other, but some one may see these letters, and come to our assistance!

But alas! though the letters were seen, and marvelled at and talked about, no government, either English or French, deemed it worth while to send a search and relief expedition.

Yet those ten poor fellows had wives and little ones, had sisters and brothers, and fathers and mothers at home, who were, like Harry's parents, mourning for them as dead.

The lives of cruelty and indignity which they had led, during all these long dark dreary months and years, it is not my intention to describe. Suffice it to say that these men were the abject slaves of a brutal king, compelled to eat of the most loathsome garbage and to live in a state of almost nudity. No wonder that already four of their number had passed away. Their bodies, shocking to relate, were not even buried, but thrown into the jungle for the wild dogs to gnaw and the ants to eat.

The others lived, including Nicholls the bo's'n.

Ah! often and often had they wished to die.

The only pleasure of their lives, if pleasure it could be called, was that at night they were not separated, but kept in one common prison, strictly guarded by armed sentinels.

Then in the dark they used to talk of the dear old days at sea, and of their homes far away in peaceful England.

More than once during the time of their captivity King Kara-Kara had been on the war-path against the drunken old 'Ngaloo,

and the former had been the victor, although he had not followed up his triumph, as he used to threaten he would do, and annihilate 'Ngaloo and his people.

The two kings hated each other with a true and everlasting hatred, and the same may be said of their followers or people.

A day of rejoicing came at last, though, to the poor white slaves, and that was when the island scout had bravely forced his way into camp, and given them news of their officer Harry.

Then the king their master got word, somehow or other, of all the prosperity of honest Googoo, and determined at once that he would make war upon him and utterly spoil and harry him.

So he called his men of war together, and made all preparations for the campaign which we have seen to end so disastrously for this ambitious monarch. He reckoned without his host in a manner of speaking – at all events he did not take King 'Ngaloo into account. He kept the sentinels on the hills and slipped away northwards at the dead of night.

Now 'Ngaloo had recently had a visit from a band of Somalis under the guidance of an Arab, who had brought him gifts of rum and beads. 'Ngaloo gave the beads to his wives to hang around their fat necks, their wrists, arms, and ankles, and his wives were happy in consequence, and even submitted with patience and smiles to be pulled around the palace tent by the king's horrid tongs. But 'Ngaloo stuck to the rum.

He never knew quite clearly what he was about as long as his him lasted, but he was not a fool for all that; and when one day

a sentinel reported that the towns and camp of Kara-Kara were very still and almost deserted —

“Oh!” said the king, “old Kara’s away after something. Ha! ha! ha! now is the chance for me! But I wonder where he has gone to.”

These rival kings had one thing in common, a certain superstition not unusual among some African potentates; they thought it unlucky to make war the one upon the other without some cause. These causes, however, were easily found; if they could not be found, then they could be manufactured for the occasion.

’Ngaloo determined to manufacture one now. So he went to bed, not to sleep, for he ordered his prime minister to squat on the floor close to his dais and hand him rum as he wanted it.

’Ngaloo preferred drinking like this, it saved him the trouble of tumbling about.

He lay awake nearly all night thinking and laughing and giggling to himself. Once he caught his prime minister napping, and gave him a back-hander with his tongs, which effectually kept him awake for some time to come.

In the morning ’Ngaloo called three of his people to him, and sent them away across the hills with a message for King Kara-Kara. It was to the following effect, though I cannot give the exact words:

“Will King Kara-Kara be good enough to cross the mountains with his army, and visit his dear brother King ’Ngaloo, the mighty

monarch of the whole universal earth, who will have the greatest pleasure in pulling King Kara-Kara's nose with his gilded tongs, and the nose of every man in his army."

Off went the three men, and delivered their message, and off went their heads just three minutes afterwards. For though King Kara-Kara was far away, he had left a lord-lieutenant behind him.

It did not matter about the messengers having their heads off, they were first on the list, at all events, for the next human sacrifice, and a day or two back or fore could not hurt. But as they did not return, the fact formed a *casus belli*, and gave 'Ngaloo just the opportunity he wished for.

