

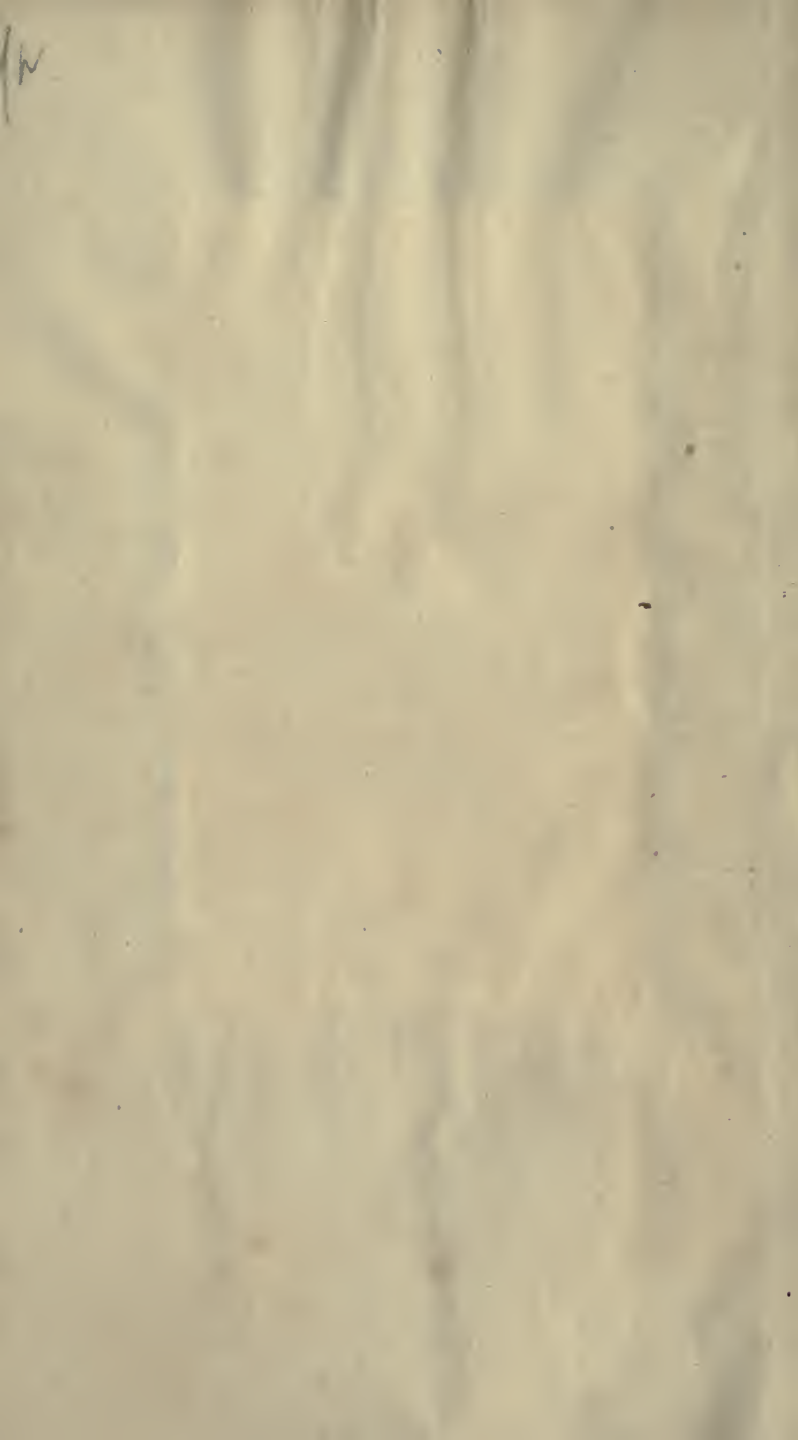






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1850

THE GREAT EASTERN ARCHipelago

[Gore, Catherine Grace Frances (Moody)]

A D V E N T U R E S

IN

BORNEO:

A TALE OF SHIPWRECK.

“Remember that thou wert a bondman in Egypt, and that  
the Lord thy God redeemed thee from thence.”—EXODUS.

*SECOND EDITION.*

LONDON:  
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1849.





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TO  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
SIR JAMES BROOKE, K.C.B.  
GOVERNOR OF LABUAN,  
AND  
RAJAH OF SARAWÁK,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,  
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# ADVENTURES IN BORNEO.

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## CHAPTER I.

It has been often said that no human life is so uneventful but that, if fairly and simply recorded, the story would afford profit to the reader. I will not pretend, however, that I am commencing my autobiography by way of lesson to mankind. It is rather for the purpose of relieving my own breast, long the solitary prison-house of painful reminiscences, that I am about to confide to the world what,

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for years, I had not courage or self-command to relate to even the dearest of my friends.

The first thing I can recall to my recollection is a mean house in a dreary street towards Gray's Inn Lane, where I lived with my father and mother. *They*, however, were neither mean nor dreary. Throughout the years that have since elapsed, I have rarely seen a nobler-looking man than my father, and never, decidedly *never*, a more beautiful woman than his wife. He was grave, indeed,—much graver than my mother; and I attributed the different impression they made upon me to the black colour of his dress, while she was constantly attired in white, or some light quaker-colour, pleasant to look on. I did not then know that the black coat I thought so mournful, was simply the livery of a grave profession.—My father was in orders.

Unluckily, the sobriety of his deportment

was to be accounted for in another manner. He was poor!—A curate, and with slender hopes of preferment, he had won the affections of the only daughter of a noble family in whose parish he officiated; and their marriage, unsanctioned by her parents, had never obtained forgiveness. Aware that nothing could be argued against her young husband but his want of fortune, my poor mother had trusted as mistakenly to the promptings of affection in the hearts akin to her, as the man whose intrinsic worth had captivated her heart, confided in the clemency of the great personages to whom, professing and calling themselves Christians, he had long preached the duty of forgiveness of trespasses.

On the death of Lord H——, two years after the rash marriage of his daughter, her name was found to have been erased from his

will. He left two sons; the elder, who succeeded to his title and estate—a proud man, proudly married; and a second, who was serving with his regiment in Spain. My grandmother would probably have been tempted to relent in her daughter's favour at this softening epoch of family affliction, had not the new Lord H—— persuaded her to continue her residence under his roof; where her mind was soon engrossed by the changes incident on the instalment of his large household. By feeding her resentments with idle tales against “the curate and his wife,” and conciliating her harsh and imperious temper, her son soon obtained as complete a control over her jointure as over his own revenues.

Nothing could exceed, I have been told, the insolence with which my father was treated by the Dowager and her son; unless the patience with which he forbore towards them, so

long as hope remained of the reconciliation so languished after by his wife. But it was soon clear that all chance was at an end. The old lady seldom stirred abroad. Even at church, the pew, so well-cushioned and well-curtained to screen from prying eyes her drowsy devotions, excluded even a glimpse of the curate's wife, on her oaken bench; so that she had some plea for ignorance that her daughter was about to become a second time a mother, though her eldest born, my unworthy self, had never been noticed by its grandame, with so much as the recognition of a passing glance.

So well and so cheerfully, however, had my darling mother accommodated herself to the evils of her own creation, that her husband would have borne up without a murmur against the scorn of which he was the object, had he not found it operate injuriously in the

discharge of his parochial duties. In most country villages, where the want of a resident rector destroys the wholesome balance afforded by the influence of the parsonage to that of the "great house," the latter becomes magnified into a fourth estate in the body politic. Compared with the insignificance of young Meredyth the curate, the greatness of Lord H—— grew and grew; till my father's piety, and learning, and watchfulness over the best interests of his parishioners, were forgotten in the recital of Christmas doles and aristocratic hospitalities. A few chaldrons of coals and dozens of blankets, sufficed to efface all recollection of his services throughout the year. The rich farmers began to treat him like an inferior. Even the poor, whom he comforted, were heard at times to mutter, that "the ill-blood betwixt the parson's wife and the mother she was bound by gospel-law to honour,



was a scandal and offence in the eyes of the parish."—As if the ill-blood lay on *her* side!

The end of all this was, as my uncle had probably foreseen, that as soon as my pretty little sister Emily began to run alone, my father resigned his curacy and removed to London. The H—— family were thenceforward spared the necessity of averting their faces, when, on their way to church in the grand family-coach, they passed the little vine-covered parsonage, where the daughter of their house was honourably fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother.

Children delight in change. It was some time before I discovered how much I had lost in renouncing our pleasant little garden for the dingy streets of the metropolis; and that even my parents had left their cheerfulness behind. Their worldly means, indeed, had undergone no diminution. My father had

accepted, in lieu of his curacy, the chaplaincy to some public institution; so that, though poor, they were no poorer than before. But the same household tasks which, in the country, it was no penance to fulfil, became menial in town; and it vexed my father mortally to see his beautiful wife not only exposed to privation, but compelled to turn her fair soft hands to servile occupations.

But, worse than all, the little daughter who was come to augment their pains and pleasures, proved sadly delicate. Her face, though full of sweetness, was colourless as a wood-anemone; and her mother, kept awake night after night by her restlessness, grew pale and feeble as herself.

Such was the earliest state of things I can remember. I was not quite four years old; but I have a distinct recollection of the tears that used to fall from my mother's eyes as she

sat quietly at work; and of the long silences that ensued, after I had been reprov'd for prattling, so as to disturb my father, who sat reading, or pretending to read. Never was there so still a house!—Our hours were regular as clockwork—our provisions scanty—our dress penurious. No friendly knock ever disturbed the door. My mother's former friends decided, with her family, that she had disgraced herself; my father's did not presume to intrude on the seclusion of his aristocratic helpmate.

I can remember months and months passing gloomily away:—the dreary November fogs, —the chilly winter evenings;—and, above all, the still more desolate spring that shone only upon barren flagstones, and brought forth neither violets nor cowslips. What a sad time it was!—No playthings—no playmates! Nothing but the wail of poor little Emily,

peevish from sickness; nothing but the tugs and cuffs of the cross maid-servant, who waited upon us all, and vented her ill-humour upon *me*, (who, by good luck, was sturdy enough to bear her chafings,) the moment my mother's back was turned.

The only circumstance I recall with pleasure is that, however joyless those days, I heard no murmurs from the lips of my parents. Their marriage vow fulfilled its promise, and they were all in all to each other. But I suspect there must have been peculiar sadness in their forced cheerfulness while together: for no sooner were they apart, than each would turn aside and weep.

My solitary recollection, in evidence of a mutual confiding of their cares, is a suggestion I more than once overheard from my mother, that "if Charley were there, things would be otherwise;" or that "if Charley knew how they

were situated, *he* would assist them." And whenever I pleased her most, either by my endeavours to amuse the poor sick baby, or my diligence in doing errands for my father, she would observe aside to the latter, that I "reminded her of Charley." This Charley was her younger brother; and I discovered that one of the sources of her tears was his imprisonment at Verdun. A termination of the war was at that time so little hoped for, and the communication between English prisoners and their friends at home so frequently interrupted, that he was almost as much lost to her as if numbered with the dead.

Young as I was, I remember running to hide my head for shame in the bed-clothes, the first time I found that dear good mother putting a patch into my clothes!—Her own had long been faded and threadbare. But the patch was *too* unmistakeable a badge of poverty!

When the maid-servant gibed and laughed at me on my first appearance in my stigmatized garb, I felt that I could have killed her. I *did* so resent her sarcasm that she took the opportunity of giving warning on the spot. And lo! a moment afterwards, I repented my rage, and hurried after her to beg pardon on my bended knees. For I knew that my mother prized her services, and had often said that no one else would make herself half so useful.

But it was too late. If *I* was penitent, the girl was stubborn, and would not hear of staying in her place: "Hard words as well as hard work was too much for any one."

When my mother saw me broken-hearted for having brought down this annoyance upon her, she comforted me by telling me, with a kiss such as mothers only can give, that "though I was to blame for having spoken harshly and hastily, I need not reproach myself on *her* ac-

count. She had long intended to send Hannah away, and did not mean to replace her."

And so it was. In a month's time, we were all waiting upon each other: my mother on her sick child, and I and my father on that dear mother.—An unmerited reward;—for what greater pleasure to me on earth than to serve *her* who so fondly served us all!—

But thinner and thinner she grew, alas! and paler and paler. I dared not notice the change, however, to my father. For the only time I ventured to say to him that "mamma worked too hard; that it was a *shame* she should work so hard; that she never enjoyed a good night's rest in her bed, like other people," he uttered such a frightful imprecation—not upon *me*—nay, I cannot say upon whom,—though the words seemed wrung out of the depths of his heart, that I never strove to excite his pity again. *That* was the only time

I ever heard a curse or an unseemly expression from the lips of my father.

Soon afterwards, I heard him talking, for the first time for months, in a cheerful tone. The newsvenders' horns were announcing in the street tidings of the flight of Napoleon, and the retreat of the French army; and he ventured to predict to my mother that, ere the summer was past, she would see her dear Charley again. She did not answer. Perhaps because poor little Emily was dozing upon her knee; and to take and press the hand which my father extended sympathizingly towards her, she must have disentangled her own from the flaxen curls of the little head she was supporting.

“Think, my dear Mary,” said he, “of the comfort of being clasped once more to the heart of your brother!”

She did not answer, till urged again and again for an avowal of her joy; when, in a



broken voice, and with a scarcely perceptible glance at her husband's rusty suit and the empty bookshelves from which the favourite volumes brought from the country had, somehow or other, unaccountably disappeared, she at length faltered—"Yes, I shall be indeed happy to welcome the companion of my youth. But—but he will come too late!—He will not find us what we were.—He will not find us what we ought to be.—I feel changed at heart. My mother's unkindness and this poor baby's sufferings have made me peevish and unreasonable.—I feel—forgive me for saying so—I feel hardly worthy to see dear Charley again."

My father's lip quivered; not because he was about to speak, for he attempted no answer. There needed none, indeed; for when, some days afterwards, a sunburnt stranger burst into the room, and rushing to

my mother, flung his arms around her and strained her to his heart, as though resolved never to part with her again, there was neither cloud nor shadow over the gush of joyful tears with which she repaid these demonstrations of affection on the part of her beloved brother.

I remember going and sulking in a corner, because, for full half an hour after his entrance, neither of them found a moment's leisure to notice me. Though I had a patch at my elbow, I wanted to be shown to this long-talked-of uncle, as the little Charles who was named after him, and was supposed to bear some resemblance to his namesake!

At length, however, I was called for, and had nothing left to wish for in the world!

CHAPTER II.  

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ALMOST sooner than it takes to relate the change, the dingy house grew cheerful, the surly servant was replaced, and the patched garment and rusty suit disappeared.—It was my good uncle's pleasure to share with his disinherited sister the fortune of ten thousand pounds bequeathed him by his father. It was her right, he said. For marrying an honest man, she ought not to be defrauded of her birthright. Not a step would he take towards H—— Hall

till he had seen his sister well and cheerful. His embarrassments thus cleared off, my father found no difficulty in obtaining a curacy in a healthy country neighbourhood ; and never shall I forget our first glorious summer among the green fields, after two years' miserable imprisonment in town !

It was positively intoxicating to the soul of a child to look up to the blue sky flecked with snowy clouds, after labouring so long under the heavy, noisome, opaque atmosphere of London : and to watch the expansion of the summer flowers, or the flitting of its bright-hued insects. But my father, I suspect, enjoyed a still more thrilling delight, in beholding the bright hues of health revive upon the happy faces of his wife and children. Little Emily ceased to pine. She was no longer sickly—no longer peevish. She was like other children of her age. But no—not like other

children :—except in some Italian picture, no cherub's face was ever half so fair. She was my father's idol; partly from a revulsion of feeling arising from the consciousness that, at one time, in the depths of our poverty, he had ceased to pray that her life might be prolonged.

My uncle soon rejoined his regiment; his attempts to produce a reconciliation between my mother and her family having proved abortive. I have since heard that he took matters with too high a hand for any chance of success. His intercessions too much resembled reproaches. Whenever he began to allude to my poor mother's sufferings since her marriage, he spoke with such emotion and bitterness, that Lord H——'s endeavours to defend his line of conduct produced fresh altercations.

But even though "Charley" was away, and his kith and kin still unrelenting, we were

supremely happy. The strongest impressions imbibed by childhood are of a physical nature; and just as my baby-days in London survive in my memory through a misty haze of winter fog and summer dust, my recollections of Swallowfield are clothed with perpetual verdure and fragrance.

The parsonage house, which, during the absence of the incumbent, (who had been despatched to the South of France for a pulmonary complaint,) we were permitted to inhabit, was divided from the village church by a short over-arching avenue of lime-trees; the sweetness of whose blossoms, for a time, and tender green of whose quivering foliage for a longer period, rendered the path as pleasant, as the vista of the church porch and quiet churchyard beyond was cheering to look on. It was thence I derived due reverence for my father's holy estate. The path being

private, he usually robed at home; and when, on the summons of the early service bell, the pastor issued forth with grave deportment, and proceeded, under the shade of the lime-trees, followed by his little household, towards the venerable edifice wherein he was about to expound the word of God, I used to feel, as I held fast by my mother's hand on my way to join his congregation, as though we formed part of a privileged and sacred caste. The mellow tone of the old bell,—the bright snatch of daylight visible beyond the shadowy avenue,—the soft rustle of the lime-leaves,—the fragrance of the summer atmosphere,—created an unspeakable charm of sanctity and grace. It was as a sort of beatification, after the dreary, stony streets of that busy city, whose churches constitute something between a shop and a place of public amusement,—with their wine-vaults below, and flaunting gal-

leries above ;—where Christians “perform” their devotions, as though merely an allotted part of the business of the week.

The village of Swallowfield was surrounded by large dairy farms; fertile pastures, divided by those unpleached hedges of hawthorn, maple, honeysuckle, and briar-rose, which enrich and perplex the low grounds of English landscape. Nothing was audible in those rural solitudes but the song of the linnet in the thicket, or the loud breathing of the cows as they cropped the luxuriant grass, with whose abounding wild flowers mingled the sweetness of their breath. I dwell upon these images, familiar though they be to every rustic, because, in after-days, amid the arid dryness of a tropical waste, where the feathery leaves of a solitary palm formed the only visible verdure, and the night-cry of the jackal the only sylvan sound, I used to re-



cur to the green haunts of Swallowfield as enviously as Dives, in his hour of torture, may have looked upon Lazarus in the regions of the blest.

What would my scorched lips have *then* given for one of the humblest fruits with which our parsonage garden abounded? or what my yearning spirit, for one poor half-hour in the lime-tree avenue, with the sabbath bell knelling from the old church tower;—my father pacing gravely before us, and my hand clasped in my mother's hand?—

But I must not anticipate. At Swallowfield, my parents were as much beloved as in the neighbourhood of H— Park they had been slighted. No coronet coach to launch its weekly contempts at their head! Nay, not so much as a resident squire to divide with them the deference of the village. It was a family living; the property of the sickly in-

cumbent, whose liberal salary enabled his curate, during his absence, to exercise something of a paternal care over his poor. In those days, the minds of men having been absorbed in the issue of that grievous national war which decimated their families and contracted their subsistence, polemical controversy was confined to the Dissenters. There were no schisms in the Anglican church. As to our village, the doctrines preached by my father were venerated as the Word itself; bringing forth such wholesome fruit as your sticklers about painted glass and rood-screens will never cull from the bush-harrowed field of modern divinity. My mother, too, was worshipped almost as a guardian angel; not only by the poor, to whom she dealt out with a merciful hand the worldly aid fitted to their needs; but by the more prosperous class, to whom the still holier mercies of her heart were

manifest. Her Christianity was part of herself.—In the burning furnace of adversity had its lessons been ingrained into her soul!

Arriving as a stranger at Swallowfield, she had dropped at once the title of “honourable,” as at variance with her present condition; and among the farmers’ wives was only Mrs. Meredyth the curate’s wife, with whom they were not afraid to exchange trifling presents and services. But she was not the less respected for her humbleness. Independent of the beauty that made it a pleasure to look upon her, there was something so distinctive of the gentlewoman in her air and gait, that, had she been toiling in a field or working at a churn, no man would have passed her without touching his hat.

When I want to think of her in her fairest and dearest guise, I picture her to myself strolling of a summer afternoon along the vil-

lage, holding in her arms the little girl on whom, in our necessities, she had so long waited as nurse, that the little creature was never happy apart from her; and with one waxen arm entwined round her mother's neck, and one little naked foot clasped in her fondling hand, a kiss ever and anon exchanged between them, they would wander homewards; greeted by the labourers on their way from work with a murmured blessing, and by the good dames standing at their cottage-doors, with a salutation savouring at once of love and duty. The pastor's wife left a charm in the air as she went, like the track of some celestial being.

I distinctly remember one evening, when my father and mother were seated together side by side, on the lawn sheltered by the garden-front of the Parsonage, which was covered over with jessamine and muskroses, enjoying the soft

lustre of the harvest moon, the only moon of the year which seems to warm as well as enlighten. I had been allowed to sit up an hour later than usual, that I might share with them the delicious sweetness of the night; an indulgence which I repaid by enjoying it in quietness, and not molesting them by questions. My mother had taken off her straw hat, and was holding it by the strings, the better to survey the beauty of the heavens; which seemed to smile upon her in return, so soft, and yet so glorious was the light that fell on her uplifted face.

“Would you believe,” whispered she to my father, on whose shoulder she was leaning, “that sometimes, on waking in the morning, I tremble to draw aside the curtain of my bed, lest I should find myself again in our old dreary London home; and discover that all the happiness I have been lately enjoying was

only a dream! At last, when I take courage, and peeping out, catch sight of the white crib by my side, with a little rosy face lying healthy and hopeful on the pillow, I can scarce contain myself for joy; and never seem to render my prayers thankful enough for all the blessings vouchsafed us. Even now, while seated safe by your side, I can hardly realize the delicious moments we are enjoying."

