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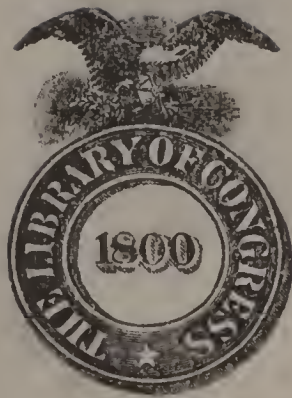
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The Coral
Island

By

IRA WILDER



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THE CORAL ISLAND



*My father placed me under the charge of
a merchant captain*

The
CORAL ISLAND

*An episode from Robert Michael
Ballantyne's famous tale of the
South Seas, retold for
Story-Teller's House*

By
IRA WILDER

Drawings by
THEODORE KENT



THOMAS S. ROCKWELL COMPANY
CHICAGO

1930

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CHICAGO

Printed in United States of America

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JAN 28 1931

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CHAPTER I

WRECK OF THE GOOD SHIP ARROW

OF ALL the places of which I, Ralph Rover, had ever heard, none captivated and charmed my imagination so much as the Coral Islands of the Southern Seas. I was an apprentice to a vessel in the English coasting trade, and so had opportunity to listen to stirring tales by many seamen who had traveled to almost every quarter of the globe. It was their accounts of thousands of beautiful fertile islands formed by the tiny coral insect, where summer reigned nearly all the year around, which fixed my resolution, when I reached the age of fifteen, to make a voyage to the South Seas. My father, after a great deal of urging, placed me under the charge of an old messmate of his own, a merchant captain, who was on the point of sailing to the South Seas in his ship, the *Arrow*.

It was a bright, beautiful, warm day when our ship spread her canvas to the breeze, and sailed for the regions of the south. Oh, how my heart bounded with delight as I listened to the merry chorus of the sailors, while they hauled at the ropes and got in the anchor! The captain shouted—the men ran to obey

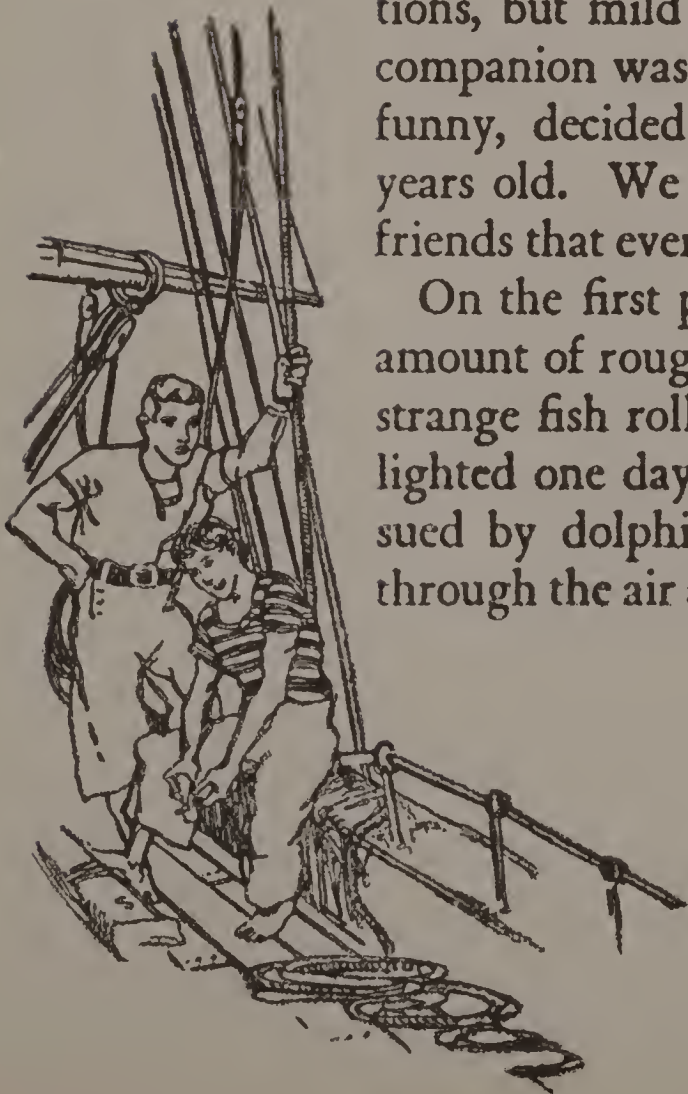
—the noble ship bent over to the breeze, and the shore gradually faded from my view, while I stood looking on with a kind of feeling that the whole was a delightful dream.

“There, lass,” cried a broad-shouldered jack-tar, giving the fluke of the anchor a hearty slap with his hand after the housing was completed—“there, lass, take a good nap now, for we shan’t ask you to kiss the mud again for many a long day to come!”

And so it was. That anchor did not “kiss the mud” for many long days afterwards; and when at last it did, it was for the last time!

Two of the boys in the ship became my special favorites. Jack Martin was a tall, strapping, broad-shouldered youth of eighteen, with a handsome, good-humored, firm face. He had had a good education, was clever and hearty and lion-like in his actions, but mild and quiet in disposition. My other companion was Peterkin Gay. He was little, quick, funny, decidedly mischievous, and about fourteen years old. We three became the best and stanchest friends that ever tossed together on the stormy waves.

On the first part of our voyage, we had the usual amount of rough weather and calm. We saw many strange fish rolling in the sea, and I was greatly delighted one day by seeing a shoal of flying-fish pursued by dolphins dart out of the water and skim through the air about a foot above the surface. When



*My other companion
was Peterkin Gay*

we approached Cape Horn, at the southern extremity of America, the weather became cold and stormy, and the sailors began to tell stories about the furious gales and the dangers of that terrible cape.

"Cape Horn," said one, "is the most horrible headland I ever doubled. I've sailed 'round it twice already, and both times the ship was a'most blow'd out of the water."

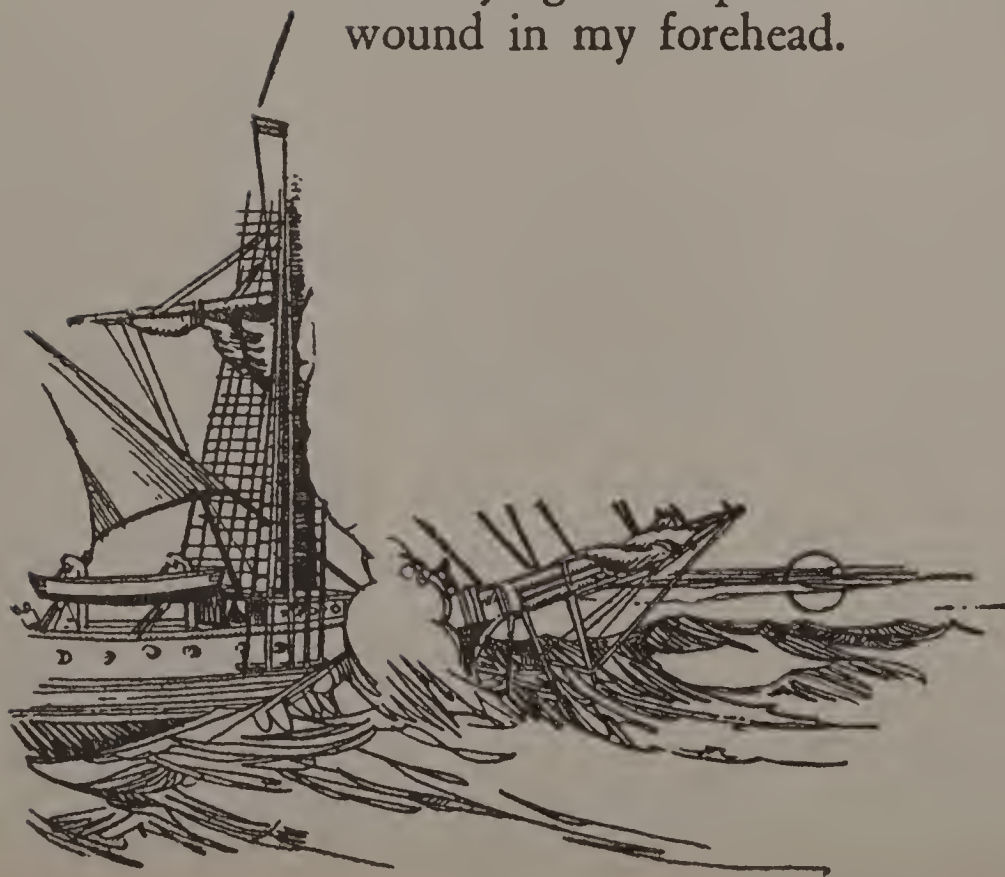
"And I've been 'round it once," said another, "an' that time the sails were split, and the ropes frozen in the blocks, so that they wouldn't work, and we was all but lost."