So he put on his war clothes, hung his tongs in his girdle beside his dagger, took his spear in his hand, summoned all his army, and marched over the borders, five thousand strong, with tom-toms beating and chanters braying, and in two days' time had entered the Kara-Kara territory.

He captured every one he could, only those that were not worth capturing he made short work of. Then he burned all his enemy's towns and villages, and having left a thousand men to lay siege to an inaccessible mountain, on the top of which, with the white prisoners, the lord-lieutenant had made his camp, 'Ngaloo with the rest of his savage army followed his foe up to the lake side, and it was fortunate he had arrived in time, as we have seen in the last chapter.

The remnant of Kara-Kara's beaten army hied them back to their own country, only to find it laid waste by fire and sword; so

they fled away into the wilderness, and joined other tribes with whom they had been friendly before this.

Having both fought on one side, and both assisted each other in annihilating the unfortunate Kara-Kara, 'Ngaloo and Googagoo naturally became very friendly.

Both armies bivouacked that night on the battlefield, and the wounded were attended to. These, however, owing to the brutal customs of African warfare, were very few, for 'Ngaloo's men in the moonlight ran a-muck all across the blood-stained field, and ruthlessly slew all those who showed the slightest signs of life.

Next morning was a sad one for Harry, for his faithful Somali Jack, who had served him so long and so faithfully, who had nursed him in sickness, and more than once saved his life, breathed his last in his arms shortly after sunrise.

He had been terribly wounded in the battle, and nothing could save the poor fellow.

Quite conscious he was to the last, and conscious, too, that his end was drawing near, though neither he nor Harry knew it was so *very* nigh.

Some duty or other demanded Harry's presence in another part of the field, but Jack said —

“Do not go and leave me now, dear master; stay with me a little time.”

“I will stay; I will not go — poor Jack,” replied Harry. And he sat down beside the dying Indian, and took his head in his lap.

Harry often thought of this last interview with his Somali

servant afterwards, and how thankful he always felt, when he did so, that he had not gone away and left Jack. Had he done that he would not have seen the last of him, or heard his dying words.

These, however, were few, for Jack was weak and his voice feeble, and his breath coming in gasps. He lay some time quiet, then —

“I have so much to say,” he almost whispered; “but I forget, and I am cold —*so* cold.”

“I have a brother in Brava.”

Harry thought he said mother.

“You have a mother, Jack?”

“No; no mother — a brother. See him; tell him how I died, how I lived. Tell him about heaven and all things good, as you have told me.”

“Raggy — he will miss poor Jack.”

There was a long interval of silence. Jack’s eyes were closed now, and Harry thought he slept. But he opened them presently.

Then he put his cold damp hand in Harry’s. “Master,” he said, “you have given me life.”

“Oh, Jack!” said Harry, “I fear it is far beyond my skill to give you life.”

“But you have given me life — light and life. I was but a savage. You have told me of Him who can love even a savage.”

“Yes, yes, Jack; He loves you. He will receive you.”

“Say ‘The Vale,’” Jack murmured.

Harry knew what he meant, and repeated a verse or two, in

metre, of that beautiful psalm that has given comfort to many a soul in sorrow.

The last verse that Jack could have heard was the fourth:

“Yea, though I walk thro’ death’s dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill,
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.”

There were just a few long-drawn sobs at intervals, then Harry sat watching to see if he would sigh again.

But a minute passed, and Jack sighed no more. Harry gently closed the eyes.

Then he sat for a time, biting his lip till it almost bled; but all to no purpose, his sorrow *would* find vent.

And knowing all we do, can we wonder at Harry’s grief?

Can we wonder that he bent over that faithful Jack, and that the scalding tears fell from his eyes upon the poor dead face?

Book Four – Chapter Seven.