"*Child!*" was my father's half-reproachful, half-fond rejoinder, imprinting, as he spoke, a kiss upon the fair forehead resting on his shoulder; "yet how can I reprove you, when, alas! I often indulge in vagaries quite as groundless? I suspect, dearest Mary, that the mind never wholly resumes its healthy tone, after such hours of anxiety as we underwent in London. My sense of remorse for having betrayed you into a position so unworthy of you,—my terror lest our children,

already cold and ragged, should finally want bread,—above all, my fear lest that tender little one should fall a victim to the privations we were enduring, ate into my very soul. It ought not to be so; or at least, should be so no longer. I should have learned a lesson of double reliance on the protection of that Providence which rescued us from such depths of misery. Yet am I free to confess that while *you* dread to awake from a happy dream, *my* fears are quite as overwhelming that the reality is too delightful to last!”—

The moment *he* spoke despondingly, it became my mother's task to cheer him up. And deeply rooted must have been the hypochondriacism which could resist the endearing remonstrances she addressed him, and the endearing tones in which they were uttered. She reminded him, though Heaven knows it did not need, of the sacred character of his

mission; and that though *she*, a weak woman, might be shaken in spirit by the trials she had undergone, he, whose strength was from above, and who was consecrated to the service of a Master mighty to save, should be as the oak upon the mountain side, the stronger rooted for the storm.

“ You are only too right, my dear Mary!” was his mild rejoinder. “ But if I may dare confess my weakness, that very consecration is one of the causes of my discomfiture. The idea of doing my Master’s work for hire, is painful to me. I say it to you, dear wife, in all sincerity, and in presence of Him by whom our words and thoughts are recorded, that if a throne were offered to me, or any more enjoyable condition of worldly grandeur, I would choose and prefer for my vocation that of a parish priest, endowed with faculties both worldly and moral, to cause my teaching to



prosper. But my mind misgives me that my present duties are too light. I feel that more is required of me. My crown is of roses rather than thorns. What merit in pursuing my way when there are no flints in the path!"—

Gentle words and gentle tones again qualified her reply; by dint of which, rather than by any stress of argument, she convinced him that he was in the wrong. "Contentment," she said, "was one of the most acceptable of the heart's sacrifices."

I have often dwelt upon the remembrance of this little scene, in explanation to myself of my father's conduct in one of the most important steps of his life.—Alas! why must I add the most fatal!—

## CHAPTER III.

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It was in the spring time of the succeeding year, somewhere about March, (for the snow-drops and crocuses were dying away among their lance-like leaves, and the rods of the mezereon bushes studded with bloom,) that, one day, as my mother was standing at the parlour-window with little Emily before her on the window-seat, and myself by her side, with one eye on my lesson-book and the other fixed, like her own, on the sweep-gate by which we were expecting my father's return from the

village, I saw him hurry in with a disturbed step, and a face as pale as ashes.

It was a bitter day. A slight sprinkling of sleet was beginning to fall; and to *me* it appeared as if the blueness of his pinched face was occasioned by the cold. But the eye of his loving wife was not to be so deceived; and an exclamation that escaped her lips convinced me in a moment that something was amiss. My father entered the room, as soon as he had divested himself of his hat and great-coat, with a forced smile upon his face. But the manner in which he desired me to take Emily by the hand and lead her carefully to the nursery, and not return till I was sent for, made my heart sink within me.—It could not be *good* news he had to communicate!—

When, at length, I rejoined them at the dinner-table, both were composed; though graver and more silent than usual. But it was

not difficult for me, to whom every turn of my mother's countenance was familiar, to perceive that her eyes were heavy with weeping.

No need to prolong for my reader the suspense and anxiety I found so painful; and few words will suffice to relate the blow which had fallen upon our little household. My parents' worst presentiments were verified. The invalid rector of Swallowfield was no more; and previous to his death, at Nice, had disposed of the next presentation to the living. Already, my father had received a letter from the new incumbent; claiming possession, and announcing his early arrival.

From the family councils that ensued, I was of course excluded. My father and mother sat up late that night, to talk over their prospects; and I noticed that, next morning, when my mother made her appearance with the air of one walking in a dream, my father's aspect

was radiant with joy. He went off to town that morning, on some errand of business; and during his absence, people came thronging in from the village to inquire whether the news were true that the loss of their old rector was to be followed by that of his substitute?—The old wept, the young murmured! Any one would have thought some severe injury had been inflicted on them, instead of a dispensation in the ordinary course of nature.

And I, too, I am ashamed to say, murmured. Without considering what my kind uncomplaining mother might have to undergo in consequence of the change, I kept openly fretting at being forced to quit my pretty garden, the spring sowing of which I had just completed; and relinquish the gift of a foal promised me by one of the Swallowfield farmers, which I was hourly expecting.

But when, the following day, towards dinner-

time, my father returned, new prospects were opened to me which superseded all further regret for foals, or lupines, or convolvulus-majors.

“How shall you like, Charley, my boy,” said he, when I was summoned to rejoin my parents at tea-time, “to cross the wide, wide sea; and live in a far-off country, where, instead of flights of carrion crows, as at Swallowfield, the air is full of parrots and lories; and where you will see groves of plantain trees and cocoa nuts, such as you have read of in “Robinson Crusoe?”—

“With papa and mamma?” was my reply.

“With papa and mamma, and little Emily, whose delicate frame will be fostered by the warmth of a more genial climate.”

“Let us go directly!” cried I. “I am quite ready.” I had begun to pack up my books and playthings as soon as ever I heard we were to quit Swallowfield.

“There!—*One* of your objections is removed at once,” said my father, turning with a smile towards his wife, whose eyes were swimming in tears. “You fancied that Charles would be wretched at the prospect of leaving England.”

“But even *he*, you see, premises that papa and mamma are not to be left behind!” faltered my mother. “Situated as I am, it is surely natural I should experience some regret at quitting my native country unreconciled to my family. At my mother’s age, it is most unlikely that she will survive till our return. — I shall never, *never* see her again!”

“Before we sail, you must make a last attempt. GOD forbid that I should do aught to frustrate the reconciliation. Perhaps *this* time your brother may withdraw his opposition; for Lord H—— can no longer stigmatize us as beggars. Between your brother

Charles's generous concession and a chaplaincy of eight hundred a year, he will see that we require no assistance at his hands."

This was the first intimation I received of the purport of the long voyage announced by my father; and whereas, a few months before, I had been told, when my uncle Charley sailed from Falmouth to rejoin his regiment at New Orleans, that *he* too was about to "cross the wide, wide sea," I now naturally inquired whether we should not find him in the far-off land to which we were about to repair?

At this hint, my mother's tears flowed afresh. *She* knew, alas! that her future place of banishment was as far distant from the country where her best loved brother was confronting the perils of war, as from that native shore where her last surviving parent was soon to drop into the grave!—

A word of exhortation from her husband



sufficed, however, to console her. He spoke of the blessings spared her in her children; of the benefit my delicate little sister would derive from the voyage; and, above all, of the august and responsible nature of the functions he had undertaken—to teach the Word of Life in a heathen country, and entertain the faltering faith of the English exile in a savage land.

The following Sunday, he made a similar explanation in a farewell discourse to the parishioners, by whom he was so truly respected; and sobs of heartfelt sympathy were the best answers to his appeal. He preached, I remember, from the 28th verse of the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles: “Be it known to you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it:” concluding his discourse in the words of St. Paul, “Finally, brethren, *pray*

*for us*; that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with *you.*"—

When he came down from the pulpit, a spiritual radiance shone from his face, such as painters ascribe to those of saints. Young and old of the congregation hurried after him out of church, and across the churchyard to the gate leading into the lime-tree avenue, (at that time bare and cheerless,) with many a withered face bathed in tears,—many a rough hand extended towards him,—many a faltering mother's voice entreating his benediction on some young child uplifted to receive it. They could not bear to part with him. It was as if the anchor of their faith were lost, and they were drifting out to sea.

In a few days, we were to sail from the Downs; on board the good ship the *Kelso*, a merchant vessel of 500 tons, "copper sheathed

and copper bolted," which was to touch at Rio Janeiro and the Cape, before we reached our ultimate destination at Pinang: and my mother's arduous preparations were hourly interrupted by the visits of the farmers' wives, bringing such humble presents as they could command. Webs of homespun linen, to assist in our outfit; and all sorts of cordial distilments and conserves, of home manufacture, as necessaries for the five months' voyage,—to *their* apprehension more terrible and mysterious than that of the patriarch of old!—

My poor mother accepted cordially what it would have inflicted pain and grief upon them to refuse.

"When all this is past and over," I heard her say to my father, in a faint voice, as the last straggler quitted the house, "my burthen will be less hard to bear."

She spared herself nothing, however. No one was turned from the door. To the poor, she gave with one hand; while with the other, she did not disdain to gather the offerings of the rich. Even to the workhouse, she paid a parting visit; that the bedridden pauper she had so often comforted, and the sickly orphan to whom a kindly word from *her* had a price beyond rubies, might not feel themselves forgotten. One poor lame and epileptic girl, who was in the habit of crouching like a dog at her feet, though incapable of understanding that the only human being who had ever spoke to her kindly was going away from her for ever, seemed to have an instinctive conception of coming evil. As my mother stood leaning grave and sad against the door-post, casting a last wistful glance upon that refuge of misery, poor Nancy seized the handkerchief with which she had been

wiping her tears, and begged it for a keepsake.

“We shall both of us be soon *there!*” said she, pointing with a significant nod to the ground under their feet; “and when old Rody the sexton puts me to bed, they shall place *this* on my heart. It will serve to keep me still and happy, in that dark place. But *you* will need nothing!”—added she, in a lower voice, on seeing my mother shudder at her words. “*You* will go up to heaven among the birds and stars; and everybody in Swallowfield will pray for you, that you may be happy for ever and ever.”—

Such scenes were trying enough. Even my own young heart grew heavy at this constant talk of parting and banishment, and the perils and dangers of those who go down to the sea in ships.

But a far severer trial was in store for my

mother; who, lacking the nobler inspirations of the aspiring Christian priest, could only comfort herself by clasping closer to her bosom the tender child she flattered herself was to be rendered robust by the balmy gales of a milder climate. At her earnest desire, I was to accompany her on her expedition to H—— Hall; and while my father was completing his pecuniary arrangements in town, we proceeded together to the abode of one of the few among his former parishioners who, through good and evil report, had stood his friend; from whence, a letter was despatched to the Dowager, announcing our departure from England, and craving a parting word. My poor mother fancied that the sight of her handwriting, and my own name and face, recalling those of my absent uncle, (now fighting once more the battles of his country!) would plead in our favour; and that she

should not be forced to depart for the land of strangers with her mother's malediction still weighing, unrecalled, upon her head.

Within a few hours her letter was returned, unopened. But another, indited by Lord H——, was placed at the same time in her hand; apprizing her that the old lady, having suffered severely from an apoplectic attack the preceding winter, he was forbidden by the faculty to expose her to the slightest emotion. "Barely convalescent," he added. "the perusal of a letter from the daughter whose undutiful conduct was the original cause of her loss of health, would probably prove fatal." Having "seen in the newspapers an announcement of Mr. Meredyth's appointment in the East," he concluded by "wishing her a safe and prosperous voyage; trusting that her husband's ministry might be crowned with a success in some degree ex-

piatory of his former irregularities of conduct.”

By the despairing look with which my mother suffered the letter to fall from her hands, I saw that the object of our little journey was defeated. So thoroughly wretched did she look, that I did not dare address her; for already, I had overheard the communication of our good host and hostess, that “if it warn’t my Lord’s will and pleasure to admit her to the hall, nought was to be holpen.” The old lady was completely immured; never seen by the tenants or villagers, except at rare intervals in the family-coach, on her way to Divine service.

This hint afforded a last hope to my mother. The sabbath was at hand; and though denied access to her offended parent, it would be something to obtain a last sight of her still-loved face. Nine years had passed since they



were as strangers to each other ; and the faithful daughter yearned to look upon those features which, soon, she must behold no more.

Better have abstained from that coveted enjoyment! From the pew in which she stationed herself, which commanded a view of the gallery into which, every Sunday, my grandmother was pompously assisted by two menials arrayed in the showy family livery, she was borne senseless into the churchyard. The shock was too much for her. But Lady H—— was never aware that the confusion in church, incident on her removal, was caused by the swoon into which the spectacle of her infirmities had thrown her discarded child!—

Three days afterwards we sailed. The languid state in which my poor mother reached the ship which, for five months to come, was to be our home, arose solely from

the disappointment to which she had unluckily exposed herself. But so powerful was her self-control that, before my father, who was detained by business at the India House, rejoined us at Portsmouth ere we stood out to sea, she had regained, if not all her usual cheerfulness, at least the most perfect resignation. All was carefully arranged in our little cabin;—our furniture and gifts made the most of,—his favourite books placed within his reach. And as, luckily, though she and poor little Emily were already attacked by the sufferings which render a sea-voyage so unpalatable, my father and myself experienced nothing beyond the dizziness of which every novice is susceptible, we were able to devote ourselves entirely to the service of my mother, and sister. And now, the immensity of the ocean was before us, with all its pangs and perils!—

## CHAPTER IV.



EVERYBODY accustomed to ship-board must have noticed the partiality of sailors for monkeys and children. The *Kelso*, in which we were embarked, was a third-class merchant vessel—the passage-price of a first-rate India-man being greatly beyond my father's means. The accommodations, poor as they were, were divided between our family and an old Anglo-Dutch Colonel, who was returning to his plantations at the Cape ; so that, had not the good-

humour of the crew rendered the deck agreeable to myself and my little sister, my poor mother, who suffered grievously from the sea, would have been sadly cramped in her cabin.

Unluckily, our captain was a churl. Both my father and Colonel Nieuwenhuysen had been advised to drive a strict bargain with him; and he revenged himself now that we were in his power, by a thousand petty annoyances. The old Dutchman's pipe was prohibited; and it was only at certain hours we were allowed the freedom of the deck. Above all, instead of profiting by the presence on board of a clergyman of the established church for the regular performance of divine service, as my father was the first to propose, he chose to continue his usual practice of reading prayers once a week to the crew.

“A blue coat is as nigh to heaven as a black un, any day o' the year,” was Captain

Garvain's rejoinder to Williams, the mate, when urged to accept my father's offer. "This skinflint of a parson must please to know that, being lord paramount on my own deck, I'm also both parson and clerk."

But though this illiterate fellow persisted in garbling the word of God for the sole pleasure of thwarting my father and mother, they made it a duty to attend whatever semblance of public worship, according to the form of the established church, was going on in the ship.

In more trivial things, he was still more aggravating. My mother was too weak to join the public meals in the cuddy—my little sister too young; and it was with great difficulty they obtained the comforts necessary to their enfeebled state. The steward was repeatedly reprimanded for supplying them by stealth, and at undue hours, with the requisite food.

My mother, a dear lover of peace, kept her grievances as far as possible from her husband's knowledge; and such offences on the captain's part as were personal to himself, he rebuked with the gentlemanly mildness which on all occasions distinguished his deportment. Whereas old Nieuwenhuysen raged and stormed like a hurricane! Scarce a day passed without some violent altercation between them, by which all on board were the sufferers. By the close of the first fortnight, however, my father's forbearance exemplified the value of a soft answer in turning away wrath. For the storming colonel had accomplished nothing towards having *his* way; while nearly all the annoyances and obstructions of which my parents had to complain, were gradually and silently removed. Surly as ever in deportment, Captain Garvain desisted from petty molestation. He was even seen to pause

while pacing the quarter-deck at dusk, to listen to the sweet voice of my mother hushing her little daughter to sleep with the evening hymn; though he had more than once threatened his men with punishment for uncovering their heads at the same pious invocation.

Poor fellows!—it was surprising in what veneration they held both mother and child! Whatever fish was caught, the “little lady” must be summoned to look on as it lay floundering on deck,—whether the dolphin, with its varying hues, or the lesser fry, for more profitable use. It was the delight of the sailors, too, when aiming at the seabirds, as we approached Rio Janeiro, to wing one of the smaller sea-hawks, in hopes that my father and mother might obtain permission for them to keep it as a pet by way of recreation for “little miss.”

Between our pastimes and our feuds, in

short, the voyage, if tedious, was far from monotonous. Part of my father's day was occupied in study, part in giving me lessons; and even the hours of leisure spent on deck, were diversified by a constant succession of novel objects and the explanations to which they gave rise; — the new aspect of the Southern firmament,—the endless variations of a marine atmosphere.

For the first six weeks the weather was so calm, that I began to grow malapert, and fancy the dangers of a sailor's life exaggerated on shore. Nay, I would sometimes twit the older mariners who endeavoured to amuse me with tales of shipwreck and piracy, as "spinners of yarns." One and all rebuked me, indeed, for my rash incredulity, and bade me beware of evil to come in "rounding the Cape:" a crisis of our passage of which even my father spoke uneasily.



“ For my own part, I shall be glad,—main glad,—to find myself on dry land again!”—was Colonel Nieuwenhuysen’s frequent aside to my mother; “ not only to get rid of the sight of that ruffian old Garvain’s mortal ugly face, and command the independent enjoyment and company of the best friend I’ve got in the world, my blessed old Meerschaum, but because, since I came aboard, I’ve had a hint from Ned Morley, (who cares not a pinch o’ snuff for Garvain’s gagging,) that the Kelso’s a doomed ship!”—

The word carried an unpleasant sound with it! My mother asked for further explanations.

“ What do I mean by *doomed*?” cried the old Colonel. “ Why, I mean that it was built for a purpose which the glorious Christian spirit of our country, Madam Meredyth, has rendered abortive. The Kelso was once a

slaver, ma'am!—Every plank and every joist of her has been wet with the blood or tears of the poor niggers. I was the first colonist of the Cape who set my face against the slave trade; and by the blood o' my body, Madam Meredyth, had I guessed that this confounded ship was ever engaged in the traffic, I'd have embarked in Beelzebub's own yacht, ma'am, before I'd ha' come aboard her!"

"Since you are now so near the termination of your voyage," remonstrated my mother, "it would be an act of mercy on *your* part, my dear Colonel, not to excite my uneasiness, or the fears of my children."

"But I *do* want to excite your uneasiness, Madam Meredyth!" retorted the dogged old Colonel. "I like you too well, my good lady, you and your worthy husband and your pretty bantlings, to bear the thoughts of your

being cabined up three months longer with an old wronghead like Garvain; in a ship, too, which bears Satan's own black marks of ownership on the forecastle!"—

My mother could not forbear a smile at all this vehemence; but she contented herself with reminding him of the old proverb, that what "folks could not cure they must endure;" that our passage-money was paid; and that even if the job were a bad one, we must make the best of it.

"That's just what I'm driving at, my good lady," cried the old Dutchman. "I've told you a many times already, that I'm not quite the lack-penny I'm treated like, by Captain Garvain and his crew. There's more golden ducats maybe at the bottom o' my locker, than o' silver dollars in his. So if you and your good man and your children choose to land and take up your quarters with me at Wivil's

Lust, till some good safe ship, Dutch or British—no matter for that—touches at Cape Town, bound for Pinang,—you shall have no cause to complain o' your fare while you stay with me,—and not a stuyver to pay for your passage when you say good bye!”

It was impossible not to be grateful for this generous offer; and thank him she did—and heartily. But it was also impossible to incur so great an obligation towards a stranger.

“Not when I tell you that yours and your children's lives are at stake?”—cried Colonel Nieuwenhuysen, angrily.

My mother gave an incredulous shake of the head.

“And is a fellow-creature and a fellow-Christian, ma'am,” he resumed, “ever to be called a stranger? Haven't you Scripture warrant to love your neighbour as yourself?”—

Still, neither with my father nor my mother

did his arguments prevail. They believed Captain Garvain, in spite of his fractious temper, to be a good man and excellent seaman; and as to the crew, there was an old sailor, called Ned Morley, who was as tender a nurse to my little sister as half-a-dozen female attendants rolled into one.

“I tell you what, then, Parson Meredyth,” resumed the kindly-hearted Dutchman; “since you’re not to be persuaded for yourselves, at least don’t risk your whole venture in this doomed ship! Though you’re bent upon going down to Davy’s locker, you and your lady, at least leave a handful o’ seed-corn behind ye! Where the stock’s so good, a slip or sucker’s always worth having. So even leave me your lad! I’ll have a father’s care o’ the boy.—When you say the word, he shall be for’arded to you safe and sound at Pinang. Or, if content to leave him to me for better for worse, I’ve

told you before that I've neither chick nor child o' my own:—so that the thirty thousand florins per annum I shall leave after me will be going a-begging, if the Jonkheer Carolus yonder chooses to stand by the old fellow to the last, and stretch out his hand for't!"—

For a moment I was horribly alarmed lest my parents should be tempted by this more than liberal offer; for I would rather have remained with them to work my hands off, than quitted them to become a prince. But a glance at my father's face relieved my mind. It said, as plainly as face could speak, that he would as soon part with his right arm as with one of his children. All he uttered aloud, however, was, that he was grateful to the Colonel for his good-will; but still more grateful to that Providence which had not only vouchsafed him children, but the heart to love them, and the means to afford them bed and board.

After this, the Colonel said no more. But for the two days longer he remained with us he sulked with our family, instead of wrangling with Garvain; and, on entering Table Bay, prepared for disembarkation, scarcely bidding us good bye. Just, however, as he was stepping into the shore-boat, his heart became too full to keep up any further show of resentment; and, hobbling back into the cabin, he stretched out both his hands to my father.

“Think better on’t, Parson!” said he; “don’t let pride get the upper hand over reason.—Accept my proffer.—Come ashore.—Let the Kelso go to the devil!—I tell you again and again, ’tis a doomed ship!”—

“My trust is in Him who sinks or saves, my dear Colonel!” replied my father, gravely. “I have accepted a solemn mission, and must not loiter in the discharge of its duties.”

“Then farewell, and the Lord God bless and

keep ye all!" was the Dutchman's abrupt rejoinder. But I heard afterwards, from the mate, that big tears were rolling down the bluff old Colonel's face as he gave a last look from the harbour at what he had been pleased to call the "Doomed Ship."—

We remained three days off Cape Town, for water and provisions; but saw no more of the old man. It was not till we weighed anchor again, we were informed that he had sent on board a supply of old Constantia for my parents' use, and an abundance of fine fruit and sweet-meats, for the children.