"And I've been 'round it no times at all," cried Peterkin, with an impudent wink of his eye, "an' *that* time I was blow'd inside out!"

Nevertheless, we passed the dreaded cape without much rough weather, and, in the course of a few weeks afterwards, were sailing gently before a warm tropical breeze over the Pacific Ocean. But one night, soon after we entered the tropics, an awful storm burst upon our ship. The first squall of wind carried away two of our masts and left only the foremast standing. Even this, however, was more than enough, for we did not dare to hoist a rag of sail on it. For five days the tempest raged in all its fury. Everything was swept off the decks except one small boat. The steersman was lashed to the wheel, lest he should be washed away, and we all gave ourselves

up for lost. The ship was now very near the rocks. The men were ready to launch the boat, with the captain beside them giving orders, when a tremendous wave came towards us, falling on the deck with a crash like thunder. Jack, Peterkin, and I together were swept into the bow and knocked against an oar which we eagerly grasped hold of. At the same moment the ship struck, the foremast broke off close to the deck and went over the side, carrying the boat and men along with it. Our oar got entangled with the wreck, and Jack seized an axe to cut it free, but, owing to the motion of the ship, he missed the cordage and struck the axe deep into the oar. Another wave, however, washed it clear of the wreck, and the next instant we were struggling in the wild sea. Then I became insensible.

On recovering my consciousness, I found myself lying on a bank of soft grass, under the shelter of an overhanging rock, with Peterkin on his knees by my side, tenderly bathing my temples with water, and trying to stop the blood that flowed from a wound in my forehead.



*The ship was now
near the rocks*

CHAPTER II

THREE BOYS ON A CORAL ISLAND

AS I lay still for a while, regaining my strength, I learned from Jack the story of our escape from the sea after we had plunged from the ship's deck. The oar had struck my head, nearly stunning me, so that I grasped Peterkin round the neck. Jack said that I pushed the telescope, which I was carrying at the moment, and to which I clung as if it had been my life, against Peterkin's mouth; but at this point Peterkin interrupted the recital.

"Pushed it against my mouth!" he ejaculated, "say crammed it down my throat. Why, there's a distinct mark of the brass rim on the back of my gullet at this moment!"

"Well, well, be that as it may," continued Jack, "you clung to him, Ralph, till I feared you really would choke him; but I saw that he had a good hold of the oar, so I exerted myself to the utmost to push you towards the shore of this island, which we luckily reached without much trouble, for the water inside the reef is quite calm."

"But the captain and crew, what of them?" I inquired anxiously.

Jack shook his head.

"Are they lost?"

"No, they are not lost, I hope, but I fear there is not much chance of their being saved. The ship struck at the very tail of the island on which we are cast. When the boat was tossed into the sea it fortunately did not upset, although it shipped a good deal of water, and all the men managed to scramble into it; but before they could get the oars out the gale carried them past the point and away to leeward of the island. But as I've read that these South Sea Islands are scattered about in thousands over the sea, I believe they're almost sure to fall in with one of them before long."

"I'm sure I hope so," said Peterkin earnestly. "But what has become of the wreck, Jack? I saw you clambering up the rocks there while I was watching Ralph. Did you say she had gone to pieces?"

"She filled and went down away to leeward of this island," replied Jack.

Well, we three had now landed on a Coral Island, although more suddenly than we had dreamed when we glimpsed them longingly from the ship as it passed their dazzling white shores. We were silent for a long time, and I have no doubt that each was revolving in his mind our extraordinary position. For my part, I cannot say that my reflections were very agreeable. I was wondering whether our

island was inhabited. If it should be, I felt certain, from all I had heard of South Sea Islanders, that we should be toasted alive and eaten. If it should turn out to be uninhabited, I fancied that it would not be long until we should be starved to death. But it seems we were not all taking such a dark view of the situation as I did.

"I have made up my mind that it's the best thing that ever happened to us," at length exclaimed Peterkin, "and the most splendid prospect that ever lay before three jolly young tars. We've got an island all to ourselves. We'll take possession in the name of the king; we'll go and enter the service of its black inhabitants. Of course we'll rise, naturally, to the top of affairs. White men always do in savage countries. You shall be king, Jack; Ralph, prime minister; and I shall be——"

"The court jester," volunteered Jack.

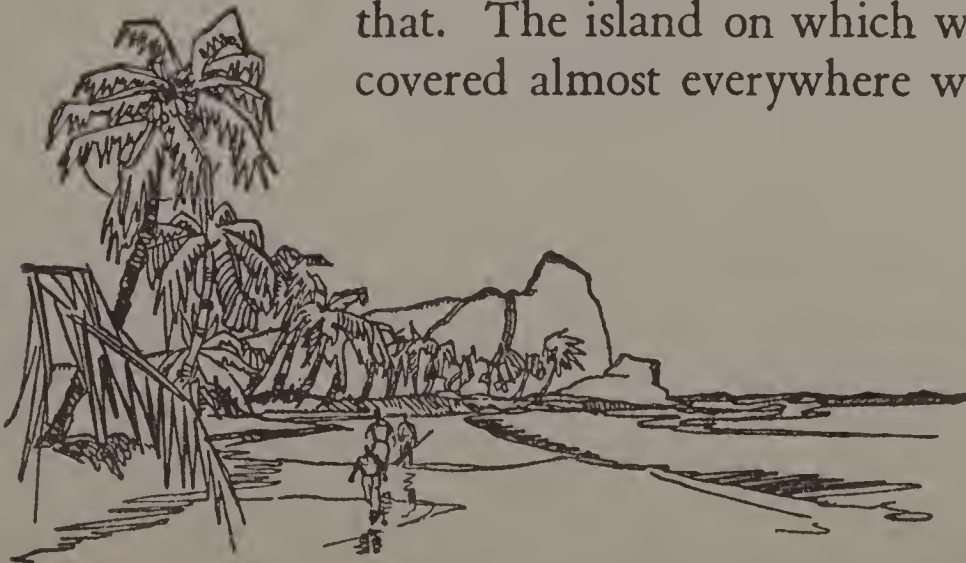
But we became more serious as we considered the possibilities of life on a desert island. Peterkin drew forth from his pocket a small penknife with a broken blade to show that we had one tool, even if a very poor one. We now seated ourselves upon a rock and began to examine into our personal property. The result of the search was as follows: an old German-silver pencil-case without any lead, a piece of whipcord about six yards long, a small sail-maker's needle, a ship's telescope, a brass ring of Jack's, a little bit of

tinder, our oar with a bit of hoop-iron on the end of it, the axe which had stuck to the oar, and finally, the clothes on our backs.

"Now, lads," said Jack, "I propose that we go to the tail of the island, where the ship struck before it foundered, and see if anything else has been thrown ashore. I don't expect anything, but it is well to see, and the distance is only a quarter of a mile. When we get back here it will be time to have our supper."

"Agreed!" cried Peterkin and I together, and with that we all three rose and hastened down to the beach. I still felt a little weak from loss of blood, so that my companions soon began to leave me behind; but Jack perceived this and, with his usual considerate good nature, turned back to help me. This was the first time that I had looked well about me since landing, as the spot where I had been laid was covered with thick bushes which almost hid the country from our view. As we now emerged from among these and walked down the sandy beach together, I cast my eyes about, and, truly, my heart glowed within me and my spirits rose at the beautiful prospect which I beheld on every side.

The gale had suddenly died away, just as if it had blown furiously till it dashed our ship upon the rocks, and had nothing more to do after accomplishing that. The island on which we stood was hilly, and covered almost everywhere with the most beautiful



*Now we hastened
along the white
beach*

and richly colored trees, bushes, and shrubs, none of which I knew by name at that time, except, indeed, the cocoanut palms, which I recognized at once from the many pictures that I had seen of them before I left home. A sandy beach of glistening whiteness lined this bright green shore, and upon it there fell a gentle ripple of the sea. This last astonished me much, for I recollected that at home the sea used to fall in huge billows on the shore long after a storm had subsided. But on casting my glance out to sea the cause became apparent. About a mile distant from the shore I saw the great billows of the ocean rolling like a green wall, and falling with a long, loud roar, upon a low coral reef, where they were dashed into white foam and flung up in clouds of spray. This spray sometimes flew exceedingly high, and, every here and there, a beautiful rainbow was formed for a moment among the falling drops.

Now as we hastened along the white beach, it suddenly came into Peterkin's mind that we had nothing to eat except the wild berries which grew in profusion at our feet.