The Fight on the Hill – Reunion

– “The Greatest King in all the world” – Home Again

This is a busy, work-a-day world, events will not tarry, nor will duty wait even upon grief, and no sooner had Harry and his party dug a grave and laid poor Somali Jack to his long rest in a cotton-tree grove, than he had to hurry off to camp again.

It was the morning of another day, a bright and beautiful day, birds sang in the bush, or went flitting from branch to branch, displaying their rainbow colours, as happy and careless as if there were no sorrow in the world.

But other birds there were – kites and fierce-looking *corvidae*, with horrid-looking vultures, that went sailing lazily round in the sky, alighting every moment on some dead body – to gorge. And gorge they would, until unable either to walk, or fly.

And what they leave of the corpses on the battlefield the ants, whose great hills and homes can be counted by the score, will speedily devour.

At night, too, when the vultures have gone to roost on the scorched and blackened branches of the burned forest, wild dogs and hyaenas will come in crowds to the awful feast.

Then rains and dews will fall and wash the bones, and the sun's bright beams will bleach them, till in time nought will be left in the field of that fearful fight except blanched skulls and snow-white skeletons.

Ah, boys! where is the glory of war when the fight is fought, when the battle is over, and the victory won? Look upon that silent, bone-strewn plain and tell me where.

As naturally as if he had been voted into it, did Harry now quietly and coolly assume command of the whole army, both Googagoo's and 'Ngaloo's. The latter king he could not respect, albeit it was through his instrumentality that they had all escaped utter annihilation. He tried to feel grateful to 'Ngaloo, but it was impossible, he really could not help observing that the great chief had a selfish, grasping, and grovelling mind. There were times, indeed, that he could scarcely feel civil to the savage.

And no wonder. 'Ngaloo, after looking for a long time at Harry's actions, and admiring his bustling but well-trained activity, came, and with cool audacity made a proposition to him. It was couched in the following terms:

“We soon go back now to my beautiful land among the mountains. I am a great king now. I have been a great king all my life. I am now twice a great king, because I shall reign over all the rich land and woods of my dear brother King Kara-Kara, whose confounded dead nose I pulled on the battlefield. So there is no king in the world so great now as 'Ngaloo. Come, then, and live with me. I will make of you a big chief. I will cut the head

of my prime minister off, and you shall reign in his stead, and have all his wives as slaves – ”

It was precisely at this point that Harry interrupted the king's poetical harangue.

Harry simply said —

“Bosh!”

Very emphatically he said it, too. Then he wheeled right round and proceeded with his duty.

'Ngaloo went away then, somewhat crestfallen; but he had a private commissariat of his own, and he found some rum there, so he consoled himself with that.

A few hours afterwards, 'Ngaloo might have been seen marching about among Harry's troops, with a sottish kind of a smile on his face.

'Ngaloo was taking lessons in modern warfare. He told Harry, when he met him, that he meant to remodel his own army upon the principles of Googagoo's.

The cross-bows greatly took his fancy. So did the amazons.

He could not tire looking at them, and as soon as he got home, he said, he would arm and drill every one of his wives, and make amazons of them.

“And if they do not be good soldiers,” he added, “why, there is the tongs.”

He snapped that weapon as he spoke, and cackled and laughed as if he had said something very clever and witty.

The next stupid thing that 'Ngaloo did was to take Harry by

the arm, and tell him with a burst of confidence, which was no doubt meant to be very friendly, that when they returned to King Kara-Kara's, and captured the white slaves, Harry should have no less than two of them, and that he, 'Ngaloo, would only keep four to himself.

Harry burst out laughing in the great king's face; but instead of being offended, 'Ngaloo was delighted, for he thought that Generalissimo Harry Milvaine was pleasedly acquiescing in his pretty little arrangement.

'Ngaloo was so delighted that he must needs go and help himself to another dose of his brain-devouring rum or fire-water.

Then he turned his attentions towards Googagoo. He made this honest king a very long speech indeed, laudatory of his own exceeding greatness, and of the comparative insignificance of every other king and chief in creation.