But even *this* did not altogether prevent a laugh at the expense of the false prophet, during the ensuing month of fine weather; which thoroughly reconciled us, old and young, both to the Kelso, its captain, and the salt sea. Ned Morley was allowed to spin his choicest yarns for Emily's amusement; while



my father and mother presided alternately over my lessons. As to Captain Garvain, it was seldom he wore his seamy side outwards, now that he experienced no further provocation. So pleasant, in short, was the even tenour of our days, that I could almost have regretted our voyage was drawing towards a close. Yet when we approached the Straits of Sunda, I shall never forget the thrill of joy experienced by all on board on hailing the first land breeze which had greeted us for weeks—the “ breeze from shore,” so often described—but in that tropical climate deliciously laden with the fragrance of the tuberoses and magnolias that abound on the Java coast.

After touching at Batavia, we had to pass the Straits of Banka, on our direct course to Pinang. Once or twice, indeed, I heard observations pass between Williams, the mate, and one of the reefers, that “ old Garvain was as obstinate

as a mule; and that the voyages of the Kelso having been hitherto limited to Rio and the Cape, he knew no more of the navigation of those seas than the capstan itself. I even heard Williams declare that it was the first time he had sailed in the Kelso, and should be the last, so dissatisfied was he with the skill of his commander. But all this gave me no uneasiness. If the Captain's skill was small, his luck was great, for finer weather never attended a voyage than we enjoyed till we lost sight of the Sumatra coast.

On that very evening, however, as I was standing with my father on the taffrail, looking out, we noticed a seaman, who had just scrambled down from the rigging, pointing out to Captain Garvain a small cloud that seemed to rise out of the sea, at the extreme verge of the horizon.—The Captain replied, as was his custom when addressed by his men,

with a coarse oath. But he immediately took his glass from his pocket, and directed it anxiously to the spot; and almost before we had time to be alarmed by the anxious look of his countenance, we became conscious of a short, rocking movement in the vessel; though no wind had arisen to account for the change. A question which my father addressed to Garvain on the subject was so brutally answered, that he took me by the hand and led me down into the cabin, as he was in the habit of doing when it was desirable that the Captain should have only his crew for audience; and there we found that the uneasy movement of the ship had already driven my mother and Emily to their berths.

They were soon, however, subjected to disturbance. By the Captain's orders, the hatches and portholes were to be fastened down, and every article of furniture double-

lashed. Already the loud shrill voice of the rising wind was alarmingly audible. The creaking and labouring of the vessel soon made us remember that we were in the arms of an element awful even when friendly, but terrible as an angry giant when aroused in wrath.

Of the night that ensued, the most exaggerated language would fail to give an adequate conception. The set of sun was followed by instant darkness; while the pitching of the ship, tossed upon billows realizing the popular expression of "mountains high," rendered it impossible to retain alight the lamp usually suspended in our cabin. On finding that the violence of the storm had disabled several hands of the crew, my father quitted us to lend his aid on deck; leaving strict injunctions that not one of us should attempt to quit the cabin. Nor should I have ventured to disobey him, so long as,

amid the roaring and howling of the storm, I heard at intervals the faint voice of my mother, (who was secured into her berth with Emily in her arms,) recommending her dear ones to the mercy of God. But after this state of uproar and terror had been prolonged for hours, till my soul waxed faint within me, and I felt that *any* change, even the stillness of death, would be a release,—a sudden crash, as of heaven and earth coming together, or as if twenty of the preceding peals of thunder had been joined into one, appeared to smite the ship into nothingness. I could not conceive, when the stunning effect of the shock had ceased, how we could still be floating on the waters, as the regular rocking of the vessel announced.

The real state of the case instantly occurred to me. Our mainmast had yielded to the violence of the typhoon! — But while de-

bating what would be the result of such a loss, I discovered that the murmured prayers of my mother were no longer audible; and having with difficulty crawled out of my hammock and made my way into her cabin, from the partitioned space set apart for me, I crept towards her berth, and called and entreated her by name.—No answer!—Not a sound, but the moans and sobs of my little sister!—

Clinging to the lashings, I contrived to reach my mother's face. Alas! it was cold as death; and the manner in which her hand and arm fell from my grasp and hung lifeless from the berth, convinced me that she had sunk under the agony of soul and body arising from that mighty convulsion of nature. At that fearful moment, I own that the prophecies of Colonel Nieuwenhuysen recurred to my mind!—

I was but a child. I had scarcely entered into my ninth year; and it is not wonderful that my first impulse should have been to weep and bewail myself for the loss of that precious mother. My next was to rush up the companion ladder, in search of my father. But the mere effort of forcing open the cabin door against the raging wind, which, penetrating every crack and cranny, bellowed without, was beyond my strength. Nor, had I succeeded, would my main object have been accomplished: for the hatches above were made fast to exclude the waves which were now beating over the deck. Except by Captain Garvain's orders, the cabin was unattainable from without.

With every pulse beating, and every nerve strained by my fruitless efforts, I crawled back to the berth; and in order to quiet the cries of Emily, terrified by the darkness and

her mother's unnatural tranquillity, crept to the side of my poor little sister, and forgot my own misery while endeavouring to quiet her fears: how little dreaming that the act would prove the means of preserving a life far dearer than our own!—

Two hours afterwards, as, towards dawn, the storm appeared to pass eastward, and the wind to experience a lull, I heard the welcome sound of my father's entrance into the cabin, and, worn out by weeping, had not strength even to answer him when he called aloud, from the very door, the names of his wife and children. Believing that, in spite of the uproar of the elements, we slept, he hastened to strike a light; and as the spark lit up for a moment the scene of desolation, I saw him stripped to the waist, with his dripping hair and trowsers clinging to him as though he had been immersed in the water; his face and



shirt streaked with blood from some blow he had encountered in the course of his exertions. I had not strength for so much as an exclamation; but when he tottered towards the berth, pointed in silence to the cold white face of my mother.

“Great GOD! how long has she been thus?” cried he, discerning at once, by symptoms imperceptible to my ignorance, that she was insensible; but that the breath of life was not extinct, sustained by the vital warmth of the children clinging to her senseless form. And without waiting for an answer, he was instantly on the alert; reviving her with cordials, with frictions, with aromatic essences. By degrees, as daylight dawned, I had the unspeakable comfort of seeing her languidly unclosed the eyes which I had fancied shut for ever. She was not herself, indeed;—she did not recognise us.—She was delirious.—But

it was happiness enough to hear the faint sound of her voice, even though it called on any other name than my own. No wonder that she should not at once recognise my father. Fatigue and horror had so changed him, that he did not look like the same man from whom we had parted the preceding evening. Even *I* felt as if ten years had passed over my head during the two heart-breaking hours I had spent in stifling my tears in what I believed to be the dead bosom of my mother.

By the time she was restored to something of a life-like condition, I heard the voice of old Garvain on the companion-ladder: and trembled lest he should be come to load my father with abuse for having withdrawn the attention of the steward for even a moment, during the still continued distress of the vessel. I was even afraid he might claim my

father's services, and take him away from us again; leaving me to a renewal of the anguish of the past night. But I was soon undeceived. The old churl was as much changed as ourselves. The hand of God had not been laid on him in vain. Without so much as pausing at the door for leave to enter, he tottered into the cabin, rushed towards my father, and throwing his arms around his neck, sobbed like a child!—

“God be praised, that you have not lost her!” was the only intelligible phrase he could utter; and he repeated it again and again, as if *his* senses, too, were wandering. My father insisted upon his taking refreshment, and half an hour's rest. But the danger of the ship was still too imminent for him to quit the deck for more than a minute. The wind had sunk. But the tremendous swell produced by its preceding violence ren-

dered it impossible at present to ascertain the full extent of damage the poor Kelso had sustained. I was surprised to see how completely, within those few short hours, the relative positions of my father and our captain were reversed. The high courage and active intelligence displayed by the "black coat," (which all on board were ready to testify had more than replaced the services of the two able seamen washed overboard during the storm,) seemed to assign him a temporary authority over the weather-beaten, wrong-headed old captain; who now addressed him alternately with the tenderness of a father and deference of an inferior.

It was not till long after noon that a council was held in Captain Garvain's cabin, to report upon the state of the ship, and the measures to be adopted. Of what passed there, I could judge only by the de-

sponding face with which my father returned to us.—In reply to our inquiries, he answered by bidding us rely on the goodness of Him who is mighty to save!—But the fact that he was obliged to leave us to take his turn in working at the pumps, while the carpenters devoted *their* service to the more urgent repairs, sufficed to prove that we were now in as much danger from our own weakness as before from the strength of the storm.

Wearied by my vigils of the preceding night, and overcome by the pain of the bruises and contusions I had received in my attempt to reach the deck, I rolled myself up in my cot, and felt as if nothing could ever rouse me again. It was, nevertheless, a whispered conversation between my father and his poor enfeebled wife, that broke my feverish doze.

“ He is a madman, and should be treated

as such!" was my mother's faint reply to some confidential communication made by her husband.

"No, there is method in his madness," replied my father, in an earnest tone; "and what is more, there is that which I little expected to find in him—conscientiousness! He will act, he says, according to the strict letter of his duty. His first is towards his Maker—to save the lives of those entrusted to his command."

"Which ought to determine him to follow the course suggested by Williams; and, since the ship no longer obeys the rudder, let it drift back to the coast of Sumatra. If the present winds continue, you say, we might be there in a few days."

"And Garvain contends that there is not a day's seaworthiness in the ship!—Besides which, the better part of our stock was thrown

over, or washed over during the storm; and we have consequently a terrible alternative before us!"

"My poor children!—What a destiny! Why had I not courage to part from them, and leave Charley, at least, safe at the Cape!" was my dear mother's ejaculation, for which I blessed her in my heart—*silently*—for I would not increase her misery by apprizing her that I was aware of our coming fate.

At length, she recovered presence of mind for further inquiry.

"But since Captain Garvain considers escape impossible, why not accede to the wishes of his crew? Why not run for the coast?"

"Because his duty to his owners requires him to keep the ship to her destination. If lost in any other channel, the insurances would be forfeited. The Kelso is underwritten for something like twenty thousand pounds."

“ And are human lives to be placed in the scale against silver and gold ?”

“ Garvain is of opinion—and his long experience and good seamanship demand some consideration—that we have as little chance of reaching Sumatra as Malacca. Our only chance is by falling in with the homeward-bound China fleet, from which we should obtain succour and provisions ; or possibly some coasting trader, bound for Java or Ceylon.”

“ You have his consent, then, to embark in the first vessel we fall in with ?”—

“ I should not have waited for it, Mary ! It is a mere question of expense ; and our lives and the lives of our children being in imminent jeopardy, we must spare no human means for their preservation.”

In spite of the fearful importance of every word uttered by my parents, I fell asleep



before their discussion wore to an end; and the heavy stupor of over-weariness relieved me for a time. But to what an awful consciousness did I awake, when roused from dreams of dry land and peace and prosperity, to find myself still tossing upon the waste of waters, with the terrors of shipwreck, or the slow death of starvation, staring me in the face!

So long as the typhoon was rending our canvas asunder and sweeping down our masts, the consciousness that we were all together—that I was under the protection of my father and mother—inspired me with a feeling of security. I felt that with *them* I *could* not die. But now, with such miseries in prospect, how I wished that I was alone with the ship's crew! To look forward to the spectacle of a wasting and struggling death for my dear patient little sister, for my loving mother, for the father who was to us as a

second providence, was far worse than the thunders of the storm!—

Of him, we now saw little; for he took his turn in working before the mast. And could he have been multiplied into ten times the strong and active man he was, his assistance would not have half availed to supply the place of the seamen who had been snatched into the deep. For their surviving messmates were now not only doubly tasked in consequence of the leaky state of the ship, but reduced to less than half rations.

No need to wear out the patience of my readers by describing the abortive endeavours of the carpenters to effect such reparations as would diminish that struggle with the encroaching sea, which kept the pumps constantly at work. While my father shared in these harassing labours, I did not quit my mother's side; who, though careful to conceal her de-

pression, betrayed herself by the earnestness with which her eyes were constantly directed towards the horizon,—straining and straining from the first moment of daylight to the last;—in the vain hope of descrying that distant sail which was to bring renewed life to her children, or the savage shore, the proximity of which not a soul on board ventured to announce!—

Twice did the welcome cry of “a sail” deceive our hopes; but each time, the long-looked-for vessel bore away, long before it came within hail. Once, indeed, Captain Garvain swore, with frightful imprecations, that his signals of distress *must* have been seen, since the craft in question was near enough for him to recognise it as a Portuguese frigate. But it was no matter!—Curses or blessings were alike unavailing—

A hopeless darkness settled o'er our fate.

CHAPTER V.

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THE first intimation I received that my parents had given up all hope, was when I found my mother kneeling on the floor with her arms thrown over my sleeping sister, as if bestowing upon her, in the yearning of a mother's heart, a last benediction; while my father, standing beside the table, was forcing into a bottle a small roll of paper, over which he tied some oilskin, carefully sealed.

“Who knows?—It may drift with the current to the Java coast,” said he, addressing

my mother, "and be the means of apprizing your family, through the newspapers, of the fate that has befallen us."

But she answered not a word. She was wrapped up in her sleeping child; and as both were too much engrossed by distracting thoughts to heed my presence, I had leisure for wondering conjectures, while I watched my father abstract from his desk and fasten in a belt round his waist, a purse, a pocket-book, and a few closely folded papers. In the pocket of the seaman's jacket which he now habitually wore, he placed his watch and pocket bible; having completed which preparations, he touched my kneeling mother gently on the shoulder.

"You must waken the children now, Mary!" said he. "Garvain gave me but an hour!"

"All is ready," she replied, in a voice that hardly sounded like her own,—so hoarse was

it and so hollow.—“ I have made up a packet of the few necessaries that can be allowed us.”

And she pointed as she spoke to a bundle tied up in a boat-cloak that lay on the floor.

I now saw what was before us. We were about to quit the doomed ship. For two days past, I had seen a carpenter at work on the long boat. We were doubtless to embark in that slight craft upon the element which had already proved so unpropitious, for the chance of reaching the coast of Borneo; which Captain Garvain pronounced to be within two days' sail. But this assertion had been negatived by an incredulous shake of the head from my father; who was of opinion—as the sequel proved—that the old man was completely out of his channel. During the typhoon which had destroyed our rudder, the compass-box had undergone a serious injury, the magnetic fluid affecting the polarity of the needle.

I consequently foresaw as clearly as my parents, that all we had to trust to was the mercy of the Almighty; and the steadiness of those five among the crew who, I found, had been selected by lot to share our forlorn hope.

“Fear nothing, father!” said I, in answer to a few words of exhortation which he addressed me, bidding me be a man, that I might support the courage of my mother and sister.—“I will obey you while my strength lasts.—Let it only please God that we may die together.”

I saw his lip quiver, though his face was as firm as it was pale, when he assisted us for the last time on the companion-ladder. But neither he nor my mother spoke a word.

Not so on deck. The scene there was trying and terrible. The boat was afloat, and the small stock of provisions that could be spared us already shipped. At first, I fancied that the clamour going on round Captain

Garvain arose from the struggle of the men to escape from the all but sinking ship. But I was wholly wrong; nor could there be a greater proof of the unfairness of my former prejudices against the gruff old man, than the earnestness with which every man among the five selected by chance as our boat's crew, entreated his commander to change places with him.

The Captain himself, who, apprehending that, in the last struggle for life, an attempt might be made to over-crowd the boat, had armed himself with his pistols, determined to shoot the first man who, for his own sake, risked the lives of all, was deeply touched by the unlooked-for generosity of those under his command.

“No, no, my brave fellows!” cried he; “Jack Garvain ’ll stick by you to the last. So long as a plank of the old Kelso remains, *there* is my place! I’ve sailed in her these eigh-



teen year, and she shall desert *me* before I'll desert *her!* Tell my owners as much, Parson Meredyth, if you've the luck, with GOD'S will, to reach dry land, and see old England again."

He took as fond a leave of my mother and sister, as though they had been a wife and child of his own; though he had often boasted, in merrier times, that "*he'd* never been such a fool as to get spliced." But though Emily put her little arms round his neck at parting, to beg with many tears that Ned Morley (an old sailor who had been indefatigable in endeavouring to amuse her, by supplying us with sea-birds or fish during the early part of our voyage) might accompany us in the boat, softened as he was at the moment, he would not hear of it. His word had gone forth. Discipline was discipline. On his own deck, the will of a commander must be never seen to waver. Such had been his uniform system;

and I believe it was to that alone we were indebted for our escape from the doomed ship. Such was the subordination of the *Kelso*, that the moment the Captain proclaimed that his passengers were to be the first embarked in the gig, the men would as soon have dreamed of arresting the course of the winds and waves, as of shaking his determination.

Before my father quitted the deck, he raised instinctively his hands and eyes to Heaven, as imploring its blessing on our enterprise. On which, three of the seamen who had been helping our embarkation, dropped on their knees to ask his benediction; and a solemn thing it was to see it bestowed upon them, by a minister of the gospel who had been labouring hand to hand with them before the mast.

It was a soft sunny day, in the afternoon of which we embarked. The influence of the storm was completely at an end. The sea

was calm. It seemed to wear a treacherous smile: for who, after witnessing its fury during a tempest, ever confides trustfully to its promises again? And as the first few strokes of our oars created a space between us and the disabled ship, now within half a foot of the water's edge, both our own crew, and the crew we were leaving, endeavoured to raise a cheer.—But a mournful attempt it was!—That faint cry, exchanged between those who were going forth to death, and those who remained to perish, was as the requiem over a grave!—

Both I and my sister hid our faces on my mother's shoulder. The last thing I saw distinctly of the *Kelso*, was old Garvain's white head upon the deck. He was peering out after us, as if for a last exchange of kindness; and unless I much mistake, his weather-beaten hand was more than once passed over

his eyes while we remained in sight. Nor could I help weeping bitterly at parting from him:—I who had so abhorred him but a few weeks before! Emily kept sobbing the name of “her good, kind Ned Morley, whom she should never see again!” but all *my* tears were for our gruff old captain. His firmness in danger and consistency of purpose had inspired me with deep respect.

And now, let those who talk of “loving the sea,” because familiar with its summer aspect in the waveless waters of the Solent, or from the Ramsgate pier, endeavour to figure to themselves the sensations of a young child to whom, for weeks past, the word “shipwreck” had become familiar, launched upon the breast of an ocean without an horizon, in a boat, to which the recent sense of motion in a vessel of five hundred tons imparted a double appearance of insecurity. No shade—no shelter—

no resting-place. — Nothing around us but glare, and the sharp briny particles of the sea-spray: nothing beneath, but the struggle of a painful death. The high resolve of my father,—the pious resignation of my mother, bore them up in that hour of trial. But my poor little sister wept and murmured. As for myself, I remember feeling, when the old Kelso diminished to a speck in the distance, (reminding us that by the dawn of another day we must become ignorant of the fate of those we had left behind,) as if my heart had ceased to beat,—so heavy—so heavy was it within my breast!—

Our boat was a ten-oared boat. But the five hands which had been spared us to work it, exclusive of my father who took his turn with the rest, would have sufficed to reach the shore, wind and weather permitting, had poor old Garvain's assertions been founded on fact,

that we were within two days of the coast. Our crew luckily included Williams, the mate; who was not only valuable as an intelligent man and experienced seaman, but as having the authority of long habit over his shipmates. Though subordination could scarcely exist under our deplorable circumstances, custom caused them to look up to him with deference. In pursuance of his advice, they pulled in relays of four oars at a time, leaving a rest of two hours in rotation to each, to husband their strength; and for the first two days, the excitement of novelty, emulation, and, above all, of hope, caused them to deal lightly with their undertaking. But when the third day dawned, without affording the smallest prospect that we were approaching land, and with their strength and stock alike diminished, *then* began the usual petulance of mutual recrimination and selfish despair!—

The heat of a tropical sun at noon-day had wrought upon the tender veins of poor little Emily, till she was almost in a state of frenzy; and my mother had some difficulty in keeping her reclined at the bottom of the boat, covered with the few garments she could command to screen her from those scorching rays; while her own head, like those of the Bedouins of the desert, was enveloped in a thick shawl. But there was no way of defending against the sultry atmosphere our parched lips, to which drink was now awarded drop by drop: our small allowance of water being already almost exhausted.

How we longed for the decline of day, when the disappearance of that terrible sun whose light darted into our flesh like a poisoned weapon, would afford us a respite from pain! But alas! the brief twilight of these tropical latitudes was succeeded at once by the gloom of night; and terrible is the

gloom of night for those who must labour through its darkness, and even at day-dawn find no rest!—

It was on the fourth morning, that, as the screams of my poor little sister, who was labouring under inflammation of the brain, burst shrilly and distractingly through the measured sound of the oars, whose monotony was, if possible, still more excruciating, my poor mother, helpless and hopeless, could not forbear repining that she had not abided in the ship.

“Either we should have now been at peace,” she exclaimed, “or I should have had the means of relieving the anguish of this tortured child!”—

But she was not the only murmurer. The men, harassed and irritable, cursed the child for shrieking; and one sulkily wished it dead, that we might be free from its noise!—What a



moan burst from my mother's lips as she heard that heart-rending sentence!—A little more provocation, and the excited man might realize his wish, and snatch the little sufferer to stifle its cries in the deep!

Better had it been so, for such a blow would have killed my mother at once.—And oh! that I should say so—would, *would* that she had died!—

I cannot count the hours, for in such an extremity as ours every hour might pass for an ordinary day, during which we suffered and despaired. When the minute came which saw our last drop of water exhausted, we were warned by Williams against endeavouring to slake our thirst with sea-water, the bitterness of which, in such moments of torture, is no preventitive. For the last day and night, my mother had lain at the bottom of the boat, with her expiring child; to whose

paroxysms luckily succeeded a heavy stupor, and the dilated pupils of her glassy eyes seemed already fixed in death.