"What shall we do, Jack?" said he, with a rueful look; "perhaps they may be poisonous!"

"No fear," replied Jack, confidently; "I saw one or two strange birds eating them just a few minutes ago, and what won't kill the birds won't kill us. But look up there, Peterkin," he continued, pointing to

the branched head of a cocoanut palm. "There are nuts for us in all stages."

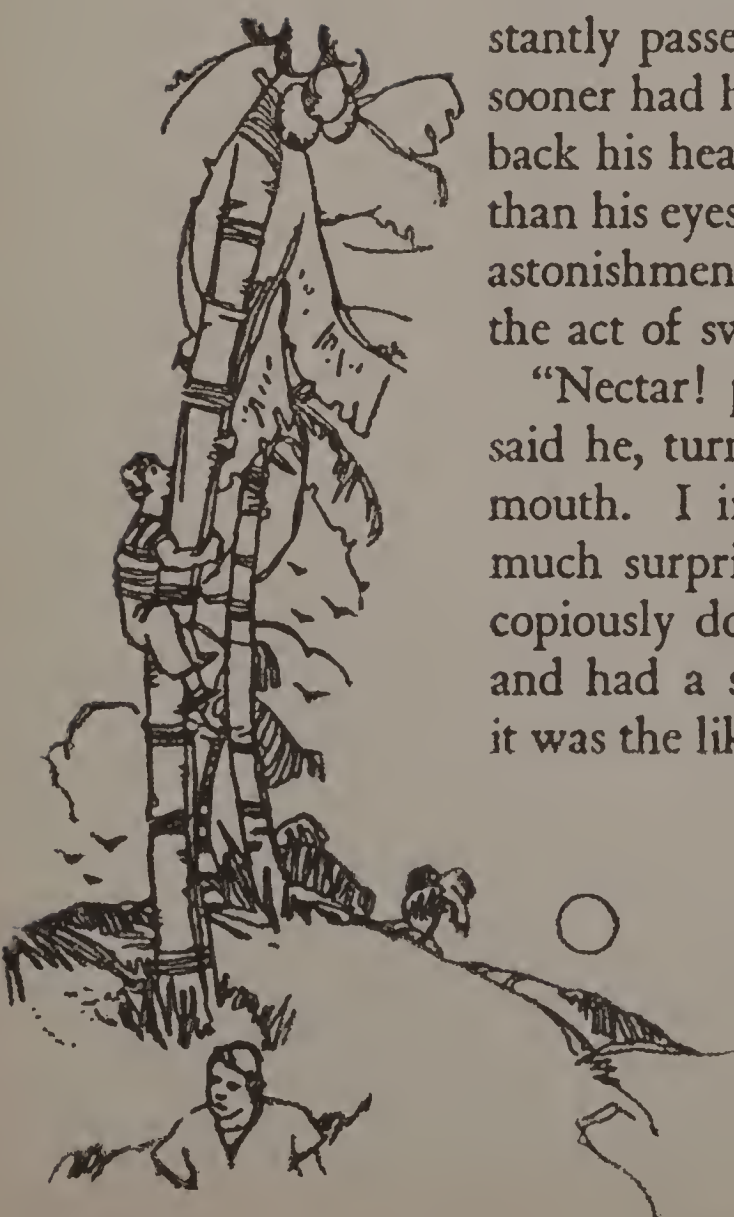
The nuts had scarcely been pointed out to Peterkin when he bounded up the tall stem of the tree like a squirrel, and in a few minutes returned with three nuts, each as large as a man's head.

"And now if you are thirsty," said Jack, "jump up that tree and bring down a green, unripe nut."

"Now," he said, as Peterkin obeyed, "first I'll cut off the rind with my trusty axe—see, it is covered with a hard shell at least an inch thick. Then you cut a hole in the end with your penknife and clap it to your mouth, old fellow."

Peterkin did as he was directed, and we both burst into uncontrollable laughter at the changes that instantly passed over his expressive countenance. No sooner had he put the nut to his mouth, and thrown back his head in order to catch what came out of it, than his eyes opened to twice their ordinary size with astonishment, while his throat moved vigorously in the act of swallowing.

"Nectar! perfect nectar! I say, only taste that!" said he, turning to me and holding the nut to my mouth. I immediately drank, and certainly I was much surprised at the delightful liquid that flowed copiously down my throat. It was extremely cool, and had a sweet taste, mingled with acid; in fact, it was the likeliest thing to lemonade I ever tasted.



He bounded up the tall stem like a squirrel

“Jack,” queried Peterkin, “how do you happen to be so well posted on everything?”

“I never saw or tasted a cocoanut in my life before,” answered Jack, “except those sold in shops; but I once read that green nuts contain that stuff.”

“And pray,” asked Peterkin, “what sort of ‘stuff’ does the ripe nut contain?”

“A hollow kernel,” answered Jack, “with a liquid milk in it; but it does not satisfy thirst so well as hunger. It is very wholesome food, I believe.”

“Meat and drink on the same tree!” cried Peterkin; “washing in the sea, lodging on the ground,—and all for nothing! My dear boys, we’re set up for life; it must be the ancient Paradise,—hurrah!” and Peterkin tossed his cocoanut in the air and ran along the beach hallooing like a madman with delight.

We had now come to the point of rocks on which the ship had struck, but did not find a single article, although we searched carefully. It was beginning to grow dark when we returned to our encampment. We therefore hastened to cut down a quantity of boughs and broad leaves with which we erected a sort of rustic bower in which to sleep, sheltered from the night dews or any rain that might fall. When we had strewed the floor with leaves and dry grass, we bethought ourselves of supper.

But it now occurred to us, for the first time, that we had no means of making a fire.

“Now, there’s a fix!—what shall we do?” said Peterkin, while we both turned our eyes to Jack, to whom we always looked in our difficulties. Jack seemed deeply perplexed.

“There are flints enough, no doubt, on the beach,” said he, “but they are of no use at all without a steel. However, we must try.”

So saying, he went to the beach, and soon returned with two flints. On one of these he placed the tinder and attempted to ignite it; but it was with great difficulty that a very small spark was struck out of the flints, and the tinder, being a bad, hard piece, would not catch. He then tried the bit of hoop iron, which would not strike fire at all; and after that the back of the axe, with no better success. During all these trials Peterkin sat with his hands in his pockets, gazing with a most melancholy visage at our comrade, his face growing longer and more miserable at each successive failure.

“Oh dear!” he sighed, “I would not care a button for the cooking of our victuals,—perhaps they don’t need it,—but it’s so dismal to eat one’s supper in the dark. Oh, I have it!” he cried, starting up; “the spy-glass,—the big glass at the end is a burning-glass!”

“You forget that we have no sun,” said I.

Peterkin was silent. In his sudden recollection of the telescope he had quite overlooked the absence of the sun.

“Ah, boys, I’ve got it now!” exclaimed Jack, rising and cutting a branch from a neighboring bush, which he stripped of its leaves. “I remember seeing this done at home. Hand me the bit of whip-cord.”

With the cord and branch Jack soon formed a bow. Then he cut a piece, about three inches long, off the end of a dead branch, which he pointed at the two ends. Round this he passed the cord of the bow, and placed one end against his chest, which was protected from its point by a chip of wood. The other point he placed against the bit of tinder, and then began to saw vigorously with the bow, just as a blacksmith does with his drill while boring a hole in a piece of iron. In a few seconds the tinder began to smoke; in less than a minute it caught fire; and in less than a quarter of an hour we were drinking our lemonade and eating cocoanuts around a fire that would have roasted an entire sheep, while the smoke, flames, and sparks, flew up among the broad leaves of the overhanging palm trees, and cast a warm glow upon our leafy bower.

That night the starry sky looked down through the gently rustling trees upon our slumber, and the distant roaring of the surf upon the coral reef was our lullaby.

*In a few seconds the
tinder began to
smoke*



CHAPTER III

CORAL GARDENS UNDERSEA

WHEN I awoke on the morning after the shipwreck I did not recollect where I was for some moments during which I looked up into the bright sky and sniffed the scented air. Then I beheld Peterkin beside me, yawning and rubbing his eyes. He gazed slowly around, till, observing the calm sea through an opening in the bushes, he started up suddenly as if he had received an electric shock, uttered a vehement shout, flung off his garments, and rushed over the white sands into the water. The cry awoke Jack, who on seeing Peterkin likewise bounded to his feet and dashed after him into the water with such force as quite to envelop Peterkin in a shower of spray. Jack was a remarkably good swimmer and diver, so that after his plunge we saw no sign of him for nearly a minute; after which he suddenly emerged, with a cry of joy, a good many yards out from the shore.