To all of this Googagoo listened with the politeness and urbanity inseparable from his nature.

But the king of the hundred islands, in a return speech, reminded 'Ngaloo that however great and glorious we were in this world, we must all die one day and go to another, where the Great Spirit would judge us according to the deeds done in the flesh, or forgive us if we trusted the Son that He had long, long ago sent to save us.

Alas! 'Ngaloo was not much impressed by the earnest words of Googagoo. He was silent for a short time, as if in deep thought; then he spoke to the following effect:

“Very likely all you say is true; but I suppose in the next world I will be just as big a chief, and have more territory than I have in this. For,” he added, “there is no getting over the greatness of ’Ngaloo.”

It took the united armies a whole week to reach King Kara-Kara’s country.

Harry had taken the precaution to keep his people quite separate and well in advance of ’Ngaloo’s, and gave strict orders to Walda and his other officers to watch for the slightest signs of treachery on the part of ’Ngaloo.

Our hero mistrusted him, and perhaps he had reason; but, on the other hand, he need not have done so either, for “the greatest king in all the world” was so frequently overcome by frequent applications to his fire-water commissariat, that he had to be carried in a grass-cloth hammock nearly all the way.

It was forest land mostly which they traversed, woods filled with chattering monkeys and bright-winged silent birds, woods in which lions roared and hyaenas laughed all night long, woods often dripping with dank dews, and at times so dark by day that it was difficult to find a way through them.

But anon they would come to open glades and glens among the hills and mountains, with clear streams rippling through them, in which many a lusty trout gambolled and fed, with sweet bird-voices and the murmur of insect life, making music in the air, every creature happy and busy, because of the sunshine that gladdened all.

They came at last to the foot of the mountain or conical hill, where Harry's unhappy shipmates were imprisoned.

Some slight show of resistance was made by those beneath, while those at the top and on guard rolled down great stones and rocks upon them.

But Harry's brave fellows, he himself at the head of them – he well knew how to climb a hill – took the place with one wild determined rush.

Many of the assaulters were wounded and some were killed with the descending stones, so that their savage instincts got the better of their judgment, and in spite of all that Harry could do, an ugly scene of carnage took place as soon as the fort was captured. Harry had found his men at last. And not a whit too soon, for at the very moment when, waving his victorious sword on high, he scaled the last parapet, they were being ordered out for instant execution.

Ordered out? From what? Out, dear reader, from one of the most loathsome dungeons it is possible to imagine, dark, slimy, dismal, and filled with noisome vapours, a dungeon that for months they had shared with centipedes and slimy, slow-creeping lizards.

And all this time their food had been only raw cassava root and a modicum of half-putrid water.

And now Harry Milvaine, their beloved officer, stood in their midst.

They had not forgotten their discipline, for each and all

touched their brows by way of salute.

“My poor fellows?” said Harry, his voice half-choked with emotion.

It was the first kind words they had heard for years. No wonder they broke down, and that those once sturdy British sailors – babies now in their very weakness – sobbed over Harry’s hands or hugged him in their feeble arms.

Harry had been telling Walda that, in all probability, there would be a quarrel with ’Ngaloo about his shipmates, the survivors of the *Bunting’s* men, and that there would possibly be some fighting.

“But,” said Walda, “I know the people of King ’Ngaloo well; they do not love fighting, they would rather cross the hills to their own homes.”

“Yes, true, Walda; but the king – the king. Remember that he rules over them, and if he bids them fight, then fight they must, and will.”

“Ah! the king!” replied the wily Walda. “Yes, to be sure, only they will not fight if he does not order them to do so.”

“No, Walda. But why do you smile? Now you are laughing outright. What amuses you, Walda?”

“Not anything much,” said Walda, “but – leave the king to me.”

Harry with his men and Googagoo’s army were to start the very next morning, against all odds, however fearful these might be; so, to be ready for any emergency, he drew his people well

to the north, at some distance from those of 'Ngaloo's. And then they camped all night ready armed.