Yet my father spake never a word; and when he *did* address some admonitory expostulation to those out of whose hearts blasphemies and execrations were wrung by the depths of their despair, the sound was so faint and unnatural that I could scarcely recognise it as his. It seemed as if he were afraid of increasing the exhaustion of his sinking nature by the emission of the breath needful to ask us how we fared. All he thought of was his part in the rowing; to work—work—work,—so long as his failing strength would admit; for every stroke of the oar brought those whom his soul loved nearer and nearer to their chance of rescue. His hands, less used to such severe labour than those of the seamen, were completely

excoriated; so that I saw the blood drop from them, when, after his turn of respite, he resumed the oar. But such despondency was in his face, that I did not dare to tell him how my heart bled with them. It would have seemed like intrusion on such deep-seated woe, to talk of pity. All I could do was to creep down to the bottom of the boat and kiss his feet; for I saw that he was too deeply absorbed to be conscious of the movement, though at any other time the lightest whisper of one of his children sufficed to wake him from sleep, and the slightest caress was returned a thousand fold.

Even when, after many hours of fearful struggle betwixt life and death, old Hiram (an American seaman, who had embarked with us from the Cape, and from the moment of quitting the Kelso harassed us by declaring that ours was a lost case, and that it would

save us many a pang to leap overboard at once,) was the first of our crew to realize his own predictions by sudden death, my father, instead of pronouncing the usual form of prayer over the body, ere it was consigned to the deep, contented himself with pronouncing—"the Lord receive thy spirit!" In such a state of physical prostration as ours, the mind, I am convinced, becomes paralyzed; its best faculties lie dormant.

It was day-break when I saw the waters close over our brother sufferer; and the dead and sullen sound produced by the plunge of the corpse over the side of the boat, afforded, I suspect, the first indication to the experienced ear of Williams that we were approaching land. Lead we had none, and to judge by the eye was impossible; for a moist, unwholesome haze seemed to exude like steam from the sea. At the distance of

a hundred yards, we should have been unable to discern a vessel bearing down upon us.

As to myself, partly from inanition, and partly from the influence of this stifling vapour, my head swam, and my heart sickened, as I have since often found them do under the action of opium; and all that was going on round me in the boat appeared to pass in a dream. Lying at my father's feet,—so close to my poor mother that I could hear her irregular breathing,—log-like as I was, and almost devoid of sensation, I overheard at intervals a few hoarse phrases exchanged between Williams and my father. Both of them had descried on the verge of the horizon the preceding evening, which was luckily clear from mist, a strange sail, which, when pointed out by their exclamations, I could liken only to the curiously-rigged boats or junks one sees sailing in the air on some

Japan screen or Chinese tea-box. But Williams, who was familiar with these seas, instantly pronounced the word "prahu," in a tone of consternation which I knew not how to interpret; and I now heard him assert to my father his conviction that we were nearing the coast of Borneo, and that the vessel we had seen was one of the pirate ships of the Illanun tribe!—

"And then," added Williams, in his now guttural and despairing voice, "the Lord have mercy upon us! Better, a thousand times, that we had gone to the bottom in the poor old Kelso, than fall into the hands of those ruthless ruffians!"

"A poor conquest for their valour," rejoined my father, inarticulately. "A boat-load of dying men, with the bodies of a dead woman and her babes!" And there was something horrible in the burst of half hys-

terical laughter with which he concluded the sentence.

What ensued I know not, for my senses were dimmed by a weight of insensibility,—half weakness, half stupor. The first thing I recollect was the keel of the boat grating on some hard substance,—the sands of a coast which extensive coral reefs rendered only partially accessible. It was evening. A broad sheet of purple, flecked with streaks of gold and crimson, already covered the West, from whence the sun had but just disappeared; and by the glimmering light, I could discern a shelving bank, sloping upwards from the waters, composed of what appeared to be colossal serpents, writhing round each other. At all events, our keel was fast in the sand. Yes, dry land was before us!—Yet though such a change had been looked for as fervently as of old from the ark of the patriarch, not a cry

of exultation burst from the four living men who now, alas! constituted our boat's crew. No one spoke, not even to render thanks to GOD for his deliverance. The consternation of our minds was paramount.

“I know these mangrove shores,” muttered Williams, in answer to my father's proposal to him, that he and one of the crew should land and obtain succour for my mother, who, though insensible from fear, still breathed, as till very recently did the little sufferer, nestling in her bosom; “it is next to impossible to obtain a footing on them. What you see are but the roots, and may be climbed like a ladder; but, above, the plant itself is still more bitterly intertangled. The morass in which it springs would probably immerse you to the middle in black and fetid mud. There is no reaching the land from hence.”

“Then let us pull round to the creek, half



a mile to the eastward, which we noticed from sea," cried my father; "to which we traced the current of fresh water, and where Harmer fancied he saw the smoke rising among the trees."

"The smoke of some confounded village of Dyak Lauts, where we should be butchered in cold blood for the sake of our clothes and pistols!" rejoined Williams, crossing his arms dispiritedly over his breast, instead of following my father's example of again seizing his oar.

"What do you mean, Williams?—What do you suggest?—What would you propose?"—cried my father, impatiently, for the precious lives of those he loved might be squandered during the altercation. "If the danger you surmise exist, we must face it at last; why not *now*? Be a man, and let us row for the creek."

And already, he struck the oar among the

mangrove roots, to push off from shore; so shelving at the spot we had touched, that two yards off we were in five fathom water. But Williams, backed by his messmate Harmer, still resisted. "Wait at least till nightfall," said he, "that we may reconnoitre, and do the best we can for ourselves."

Wait!—when the sands of that precious life were ebbing away!—

"At nightfall—it is but an hour," resumed Williams,—“we will push for the creek, or at least till we reach the nearest landing-place to this accursed jungle. I will go on shore myself. I am better used than you are to deal with these barbarians. They will accompany me back to see what is to be gained by blowing out our brains, instead of chaffering with me for fruit and water, or agreeing to afford us shelter. As I've told you again and again, Mr. Meredyth, your old-world

notions about hospitality and mercy will only lead you astray. With these Godless savages, you must deal as they would deal with *you*, or you'll get the worst of it."

"At what are you aiming?" said my father, peevish at what appeared the mate's insensibility to the sufferings of his wife and children.

"At making you understand that if, while dealing with an Illanun, you allow him to perceive that you are in possession of a larger sum of money than the one you offer him, you will get your throat cut. God knows we have not much besides our skins, to tempt their covetousness. But the little we possess, either coin or arms, is all we have to look to for the purchase of our escape from this savage land."

A murmur of assent from his three messmates seemed to assign consideration to his counsel.

“What we have to do, therefore, is to bury at some given point, hereabouts, in the sand, our money and watches, with the exception of a few silver pieces for the purchase of necessaries. Escaped from shipwreck, they cannot expect to find us *very* nobly provided; and we shall thus have a resource to fall back upon, if, as I trust, we find a few Chinamen settled among the natives. Accustomed to deal with English traders, *they* would, for interest sake, espouse our cause.”

My father shrugged his shoulders. But he saw that acquiescence alone would quiet Williams's anxieties, and procure shelter and refreshment for her whose existence hung upon a thread. To what purpose, indeed, dispute with one so much more practised in the straits of Oriental adventures, and so much more master of his faculties! Mechanically, therefore, he placed in the hands of the

mate the little packet, stowed away under the gunwale, containing his valuables; which, with a few trifles belonging to the men, Mr. Williams enclosed carefully in a stout leathern pouch which had been used by poor Hiram for tobacco. Then, having leapt on shore, he sought a spot high and dry among the mangrove roots; where, after carefully scraping away the sand, the treasure was deposited. To mark the place for future recognition, he tied round an adjoining root of peculiar twist, the ragged remnant of a black silk handkerchief, which had once served as a cravat, and of late as a signal, of which none but the sea-birds were likely to take heed.

When he had finished his task and returned to the boat, my father, who had thrown himself down beside us, was weeping like a child, from exhaustion and helplessness.—He saw that the preservation of his

wife and children depended on his exertions, and that the powers of his mind and body were alike prostrate. Even Williams was a plummet over him. The good mate bad him "cheer up, and be a man!"

"A man,—but a doomed one," faltered my father in reply. "Old Nieuwenhuysen was right. We sailed under a black flag."

The words had scarcely passed his languid lips, when Williams, finding his low "hush!" disregarded, seized him by the arm to impose silence. "Listen!" said he, in an ominous whisper; and in a moment, through the stillness of that desert shore and breathless evening, the strike of distant oars was perceptible.

Though nothing was yet to be seen, a boat was certainly approaching. But came it in peace or came it in war? Alas! the only one of our party skilled in the demonstrations of

these barbarians, evidently apprehended the latter extremity.

“Arm yourself, Meredyth!” cried he, at the same time snatching up the pistols and powder flasks, which lay under the gunwale of the boat.

“Whatever may betide, stir not,” cried my father, addressing me in his turn, and flinging his boat-cloak over myself and my mother, ere he seized the weapons held out to him by the mate.

I obeyed by pressing close to the dear side of what I could not then distinguish to be a breathing body, or a lifeless corpse. Over both of us, the heavy boat-cloak was extended like a shroud!—

## CHAPTER VI.



A MOMENT afterwards, my heart was paralyzed by the sound of a yell such as I had not conceived the human lungs capable of producing. No further question, whether friend or foe were at hand!—It was the war-cry of some savage foe!—

The hasty orders given by Williams to my father to arm himself, had probably been misunderstood. Or it may be that, in the flurry of loading, his pistol inadvertently went off,



just as the first of two canoe-like boats, that were advancing through the twilight, glided rapidly towards us. For the report was so closely intermingled with the horrible uproar of our assailants, that I was never able to satisfy myself whether their rage was provoked by a hostile demonstration on our part, or whether they had from the first approached with evil intent. But their enmity was now unmistakable.

Enfolded as I was, my sight was wholly obstructed, and my hearing partially impeded. But I found, by the movement of the boat, that Williams and his companions had, at the fearful outcry of our assailants, leapt on shore, to find such ambush as they might among the mangroves; while my father, not choosing to desert the precious freight over which he was guardian, remained standing in the boat, prepared to defend, to the

last drop of his blood, his own life and the lives far dearer to him. But, from his staggering gait, I soon perceived that he was wounded, though no second explosion had taken place, and the canoes were not yet close enough for boarding. Nor was it till when, long afterwards, I became familiar with the use of the sumpitan or blow-pipe, through which the Dyaks discharge their poisoned arrows, that I knew his wound to have proceeded from one of those darts pointed with fish-bones steeped in the deadly juice of the upas, which constitute one of the most fatal weapons of barbarian warfare.

A moment afterwards, I became conscious that strong men were closing with him, arm to arm; but the strife of tongues, both loud and strange, answering each other in various directions, rendered it impossible to decide whether we were attacked from sea or land.

Many of these, resounding in the distance, probably arose from the savages pursuing our fugitives into the jungle; but the ruffians by whom my father was speedily overmastered, bore him off instantly a prisoner to the canoes; two of them, who remained behind, proceeding to ransack our boat, carrying off the few articles of clothing that remained. At the meaning of their exclamations, while trampling on our prostrate bodies, it was impossible to guess. But as the corpse of our poor precious little Emily, which they first snatched up, was already cold, they probably decided that the white strangers were bringing these their dead to shore for interment, when they were discovered and set upon. Our boat being secured till the reflux of the tide, they chose to leave it and join their comrades in pursuit of the fugitives; whom they probably suspected of having carried off the European

treasures on which they had calculated, no trace of which was to be found.

Either in the wantonness of disappointment, however, or to "make assurance double sure" of leaving only lifeless corpses behind, one of these barbarians, ere he stepped back into the canoe, drew forth from his belt a kriss or long Malayan knife, and stabbed my poor mother again and again in the breast. A third stab was destined to myself; but luckily—*must* I say luckily!—the stroke which would have been otherwise mortal, glanced from the metal buttons of my jacket, and the weapon entered only the fleshy part of my arm.

Sufficiently master of myself not to utter the slightest cry of pain or terror, the savages doubtless judged that their first surmise was correct, and that they were dealing only with dead bodies; for they went on their way re-

joicing. I heard the stroke of their receding oars, mingled with shouts of triumph, as if replying to those audible at intervals from the jungle. But from the precipitation of their movements, both during the attack and retreat, there was reason to suppose that they were people acting surreptitiously and treacherously, as regarded some greater power. And this subsequently proved to be the case.

But my condition was not one that admitted of reasoning. As I lay there, maimed, bleeding, and lonely, my life ebbing from me on the savage shore of an unknown country, where our remains, if not devoured by cannibals, would be the prey of the sea-eagles or the jackals already howling in the jungle, my soul did not instinctively compose itself to peace. In the smart of my wound, and bitterness of my apprehensions, murmurs broke from my parched lips. "Why was I

born to suffer thus?—Why, why were my dear parents and myself thus grievously tormented?”—

I spoke aloud; and the hissing on the sand of the receding tide was the sole answer vouchsafed me. On which, as if mocked by the sound, I burst into such a paroxysm of sobbing, as caused the blood to well yet more freely from my wound; and again, in what I believed to be my dying moments, I cried aloud, like Job in his misery, that “GOD had forsaken me!”—

Let those who benevolently sympathize with the grievousness of my position, figure to themselves my sensations when, the next moment, I heard the voice of my mother faintly but audibly articulating beside me, “Patience, patience, my child!—Patience, my *poor* child!”—

Firmly convinced that she addressed me

from the dead to reprove my insubmission to the will of Heaven, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth; and, terror-struck, I resigned myself to die. But after a minute's pause, the same dear gentle voice called upon me by name; and I perceived that, by some strange miracle, the breath which had been suspended was restored. There was now nearly as much warmth in the body I had for hours regarded as lifeless, as in my own. The copious flow of blood from the wounds wantonly inflicted by our savage assailants, had, in fact, afforded that relief to her fever-struck frame which, in Europe, would have been imparted by the aid of the physician.

I had, however, as little strength to question her, as she to answer. She extended her feeble arm, as if to bless me; but it fell back powerless to her side. The remedy which had recalled her to life must, unless sus-

pended, soon bring that life to a close. No merciful hand to staunch those salutary wounds!—No aid to yield so much as a draught of water to her parched lips!—

“Where is Emily?” faltered she, as I dragged my wasted cheek nearer to her own.

“Dead, dear mother!—At rest!” I had not breath to add that the corpse of that darling sister lay unburied at our feet.

“And your father?”—she gasped, as I managed to reach her hand and press it in my own.

I did not answer. To what purpose increase her sufferings by telling her that he was wounded and a captive!

“Dead, too!” said she—as if replying to my silence. “Soon to be re-united—soon, soon to be happily re-united!” was, a moment afterwards, her ejaculation. Then, as if suddenly remembering the sufferings which had wrung such heavy moans from my lips, she



prayed aloud that, if it pleased GOD, we might be released.

“Yet, if otherwise appointed, Thy will be done!” said she, clasping our hands together upon her labouring bosom. Adding, after a short pause, during which she had endeavoured to gather breath to admonish me,—  
“You are young, my son. *You* may struggle through it yet!”—

“Oh! mother—not through sufferings like these!” murmured I, with failing fortitude.

“Trust to the sustaining hand which hath rescued the poor and needy out of sorer straits than ours!” said the dying woman. “And now, and ever, call humbly and patiently upon the name of the Lord thy God!”

But I could not obey her.—I was sullen with pain and despair.—It was only towards *her* that my heart softened.

“Should you survive, my poor darling,” said she, attributing my silence to weakness,

“remember, Charles, remember as long as you live, that——” Alas! alas! her words, which had been throughout incoherent—for I give them only as I concluded them to be—became thoroughly inarticulate; or else my own sense of hearing was so imperfect from pain, that her last charge was incomprehensible. Thenceforward she uttered but a few detached ejaculations—of which I distinguished only — “my brother — Swallowfield — memory.” A long silence ensued,—interrupted by a frightful spasmodic rattle in the throat, intimating the approach of death. Ere it ceased, my own consciousness forsook me. All afterwards was a blank.

The first thing that recalled me to myself was a cool fresh sensation; and then, a sudden leaping or gasping back to life—worse to endure than all my previous pangs.—And lo! a greenish glimmering light was around

me—the light of a tropical dawn;—and close over my head hung a dusky face—how unsightly to my childish eyes! Yet the countenance was mild and friendly; and the hands that were chafing my limbs and chest were soft and tender. On endeavouring to look around me, I saw that I was lying in a canoe; the paddles of which were worked by two women, of the same swarthy complexion and strange aspect as the one who was removing my garments saturated and stiffened with blood. But the operation, though kindly intended, served only to renew the hæmorrhage which had reduced me to my present weakness. Again, a deadly faintness came over me. I remember only that the kind woman who was endeavouring to aid me, moistened my lips with the juice of a fresh lime, more welcome than nectar; and rested my aching head upon her knees, till the canoe, which had

been coasting along shore, reached what was probably its destination. For the paddles were now flung down, and I was carefully taken out by the two rowers, and removed between them as tenderly as if a child of their tribe. And yet so swift were their movements that the morning air, through which they bore me, refreshed my feverish face. I was scarcely sensible. All I knew was that we passed under the shade of spreading trees, overtopped here and there by a feathery palm. When my bearers paused, some sort of discussion arose between the three women; which ended with my being clasped in the arms of my first attendant, (whom I heard apostrophised by the other two by the name of "Acheena,") and carried with some difficulty up a steep ladder that appeared to lead to a granary, mounted upon piles and thatched with palm leaves.

On reaching the top, she paused to recover her breath; then, making her tottering way with her burthen through several compartments of this strange structure, the rough flooring of which consisted of split bamboos, she reached an inner chamber; in one corner of which was spread a neat white mat, with a cane-work pillow. Here, she carefully deposited me; and in a moment I was surrounded by a tribe of half-naked children and women, habited in a short kilt or petticoat;—some of coarse white cloth, some of wrought birch bark, and wearing rude metal rings on their arms and ancles. But Acheena peremptorily dismissed them, save one old woman, whom I supposed to be her mother; with whose assistance she proceeded to bathe and bind my wound, and foment the contusions with which I was covered.

The tears that stood in Acheena's eyes, and

the pitying exclamations of the old woman, as, at every motion and every recurrent thought, heavy moans attested my anguish of body and spirit, convinced me that I had found friends; and I endeavoured in return to make them sensible of my gratitude, when refreshing drinks were brought me in rude cups formed from the cocoa-nut; while a decoction of bruised herbs was carefully applied to my wounded limbs.

These drinks probably contained some of the powerful narcotics familiarly used in the East. For, in spite of pain and excitement, I fell into a profound slumber; in which my spirit became as active as my body remained helpless. The terrible scenes in which I had been recently an actor, reproduced themselves in my visions; but magnified in all the horror of their details. The mangrove roots became twisting and menacing serpents, guarding that

ill-omened shore: the miscreants who had plunged their weapons into the breast of my dying mother were fiends from Hell, whose triumphant yells proclaimed unlimited mastery over their victims. My fair-faced sister, my mild holy mother, were dragged before my eyes to unimaginable torments. My father became the prey of cannibals;—and all the while I fancied myself extended on a couch of red-hot iron, or floating on a sea of burning marle.

Anon came the softer influence of the opiate: green vistas and waving corn-fields, — the pleasant hamlet-homes of my lost country; —the sheep in the fold,—the kine in the pastures,—the sun-burnt hay-fields,—the furzy, heathy common, with its scraps of gravel-pit, overhung with weeping birch or pendent briony:—cottage-gardens, bursting with fruit and dappled with flowers,—or lordly parks, with stately avenues, and herding deer

cherished into tameness. Everywhere, verdure,—everywhere, quiet. Even the clouded atmosphere presented a charm to eyes long seared by the monotonous glare of a boundless ocean and tropical sky.

But, amid those refreshing scenes, I looked in vain for my parents!—I looked in vain for the smiling sister, born to us in just such a nest of peace!—In vain did I wander and wander through wood, and shrubbery, and open plain; seeking and seeking the dear familiar faces that shone upon my childhood. I sought the well-known church: my father's place stood empty. I flew from cottage to cottage; but the form of my mother, which, like a ray of light from Paraclete the comforter, used to hover of old wherever there was darkness, and diffuse comfort wherever sickness prevailed, was strangely, strangely absent!—And that absence marked the unreality of all I gazed on.



And yet so vivid were my impressions, and even my power of reasoning thereon, that at length I sought out, till I found it, the wicket gate leading to the avenue of lime-trees, and from thence to the church-yard; where, to my childish eyes, perpetual sunshine seemed to abide. Since gone from the face of the earth, it was *there*, I fancied, I should find the memorial of all that had been: humble headstones, perhaps, recording only that they had lived and died,—had been beloved, and were still lamented.—But what can human memory wish for more?

Yet even there, was their name wanting! The church-yard I entered was not the same as of yore. The vegetation was grown dank and unwholesome; tall grass, and weeds overtopping the grass. The ancient yew-trees extended their sombre boughs till they shut out the sky. But, lo! glimmering dispro-

portionately beneath them, like some huge excrescence of the ground, rose a shapeless marble tomb, surmounted by a coronet, and garnished alternately with the heraldic shapes I used to notice on the old family coach of the H.'s, and the grim emblems of death; —wyverns and skulls, unicorns and cross-bones, so jumbled together as to be ludicrous rather than imposing.—But the titles engraven on the tomb were Right Honourable ones. Nothing of the humble name of Meredyth slept below!

Where, oh! where, then, should I seek them next? Alas! my spiritual wanderings were actuated by no volition of my own; and all further impressions became misty, inconclusive, vague. But as I seemed to flit along the ground, skimming the surface of flowery savannahs, a strain of softest and sweetest music led me on, so that I had no further

fears. I was at once happy and sad. I was even conscious of shedding tears in my sleep, and that they were tenderly wiped away by some watchful hand. But I knew not whether I lived the life of this world, or existed as a disembodied spirit.

Why do I revert to these purposeless visions? Because to write of them is a relief to my feelings, after recurrence to facts so torturing, and with the records of such dreary days in store awaiting my commemoration. For when, by degrees, my long-protracted doze gave way to the clear consciousness of my situation,—a situation scarcely wilder in the reality than my opium-prompted dreams,—what was there to reconcile me to life, in finding myself a lonely captive, amidst a horde of savages, whose very name, country, faith, and customs were a problem to my mind?