"Come on in, Ralph," he called, and I, too, hastily made ready to imitate Jack's vigorous example.

While Peterkin enjoyed himself in the shallow water and in running along the beach, Jack and I

swam out into the deep water, and occasionally dived for stones. I shall never forget my surprise and delight on first beholding the bottom of the sea. The water within the reef was as calm as a pond; and as there was no wind, it was quite clear from the surface to the bottom, so that we could see down easily even at a depth of twenty or thirty yards. When Jack and I dived in shallower water, we expected to have found sand and stones, instead of which we found ourselves in what appeared to be an enchanted garden.

The whole of the bottom of the lagoon, as we called the calm water within the reef, was covered with coral of every shape, size, and hue. Some portions were formed like large mushrooms; others appeared like the brain of a man, having stalks or necks attached to them; but the most common kind was a species of branching coral, and some portions were of a lovely pale-pink color, others pure white. Among this there grew large quantities of sea-weed of the richest hues imaginable, and of the most graceful forms; while innumerable fishes—blue, red, yellow, green, and striped—sported in and out amongst the flower-beds of this submarine garden, and did not appear to be at all afraid of our approaching them.

We darted to the surface for breath and took the second dive down, keeping close together under water. I was greatly surprised to find that we could

stay down much longer than I ever recollect having done in our seas at home,—I believe owing to the heat of the water. When Jack reached the bottom, he grasped the coral stems, and crept along on his hands and knees, peeping under the sea-weed and among the rocks. I observed him also pick up one or two large oysters, and retain them in his grasp; so I also gathered a few. Suddenly he made a grasp at a fish with blue and yellow stripes on its back, and actually touched its tail, but did not catch it. At this he turned towards me and attempted to smile; but no sooner had he done so than he sprang like an arrow to the surface, where, on following him, I found him gasping and coughing, and spitting water from his mouth. In a few minutes he recovered, and we both turned to swim ashore.

“Here’s breakfast,” he called to Peterkin, giving him the oysters to split open while he and I put on our clothes. “They’ll agree with the cocoanuts excellently, I have no doubt.”

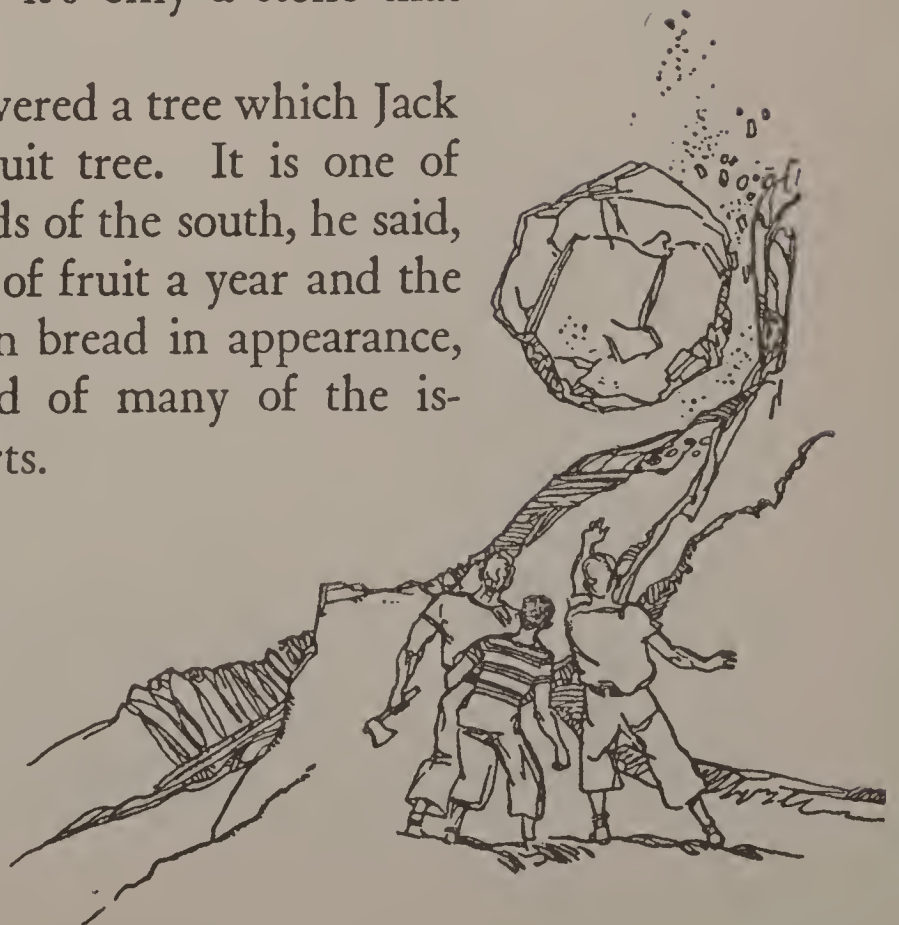
We had no difficulty this morning in making a fire to roast our oysters, as our burning-glass was an admirable one. After breakfast we decided to make an excursion to the top of the mountains of the interior, in order to obtain a better view of our island. We first took the precaution of arming ourselves, Jack with the axe, and Peterkin and I with clubs cut off a species of very hard tree which grew

near at hand, as we knew not what dangers might befall us on the way. Our only adventure, however, lay in hearing a strange pattering or rumbling sound as we advanced single-file up a heavily wooded valley. We all stood still in alarm, and my thoughts were centered on all I had ever heard or read of wild beasts and savages, torturings at the stake, roasting alive, and such like horrible things. Suddenly the pattering noise increased with tenfold violence. It was followed by a fearful crash among the bushes, which was rapidly repeated, as if some gigantic animal were bounding towards us. In another moment an enormous rock came crashing through the shrubbery, followed by a cloud of dust and small stones, and flew close past the spot where we stood, carrying bushes and young trees along with it.

“Pooh! is that all?” exclaimed Peterkin, wiping the sweat from his brow. “Why I thought all the wild men and beasts in the South Sea Islands were charging down on us. And it’s only a stone that got uneasy.”

On our way home we discovered a tree which Jack called the celebrated breadfruit tree. It is one of the most valuable in the islands of the south, he said, as it bears two or more crops of fruit a year and the fruit, very much like wheaten bread in appearance, constitutes the principal food of many of the islanders who live in these parts.

*An enormous rock
came crashing
through the
shrubby*



“So,” said Peterkin, “we seem to have everything ready prepared to our hands on this wonderful island,—lemonade ready bottled in nuts, and loaf-bread growing on the trees!”

“Moreover,” continued Jack, “the breadfruit tree affords a capital gum, which serves the natives for pitching their canoes; the bark of the young branches is made by them into cloth; and of the wood, which is durable and of a good color, they build their houses. So you see, lads, that we have no lack of material here to make us comfortable, if we are clever enough to make use of it.

We had found no signs of inhabitants on our island. It was large,—we estimated it at about ten miles in diameter—and had two mountains, of 500 and 1000 feet respectively, we guessed. All around it ran the beach of pure white sand and, farther out, the coral reef encircled it completely.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT WITH A SHARK

FOR several days after the excursion related in the last chapter we did not wander far from our encampment, but gave ourselves up to forming plans and making our present abode comfortable.

There were various causes that induced this state of comparative inaction. In the first place, although everything around us was so delightful, and we could without difficulty obtain all that we required for our bodily comfort, we did not quite like the idea of settling down here for the rest of our lives, far away from our friends and our native land. To set energetically about preparations for a permanent residence seemed so like making up our minds to saying adieu to home and friends for ever, that we tacitly shrank from it and put off our preparations, for one reason or another, as long as we could. Then there was a little uncertainty still as to there being natives on the island, and we entertained a kind of faint hope that a ship might come and take us off. But as day after day passed, and neither savages nor ships appeared, we gave up all hope of an early deliverance and set diligently to work at our homestead.

One day Peterkin came up from the beach, where he had been angling, and said in a very cross tone, "I'll tell you what, Jack, I'm not going to be humbugged with catching such contemptible little fellows any longer. I want you to swim out with me on your back, and let me fish in deep water!"

"Dear me, Peterkin," replied Jack, "I had no idea you were taking the thing so much to heart, else I would have got you out of that difficulty long ago. Let me see,"—and Jack looked down at a piece of timber on which he had been laboring, with a peculiar gaze of abstraction which he always assumed when trying to invent or discover anything.

"What say you to building a boat?" he inquired, looking up hastily.