But Walda had managed matters very prettily. He had sat up with King 'Ngaloo nearly all night, telling him wonderful stories of his own invention, and every now and again helping his majesty to another dose of his beloved fire-water.

The consequence of all this was, that when Googagoo and Harry went to bid him goodbye next morning in the hammock where he still lay, they found him rather forgetful of all recent events, but otherwise in a most amiable mood indeed.

The king said farewell at least a dozen times.

He shook hands with each of his visitors *more* than a dozen times.

And his last words were these:

"'Ngaloo is the greatest king in all the world. Don't forget 'Ngaloo. Come again and see the greatest king in all the world. Don't forget Ngaloo."

"I'm not likely to," said Harry, shaking hands again.

Then away he went, laughing.

And the march northwards was commenced at once.

Two of the men of the *Bunting* had to be carried a great part of the way, but they got stronger and stronger as the time went on, and could soon both stand and walk.

They found the boats precisely where they had left them, and in a few hours all were back once more – though sadly thinned in ranks – at their homes in the hundred islands.

Raggy, rejoiced beyond measure, met them at the beach. He was not content with shaking hands with his old messmates; shaking hands was slow work.

Raggy must dance. And dance he did, a regular sailor's hornpipe.

"As sure as I'm alive, by Heaven's mercy," said Nicholls, the bo's'n, "I think I could dance a bit myself."

"And so do I," cried another sailor.

And they both joined Raggy.

It was as merry a hornpipe as ever was seen.

No wonder the king cried "Lobo! Lobo!" and laughed till the tears gushed out of his eyes, or that the welkin rang with the admiring shouts of the sturdy amazons.

Then Raggy, who had reigned here so long and so well, resigned his regency, and in a day or two more all the old, quiet life had settled down upon the islands.

For a whole month longer Harry and his men lived with this innocent king; then, the strength of his men being now thoroughly recruited, they all said farewell to the good King Googagoo, with many regrets, and commenced the long and tedious march to the eastern coast, which they reached at last safe and sound, having met only the usual exciting adventures, and come through all the hardships incidental to African travel.

Dear young readers, I have little more to do now, except to say "Goodbye." I sincerely trust that, while I do my best in my tales to interest and instruct you, no one can accuse me of painting the

life of the sailor wanderer in too rosy colours. I speak and write from my own experience of sea-life and of other lands. And — yes, I will confess it, I love the sea, and ever did.

Here are some lines I wrote in a journal of mine many years ago: —

“While I write all is peace within and around our barque. I am sitting in my little cabin. It is a summer’s evening. Yonder is my bed; the port-hole close by my snowy pillow is open, and playfully through it steals the soft cool breeze of evening, and wantonly lifts and flutters the blue silken curtains. Not far off I can catch glimpses of the wooded hills and flowery vales of a sunny land. It is the rosy shores of Persia, and every night the light wind that blows over it is laden with the sweet breath of its flowers; while between there lies the ocean, asleep, and quiet, and still, and beautiful with the tints of reflected clouds. Often in the cool night that succeeds a day of heat have I lain awake for hours, fanned by the breath of the sea, gazing on the watery world beneath and beyond me, and the silvery moon and glittering stars that waft my thoughts homewards, till sleep stole gently down on a moonbeam and wafted me away to dreamland.”

Thus I wrote when a young man. Thus I still do feel.

The first glimpse that one catches of the chalky shores of old England after a long cruise thrills every nerve in his heart with hope and joy. To experience even this it is worth while going to sea.

Probably some such thoughts as these stole through the mind

of Harry Milvaine as his homeward bound vessel came in sight of land.

His passage had been a good one all the way from Zanzibar to the Cape, and from the Cape to Southampton.

If the thought of presenting himself at Beaufort Hall without first writing ever came into his head at all, it was speedily banished. Pleasant surprises are very well under certain circumstances, but they may be so painfully pleasant as to be positively dangerous, for joy can kill as well as cure.

So Harry telegraphed and wrote, and waited anxiously for the return letter.