On unclosing my eyes I was still lying on

my mat, in a chamber open at the sides, but shaded from the sun and weather by deep-sloping eaves of thatch formed with the leaves of the Nepa palm; of which material also consisted the interior compartments of this wild habitation. But over the bamboo flooring, the rude crevices of which I had noticed on my first entrance, had been placed a sort of carpet-work formed of the bark of trees; an act of mercy on the part of my kind attendants, in order to muffle their footsteps, and preserve undisturbed the restorative sleep afforded by their medicaments.

At the further corner of the room sat Acheena and the old woman; engaged in weaving slender slips of rattan into ornaments similar to those serving to attach their linen kirtles, which I afterwards learned to call sarongs. Unwilling to speak, I lay and watched the movements of Acheena; who, in

the intervals of her work, came and went as if her attention were partly engaged in an outer room: her naked feet, light and noiseless as those of the aërial figures I had seen in my dreams,—her movements supple and graceful. Tawny as a Moor, her jet-black hair fell in two long braided tresses below her waist; but round her brows was a cincture of interwoven rattan and birch bark, similar to that which girded her loins; imparting a queen-like air to her head, somewhat at variance with the youthfulness of her shape and movements. Strange, however, as was her aspect, my kind nurse was pleasant to look on; for humanity and cheerfulness brightened her swarthy face.

There was but one thing about her repulsive to my feelings. Round her neck, among many strings of tiny beads, (not more barbarous, perhaps, as ornaments, than the multi-

plicity of chains with which English ladies delight to overload themselves,) was one,—a white and glistening necklace,—not of pearl, but of small teeth. A horrible surmise glanced into my mind!—*Were they human?*

The shudder I was unable to control at the surmise, attracted Acheena's attention; and, hastening to her patient, she knelt down beside my mat, and, with a serious countenance, felt my hands, feet, chest, and forehead. Her investigation having satisfied her that I was wholly free from fever, she leapt up with an altered air; clapping her hands for joy, and indulged in a number of familiar gambols, while issuing her commands to the old woman, who, by this time, was peeping over her shoulder.

I thought they were about to unbind and dress my wound. But after examining the ligatures and the limb, it was gently replaced

by my side ; in pursuance, I suppose, of a system which might be advantageously adopted in more civilized lands, of "letting well alone." The truth was—and they seemed to know it as well as if I had expressed it to them—my wound had ceased to pain me ; and I experienced only the stiffness and numbness consequent on compression. But had I been still in a state of acute suffering, I could not have been more tenderly dealt with than by Acheena and the old woman, while again bathing my face and limbs, and adjusting my couch of mats. Their gentleness brought my own dear mother to my mind, and saddened my spirits, which a refreshing beverage of lime-juice and honey had for a moment raised. But on seeing tears in my eyes, Acheena fled into the adjoining chamber ; and, by way of recreation and comfort for me, brought back in her arms a little brown thing, swathed in bark, which,

nodding and smiling significantly, she laid by my side. Lucky that she was unable to surmise how much more like a monkey than a human being I thought this pledge of her affections!—

Poor little animal! Uncouth as it seemed to *me*, it partook of its mother's kindly nature; for on turning its eyes upon the languid white boy, it laughed, not only with its bright dark eyes, but with a little mouth that unclosed to show the first four pearly teeth of babyhood; at sight of which, I once more drew back and shuddered, from associating them with Acheena's necklace.

Again, the mother surveyed me compassionately, and again disappeared. But this time she returned laden with something more grateful to the eye than the little brown-headed urchin; viz., several calabashes filled with fruits unknown to me by name or sight,



but with which I soon made myself better acquainted ; the delicious mangosteen, the luscious durien, the creamy banana ; besides oranges ripe and melting, and pomegranates, whose ruddy rinds were bursting with the juicy seeds so acceptable to a feverish mouth. The little one by my side tried to snatch some of these tempting treasures ; but with words and gestures of such fondling endearment as I could scarcely reconcile with the ugliness of the poor little imp, Acheena coaxed them away from it ; and hugging it rapturously in her arms, carried it off to her mat at the opposite side of the room, to bestow upon it the nutriment better suited to its tender age.

As she nursed it and crooned to it, I seemed better to understand the tender mercies her motherly heart had bestowed upon myself. She had seen my dead mother ; and the

woman's instinct of her nature yearned towards an orphan!—

But oh! whenever that thought of orphanhood recurred to me, how wildly did my tears burst forth! As yet, I had seen no male in the dwelling under whose roof I was sheltered. But this kind woman must have a husband—this crowing babe a father—in the tribe who had slaughtered my parents, and perhaps carried off our surviving people into captivity.

If unable fully to enter into my feelings, my mild hostess comprehended them sufficiently to spare no pains in endeavouring to comfort and re-assure me. When I gained strength to attempt such inquiries as signs and gestures would express, and she was made to understand my anxieties concerning the fate of those who, I explained to her by placing her infant in her arms, stood in the

same relation to *me* as she to the poor urchin, nothing could be more plaintive than the tones in which she replied by words I could not understand, but which her movements gracefully, though grievously, availed to interpret. She assured me that my mother—she of the long hair—whose little one lay by her side,—had been buried by her people; and, with a solemn countenance, fetched a bowl full of flowers from the adjoining chamber, and showed me how they had been strewn over their grave.

I then endeavoured to ascertain the fate of my dear father.—Was he dead?—Was he a prisoner?—

But on that point, my best efforts were ineffectual. Acheena knew nothing of our boat or its crew, antecedent to the moment of finding me, senseless and bathed in blood, beside the corpses of a woman and child abandoned

in a stranded boat. But by dint of vehement expressions of horror and indignation, she made me comprehend that, whatever mischance had befallen our party, was the work of a strange tribe—the enemy of her own;—that she and hers stood as much in awe of these sea-robbers as the white men themselves; that if their prahus had quitted the coast, it was because the Illanun crew which had attacked us found they had enough to do in overmastering the white people, without staying to attack the hamlet of Tanjoo, of which the dwelling I was sheltered in, formed a part.

All this I did not, of course, at once comprehend; but after many earnest explanations, I came to the above conclusions. Acheena also apprised me that her husband and his fellow-villagers were away, up the country, to carry their annual tribute to the rajah of the

district. She seemed to fancy it was their absence which had tempted the Illanuns to land upon the coast, with a view to plunder and capture; when our unlooked-for arrival produced a change in their purpose.

By degrees I imbibed, among these impressions, the comfort of knowing myself to be in security. As I gained strength, the kinsfolk and companions of Acheena flocked in to gaze upon the stranger. But not offensively. All spoke me kindly, or soothed me with endearing gestures. I was an object of heartfelt compassion among those dusky women, with their cane-wrought armlets and coronals. Some brought me fruit, some sago, some rice, some the gaudy feathers of lories, some the purple shells of their coast. For I was small of my years; and they compassionated me as a poor motherless child, whom the Illanuns had deprived of his parents. And what could Chris-

tians have done more than these poor unlettered heathens?—

I noticed that, every morning, the first measure of Acheena, on entering my chamber from the outer one which she shared with the women and children of the household, was to take off and cast out of the window a single flower from a string of half-dried blossoms, of the jessamine kind, but larger and more highly scented than the dear old tree at Swallowfield; a ceremony which at first I believed to form part of some religious observance. But her eyes brightened so whenever she snatched down one of those withered buds, that I endeavoured to gain an explanation. On which she pointed out to me, that only two flowers remained on the string; and explained that, after two more sunsets, her husband, Bulan, would be at home again!—This flower-tally was an almanack, by which to count the days of his absence.—

Though Acheena leapt up and clapped her hands for joy when she made this announcement, snatching up the little brown urchin that was crawling over the bamboo floor, and covering it with triumphant caresses, I own it served to depress me. Creeping into the shadiest corner of the chamber, which I had not yet found strength to quit, I began to weep bitterly. If this man, this savage, this Bulan, as she called him, should prove as brutal as those other wretches of his colour whose war-cry still seemed to sound in my ears, what would become of me?—I might still be carried into slavery, or slaughtered in cold blood!—Vague, but terrible apprehensions, overcame me. The tenderness of Acheena had for a time tranquillized my sorrow; and the novelty of the scene around me excited my interest. But now, I began to reproach myself with having submitted to

be comforted. My tears flowed unresisted. Poor helpless outcast that I was! Why was I not at rest beside my mother and sister?—

So occupied were the women in preparing a festival for the return of their lords and masters, that they took less heed than usual of my sorrows. They brought me, at intervals, morsels of the viands they were preparing. But I could not eat. Nor, had appetite been vouchsafed me, should I have ventured upon their food, unless under the unmistakable form of fish or fowl. A meat, which I afterwards knew to be dried venison, filled me with indescribable horror. I had heard such loathsome stories from the sailors of the *Kelso*, touching the unclean food of the *Borneans*, *Chinamen*, and *Malays*!—

Vainly did I endeavour to make poor *Acheena* sensible of the origin of the anxieties which were producing so unfavourable a



change in my health. At length, as she stood beside me, putting a finishing hand to a sort of hat or helmet of palm leaves adorned with beads, which I saw was destined for Bulan, I flung myself down on the floor, and placing her foot upon my head, endeavoured to show her how willing I was to be her servant—her slave.—Then, clasping my hands in an attitude of intercession, implored her not to send me away from her, or surrender me to be the slave of another. Holding the brown urchin to my heart, I tried to make her understand, that by adopting me, she would secure an elder brother for her darling; that I should grow up to be strong, and to defend him, *even* as she had proved my friend!—

Earnestly and pityingly did she gaze upon me; and I was endeavouring to interpret the expression of her countenance, when, of a sudden, she uttered a piercing cry—a cry of

frantic delight; and flinging down the work she held in her hand, darted like an arrow towards the door.

In a moment, she was folded in the arms of a tall stern-looking man, of her own tawny hue, but not of her own prepossessing aspect; in whose girdle were stuck two Malay knives, and who had only laid aside his spear to enfold his loving Acheena. From the outward room resounded discordant cries of joy and greeting!—The tribute-bearers had returned home on the eve of the appointed day; and, lo! the crisis of my destiny was at hand!—

## CHAPTER VII.



It struck me that, while Acheena continued to prattle and wind herself, like one of the luxuriant parasite plants of her country, round the stately stem of which I stood so much in awe, she was endeavouring to prevent Bulan from obtaining a glimpse of the new inmate of his household, till she had told him her tale and my own. For after chattering like a parokeet, yet using all the time as many signs and gestures as she employed in speak-

ing to myself to whom her language was unknown, she suddenly relaxed in her clasp of this beloved Bulan; and, simply taking his hand, led him towards me.

Let me repeat again and again that I was but a child, and a diminutive child, of nine years old; lest I be taxed with cowardice, while admitting that the searching glance of his dark eye seemed to transfix me. I shrank into less than myself. With my head sinking upon my bosom, and every drop of blood curdling in my veins, I expected to find myself snatched into the arms of this tall and rigid savage, impaled upon his kriss, and my teeth added to the neck ornaments of poor Acheena!—

My suspense, however, was so protracted that at length I ventured to look up; when I found the stern expression of the bronze visage changed into a look of unutterable

contempt. His shoulders were elevated, his upper lip bitterly curled. Probably he detected my cowardice, so different from the hardy bearing of the youths of his tribe. For from the tones of Acheena's voice, I could see that she was expostulating, and telling him that I was still sick and weak from the loss of blood consequent upon my wound. But when she removed the covering from my arm, and showed him the deep cut, not yet skinned over, the barbarian looked ten times more scornful than before!—

Luckily, his attention was readily diverted from me. His own imp of darkness was placed in his arms by its grandmother; and, lo! his grim aspect relaxed, and he began to fondle the little creature with the passionate tenderness of an ape towards its young. I fancied that he even glanced more humanely towards myself, on seeing what a good under-

standing prevailed between me and his child; for the little one tried to reach down from its father's arms to sport with and caress me.

But the chamber was soon cleared of them all; and the careful manner in which, on quitting it, Acheena placed food and drink within my reach, proved to me that I was to be long alone. The fact was, that Bulan, haughty as he looked, was not the great man of the village.—The feast was to be held elsewhere; each house contributing its share. But by the disagreeable uproar of human shouts, and gongs, and tom-toms, which shortly afterwards proceeded from a dwelling similar to the one I inhabited, and though included within the same fence or fortification of pointed bamboo stakes, separated from it by a group of betel trees, I found that, for a time, I was safe from molestation.—The savages were in full carouse.

My first sensation was one of exquisite relief. My next impulse was to ponder on the possibility of effecting my escape, during the absence of this grim Bulan and his comrades. But how, or whither?—What chance of rejoining my father?—What hope of obtaining kinder masters than those from whom I wildly wished to flee?—I should unquestionably perish in the jungle—either of hunger, or to satisfy that of the beasts of prey!

At least I might profit by my solitude to examine the house, and investigate the habits of its inmates. Scarcely able to stand upright, I tottered, holding by the wall, towards the outer chamber,—or rather chambers,—for there were five compartments under the roof: one, with which I was already familiar; the second, a dormitory furnished with mats of all sizes and textures, for the use of the women and children; the third, a

kitchen, containing cooking utensils of strange device, with mortars and mills, for grinding corn and stripping the padi, or rice, of its husk; the fourth, a store-room, piled with bags of rice, sago, millet, and maize,—segments of sugar-cane for boiling, and heaps of birds' nests,—I mean the edible nests of the sea-swallow formed of fish-bones, which constitute so dainty and nutritious an article of Oriental food. The fruits, too, with which Acheena had been in the habit of regaling me, were kept there in baskets of delicate cane-work, effusing a delicious aroma; and I could hardly forbear smiling at the recollection of the disgusts and fears with which, so recently, her strange provisions had inspired me.

Nevertheless, my awe was far from dissipated. For the fifth chamber, evidently devoted to the use of the males of the community,



had yet to be visited; and a single glance from the threshold showed me that it was an armoury, full of their spears, sumpitans, and war-shields; their krisses steeped in upas juice, and other nameless and poison-tipped weapons. And how could I be sure but that one of their dusky warriors remained there in ambush, in some dark corner, to watch over this treasury of the house?—

I took the precaution of peeping from the outermost door, down the steep ladder, (the precipitous descent from which to the earth, turned me dizzy to look at!) to satisfy myself that no one was approaching to surprise me in my search. But nothing was stirring below, save the flocks of domestic fowls perpetually crowing and chucking round the house; and the wild pigeons which, in the absence of the fowls' masters, settled down among them, to rob them of their food.

With a cautious step, therefore, I now approached the Blue chamber, on approaching which, I was struck by an odour not absolutely foetid, but unpleasantly different from the atmosphere of the opposite room, where the grains and fruits were deposited. Nothing doubting that it proceeded from the poisonous vegetable juices in which I knew the weapons of these savages to be steeped, I did not scruple to make my way in; and was soon lost in childish wonder at the neatness with which the sharpened fish-bones were fitted into the spears and arrows, to render their heads more searching; and the exact bore of the slender sumpitans, through which their darts were discharged. The handles of ivory, mother-o' pearl, and tortoiseshell of many of the krisses and swords, also attracted my attention.

I had seen such things in my own country,

in museums and collections of curiosities. And that I should now be gazing upon them in a dwelling thatched with palm-leaves, and floored with bamboo, with the whoops of naked savages resounding from an adjoining hovel, so that the next moment these cruel instruments might be buried in my flesh, was a fact to startle away my breath!—

Daylight was declining. My hosts might return; hurriedly, therefore, I completed my survey, scarcely giving myself time to examine, by the uncertain light, the padded war-jackets of the Dyaks, capable of repelling a wooden spear-head; which, by their dusty and faded appearance, seemed to have been long out of use. But as I flung them back upon the floor where they had been lying, I discovered that the strangely pungent smell which had disgusted me on the threshold, proceeded from a large net, apparently a fishing-

net, suspended above the war-jackets, from the joists; and containing what I conjectured to be large buoys, or floats of cork.

Though evening was now glimmering towards dusk, my boyish curiosity prevailed; and drawing down the heavy net, so that I could reach it by standing on the ledge upon which the spears were deposited, I proceeded to investigate the contents.

But how! oh heavens, to describe the ghastly spectacle that met my view!—Five human heads, reeking with a sort of briny or aromatic varnish, in which they had been saturated to preserve them from corruption; but, even in that foul and distorted state, retaining the painful semblance of humanity!—

Heart-sickened and rebuked, I sunk down upon the floor, upon my knees—upon my face.—All my horrible misgivings respecting the cannibalism of my savage hosts recurred

to my mind. One only thought sustained me. The heads were decidedly not of European origin. However disfigured by the means taken to preserve them, I was able to satisfy myself, by the texture of the tufts of hair remaining, and the formation of the grinning jaws, that they were the skulls of Malays:—enemies, probably, conquered in battle, and preserved in token of conquest.—But what had become of the bodies from which these grim trophies were dissevered?—

Overcome by loathing and weakness, I could scarcely drag my limbs out of this chamber of abominations. The smell I had found unsavoury when its origin was unsuspected, now caused my very gorge to rise, till I grew faint as a girl. And what if these ghouls—this Bulan and his people,—should return and find me extended on the threshold of his horrible sanctum!—

By slow degrees, however, pausing oft to wipe the clammy dew from my face, I managed to crawl on my hands and knees along the uneven flooring to my allotted place. And having obtained it, I lay me down upon my mat, and endeavoured to soothe down the beating of my heart by recurrence to the last command of my mother, "to call humbly and patiently upon the name of the Lord my GOD!"—

Still, though solaced by the recollection, my childish faith was not strong enough within me to enable me to surmount all fear. At times, a frightful surmise darted into my mind that I was to be sacrificed, at leisure, in honour of the return of the tribute-bearers! The gentle remonstrances of Acheena on her husband's entrance had perhaps been intercessions that I might be spared: and kept, like some Pongo of the woods, to make mirth for her child!

Nay, the calm, cold, cruel eye of Bulan, as he examined my proportions and condition, might possibly have been the survey of a butcher!

While revolving these agonising reflections, which caused my breath to come in gasps like that of a drowning man, I heard indications of a thunder-storm growling in the distance; a thing of too frequent occurrence in those latitudes to be noticed; but that I feared the change of weather might drive home the revellers, ere I had time to compose myself into the semblance of sleep, so as to remove the suspicion that, during their absence, I had been prying into the secrets of my prison house.

I covered myself over, meanwhile, with one of my mats, partly to screen myself from the vivid glare of the forked lightning, which even the deeply-sloping canes could not quite shut out, and which showed itself distinctly between the

crevices of the rough flooring, and partly to conceal my face from observation, in case I should be visited by my hosts.

What was my horror, therefore, when I suddenly found a hand far rougher than Acheena's interposed under my covering, and laid upon my chest!—Amid the thunder-peals, those light-footed savages had traversed the room unheard; and were profiting by the darkness to examine their hapless prisoner!—

While Bulan passed his hand over my breast and forehead, rendering his account of me to the others in so low a voice that I saw he fancied me to be fast asleep, Acheena was investigating, by touch and smell, the calabashes containing my untasted food. I could discern a sadness in her tone while informing her companions that, though they had been feasting, I still fasted; and if their intentions were indeed hostile, nothing could be milder than their



voices, or more deferential than their tread. But as much to my relief as my surprise, after a short dialogue, they retired. At least, when a blaze of lightning next lighted up the room, thanks to the interposition of Bulan in removing the mat from over my face, I could clearly perceive that I was alone. And oh, how fervently did I give GOD thanks for that great mercy!

But is it to be wondered at that rest visited not my feverish frame? "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man," saith one whose words will abide for ever and ever, "fear came upon me, and trembling, which caused all my bones to shake." And let no man presume to scoff at fear; unless, having been exposed to terrible extremities, he hath shown himself fearless. Even then, coldness and want of sensibility are often mistaken for courage.

There was nothing—no, nothing in this

world, to which I could turn for comfort. My father, if yet he lived, might be exposed to perils still greater than my own. My mother and sister, whose long protracted sufferings I had witnessed, might, in spite of Acheena's ill-understood assurances, be denied the decencies of burial. Myself, if spared in the flesh, might be destined to live and die among heathens,—a participator, by slavish coercion, in their profane rites.

Wearied out by my solitary tears, at length I fell asleep. But from my unrefreshing slumbers, I was snatched, ere daylight dawned, by a powerful hand. "And now," thought I, "my hour is come." And I prayed aloud that God would help me, and that my agony might be short. But as the words escaped my lips, the same hand firmly sealing them, imposed silence upon me. And having been borne struggling out of the room and along the central

passage of the house, I found myself in presence only of Acheena and the women; who, by the morning light of a fine day dawn, were preparing the morning's repast of their husband and master.

But already, I had no further fear of forming part of the viands of the day! The faces of these women were at once so mild and merry, that an evil project could scarcely be in agitation. The moment I caught sight of Acheena's laughing eyes and snow-white teeth, I felt reassured.

With the instinctive tact of her sex, she had discovered the repulsion entertained by her husband towards the white man's child; and hoped to moderate his prejudices by demonstrating outwardly and ostensibly, my adoption into their tribe. By dint of begging and borrowing, she had consequently obtained from her neighbours the means of converting me into a son of the

Dyaks. And having presided at my toilet, and attired me in a sarong, with anklets and armlets similar to those of Bulan, she made me present him, at his waking, his morning mess of rice and curried venison.

I know not whether the savoury fumes of his meal softened his heart—as is the case at times with the citizens of more civilized countries;—or whether the unwonted sight of the child of the stranger bedizened with the adornments of his people tickled his fancy. But he not only laughed as heartily as Acheena while surveying me, but, on becoming satisfied that my bodily weakness was no imposture, took me up kindly in his arms,—carried me down the steep ladder that afforded access to the house;—and, after passing under the group of betel trees and beside the adjoining habitations, lifted a couple of the bamboo-stakes, left loose for the purpose of egress from

the stockade. But that his frank deportment completely reassured me, I might have wondered why he was fatiguing himself by bearing such a burthen as my attenuated frame into the open country.