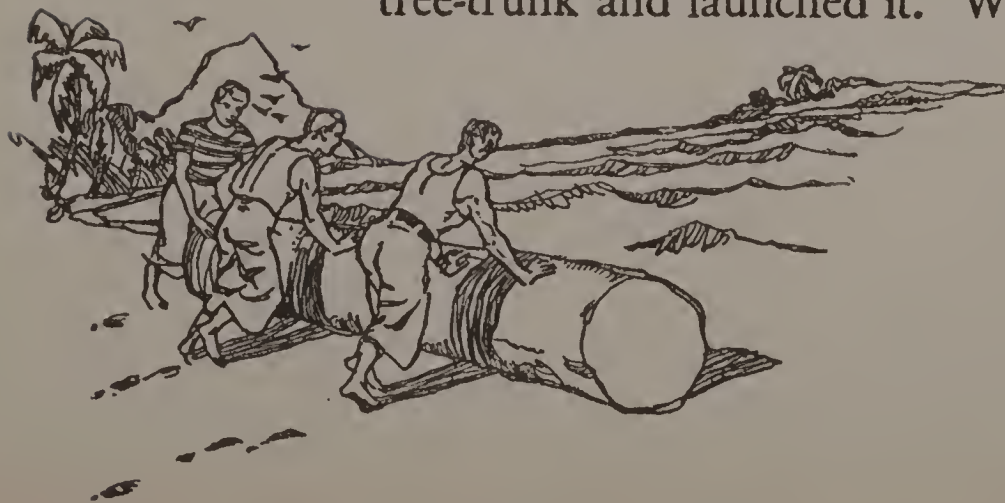
"Take far too long," was the reply; "can't be bothered waiting. I want to begin at once!"

Again Jack considered. "I have it!" he cried. "We'll fell a large tree and launch the trunk of it in the water, so that when you want to fish you've nothing to do but to swim out to it."

"Would not a small raft do better?" I asked.

"Much better; but we have no ropes to bind it together with. Perhaps we may find something hereafter that will do as well, but, in the meantime, let us try the tree."

After an hour's work we had cut down a thick tree-trunk and launched it. We had also made rude



*After an hour's work
we had cut down
the trunk and
launched it*

oars with which to propel it. We found that we could get on it easily enough, but that once we were astride the log, we had the utmost difficulty to keep it from rolling round and plunging us into the water. Not that we minded that much; but we preferred, if possible, to fish in dry clothes. To be sure, our trousers were necessarily wet, as our legs were dangling in the water on each side of the log; but as they could be easily dried, we did not care. After half-an-hour's practice, we became expert enough to keep our balance pretty steadily. Then Peterkin laid down his paddle, and having baited his line with a whole oyster, dropt it into deep water.

"Now, then, Jack," said he, "be cautious; steer clear o' that sea-weed. There! that's it; gently, now, gently. I see a fellow at least a foot long down there, coming to——ha! that's it! Oh! bother, he's off."

"Did he bite?" said Jack, urging the log onwards.

"Bite? ay! He took it into his mouth, but the moment I began to haul he opened his jaws and let it out again."

"Let him swallow it next time," said Jack, laughing at the melancholy expression of Peterkin's face.

"There he is again," cried Peterkin, his eyes flashing with excitement. "Look out! Now then! No! Yes! No! Why, the brute *won't* swallow it!"

"Try to haul him up by the mouth, then," cried Jack. "Do it gently."

A heavy sigh and a look of blank despair showed that poor Peterkin had tried and failed again.

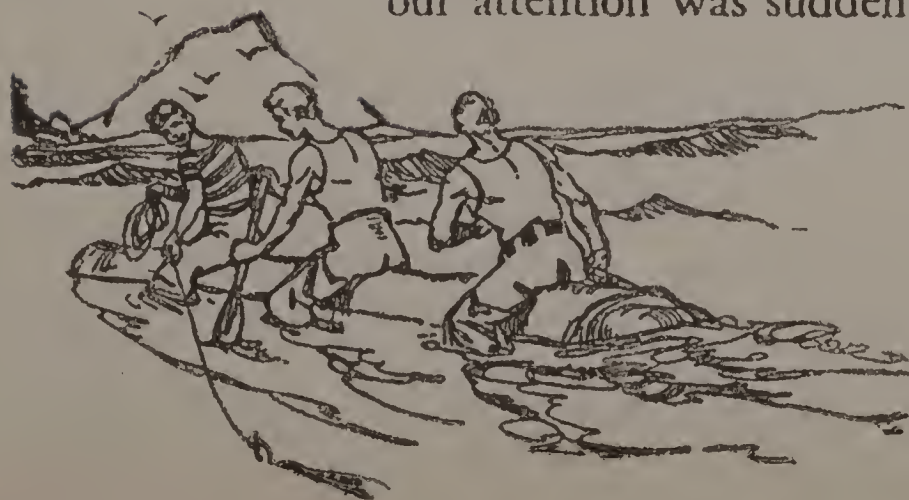
"Never mind, lad," said Jack, in a voice of sympathy; "we'll move on, and offer our bait to some other fish." So saying, Jack plied his paddle; but scarcely had he moved from the spot, when a fish with an enormous head and a little body darted from under a rock and swallowed the bait at once.

"Got him this time,—that's a fact!" cried Peterkin, hauling in the line. "He's swallowed the bait right down to his tail, I declare. Oh what a thumper!"

As the fish came struggling to the surface, we leaned forward to see it, and overbalanced the log. Peterkin threw his arms around the fish's neck; and, in another instant, the log overturned and we were all floundering in the water!

A shout of laughter burst from us as we rose to the surface like three drowned rats and seized hold of the log. We soon recovered our position and sat more warily, while Peterkin secured the fish, which well-nigh escaped in the midst of our struggles. It was little worth having, however; but, as Peterkin remarked, it was better than the smouts he had been catching for the last two or three days; so we laid it on the log before us, and having rebaited the line, dropped it in again for another.

Now, while we were thus intent upon our sport, our attention was suddenly attracted by a ripple on



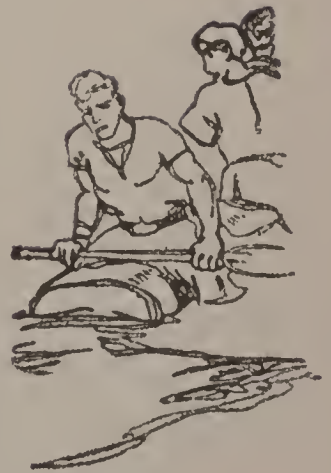
*"I see a fellow at
least a foot long
down there"*

the sea, just a few yards away from us. Peterkin shouted to us to paddle in that direction, as he thought it was a big fish, and we might have a chance of catching it. But Jack, instead of complying, said, in a deep, earnest tone of voice, which I never before heard him use,—

“Haul up your line, Peterkin; seize your paddle; quick,—it’s a shark!”

The horror with which we heard this may well be imagined, for our legs were hanging down in the water, and we could not venture to pull them up without upsetting the log. Peterkin instantly hauled up the line; and, grasping his paddle, exerted himself to the utmost, while we also did our best to make for shore. But we were a good way off, and the log being very heavy, moved but slowly through the water. We now saw the shark quite distinctly swimming round and round us, its sharp fin every now and then protruding above the water.

From its active and unsteady motions, Jack knew it was making up its mind to attack us, so he urged us vehemently to paddle for our lives, while he himself set us the example. Suddenly he shouted, “Look out!—there he comes!” and in a second we saw the monstrous fish dive close under us, and turn half over on his side. But we all made a great commotion with our paddles, which no doubt frightened it away for that time, as we saw it immediately afterward.



*“Haul in your line,
Peterkin; it’s a
shark!”*



“Throw the fish to him,” cried Jack, in a quick, suppressed voice; “we’ll make the shore in time yet, if we can keep him off for a few minutes.”

Peterkin stopped one instant to obey the command, and then plied his paddle again with all his might. No sooner had the fish fallen on the water than we observed the shark sink. In another second we saw its white breast rising; for sharks always turn over on their sides when about to seize their prey, their mouths being not at the point of their heads like those of other fish, but, as it were, under their chins. In another moment his snout rose above the water—his wide jaws, armed with a terrific double row of teeth, appeared. The dead fish was engulfed, and the shark sank out of sight. But Jack was mistaken in supposing that it would be satisfied. In a very few minutes it returned to us, and its quick motions led us to fear that it would attack us at once.

“Stop paddling,” cried Jack suddenly. “I see it coming up behind us. Now, obey my orders *quickly*. Our lives may depend on it. Ralph, Peterkin, do your best to *balance the log*. Don’t look out for the shark. Don’t glance behind you. Do nothing but balance the log.”