It came in good time.

With a beating heart he tore it open.

All were well. Even his old dog Eily was mentioned by his mother – for of course the letter was from her – in terms of affection.

“She knows you are coming,” she wrote, “and whenever I mention your name rushes to the gate to look, and barks in a kind of half-joyful, half-hysterical way that is most peculiar.”

Harry is back in the Highlands at last. He has come a good two hours earlier than he expected. But he does not mind that. He likes to walk slowly on towards the home of his boyhood. Every little cottage, every hill – the hills are all heather-clad, for the summer’s bloom bedecks them – every wood, ay, every tree recalls some sweet memory of the bygone.

He is still within half a mile of Beaufort when he sees a dog.

It is his own.

It is Eily.

She has been out hunting for stoats at the hedge-foot.

He calls her by name. She stops and stares, bewildered for a moment, then with a few joyful bounds she is at him. She is *at* him, and *on* him, and *round* him, and *round* him all at once apparently.

Her dear old master risen from the dead!! She can hardly believe her eyes, and is fain to stand a little way off and bark at him for very joy. Then off she flies homewards, to tell that she has found her master.

So that Harry's father, bareheaded and with his newspaper in his hand, but hale and hearty as of yore, and Harry's mother, more fragile and older-looking, are both at the gate to welcome him.

And behind them comes old Yonitch to shake her dear boy by the hand.

Harry has a companion, whom he now introduces, and he is no less a personage than Raggy himself.

I think everybody is half afraid of Raggy at first, but Raggy smiles so pleasantly, and laughs with such ringing joy, that he is soon at home, and even Yonitch and Eily forgive him for being so dreadfully black.

That last line is meant to be left to the reader's own translation. It represents exclamations of wonder and joy at Harry's long story, and questions asked and answered, and a deal more I have

no space to mention.

Eily and Harry went that same evening for a ramble in the forest. They found it just the same. The birds were there, and the bees were there, and the rabbits and weasels and squirrels were there – but poor Towsie the bull was gone.

They walked home round by Andrew's cottage.

Andrew came rushing to his little gate and held Harry's hand as if in a vice, while he pulled him in and seated him in a chair.

Then Harry had all his story to tell over again.

And honest Andrew listened and listened; frequently his eyes would become moist with tears, when he immediately took a large pinch of snuff, for shy, sly Andrew wanted to make believe that it was the snuff that made his eyes swim, and not downright emotion.

“Man! man!” was Andrew's frequent exclamation, “only to think o' seein' you back again among us!”

“Look!” he said, when Harry finished speaking for the time being. “Look!”

Harry looked. Andrew had a tall hat in his hand. It was gloomily bedecked with weepers of crape, as big almost as those worn by hearse-drivers.

“That's my Sunday's hat,” said Andrew; “and I've worn it, as you see it, every sabbath since the terrible day when Captain Wayland came here and told us we would never see you more.”

“But I'll take them off now,” he added, joyfully.

Honest Andrew did so, folded them up, and put them carefully

away in a drawer. Then he heaved a big sigh and took another pinch of snuff.

It was very gratifying to Harry's feelings to find that his little garden and boy's bungalow, where the swallow that Eily brought him told the story of Africa, had been carefully tended and kept up inside and out.

This was Andrew's doings.

Harry has had many wanderings since then, both by sea and land, but adventures such as those he came through on the dark continent come but once in a lifetime.

He has been a gallant and good officer.

He has done his duty.

Ah! there is a halo around the head of every one who does his duty, be that duty high or be it humble.

Harry Milvaine now holds a good appointment in a dockyard, and his leave is always spent in the Highlands, and honest Andrew and he are as good friends as ever.

Though no longer a boy, Raggy is still his faithful servant.

But Harry has promised his mother that ere long he will take leave of the service and settle down at home. He will have a flagstaff, however, he says, towering high and mast-like up from the green garden lawn, and proudly on that staff will flutter —

“The flag that braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze.”

The End