I was soon satisfied. After threading a straggling thicket, high over the flowering shrubs of which predominated the sago and nepa palm, we reached a gushing stream, swollen probably by the heavy rains of the preceding night; on the banks of which, a group of the Dyaks of his tribe (for they were facsimiles in colour and vestments of himself,) were busily employed in fishing, by means of a net fastened to stakes on either bank: for sport, probably, rather than profit; since the proximity of the ocean insured them a far more advantageous take, in the salt water. To these men, a manly but mild looking race, he exhibited me, not like some "rare mon-

ster," but with something of paternal pride. Whatever explanations he gave, were approvingly accepted; and at the close of the harangue, he deposited me on a bank, high and dry above the river; where I might at once amuse myself by watching their occupation, and be braced by the cooling breezes generated by the fall of the mountain stream. Such was his wise leechcraft. Discerning that my fever was the fever of weakness, he omitted no means of renovating my strength.

Before the fervours of noon compelled us to retreat into the house, I was thoroughly reconciled to Bulan's return. His air of sternness in first accosting me, was simply an expression of trouble and surprise. He was of a graver nature than Acheena, but scarcely less kind. I enjoyed my meridian repose as if not a care remained on my mind; and was far from sorry to find, on awaking, that the

evening was to be spent in sociable community with our village neighbours. The tom-toms and gongs were again busy; perhaps by way of termination to the banquet, which the storm had interrupted the preceding night. But by the care with which Acheena presided over the arrangement of my gaudy ornaments on the occasion, and the solemnity with which I was addressed by Bulan, I gradually discovered that I was about to be publicly welcomed by Matari, the Chief of their settlement, and formally inaugurated into their tribe.

At first, the prospect of these festivities somewhat pained me. Though for some time past my thoughts had been wholly engrossed by the idea of self-preservation, now that I was released from immediate apprehension, my heart could not but recur heavily to those I had lost. So perverse is human nature that, the moment the fear of death was past, I

discovered how little remained to endear the life to which, only the previous day, I had clung as precious.

But my courage soon rallied. Youth is youth; and now that the blood had begun to circulate more freely in my veins, the breath of the summer air fanning my cheeks and the novel fragrance of the strange flowers in the adjoining thickets, served to revivify my nature. I was almost content—almost joyous,—when towards sunset I was borne by Bulan, attended by the merry Acheena, with her face shaded by a spreading hat of palm leaves, and carrying her urchin slung round her neck, to a bright platform of greensward, adjoining the hamlet of Tanjoo. Enclosed by a belt of podada trees, it had been evidently laid bare by the axe, for the purpose, at the first clearing of the jungle.

In so pleasant a spot, but for the stunning



noise of the gongs and tom-toms, the soft stillness of evening would have afforded a really enjoyable pleasure. And to my great surprise, the trees, as twilight deepened, became resplendent with light; though by what artificial means these untaught people managed to procure so brilliant an illumination, it was hard to account for. At length, one of the sparks which I noticed flitting or falling from the trees, fluttered so near me, that I was able to ascertain its nature; and, lo! for the first time I beheld one of those glittering fire-flies, which, when clustered together, invest the object on which they settle with a blaze of light.

But though the sports of the evening seemed about to commence, (for Bulan and one of his companions, well matched with him in point of height and athletic agility, were already measuring and poising their wooden spears

for the performance of their war dance,) I had as yet seen nothing of the chief. At length, a loud shout in the direction of the dwelling pointed out to me by Acheena as Matari's, at the head of the bamboo enclosure, announced his coming forth: responded to from the platform by such a crash of gongs, such a rattling of shells, and banging of tom-toms, as nearly overpowered my weakened senses. Half deafened and half awed, I turned towards the opening among the palm-trees, through which Matari was to make his appearance.

In a moment, I was hoisted upon Bulan's shoulder, and borne to meet him; and even from a distance, could perceive that he was a man of colossal proportions, well calculated for the honours of his supremacy. Round his waist was a sarong of fine cloth, embroidered in gaudy colours; in the belt of which, in addition to two krisses, whose handles were

enriched with rudely wrought gold, and pearls of irregular form, were stuck a pair of European pistols. But his cap, or helmet of bark and rattan, surmounted by gay streamers, was the crowning pride of his wild and picturesque costume.

After gazing upon me, face to face, as I clung half terrified to the shoulder of my bearer, he nodded approvingly; and taking one of the metal circlets from his brawny arm, placed it round my neck. I could have dispensed with the gift, which seemed to intimate a badge of slavery; nor was I much better pleased when, after closing his own eye-lids with his fingers, he applied the same ceremony to my own.

The next form he observed was, however, far more revolting. Snatching from the hands of an attendant a white fowl, which appeared to have been brought for the purpose, he

swung it wildly round his head for some minutes, till the velocity and force of the movement deprived the poor bird of life: then tore it with frantic gesticulations limb from limb, sprinkling the blood upon himself and me, and all the bystanders. After which, the gongs and tom-toms struck up again; and the Dyaks burst into a yell that chilled me to the marrow,—so fearfully did it remind me of the war-cry of the Illanuns of the coast!—

But oh! had this been my only grief!— On raising my eyes to watch the movements of the savage, while whirling the fowl round his head, I noticed that, among other adornments, his gaudy cap boasted what at first appeared to me a flowing tuft of unbleached silk. But on looking again, I saw that it was hair—human hair—*flaxen* hair!—No! I could not mistake it!—I had too often seen our darling Emily's beautiful locks curling

round my dear mother's hand, not to recognise their texture! My sister—my sister—my dear sister!—That I should have lived to behold them thus degraded!—

## CHAPTER VIII.

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So deep was the horror with which this discovery oppressed my mind, that from that moment all my thoughts were of escape. Though sorely perplexed as to the strange land on which I was thrown, I believed it to be either Malacca or Borneo; and doubted not but that, near or far, the English must possess a settlement there. I had been so accustomed, from my childhood, to hear of Britannia ruling the waves, and of the British flag

being sovereign in India, that I was firmly convinced some fort, or factory, or colony must be attainable, as soon as my strength enabled me to set forth upon the search. By keeping along the coast, I should be sure to reach some stronghold of my amphibious nation. Alas! I had already forgotten the impervious nature of the mangrove jungle, which constituted my first experience of that terrible shore; and which would cut short my enterprise in the onset.

But while my strength was gathering, and my purpose of truancy maturing, so parental was the kindness of Bulan and Acheena, that, involuntarily, I began to attach myself to them, like a dog to its master. Before I was strong enough to wander beyond the thickets adjoining the village, Acheena used daily to bring me bunches of the jessamine-flowers in which she had seen me take pleasure as a

memento of home; while her husband endeavoured to divert me by gifts of wing-strung doves, a great variety of which abounded in the district, or some of the curious little tortoises frequenting the creek. They told me of larger tortoises—turtles, as it afterwards proved—which visited the sands of Tanjoo in spring time; depositing myriads and myriads of eggs, which they promised me I should taste. But the chief luxury in which the Dyak Darak delighted, the chewing of sirih and betel-nut, was not of a nature to inspire me with much confidence in their taste.

The climate, though subject to storms, was a pleasant one. But I suppose there must be something in the cuticle of an European skin less qualified for exposure than that of either browns or blacks. For I suffered terribly from exposure; not alone from the stinging of moschetos and other insects, but from the



mere action of the sun. My hosts were not a little diverted at seeing me proceed to bruise, in one of their mills, the oily seeds of a species of tounesol, to form an unguent; by a careful friction with which over my limbs and body, I relieved myself from the pain of my burns.

Soon afterwards, Bulan and his comrades proceeded on a hunting-party into the jungle; hog-hunting, I believe,—for there was a grand preparation of their sharpest spears. I felt relieved by their absence. Though as yet I had never experienced an angry word or unkind gesture from any one of the tribe, I could not but feel that, at some unexpected moment, I might inadvertently offend. And it is scarcely safe to tread upon the toe of a man who wears a poisoned kriss in his girdle!—

But my chief anxiety to get rid of Bulan

was, that I might profit by his absence to revive my friendliness with Acheena; of whom I had seen less since she had a double household duty to fulfil, and from whom I wanted to ascertain facts concerning which she alone could satisfy me. The lock of hair adorning Matari's head-dress weighed heavily on my spirits. I had now detected, in all and each of the dwellings of these barbarians, a collection of heads similar to the one which so appalled me in my new home; and was resolved to learn whether, among these horrible trophies, existed the relics of my unfortunate parents.

The question was scarcely less hazardous to propose than it was heart-rending to utter. The first time, however, I found myself alone with Acheena, after her husband's departure, I led her gently into the armoury, (stripped of half its contents by the absent warriors,) and,

pointing to the nets, made her understand the cause of my distress. With uplifted hands, I implored her to tell me whether Matari had possessed himself of the remains of the white woman and child, as well as of their silken hair!—

But the moment my meaning reached her, she would not listen to another word. Nothing could be more genuine than the warm-hearted woman's indignation. She readily made me understand that the heads I saw were those of enemies honourably conquered in battle—not of women and children.

Dragging rather than leading me through the enclosure, she insisted on my accompanying her, that very moment, across the padi fields to a remote spot, situated high above the banks of the stream, but skirted with trees and thickets; and which, by its peculiar aspect, I soon saw to be the burying-place of

the village. Small tombs, formed of the bark of trees, and raised like their houses upon piles, as a precaution against the rising of the stream, were scattered at intervals among the bushes; on many of which lay armlets and head-circlets of some value, besides metal ornaments, such as the wife of Matari wore suspended from her sarong. There were also calabashes of food, in a few of which the rice still lingered; though, for the most part, the flocks of doves abounding in the neighbouring jungle had made free with the grain provided by these simple people for the sustenance of their dead in a future state. By the humble attitude in which Acheena inclined herself beside one of these depositories, I saw at once that it contained the remains of her parents. When she raised her head again, the tears swimming in her eyes had extinguished every spark of the indignation pre-

viously kindled there by my opprobrious surmises. And it was with a far gentler deportment than she had worn when we reached the cemetery, that she led me to its furthest verge, and pointed out a spot near to a group of lofty palm-trees, as the grave of those I loved.

The place was marked out in a manner very different from that which designated the last home of the dead of her tribe.—Probably it had been necessary to omit the peculiar consecration by which the other tombs were made holy. For in lieu of a sarcophagus of bark or wood, these kindly-thoughted people had planted over the grave two similar flowers, of rare beauty, resembling our European lily, but taller, and more profuse of blossom: perhaps from some well discerned resemblance between their spotless petals, and the fair haired children of the west who slept below.

Acheena did not grudge or reprove my grief when she saw me throw myself weeping on the grave which contained all that was kindred to me in that distant world. On the contrary, she wept with me. But when my tears had flowed as fully as she thought compatible with the rougher nature of my sex, she raised me up, and pointed gravely, but proudly, to the earth; pronouncing in a solemn manner, the names of "Tupa" and "Suleyan," the divinity and elysium of the Dyaks. The subterranean heaven of the poor savage was not, perhaps, such as it became a Christian child to look to for comfort.—But it was there, she told me, that "by the blessing of Tupa, the God of her people, my parents would await me when the pleasures and pains of this life were at an end."

Tenderly embracing my kind comforter, I endeavoured to thank her for having charitably

bestowed sepulture upon the strangers. But this act, if I rightly interpreted her, she disclaimed. Sulara, the wife of Matari, (who had accompanied her on the morning when I so fortunately fell into their hands, on one of their frequent expeditions to the shore, for the purpose of procuring shell-fish, on the ebb of the tide,) had undertaken to return with stronger aid than her own, and bring back the bodies for interment, while Acheena devoted her care to myself. And it was thus, she explained, that the hair I had valued so highly fell into Sulara's hands.

She endeavoured, as we proceeded homeward together, hand in hand, to convince me that no insult had been intended towards the dead, in the use to which that one single tress was applied; that her people being accustomed to ornament their head-dresses with all they possessed of choicest or most beautiful—pearls,

gold, or precious stones,—the hair I loved had been selected as fairer than even these.—But I could not enter into her arguments; or even repress, in reply, a mournful and reprobatory wave of the head.

On seeing me thus pertinacious, she added, that “since I so dearly prized the hair, she would endeavour to procure the remainder of it for me, of Sulara; by an exchange of one or two household articles, of which the wife of the chief stood in need.”

Nor was this a mere empty profession. Some days afterwards, she brought me, neatly spread and rolled between two strips of birch bark, the whole of that precious treasure; the long auburn tresses of the mother,—the shorter flaxen curls of the darling child!—And oh! how fondly did I press them to my eyes, my heart, my lips—those memorials of my Christian home,—my early happiness!—



I noticed, in the sequel, that the most brilliant of Acheena's personal ornaments, her silver anklets and the jingling trinkets formerly appended to her sarong, had altogether disappeared; and could perfectly appreciate the sacrifice she had generously made for me,—for they were the handiwork of her beloved Bulan! But if, in process of time, Sulara appeared in brighter accoutrements than of old, at our dance holdings on the green platform, Matari was less richly adorned. From his casque, the one silken tress had disappeared.

I have frankly avowed the awe in which I stood of my Dyak lords; whether armed for the hunting field, with spear and pistol, performing the wild evolutions of their war dance, or even when engaged in the uncouth discharge of their domestic duties. But will it be credited that, before a year, nay, before many

months had elapsed, I became an object of fear and veneration, in my turn!—

After kneeling on my mother's grave, and obtaining possession of a relic that so forcibly recalled her presence, I gave up all thoughts of flight. I resolved to wait till I was older, and then depart only with the sanction of my protectors. I would not escape, like a thief in the night, from those who treated me like a son. But it mortified me to think that, in the interval, my nature was running to waste. Though I might pray in secret to the God of all grace—the Trinity in unity, the Christian's God,—though I might feel assured that in resuming at some future epoch the habiliments of Europe, I should be able to resume the notions and habits of an Englishman,—I was conscious that, day after day, my impressions of the past were weakened. The little book-knowledge I ever possessed was all

but gone. It might be that my efforts to acquire the language of my new country were injurious to my reminiscences of *hic, hæc, hoc*; or that the bodily weakness and severe shocks to which I had been exposed might have produced a deterioration of my faculties. But certain it is, that as regarded names and dates, or time or place, my memory failed me.

The thought that to me the Sabbath was as any other day, was inexpressibly painful. But in my inevitable ignorance of the day hallowed to the Lord, I did my best to remedy the evil by consecrating part of every day of the week to religious observances. Between the rising and setting of every sun, a sabbath was included.

Still, the thought of becoming rude and illiterate as the gatherers of human heads among whom my lot had been cast, was indeed humiliating; and having turned in my

thoughts by what means I could preserve the impression of such knowledge as my lamented father's lessons had imparted, I betook myself every day, at the ebb of the tide, to the sands westward of the creek, which the receding waves left hard and dry and trackless. There, with a sharp-pointed cane, I managed to continue the exercises of writing and arithmetic I had daily practised with my father, while on shipboard; and, by degrees, while sedulously devoting myself to my task, I found a thousand impressions revive, and reminiscences recur, which had been previously effaced. While labouring to bring my rambling text-hand into a form and shape worthy the formal lines of a copy-book, I could almost fancy I heard the merry voice of dear little Emily, proclaiming that "Charley had made a blot," or that "Charley had forgotten his tables!"—

When my self-imparted lesson was at an

end, I spared myself the trouble of effacing my copies and calculations, seeing that the next turn of the tide would sweep them away; and the consequence was, that the first time the prawn-fishers proceeded to their work in that direction, they were as much astounded by the discovery of these amazing hieroglyphics on the sand, as Robinson Crusoe by the print of a human foot in his uninhabited island. I noticed that several solemn meetings were held just then in Matari's dwelling-house, accompanied with a wondrous beating of tom-toms and gongs; but little surmised that my painstaking scholarship was the cause of so much stir.

Nothing doubting that these marvellous inscriptions were the work of spirits, either good or evil, the Dyaks had scarcely courage to return to the haunted spot. But when they *did* visit it, it was not the least of their terrors

to perceive that, every day, the mystic characters assumed another form !

At length, one morning, Acheena, unwilling to exclude me from any portion of the pains or pleasures of the family into which I was adopted, beguiled me out of the enclosure by a series of the most energetical nods and becks, and led me by a short cut through the jungle, of which I had never doubted, straight to my briny school-house on the beach.

But that she was unfurnished with a net or basket, I should have fancied her bent upon a fishing expedition. But her manner was too earnest for so every-day an enterprise. She kept pointing to the skies above our head, and the earth under our feet, with an air of religious awe—such as I used to see worn by the elders of my father's flock, on entering the church-porch of Swallowfield. From time to time, as we neared the sea shore, she repeated

certain words and phrases; — the names, I believe, of her people's divinities, and their form of prayer, which I heard for the first time.

As we passed through a scrubby thicket of underwood, fringing the high-water mark, I possessed myself of my pointed cane, which I was in the habit of depositing there after my daily exercises, to spare myself the trouble of transportation, but which looked to her like any other stick. On reaching the edge of the waves, just then rapidly receding on the beach with a pleasant ripple, she began to examine so carefully the speedily-dried sands as white as silver, gradually exposed to the sun, that I fancied her intent on finding some of the sprays or fragments of coral, which, after a storm at sea in the direction of the reefs, were apt to be thrown up entangled in the seaweed. Nothing of the kind was discernible;

and yet, as the tide receded and receded, Acheena continued to advance with careful steps and down-bent eyes, earnestly scrutinizing the beach.

Puzzled to conjecture of what she was in search, I thought it as well to devote the interim of her saunterings to the execution of my daily task; and down I threw myself on the hardest and whitest portion of the sand, and set to upon my text-hand and rule of three, as diligently as if under the eye of an usher. As I made to myself something of a delight—something that linked me with my lost home and country, in this occupation,—I was soon engrossed in it. Nor was it till, on reaching the last line of my copy—from which I was forced to blow away the sand raised by my rude graver, in order to render it a fair one,—I turned to ascertain whether my companion had accomplished *her* task, whatever it



might be, and wanted me to return home with her, — I beheld poor Acheena squatted on her knees, at a few paces distant from me on the sand, worshipping me, I verily believe, as something more than mortal!

Unable to comprehend the motive of so sudden a change in her demeanour, I jumped up, and flew to raise her from her submissive posture; nor, when I discovered from her torrent of words and profusion of gesticulations that they had only lately begun to suspect that the writings on the sand were the work of some supernatural being, (little surmising that the son of the spirits was abiding among them as one of themselves,) could I restrain my laughter. To be taken for a magician—perhaps for a divinity—I, poor little Charley Meredyth! And all for being able to work (errors excepted) a sum in the rule of three!

Another moment, and I checked my hasty

mirth. Since this undue importance had been assigned me without fraud or pretension on my own part, might it not be as well to avail myself of the misconception? By retaining something of a mystic character in the eyes of the Dyaks of Tanjoo, might I not secure myself from present harm, and perhaps hereafter obtain an influence over their minds, leading to their religious regeneration? If I reflected at that moment that a child once taught in the Temple, I thought it not profanely; but humbly trusting that the simplest Christian child, so placed as I was placed, might by GOD'S will be permitted to proclaim to the Heathen the Gospel tidings of—"On earth peace and good will towards men."

Without confirming or negating her supposition, therefore, I accompanied Acheena quietly home, and allowed her to offer her own explanations to her people. But from

that day, I was treated with unusual deference by Matari and his comrades; consulted concerning their comings and goings, by sea and land; whether the wind was favourable for their fishing, or whether the game would be plentiful for their chase. Like other oracles, I took care to make my replies predictive of good or evil fortune, as the case might be; and so retain my reputation as a prophet. If convicted of a blunder by their return home with empty nets or pouches, I took care to double my consequence on the morrow, by new rows of hieroglyphics on the strand, or a wilderness of curly-tailed capital letters. When everything else failed, I laid the blame on the sinister influence of Sakarra, or the Pleiades; whose brilliant little cluster of stars had often been pointed out to me by Acheena, as the protecting genius of the Dyaks.

I had received from my poor mother, on

board the Kelso, some slight instructions in drawing: sufficient, at all events, to enable me to give a correct outline of natural objects,—birds, beasts, fishes;—to sketch the strange dwellings of the enclosure, mounted on their piles, among the betel-trees; or even of Acheena, carrying her infant on her shoulder, or Matari, brandishing his sum-pitan.

These objects I now proceeded to trace upon the beach; taking care that my first raw attempts should be obliterated before they met the eyes of my neophytes. But never shall I forget the impression produced on their minds when I first allowed them to discover my delineation of their village! Till they had ascertained by ocular demonstration, that Tanjoo still stood in its place, with the old wood-pigeons cooing in its grove of trees, they positively trembled lest

my black art should have removed it from its foundations.

Having certified to their own satisfaction that my sketch was merely a "counterfeit presentment" of their beloved homes, they signalized their joy by adorning me with a necklace similar to the one which had caused such uneasiness in my mind when I saw it encircling the tawny throat of Acheena; but which I had long discovered to be composed of cubs' teeth, from the young bears destroyed in their jungle. After all, *my* ignorance and prejudices were scarcely less absurd than those of the poor Dyaks! There was one point on which, even then, I accused myself of both stupidity and supineness. In the first miserable days of my sojourn in the land of the stranger, I had been too smitten down by grief and terror to take account of the lapse of day and night, or even the changes of the

moon; so that of the time of my banishment, I entertained only a vague idea. As soon as I began to feel uncomfortable at the notion of having broken accounts with the civilized world, I reminded myself that, at least, the regular recurrence of the seasons would acquaint me when a year should have revolved. But even that hope was transitory. In the genial climate I inhabited, the leaves never lost their verdure; nor was the niggardly earth restricted to an annual crop. Though Bulan and Acheena, and their fellow-villagers, applied themselves, at stated intervals, to sowing and reaping the padi in the wet lands and maize in the dry, I felt pretty certain that not more than a third of a year could have elapsed since I witnessed a similar operation.