Peterkin and I instantly did as we were ordered, being only too glad to do anything that afforded us a chance or a hope of escape. For a few seconds, that seemed long minutes to my mind, we sat thus



*The monster's snout rubbed against the log
as it passed*

silently; but I could not resist glancing backward, despite the orders to the contrary. On doing so, I saw Jack sitting rigid like a statue, with his paddle raised, his lips compressed, and his eyebrows bent over his eyes, which glared savagely from beneath them into the water. I also saw the shark, to my horror, quite close under the log, in the act of darting towards Jack's foot. I could scarcely suppress a cry on beholding this. In another moment the shark rose. Jack drew his leg suddenly from the water, and threw it over the log. The monster's snout rubbed against the log as it passed, and revealed its hideous jaws, into which Jack instantly plunged the paddle, and thrust it down its throat. So violent was this act that Jack rose to his feet in performing it; the log was thereby rolled completely over, and we were once more plunged into the water. We all rose, spluttering and gasping, in a moment.

"Now, then, strike out for shore," cried Jack. "Here, Peterkin, catch hold of my collar, and kick out with a will."

Peterkin did as he was desired, and Jack struck out with such force that he cut through the water like a boat; while I, being free from all encumbrance, succeeded in keeping up with him. As we had by this time drawn pretty near to the shore, a few minutes more sufficed to carry us into shallow water; and we landed in safety, though quite exhausted.

CHAPTER V

WATERSPOUTS AND PIGS

NOW that we had been comfortably established in our quarters for some time, we began to plan a trip of exploration around the whole island. Jack proposed that we should supply ourselves with good defensive arms, for, as we intended to ascend most of the valleys as well as to encircle the shore before returning home, we should likely meet with, he would not say *dangers*, but, at least, with everything that existed on the island, whatever that might be.

“Besides,” he said, “since there are many small birds among the trees which we might find good to eat, I think it would be a capital plan to make bows and arrows to shoot them.”

“First rate!” cried Peterkin. “You will make the bows, Jack, and I’ll try my hand at the arrows. The fact is, I’m quite tired of throwing stones at the birds. I began the very day we landed, I think, and have persevered up to the present time, but I’ve never hit anything yet.”

“You forget,” said I, “you happened to hit me one day on the shin!”

"Ah, true," replied Peterkin, "and a precious shindy you kicked up in consequence. But you were at least four yards away from the impudent paroquet I aimed at; so you see what a horribly bad shot I am."

As it turned out, however, Jack made a bow and arrows for himself only, while Peterkin and I constructed weapons which were better suited to our degrees of prowess. Peterkin had drawn a long pole into the tent, and was attempting to fit a small piece of the hoop-iron to the end of it.

"I'm going to enlist in the Lancers," he announced. "You see, Jack, I find the club rather an unwieldy instrument for my delicately formed muscles, and I flatter myself I shall do a great deal more execution with a spear."

"Well, if length constitutes power," said Jack, "you'll certainly be invincible."

The pole which Peterkin had cut was full twelve feet long, being a very strong but light and tough young tree, which merely required thinning at the butt to be a very serviceable weapon.

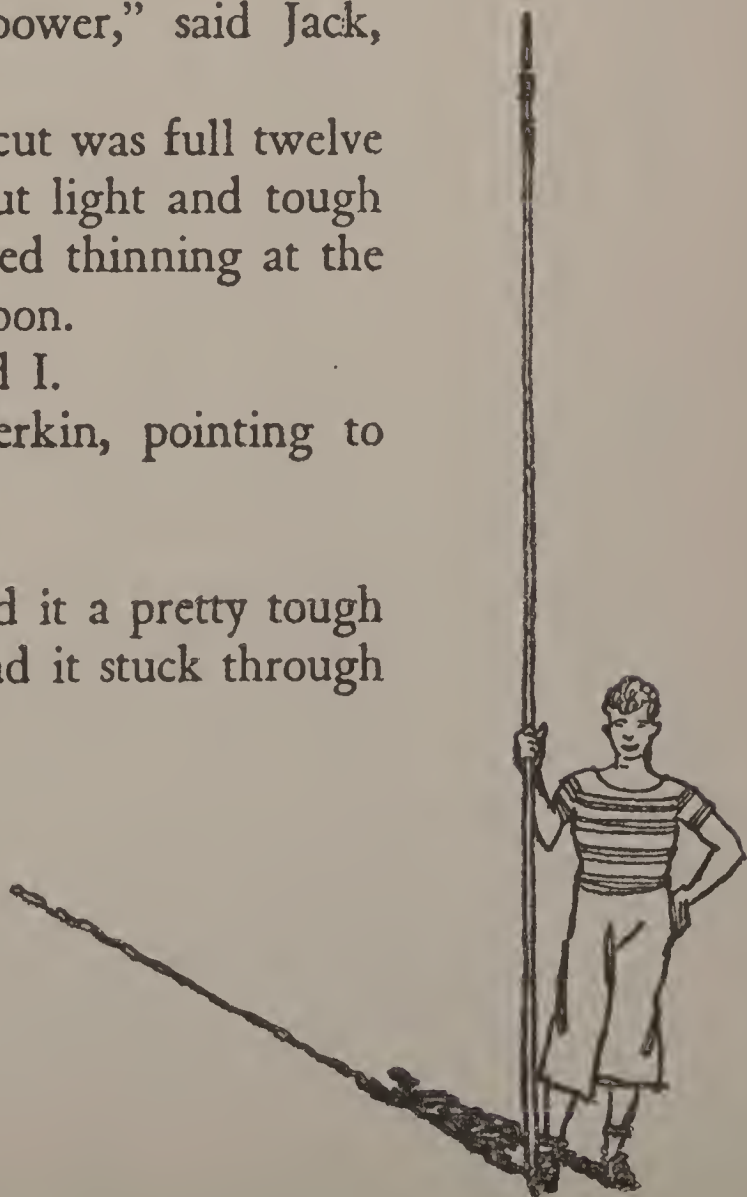
"That's a very good idea," said I.

"Which—this?" inquired Peterkin, pointing to the spear.

"Yes," I replied.

"Humph!" said he, "you'd find it a pretty tough and matter-of-fact idea, if you had it stuck through your gizzard, old boy!"

"I shall do more execution with a spear"



“I mean the idea of making it is a good one,” said I, laughing. “And now I think of it, I’ll change my plan, too. I don’t think much of a club, so I’ll make a sling out of this piece of cloth.” The cloth I referred to was a substance remarkably like coarse brown cotton cloth which we found wrapped around the ends of the branches on the cocoanut palms.

After a day spent in practicing our weapons, we set out early one morning on our journey. After passing the ridge of land that formed one side of our valley, we beheld another small vale lying before us in all the luxuriant loveliness of tropical vegetation. We had, indeed, seen it before from the mountain-top, but we had no idea that it would turn out to be so much more lovely when we were close to it. We were about to commence the exploration of this valley, when Peterkin stopped us and directed our attention to a very remarkable appearance in advance along the shore.

“What’s yon, think you?” said he, levelling his spear, as if he expected an immediate attack from the object in question, though it was fully a half-a-mile distant from where we stood.

As he spoke, there appeared a white column above the rocks, as if of steam or spray. It rose upwards to a height of several feet, and then disappeared. Had this been near the sea, we would not have been so greatly surprised, as it might in that case have

been the surf, for at this part of the coast the coral reef approached so near to the island that in some parts it almost joined it. But this white column appeared about fifty yards inland. The rocks at the place were rugged, and they stretched across the sandy beach into the sea. Scarce had we ceased expressing our surprise at this sight, when another column flew upwards for a few seconds, not far from the spot where the first had been seen, and disappeared; and so, at long irregular intervals, these strange sights recurred. We were now quite sure that the columns were watery or composed of spray, but what caused them we could not guess, so we determined to go and see.

In a few minutes we gained the spot, which was very rugged and precipitous, and, moreover, quite damp with the falling of the spray. We had much ado to pass over dry-shod. The ground also was full of holes here and there. Now, while we stood anxiously waiting for the reappearance of these water-spouts, we heard a low, rumbling sound near us, which quickly increased to a gurgling and hissing noise, and a moment afterwards a thick spout of water burst upwards from a hole in the rock, and spouted into the air with much violence. We sprang to one side, but not before a cloud of spray descended, and drenched us both to the skin.

Peterkin, who was standing farther off, escaped

with a few drops, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter on beholding our miserable plight.

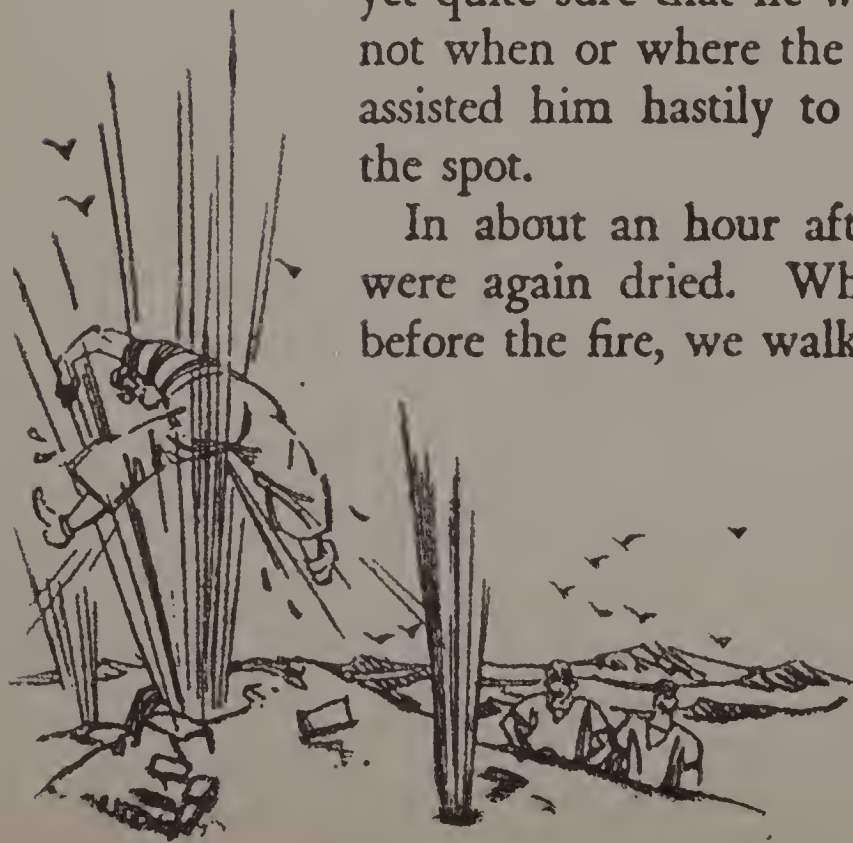
“Mind your eye!” he shouted eagerly, “there goes another!” The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there came up a spout from another hole, which served us exactly in the same manner as before.

Peterkin now shrieked with laughter; but his merriment was put to an abrupt stop by the gurgling noise occurring close to where he stood.

“Where’ll it spout this time, I wonder?” he said, looking about with some anxiety, and preparing to run. Suddenly there came a loud hiss or snort; a fierce spout of water burst up between Peterkin’s legs, blew him off his feet, enveloped him in its spray, and hurled him to the ground. He fell with so much violence that we feared he must have broken some of his bones, and ran anxiously to his assistance. But fortunately he had fallen on a clump of tangled herbage, in which he lay sprawling in a most deplorable condition.

It was now our turn to laugh; but as we were not yet quite sure that he was unhurt, and as we knew not when or where the next spout might arise, we assisted him hastily to jump up and hurry from the spot.

In about an hour after this mishap our clothes were again dried. While they were hanging up before the fire, we walked down to the beach, and



A fierce spout of water burst between Peterkin's legs

soon observed that these curious spouts took place immediately after the fall of a huge wave, never before it; and, moreover, that the spouts did not take place excepting when the billow was an extremely large one. From this we concluded that there must be a subterranean channel in the rock into which the water was driven by the larger waves, and finding no way of escape except through these small holes, was thus forced up violently through them. At any rate, we could not conceive any other reason for these strange waterspouts, and as this seemed a very simple and probable one, we forthwith adopted it.

We then turned back to the examination of the interior of the island, and spent the greater part of the day wandering through the densely wooded valleys, as one led into the other, observing new species of trees and shrubs, and strange and beautiful birds as they flew around us. Now, as we neared the shore, Jack and I said that we would go a little out of our way to see if we could procure a duck from a flock which had flown over us. Peterkin went on to the shore to kindle a fire, and we promised to rejoin him speedily. But we did not find the ducks, although we made a diligent search for half an hour. We were about to retrace our steps, when we were arrested by one of the strangest sights that we had yet beheld on the island.

Just in front of us, at the distance of about ten

yards, grew a superb tree, which certainly was the largest we had yet seen on the island. Its trunk was at least five feet in diameter, with a smooth gray bark; above this the spreading branches were clothed with light green leaves, amid which were clusters of bright yellow fruit, so numerous as to weigh down the boughs with their great weight. The ground at the foot of this tree was thickly strewn with the fallen fruit, which seemed to be of the plum species, and in the midst of it lay sleeping, in every possible attitude, at least twenty hogs of all ages and sizes, apparently quite surfeited with a recent banquet.

Jack and I could scarce restrain our laughter as we gazed at these coarse, fat, ill-looking animals, while they lay groaning and snoring heavily amid the remains of their supper.

“Now, Ralph,” said Jack, in a low whisper, “put a stone in your sling—a good big one—and let fly at that fat fellow with his back toward you. I’ll try to put an arrow into yon little pig.”

“Don’t you think we had better wake them up first?” I whispered; “it seems cruel to kill them while they are asleep.”

“If I wanted *sport*, Ralph, I would certainly give them a chance for their lives. But as we want only *pork*, we’ll let them lie. Besides, we’re not sure of killing them; so fire away.”

Thus admonished, I slung my stone with such

good aim that it went bang against the hog's flank as if against the head of a drum; but it had no other effect than that of causing the animal to start to its feet, with a frightful yell of surprise, and scamper away. At the same instant Jack's bow twanged, and the arrow pinned the little pig to the ground by the ear.

"I've missed, after all," cried Jack, darting forward with uplifted axe, while the little pig uttered a loud squeal, tore the arrow from the ground, and ran away with it along with the whole drove into the bushes and disappeared, though we heard them screaming long afterwards in the distance.

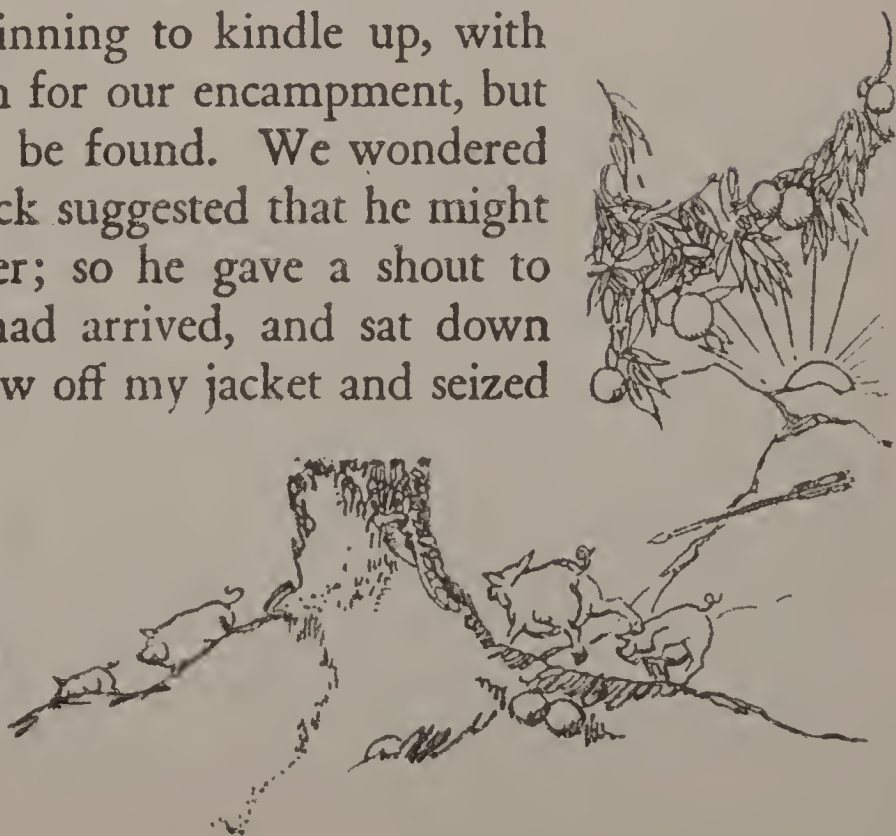
"That's very provoking, now," said Jack, rubbing the point of his nose.

"Very," I replied, stroking my chin.

"Well, we must make haste and rejoin Peterkin," said Jack. "It's getting late." And without further remark, we threaded our way quickly through the woods towards the shore.

When we reached it, we found wood laid out, the fire lighted and beginning to kindle up, with other signs of preparation for our encampment, but Peterkin was nowhere to be found. We wondered very much at this; but Jack suggested that he might have gone to fetch water; so he gave a shout to let him know that we had arrived, and sat down upon a rock, while I threw off my jacket and seized

*At the same instant
Jack's bow twanged*



the axe, intending to split up one or two billets of wood. But I had scarce moved from the spot, when, in the distance, we heard a most appalling shriek, which was followed up by a chorus of yells from the hogs, and a loud "hurrah!"