Even the gathering of the cocoa-nuts, the sago, the betel, or the cacao-nut for chocolate,

afforded no certain grounds for calculation. And I was so perplexed by a variety of works and harvests, which I witnessed for the first time, such as the extraction of camphor and gutta-percha from the wood, the collecting of the wild honey-combs from the jungle, and birds'-nests from the caves on the sea-shore,—that I finally became in doubt whether I had spent months or years with those among whom I was rapidly acquiring strength and stature. When I thought of my father and mother, I appeared to have lost ten years of my life. Yet from day to day, I scarcely found an hour too long. I worked with Bulan in the fields, or Acheena at home; and the perpetual variety of our labours prevented them from becoming tedious.

One thing sometimes occurred to me in proof that my residence among the savages did not extend beyond a year: that on my

arrival, the men were absent at the seat of government, wherever that might be, to pay what I then understood to be an annual tribute. But when I questioned Acheena on this head, and inquired when they would again depart on their errand, she told me their taxes had been remitted to the Rajah by certain prahus which had visited Tanjoo some months before for the sole purpose, as I thought at the time, of traffic and barter between two friendly tribes. For the strangers brought implements of wrought iron, and pieces of Chinese cloth and stuffs, in exchange for the wax, camphor, and birds'-nests of our people; and very amusing had it been to me during their stay, to watch the over-reaching spirit displayed on both sides.

On one point, indeed, the arrival of these Bruniotes had marked an epoch in my captivity. For from them I ascertained, through



Acheena, that I was the first white they had ever seen, that none such ever visited their part of the country. I even charged them, through her, should one of the ships of the West ever anchor on their coast, to acquaint the captain that he had a fellow-christian in captivity at Tanjoo; a spot where the names of Christian and Sabbath were unknown. I shred off a lock of my fair hair, that he might produce it as a pledge of his veracity; —the long straight black hair of the Malays and Dyaks differing as widely from that of the Europeans, as their complexion and physiognomy.

I saw that Acheena waived her head misgivingly while executing my commission; a movement which I ascribed to her vexation at my anxiety to be released from my present mode of life. But she was in truth afraid that the Rajah of Bruné might experience

some curiosity to look upon the fair Western boy, who could predict of the changes of the weather, and depict upon the level sea-sand objects usually seen perpendicular between the earth and sky. For the prahus belonged to traders resident in the capital; through whom Matari had signified to his liege lord the descent made upon his poor little village by the pirates, during the last absence of its male population, as a justification of his desire to pay tribute to the seat of government for the future through the intervention of native merchants.

Fortunately for my simple-hearted protectors, these prahus arrived in their anchorage at Tanjoo at the very period they were in the habit of setting forth on their annual expedition; for, counting on their absence, the war-boats of the Illanuns were soon observed cruising off the coast. But as prahus of con-

siderable tonnage were already riding in the roads, they judged it prudent to shape their buccaneering course in some other direction.

“The Bruné boats will not always be here!” was poor Acheena’s sage rejoinder, when congratulated on their departure. “The Bru-niotes have left us till next season; and these Badjows, these sea-robbers, will perhaps re-turn with an additional force, and destroy and plunder the village.”

“Not at present, at all events, my little wife!” replied Bulan, lifting her at arms’-length from the ground in his athletic grasp, (one of his favourite modes of conjugal endearment when in good humour.) “The Badjows know that our stores are empty. The Bad-jows will wait till we have dug and delved and dived again, to procure fresh merchandize, before they steer for our shore.”

Still, Acheena, who was the wiser head of

the family, remained sorrowful; and many a time did she invite me, as a child who had known no sin, to consult the stars touching their prospects. She was harassed by a pre-science of evil to come. The note of the Papow bird, of gloomy omen, had been heard in the village; and she accompanied me, more than once, to the burial ground; and while I knelt beside the grave where the two beautiful lily plants luxuriated and expanded in the sunshine beside the earthly resting place of those whose true home was in the skies, she performed a variety of superstitious rites around the tomb of her ancestors, whose memory was doubtless dear to *her*, as to me the thought of my lost parents.

Whenever Bulan returned home after a protracted absence in the jungle, she embraced and danced round him, with a glee I could only explain by her forebodings of mischance;

and towards his old mother, the withered crone, whom in the first instance I had mistaken for her own, her deportment redoubled in duty and tenderness. At meal time, she waited upon old Benak more like a slave than a daughter-in-law; and spread her mat so carefully at night, and set before her so scrupulously the choicest fruit of their store, that her filial piety was a pleasure to witness. But when I inquired whether it were Benak's care of her little one that rendered her so assiduous to the old woman, whose temper was none of the sweetest, she replied, that "life was uncertain — that it might please Tupa to call her suddenly to himself, and demand an account of her doings."

One morning, not long after she had made me this explanation, as I proceeded to the shore for the resumption of my ciphering, which my labour in the maize fields had

caused me to neglect, I descried the two well-known Bruniote prahus, bearing down towards the roads; each towing a sampan, or canoe, calculated for landing in the creek. I was overjoyed at the sight; for in a life so monotonous as ours, any novelty is hailed with pleasure. I had entreated the Bruné traders, when they quitted us, to bring me on their return, a store of the reed pens and Chinese ink, which I found were in use among their Mahomedan scribes; and without calculating whether the time of their absence had been sufficient for the disposal of their cargo and relading of their vessels, felt assured that my commissions had been duly executed; and that I should shortly be able to present my dear Acheena with family portraits of her husband and child, my rude performance of which would pass for the supreme perfection of art!

In the elation of my spirits, I was about to

rush to the shore and hail the prahus, when it occurred to me, that, by giving premature notice of their arrival to Bulan, and thus enabling him to be the first on board, he might drive a better bargain for himself with these merchants than amidst the competition of the thirty-three individuals who, exclusive of his family, composed the population of Tanjoo.

Away I went, therefore, through the thickets—for the enclosure in which Bulan resided lay on a landward slope a quarter of a mile from the shore, and so divided from it by lofty trees, that, unless when the inhabitants sought the coast for fishing, they took little heed of what was passing at sea. It was not a maritime settlement. A few small paddle boats, moored in the creek, constituted their fleet.

“The prahus are on the coast!” cried I,

on reaching the campong, where Bulan was hard at work, splitting rattans. "The prahus are within an hour's sail of the offing."

"What prahus?"—he replied.

"Those of our friends from Bruné!" said I, (for I had now acquired as much of their dialect as was available for all practical purposes.) On which hint, Bulan, though entertaining slight misgivings touching the accuracy of my intelligence, threw down his hatchet, and prepared to accompany me to the beach.

As we gained sight of the roads from an eminence intervening betwixt the village and the jungly shore, he laughed aloud for joy, and pulled me sportively by the hair, calling me "thick-head" and "blind eye." It was as he supposed. The prahus in sight were *not* those of the Bruné merchants. "But no matter!" cried he; "they are friends. They



bear at their mast head the ensign of our rajah. They are manned, as you perceive, by Chinamen; who have a settlement four days' sail eastward, on our coast."

And as he spoke, I did indeed perceive that such of the crew as appeared on deck were habited in the pointed cap and womanlike costume of the celestial empire.

Already Bulan, drawing himself up to the full height of his fine athletic figure, had hailed the prahus. But scarcely had the shrill cheer escaped his lips, when I saw him stop short, with his eyes dilated, and his whole frame seized with a spasmodic trembling. I have read of people and even of animals, exhibiting such symptoms when fascinated by the eye of a rattlesnake. For, alas! the noble frame of the warrior was convulsed by suddenly recognising in the crews of the two vessels bearing down upon Tanjoo, a band of

Badjows or sea gypsies, disguised in the costume of a friendly tribe for the purpose of surprising the unfortunate Dyaks!—

“Fly, boy!” cried he. “Return to the village. Seek Matari, or, in his absence, Siru, or Pandassan. Bid them arm. Bid them draw up their ladders and fortify themselves in their houses. Tell them the Badjows are upon us. Tell them not a moment must be lost!”—

Eager to obey him, I was on the point of starting at speed for the village, when lo! fierce eyes glared upon me from among the adjoining mangroves!—The Badjows had already effected a landing! During my absence at the village, a boat’s crew had pushed on shore, and the tide favouring, the sampan lay close in shore at the foot of the eminence where Bulan was standing. His quick eye discerned in a moment the extent

of the evil. Familiar with the predatory habits of the sea gypsies, he knew that they not only plundered and ravaged the villages on the coasts exposed to their fleets, but carried off into slavery those adults whose lives were too valuable to be sacrificed. Aware that his hour was come, he was too high couraged not to sell his freedom dearly; and before the pirates had time to spring upon him from behind, and pinion him, his kriss was flourished high in air, ready to inflict a death wound on whoever was the first to attempt his capture.

The present object of the Badjows being an ambuscade, from which to emerge upon the unsuspecting village, I was spared the sound of that horrible yell, which always sounded to me like the passing bell of my parents. But I listened without compunction to the howl of anguish uttered by the ruffian who, in endea-

vouring to imprison Bulan in his arms, had been stabbed to the bone; though I was myself at that moment a captive, dragged through the bushes towards the boats by a lasso fastened round my waist. Flung down hastily in the sampan, I was instantly secured to a ring in the bottom. Meanwhile poor Bulan's struggles for liberty were both firm and heroic. But what chance has even the bravest man against numbers? Though one of his assailants was disabled by his weapon, and another had already thrown himself on the ground beside his wounded comrade, to suck the poison from the orifice, five well-armed and stout-bodied Badjows remained to secure their prize!—

Soon over-mastered and fastened neck and heels together with the rough gno ropes of the country, so harshly that the blood started from his limbs, the poor fellow was flung

beside me into the boat; which was instantly paddled off towards the anchored prahus, in one of which we were stowed away between decks; so that, two minutes after our capture, we had as completely disappeared from the surface of the earth as if lying in the cemetery of Tanjoo!—

What ensued, therefore, we could only faintly guess at. Bulan, indeed, having received some severe contusions on the head, was stunned by the treatment he had undergone. But I, who had sustained no further injury than the loss of my liberty, (for the Badjows having previous intimation of my sojourn among the Dyaks, believing me to be a king's son in my own country, reckoned too largely on my ransom to maltreat me,) I was free to observe as much as could be observed by a poor prisoner lying corded like a bale of goods, in the hold of a prahu.

I soon heard the pirates hurry from the vessel, doubtless to attack the village. And though, thanks to the tardiness of poor Bulan's discovery of the error I had committed concerning the identity of our visitors, no alarm had been given so as to place the tribe on the defensive, it was probable that such resistance would be made as must detain the enemy a considerable time from their ships. Pinioned as we were, they might have left us there till the day of doom without the smallest risk of our self-enlargement. All we could do was to interchange moan for moan. And soon, in addition to the misery of our situation, was added the agony of thirst. For the day passed on; and from early morn till eve not a drop of water to slake our lips, parched as they were with grief and fatigue.—In Bulan's breast the fever ran high, indeed!—His wife, child, home, at the mercy of godless and lawless ruffians, like the Badjows!—

At length, as day-light declined, we heard first one heavy package, and then another, thrown down on the deck over our heads; and, again and again, the paddles of the canoes approaching the prahus, announced that new freights were added to the cargo: the household goods, the arms, the stores of the unhappy village. Though Bulan was unable to move hand or foot, or even turn his face towards me, I could discern, by the shortening gasps of his breathing, the increase of his emotion as the moment drew near which would probably acquaint him with the fate of Acheena and the child. It was the invariable custom of these Badjows—(*who* knew it better than himself?)—to sacrifice the babes and aged of the native settlements they sacked and burnt, as useless and encumbering baggage, not worth the removal. What if his mother and infant should be slain? What if

his wife —— But why depict the unavailing torments of that manly breast!

At every fresh shout of the conquerors, as they neared our vessel, I could perceive the plank on which he was lying vibrate with his agony. At length, though almost towards dark, two of the pirates leapt down suddenly into the hold; and I was seized and borne from his side. It was decided by our new masters that the white king's son should be transferred to the prahu in which the female prisoners were confined; the males, destined for the slave-market, being more rigorously dealt with, as well as more meagrely fed.

This change in my destination pleased me. For I was painfully anxious to see again my poor Acheena,—my sister—mother—friend,—and reassure her concerning the safety of her husband. But when I *did* behold her, face to face, oh! how I longed to escape back to



my original prison!—Poor creature, — poor mother,—poor wife!—There she sat, at the furthest extremity of the boat, crouching like an idiot; her long hair dishevelled,—her eyes fixed and haggard. I was fool enough to approach her, hoping to rouse her from this deep despondency by an inquiry after her child. She did not answer; but, on my renewing the question, pointed towards the shore from which we were receding. And, lo! through the dusk which was now thickening, I saw a red column rising into the sky, in the direction of the village of Tanjoo.

Still, the gesture by which Acheena endeavoured to explain to me that she was homeless and childless, was so devoid of her usual sensibility, — so unnatural, — so deeply despairing,—that I hoped to impart comfort to her feelings; by telling her that her husband had escaped all personal violence;—that Bulan

was *there*—close beside us;—that a few hundred yards' distance of water only rippled between;—that shortly, very shortly, we should all three meet again.

At that assurance, a shriek whose piercing bitterness no language can describe, burst from the lips of Acheena. Before I could speak a second word, she had fallen senseless on the deck!—

I know not to what savage entreatment the prisoners in the other prahu may have been exposed. But I must needs own that, towards this young and suffering woman, the deportment of the Badjows was mild in the extreme. There were no females on board, save her fellow captives; most of them bereaved, like herself, but either paralyzed by fear or stupefied by horror. They were forced, however, by the Badjows, to wait upon Acheena during the paroxysm of fever that

followed her revival from her swoon; for we were now standing out to sea, and there was no further hope of escape for these wretched women: one of whom, Palanga, the sister of Matari, having flung herself overboard ere we quitted the moorings, with the intent to swim on shore, was shot dead in the attempt.

Acheena was deposited on deck, under an awning of palm-leaves, interwoven between slips of rattan into a compact form; where, as soon as it was explained to Hussim Atim, the captain of the Badjows, that I had formed part of her household, I was permitted to share their attendance on the patient. Rather, however, would I have undertaken the hardest labours of the steerage, than been exposed to the sight of the sad smiles that broke over her bewildered face, when, raising herself feebly on her mat, she went through the move-

ments of rocking her infant to sleep upon her bosom, and crooning its evening lullaby!

Sometimes she would raise herself on her knees, as if to wash the feet of poor old Benak, and ask a blessing of her for her pains. But oftener still, she attempted to bind up her scattered hairs, and gird on her sarong; whispering, in a tone of heart-breaking joy, that “Bulan was coming back with the tribute bearers from Bruné; that only two more jessamine blossoms remained to be shed from her tally; that happy was the woman who could go forth to the gate, and welcome back the beloved husband of her youth.” For to this wife-like transport was sure to succeed a start,—a thrill of horror,—as the recollection of recent events dawned upon her mind; and to that grievous thought succeeded, first, painful convulsions; and next, total insensibility.

On the third day, thanks be to Heaven, she died!—I took her cold hand between my own, with love and reverence, ere, at Hussim Atim's order, the Badjows heaved the body overboard, as a happy riddance to their cargo. And as I watched it disappear under the blue waters, though unable to restrain my tears for the loss of so kind a friend, I could not but rejoice that our dear Acheena's troubled soul was released; and pray with my whole heart that she who had relieved the orphan, and consecrated the grave of his Christian mother, might be accepted as a Christian in spirit, if not in name, before the throne of the Christian's benignant GOD!—

## CHAPTER IX.

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FOUR more days at sea,—four dreary, sluggish days,—made doubly wretched by my sorrows after the dead, and my dread of having the sad tale of her death to reveal to her husband on our arrival at our destination. That destination, I supposed to be one of the pirate settlements on the coast of Borneo. But I was deceived. We stood over towards a neighbouring island; and I soon discovered that it was the intention of the Badjows to dispose of

their slaves and plunder, ere they rejoined their fleet at Sakarra.

I was chidden down below from the moment we sighted land; and was standing in the midst of a group of miserable women, torn from their husbands and children, and about to be sold into they knew not what horrible slavery, when at length we anchored in smooth water. We were indeed in river harbourage—a wide, slow river, with low and marshy banks; the water turbid,—the air thickened with noxious exhalations and ephemeral swarms, generated by the vapours extracted by a fierce, copper-tinted sun. Precisely such a stream must have suggested to the ancients their notions of the rivers of hell!

On the mud-bank, betwixt our anchorage and the reeds, were the trails of alligators or crocodiles. The very birds, whose heavy wings flapped over the dreary morass which

deserved not to be called a shore, wore a livid-coloured plumage instead of the usually bright colours of the tropics; and uttered a dispiriting cry, like the mournful booming of the bittern.

Oh! what a change from our green, green village, with its feathery palm-trees, its fruitful plantains, its circling pigeons, and the merry crowing and cackling of its feathered tribes! To attain a due appreciation of the joys of his lost Eden, the fallen father of mankind should have looked forth from its gates, *not* upon stones and thorns and thistles; but upon such a swamp of quaggy mud and wilderness of dismal reeds, as I surveyed from the prahu!—

The thought of landing in this aguish region, was far from inviting. But on that point, I was soon re-assured. After lying at anchor during the night, which the cries of



the marsh-birds rendered as sleepless as the stench of the mud rendered it baneful, we pursued our way on the morrow up a stream navigable for vessels of thrice our tonnage. And lo! at a spot where the reeds were discoloured and stunted, a series of thatched and peaked roofs appeared over their tops; at no great distance from which, in a reach of the river, lay a fleet of dingy rafts, rudely constructed of bamboo, which indicated the adjacency of a town or village.

One of the brass swivel-guns of the prahu in our company was instantly discharged down the stream; but whether as a friendly signal to the inhabitants, or in token of warfare, I was at first uncertain. My suspense, however, was short. As if called into existence by a stroke of magic, out crawled from the reeds a swarm of naked natives, black, and hideous to look on; with woolly hair, and a

physiognomy as foreign to that of the Dyaks as these to the Europeans. The water seemed alive with them, as a ditch with tadpoles; for they swam to the rafts, and were speedily crowding round the prahus; the chief among them, distinguished by huge ornaments of brass pendent from their ears, being alone admitted on board.

But even with the score or so thus favoured, what a hideous tumult! More especially in the other prahu; which contained the most attractive wares, in the shape of able-bodied slaves. They were bought, like stalled oxen, after a careful manipulation, as well as ocular survey; each man realizing, as well as I could interpret their dialect, the value of about a hundred rupees. But this was in very few instances paid in specie. This loathsome spot, whose vegetable and animal productions were, at the first glance, so unsightly, was

rich in products tending to demonstrate the equable distribution of the gifts of Providence. In payment for their human brethren, they produced not only gold-dust in small quantities, but certain furs, almost equalling in fineness and silkiness the skins of the sea-otter, so prized by the Chinese; but whether the skins of a large species of mole or small kind of beaver, I was never able to ascertain.

Unfortunately, my idle curiosity to examine some singular specimens of basket-work and quill-work, brought for sale or barter by some of the later rafts, induced me to transgress the prohibition against being seen on deck; for I was instantly bid for, and largely. They pronounced me to be, in spite of my hideous whiteness, a stout, active stripling. Nay, I verily believe they hoped to realize a premium for me in the inland markets, as a "fancy article."

Hussim Atim, the captain of the pirates, had, however, other projects; which he was cunning enough to disguise, under the pretence of keeping me as a plaything for his offspring, as baboons or orang-outangs are kept in Europe! The design was far from flattering; still less, the smart stroke of a leathern thong, with which Hussim Atim enforced his commands to me to go below and keep quiet, by way of certifying to his customers the docility of his pet animal.

As well for me, perhaps, that he judged it prudent to keep me out of sight of his customers! For I was thus spared the spectacle of poor Bulan, conveyed corded upon a raft to the miserable scene of his future toils. Acheena was gone for ever, and I had no comforting word to breathe to him. Better, far better, therefore, that we should meet no more.

The negotiations between the Badjows and the monsters with whom they were trafficking, were not brought to a close without libations on both sides of a fermented liquor called quarri, or some such name; which left the sea-gypsies in such a state, that I verily believe I might have effected my escape, had I experienced any temptation to that effect. But whither was I to direct my steps? The country on which we were touching, was the worst specimen I had yet seen of the earth's surface; and the natives were evidently sunk into a far lower depth of brutalization than even the Badjows; while the Dyaks of Tanjoo were, by comparison, a refined and enlightened tribe. Better, therefore, accompany the prahus back to their pirate's den! For I had strong evidence, in a variety of their habits and belongings, that they kept up some sort of commerce, if not with Europe, at least with

lands where Europeans occasionally set foot. When we weighed anchor, my heart rejoiced within me; for neither cuffs nor stripes could subdue the hope which had sprung up at the bottom of my soul, that all the days of my life were not appointed for submission to the bondsman's scourge; but that I should live to hail white faces again, and listen once more to the now almost forgotten accents of my native land.

It was probably the exhilaration of spirits proceeding from this deep-seated hope, which extinguished all sober reason within me. For one day—several having elapsed since we cleared the fated harbour of that horrible coast, a couple of days spent upon whose rotting stream had introduced fever into the prahus, so that one of the crew had already expired, and two more were despaired of,—one day, I say, as we were sailing across the

renovating waves of the open sea, and Hussim Atim was sporting with me insolently on deck, much as if I had really been one of the Simious tribe with which he had dared to class me, I was idiot enough to attempt to make him understand that, if he chose to release me, and set me on shore in the land he spoke of as one with which he traded, where white men were kings and governors, I possessed the means of paying him a noble ransom. For of the sum and valuables deposited by the English boat's crew at the moment of the attack of the Illanuns, off Tanjoo, the greater part belonged to my parents; and the remainder would, I felt satisfied, be amply refunded to the survivors or their heirs, by my uncle Charles, should the cession of the whole enable me to compass my enlargement and return to Christendom.

But I was a fool for my pains: or rather

I was but ten years old, and green of my years. For no sooner had the Badjow captain got scent of a treasure, which I declared myself able to point out in the vicinity of the village where I was taken prisoner, than he profited by having taken in fresh water, provisions, and sirih and betel for chewing, in the river of rafts, to give orders for tacking for an immediate return to Tanjoo.

Terrified, less by the prospect of the conflict that must ensue should the pirate prahus fall in with those of Bruné, cruising off our coast, than by the notion that, if Hussim Atim obtained premature possession of the spoil, my sole and only chance of release would be lost, so that I should have misappropriated the property of others to benefit outcasts and thieves,—I endeavoured to draw in,—to eat my words,—to treat my previous assertion as an idle vaunt. But Hussim Atim knew better.



Pretending to consider it necessary to give me a lesson on the heinousness of lying, (he, a member of a tribe notorious for cunning and deceit,) he administered severe correction in the shape of a knotted thong;—which made me howl lustily, I am afraid, but did not make me confess.

Still, his suspicions were strong. He did not give his orang-outang credit for the mother-wit necessary to invent such a tale as I pretended to have palmed upon him.

He consequently treated me to a specimen of the tender mercies I had heard ascribed to the Badjows by Dyak report:—I was placed naked on deck, under a vertical sun, with a lighted match fastened between each of my fingers!—This was more than flesh and blood could bear; and no sooner had my shrinking hands begun to scorch and shrivel in the flame, than I cried aloud to be released: offering to point out to Hussim Atim's private ear, the spot

among the mangroves where the treasure was deposited, and by what mark the place might be detected.

And oh! when, after several days, a week, I believe, of sailing and tacking among shoals and coral reefs, and at one time under chase of a fleet of Borneon prahus,—what agony of spirit assailed me as we neared the coast adjoining the Tanjoo creek; lest peradventure time and tide might have rotted away the silken rag that was to serve me for clue! Twice, during my sojourn with Bulan and Acheena, I had visited the spot in secret; and found the silken thread fast bound round the root. But a year had elapsed since my last visit; and the evil genius which seemed to preside over my destinies might, in the interim, have spirited it away!—

Hussim Atim stood on deck, watching me with a malignant and scrutinizing eye,

through the circling fumes of the pipe in which he was accustomed to smoke a mixture of opium and aromatic leaves, which, whatever delight it might impart to his inward man, did little towards the mollification of his temper:—the ill-conditioned misbeliever being probably puzzled to interpret the bewilderment of emotions that assailed me on approaching a shore, consecrated at once by reminiscences of my lamented parents, and the humane beings who had so mercifully supplied their place: to say nothing of its containing, as I trusted, the germs of my liberation. How my heart beat, when the opposition of wind and tide obliged us to tack, at the very moment we were nearing the creek!—How my overstrained eyes, long on the watch for familiar objects on the beach, became suddenly dim with tears when, on recognising a well-known group of sago-palms, I recalled to mind the

column of flame and smoke overtopping them, overtopping all, when I beheld them last!— Westward of those palm trees, was the burial-ground, where rested my mother and my lost playmate, my darling little sister!—

“And oh,” thought I, “if now saints in Heaven, pray for me, ye dear ones,—pray for me,—that the hour of my deliverance be not delayed;—and that I may be rescued out of the grasp of the tormentor.”—

At last, we were in the roads. At last, our anchor was dropped, and the canoe launched.— Gliding like a sea snake through the smooth waters, we reached the mangrove bank; and Hussim Atim, as we leapt on shore, appeared to me to keep his hand significantly upon the ivory pommel of his kriss. His eyes fixed themselves searchingly upon mine, as I proceeded, with the dew of anxiety starting from my brow, to examine the convolved mangrove

roots protruding from the sand. Crawling on my hands and knees among these huge feelers, I searched again and again; and was as often disappointed.—Oh! GOD! oh! GOD!—the junctures on which my memory had dwelt so familiarly, that I fancied it impossible I could be puzzled, were not to be found!—

At last, I cried aloud, or I should rather say, shrieked aloud for joy.—A few paces further, on a branch cresting the well-remembered embankment, I descried the black handkerchief,—all that remained of it at least,—fluttering in the sea breeze, on the stem to which it was tied, like a fragment of wool on the thorns of some English hedge.—It was there!—It was safe!—I had attained the object of my hopes and prayers!—

On pointing it out to Hussim, I could perceive by the sudden brightening of his terrible eye of the hue of rusty iron, that he was

agreeably surprised; that he had not, heretofore, placed unlimited faith in my veracity. His first movement was to face about towards the prahus, to satisfy himself that we were out of distance for our proceedings to be observed, having been careful to paddle the boat with his own hands, rather than be accompanied by even the most confidential of his confederates; so that the prize secured by his stratagem would, he thought, fall exclusively to the share of the lion.

He drew closer to me, however, when we reached the critical spot; and when I threw myself on my knees to insinuate my hands under the roots and scoop away the sand that covered the leathern bag, was so close upon me, that I could feel his hot breath upon my shoulders.

Heavenly mercy! what a thrill of horror ran through my frame when, in place of the

expected treasure, I found only a vacant hollow.—GONE!—The deposit was removed. But it was not alone that I knew myself to be thus thrown back upon the vengeance of the old wretch, who would be certain to think I had throughout deceived him,—that the treasure was the mere coinage of my duplicity. A still greater pang it cost me to reflect that the bag could only have been removed by the hands of a fellow-countryman;—perhaps by my father himself,—for none but the survivors of the Kelso's ill-fated launch were cognizant of the hiding-place. If, therefore, I had remained at Tanjoo but a month longer, I should have been rescued from bondage, and restored to my country and friends.

I was confirmed in this grievous supposition by finding in the sand, a few feet from the spot whence the treasure had been abstracted, an English penknife, probably used in cutting

the strings of the leathern pouch, and overlooked in the hurry of the moment. On the handle was a small silver scutcheon, engraved with initials. But I could not make them out. My head was dizzy. My sight failed me. I was pondering how I should ever gain courage to announce to the armed wretch hanging over me, my discovery that we were come too late!

At length I found his fiend-like clutch upon my shoulder.

“The treasure!”—cried he; “the money,—the jewels!”—

A sudden gleam of enlightenment, emitted by the mercy of Heaven, seemed to enter my mind as I shrank under his grasp. The bag had been removed during my short absence. The ground was newly disturbed. There was not a speck of rust on the blade of the penknife; so that it could not have been long



exposed to the influence of the sea-spray and weather. My country-people were, perhaps, still on the island. I might still be rescued!— I might still be free!—

At all events, it would be gaining time if I could prevail on Hussim Atim to go in search of the treasure-finders.

“ My father, the white Rajah, or some man high in authority under him, has visited the place since my departure in your prahus,” said I, with as resolute an air as I could muster. “ I know it by this token, an implement belonging to my family. His ship is still doubtless on the coast; probably at Bruné, with which city, you tell me, you trade; and have, before now, seen commanders of my nation. Let us go thither. You will there command for me a ransom doubling in amount the sum I expected to find deposited here.”

My composure staggered the barbarian;

and the knife, fortunately a choice silver-mounted one, served to accredit my assertion. After squatting himself for some minutes on a mangrove root, with his head buried in his hands, for reflection, he rose abruptly, and assented to my proposal. In another minute, we were in the sampan on our way back to the prahu.

Much would I have given for a half hour's visit to the ruins of the village. But I dared not propose it. Besides, as it was more than probable that an English ship was really cruising round the island, every moment was precious. The opportunity once lost, might recur no more.

It was amusing to observe, that is, it would have been amusing to me, had not my life lain at the disposal of a wretch who carried pistols and krisses in his belt, but neither law nor religion in his heart, the uncertain mood to

which Hussim Atim was wrought by the disappointment of his cupidity struggling against his hopes of future gain. He would have slain me on the spot, perhaps, for having beguiled him out of his course to visit Tanjoo; but that he regarded me as the goose from which golden eggs might still be expected. Sometimes, I caught him regarding me askance, with grinding teeth and his rust-coloured eyes rolling menacingly in the sockets. But the next minute, the thought of my Rajah father subdued his ire; and he would order me an additional mess of rice, or sweet potatoes, or even bestow upon me a handful of duriels or mangusteens, in order that I might be sleek and in good case when I came to be appraised in the market.

Fresh supplies of water for the prahus having been procured on shore, we quitted the roads. The river Bruné, it appeared, was

many days' sail from Tanjoo, according to the state of the wind; and all humane persons will enter into my wild anxieties whenever the flapping sails afforded a hint that the period of suspense might be prolonged by a calm, and so enable the English ship to quit those seas previous to our arrival. So peevish and impatient did I grow, that I wonder I was not consigned to close confinement, instead of being allowed to share the work of the prahu's company. The risk I ran would have been trying to the fortitude of a Stoic. For if, on arriving in the river, it proved that no European vessel *had* visited the coast, and that the treasure had been removed by some straggler of our boat-wrecked party, how was I to pacify the pirate,—how escape from the slave-merchant's degrading thong?—

For the first two days, the excitement of my mind took the form of restlessness. The

slowness of our progress made me envy the wings of every sea-bird that flitted past the uncouth sails of the prahu, formed of the woven bark of the ippu tree.

But on the third day, this prolonged want of sleep overmastered even my emotions; and I sank dull and stupified on a corner of the deck; murmuring to myself that “blessed were those who died in infancy, to be spared such sufferings as mine.”

But if my frame waxed weary, my soul was restless as ever. As I lay, loglike, on the teak deck of the prahu, spurned by every passing foot, I was dreaming of home—of Swallowfield.—The fragrance of the old jessamine tree, and of the English bean-fields and briary lanes, seemed to haunt me. I heard linnets and thrushes, as from our pleasant garden-hedge. But, above all, though no sound was near me at the time, save the

monotonous ripple of the ocean, I distinctly heard the Sabbath bell that used to summon us to the old grey church, up the avenue of quivering lime-trees, with the blue sky of England shining cheerfully over all!—

So heavily did I sleep, that even Hussim respected my slumber, and let me lie there through the night, on the coil of gomati ropes I had selected for my pillow; instead of waking me up by a kick, to go below to my mat in the hold, as on ordinary occasions would have been my fate. But he was himself keeping watch. For the prahu was making all sail, and running before the wind; which, on a shore circled with shoals and studded with coral reefs, demanded such careful pilotage as only the interested vigilance of ownership can inspire; more especially as the nights were apt to thicken with the unwholesome haze so common to the coasts of the Indian seas.

I was, as I said before, wrapt in a beneficent dream of home and those who had made it dear; when a sudden cry, a cry nearly as frightful as the war-yell of the Illanuns, dispelled the charm. I was on my feet in a moment. But what did I behold! The mists of night gently disappearing as the first rays of dawn formed a pathway of light along the rippling waves,—before us,—scarcely at half a mile distance,—lying at anchor near what was announced to me as the mouth of the River Rejang,—rode what the Badjows cried out aloud to be the sea palace of Tupa their GOD;—and what every pulse of my frame bounding within me announced to be—*an English frigate!*—

Reader!—you have doubtless, in the course of your days, had occasion to applaud with enthusiasm certain stanzas and sonnets illustrating an Englishman's attachment to the flag which has braved—

A thousand years, the battle and the breeze

But depend upon it, nothing that was ever said, sung, or written on the subject rises to the height of my ecstasy on surveying, pendent to the mast before me, the glorious "bit o' blue," — the well-known Union Jack!—To others, it is an emblem of victory—of national triumph.—For *me*, it combined life—love—liberty—home,—country,—friends!—

I own—let no man despise me for it, (no woman *will!*—) I own that, on seeing it wave lightly in the early breeze of morn, floating sportively, as though in scorn of the pigmy enemy it came to reduce to nothingness, the weakness of nature prevailed, and I wept—wildly and hysterically; calling aloud, and as in frenzy, upon many a beloved and sacred name, which of late I had not dared to utter.

Hussim Atim, although he spoke not, was evidently thoroughly cowed. He, whose maritime experience was confined to native



prahus, the largest fifty feet long, or the lumbering craft of a few insignificant Dutch skippers, surveyed with an air of stupefaction the noble ship; as a yokel from the country stares at the cathedral of St. Paul. But the men spoke out; exclaiming that the Rajah of the white men was come in person to claim his child. One of them ventured to ask me whether, in my country, there existed another such monster prahu as the one we were nearing. But when I answered, "Ay, a hundred such, and a few thrice as large, and carrying thrice as many guns!" the Badjows regarded me with pity, as a liar and a braggart.

I know not what mischief was expected of us by the gallant ship before us: probably, that we were about to profit by the light wind and early tide, and shoot past the frigate up the river, to alarm and bring down the natives; for on our making sail, a shot was fired over

us to bring us to. In a moment, Hussim Atim took the hint, and let go his anchor. In another, his canoe was paddling towards the frigate. He did not hesitate to be his own ambassador in a case of diplomacy that regarded the blood royal!—

What passed on the deck of the Palmyra, I have since learned from others. The pirate presented himself boldly; for he was conscious of having in his hands a valuable hostage. But the English Captain, who saw in him only one of an abhorred race, sea-robbers from sire to son, surveyed him, in his turn, much as the best-wigged of our judges surveys a convicted felon in the dock of the Old Bailey, on whom he is about to pronounce the sentence of the law.

The worst of it was, that though supplied with a competent Malay interpreter, not a soul on board could furnish a clue to a syllable

of the “confounded lingo” so volubly uttered by the Badjow.

“Let my friend Lord H—— be apprized of this fellow’s arrival,” said Captain F——, to one of his officers. “He will not mind turning out an hour earlier than usual to see what can be made out of the rascal;—though, if my skill in physiognomy go for anything, I fear, little good!”—

Before Hussim could do more than repeat some twenty times, in his Badjow dialect, his already thrice-told tale of having on board his prahu the white-faced Rajah’s son, a fine-looking young man, attired in a loose wrapper, and with a careworn face and sickly aspect, made his appearance on deck. And *he*, having but one business there, and that business involving every affection of his heart, he quickly made it understood.

“Were there,” he inquired, “in Hussim

Atim's country, white prisoners—man, woman, or child?"

It was not very difficult to point to a midshipman, climbing the shrouds of the Palmyra, probably to survey more at his ease the curious scene passing on deck; and explain that his facsimile — though the blue jacket and et ceteras were wanting,—was “at that moment awaiting their summons in yonder prahu.”

Almost as soon as the words were spoken, Captain F—— had issued orders to man his gig, and board the pirate vessel; in order to ascertain the truth of the Badjow's assertion. Taken in a trap, Hussim Atim, according to the habits of his people, became violent and dangerous; and, drawing his pistols from his belt, prepared to leap into his sampan and precede the mission of the Europeans. But Jack was as much on the alert as the pirate! He was seized and disarmed, before he could

spring overboard; and *there* he stood, chafing and blaspheming, in all the dialects of Polynesia, between two jolly tars, who listened to him with about as much concern as they would have done to the chattering of a baboon.

I cannot pretend to guess what the mid and men sent to search for me, thought of Lord H——'s nephew; whose outward boy, through long exposure to a tropical sun, bore the complexion of a new farthing or a well-scoured tea-kettle. But recognise me they did, even before they boarded the prahu. For I retained just enough of poor old Ned Morley's instructions to return, with a true British cheer, the three cheers given by the sailors, on discerning, upon the deck of the pirate-boat, the English youngster of whose evil hap they had heard so much.—Not one of them so much as jeered at my nakedness;—for they saw in it the livery of misfortune!—

Long before I reached the presence of my uncle, the proceedings on board the prahu convinced him that the object of his wearisome voyage to the East was as much accomplished as it pleased the Almighty it should be; and he was prepared to press the poor shaggy wild boy to his heart, and tell him that the fatherless had found a father, and the exile a home.

To explain in detail, from first to last, how this happy meeting had been brought about, would entail a story nearly as long as that which has been already related. But it may be stated in a few words, that, on my uncle's return from the United States, whence he had been summoned to attend the dying bed of his brother, the late lord, he found his whole family occupied with a statement regarding their discarded Mary, which had appeared in the newspapers. — The bottle prepared by my parents had been most fortunately

picked up, off Ceylon, by his Majesty's war-sloop, the Thunderer; and soon after the decease of his brother, my uncle Charles, on pushing his inquiries upon the subject at the India House, found that a seaman belonging to the unfortunate Kelso had reached Pinang; captured in a slaveship belonging to the Illanuns, on its way to Manilla. By him, it was reported that my mother, sister, and father were no more: the latter having died of his wounds in the jungle, on the morrow of the day on which our boat was surprised. But he also declared that the boy, young Meredyth, was a prisoner among the Dyaks.

Sad as was this intelligence, my uncle was content to learn that his blood yet ran in the veins of a living thing. All his thoughts, from the moment that his affairs in England were got into train, was to recover his poor nephew from the land of darkness.

Had it been necessary, he would have freighted a ship for the express purpose of exploring the Eastern Archipelago, with a view to obtaining tidings of my whereabouts. But yachting was then in its infancy; and the enterprise was beyond the skill of any ordinary landsman. As has since been proved by the arduous career of our admirable countryman, Sir James Brooke, of Saráwak, it required the tactics of a diplomatist, and courage and skill of naval and military commanders united, to say nothing of the patience of a saint, to bring the pirates of the Eastern seas to submission.

Meanwhile, though yachting had not as yet taken its place side by side with the royal navy, Toryism was so high in the ascendant, that it was not very difficult for a noble lord having votes in both houses, to obtain the assistance of a government vessel, and a passage on board. The Palmyra, already commissioned for the Chinese seas, was directed to make such a cruise of discovery in the Eastern Archipelago, as would at once serve to benefit



the Admiralty charts and the object of a faithful ally of the administration.

For an account of the retributive justice dealt by his Majesty's *Palmyra* on the *Badjow prahus*, I must be permitted to refer to the despatches containing an account of their capture, received from Captain F., by Vice-Admiral Sir R. C., then commanding on the Eastern station; which were duly transmitted to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's navy. The treasure abstracted by one of his boats' crews, on information afforded by the seaman who had also apprized my uncle of my captivity, (the disappearance of which from the mangrove swamp had caused me such mortal concern,) was remitted to the survivors of that unhappy expedition:—the share of my parents being but a small repayment for the benefit he had been the means of conferring on me.

All that remains for me to relate, on my own account, is the visit paid by my uncle shortly after I was folded in his arms, to the now deserted cemetery of *Tanjoo*.

The village was gone. Nothing remained in evidence of the scenes I was never weary of describing to him, nor he of hearing described, but a mass of ashes — half-consumed rafters, and scorched stakes of bamboo, over which the rapid vegetation of the country was already beginning to inter-tangle its creeping plants; while blades of padi and millet were sprouting in all directions, from the wantonly scattered grain. Even the wood-pigeons had deserted the place. For the betel and palm-trees, in which they had been accustomed to roost, were leafless; scathed by the flames which had devastated the ill-fated village.

On our way towards the burial-ground, past the lonely but still brightly-gushing stream, I plucked from the thicket one of those favourite jessamine-blossoms of Acheena's, the fragrance of which recalled her to my memory, as though she were standing by my side: and, placing it in my bosom, resolved to dry it and preserve it for ever, as a token of affection for

those to whom, alas! it was no longer in my power to demonstrate my gratitude.

I had not courage to cross the green platform bordered by the feathery podada-trees:—

Its echoes and its empty tread

Had seemed like voices from the dead!

For, by comparison with the ferocious tribes, in terror of whose cruelty I had lately been abiding, the mild but merry Dyaks, from whom, helpless as I was, I had never met with a spurn or an angry word, recurred to my memory as friends and benefactors.

My immediate object, meanwhile, was to persuade my uncle to cause the remains of my mother and sister to be disinterred from the unhallowed ground in which they were lying, to be committed to their native soil. But on this point, he was wiser than I. He would not hear of removal. He knew that, by this time, the dust had consumed its kindred dust; and that the heavenly spirits which had escaped from their bonds of clay, were dwelling in realms of eternal light,

where the sodded grave and marble sepulchre are of equal account. Even I, when I led him to the spot where they were laid, and beheld the two lily plants still flourishing in the purity of their silvery whiteness—even *I* could not wish them a monument more consonant with their nature.

There did we kneel together,—there did we weep together;—and while he exacted a promise from me, on that memorable spot, that I would endeavour to become as deserving his affection, and as fondly attached to him as the sister he had lost, he pledged himself, in his turn, to supply the place of my parents.

And now, dear reader, you have probably learned as much of me and my adventures as you care to be acquainted with. At what public school I was placed, as soon as my savagery was a trifle worn off, it matters not to tell; or what profession I have since embraced, or what degree of prosperity I am now enjoying. The memory of my parents is honourably preserved by a cenotaph erected

soon after my uncle's return to England, in the humble parish-church where their acquaintance first commenced. But it is still more warmly cherished in the hearts of the son and brother, from whose tenderness they were too early removed.

“ But what could you expect, my boy!” exclaimed old Colonel Nieuwenhuysen, (to whom I introduced my new-found relative, when we touched at the Cape on our return to Old England, and who listened, with tears streaming down his withered face, to the grievous history of their fate and my captivity.) “ Didn't I tell them no good would come of their confidence in that obstinate old Garvain?—Didn't I tell them they would live to repent having embarked in the *Kelso*? *You* may talk of the will of Providence, Charley—it becomes Parson Meredyth's son so to do. But I shall always ascribe your captivity and sufferings in Borneo to your poor father's obstinate adherence to that confounded slaver!—‘ *Wilful would* what *wilful would!*’ ”

But however grievous my personal reminiscences of the remote island which contains the graves of my parents, the evil influence which so long weighed down the destinies of the spot, has happily disappeared.—Darkness is no longer over the land.—The children of the heathen are trained in the paths of holiness.—“A star has appeared in the East!” and, the Christian faith having deposited its germs among the ruins of Tanjoo, the first great lesson of Christianity, that “all men are brethren,” has been exemplified by the total suppression of the slave-trade.

Under the auspices of one of the most energetic and honourable adventurers of modern times, a new territory has been colonized, whither Commerce may steer, unmolested, her richly-freighted fleets;—secured by the triumphant authority of the British flag, from all fear of a recurrence of those evils which signaled my own ADVENTURES IN BORNEO.

THE END.



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