"I do believe," said I, "that Peterkin has met with the hogs."

"When Greek meets Greek," said Jack, "then comes the tug of war."

"Hurrah!" shouted Peterkin in the distance.

We turned hastily towards the direction whence the sound came, and soon descried Peterkin walking along the beach towards us with a little pig transfixed on the end of his long spear!

"Well done, my boy!" exclaimed Jack, slapping him on the shoulder when he came up, "you're the best shot amongst us."

"Look here, Jack!" cried Peterkin, as he disengaged the animal from his spear. "Do you recognise that hole?" said he, pointing to the pig's ear; "and are you familiar with this arrow, eh?"

"Well, I declare!" said Jack.

We now set about preparing supper; and truly a good display of viands we made, when all was laid out on a flat rock in the light of the blazing fire. And so, having eaten our fill, we laid ourselves down to sleep upon a couch of branches.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE OF THE SAVAGES

FOR many months after this we continued to live on our island in uninterrupted harmony and happiness. Sometimes we went out a-fishing in the lagoon, and sometimes went a-hunting in the woods, or ascended to the mountain top, by way of variety. One day Jack and I were sitting, as we were often wont to do, on the rocks at Spouting Cliff, and Peterkin was wringing the water from his garments, having recently fallen by accident into the sea—a thing he was constantly doing—when our attention was suddenly arrested by two objects which appeared on the horizon.

“What do you think those are yonder?” I said, addressing Jack.

“I can’t imagine,” he answered. “I’ve noticed them for some time, and fancied they were black sea-gulls, but the more I look at them the more I feel convinced they are much larger than gulls.”

“They seem to be coming towards us,” said I.

“Hallo! what’s wrong?” inquired Peterkin, coming up to where we were sitting.

“Look there,” said Jack.

"Whales!" cried Peterkin, shading his eyes with his hands. "No! eh! *Can* they be boats, Jack?"

Our hearts beat with excitement at the very thought of seeing human faces again.

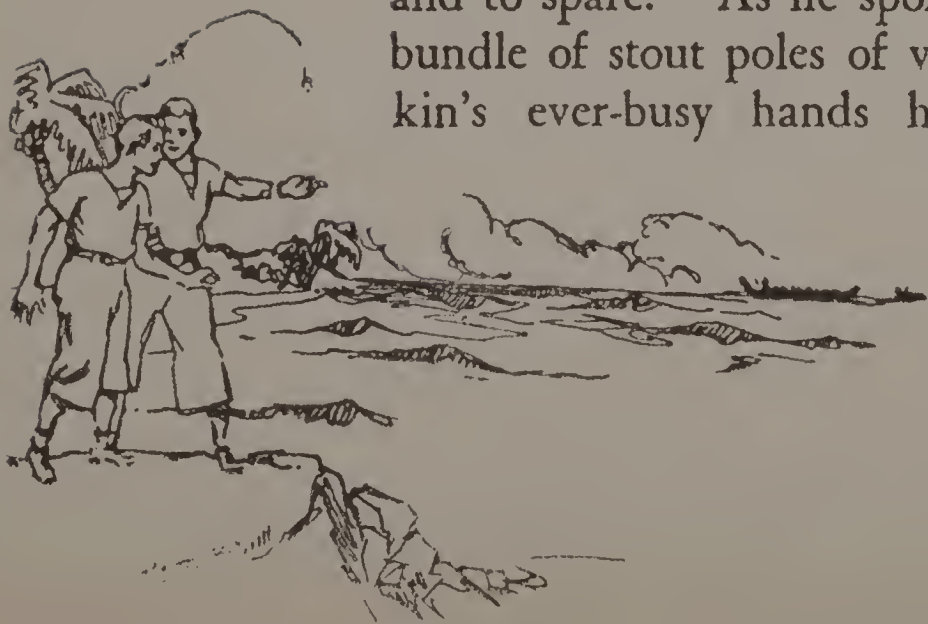
"I think you are about right, Peterkin—but they seem to me to move strangely for boats," said Jack, in a low tone, as if he were talking to himself.

I noticed that a shade of anxiety crossed Jack's countenance as he gazed long and intently at the two objects, which were now nearing us fast. At last he sprang to his feet. "They are canoes, Ralph! Whether war-canoes or not I cannot tell, but this I know, that all the natives of the South Sea Islands are fierce cannibals, and they have little respect for strangers. We must hide if they land here, which I earnestly hope they will not do."

I was greatly alarmed at Jack's speech, but I confess I thought less of what he said than of the earnest, anxious manner in which he said it, and it was with very uncomfortable feelings that Peterkin and I followed him quickly into the woods.

"How unfortunate," said I, as we gained the shelter of the bushes, "that we have forgotten to bring our arms."

"It matters not," said Jack; "here are clubs enough and to spare." As he spoke, he laid his hand on a bundle of stout poles of various sizes, which Peterkin's ever-busy hands had formed, during our



*"We must hide if
they land here"*



*Their short paddles flashed like meteors in
the water*

frequent visits to the cliff, for no other purpose, apparently, than that of having something to do.

We each selected a stout club according to our several tastes, and lay down behind a rock, whence we could see the canoes approach, without ourselves being seen. At first we made an occasional remark on their appearance, but after they entered the lagoon, and drew near the beach, we ceased to speak, and gazed with intense interest at the scene before us.

We now observed that the foremost canoe was being chased by the other, and that it contained a few women and children, as well as men,—perhaps forty souls altogether; while the canoe which pursued it contained only men. They seemed to be about the same in number, but were better armed and had the appearance of being a war party. Both crews were paddling with all their might, and it seemed as if the pursuers exerted themselves to overtake the fugitives ere they could land. In this, however, they failed. The foremost canoe made for the beach close beneath the rocks behind which we were concealed. Their short paddles flashed like meteors in the water, and sent up a constant shower of spray. The foam curled from the prow, and the eyes of the rowers glistened in their black faces as they strained every muscle of their naked bodies; nor did they relax their efforts till the canoe struck the beach with a violent shock; then, with a shout

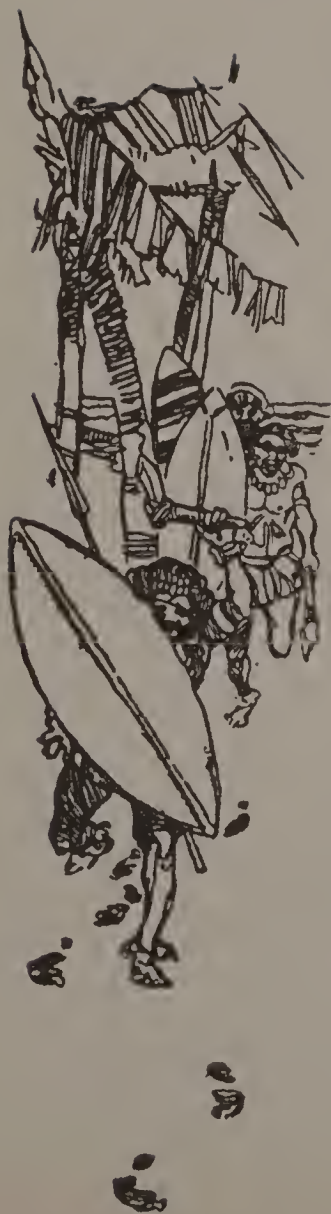
of defiance, the whole party sprang as if by magic from the canoe to the shore. Three women, two of whom carried infants in their arms, rushed into the woods; and the men crowded to the water's edge, with stones in their hands, spears levelled, and clubs brandished, to resist the landing of their enemies who still pursued them.

The distance between the two canoes had been about half a mile, and at the great speed they were going, this was soon passed. As the pursuers neared the shore, no sign of fear or hesitation was noticeable. On they came like a wild charger,—received but recked not of a shower of stones. The canoe struck, and with a yell that seemed to issue from the throats of incarnate fiends they leaped into the water, and drove their enemies up the beach.

The battle that immediately ensued was frightful to behold. Most of the men wielded clubs of enormous size and curious shapes, with which they dashed out each other's brains. As they were almost entirely naked, and had to bound, stoop, leap, and run, in their terrible hand-to-hand encounters, they looked more like demons than human beings. I felt my heart grow sick at the sight of this bloody battle, and would fain have turned away, but a species of fascination seemed to hold me down and glue my eyes upon the combatants.

I observed that the attacking party was led by a

*Most of the men
wielded clubs of
enormous size
and curious
shapes*



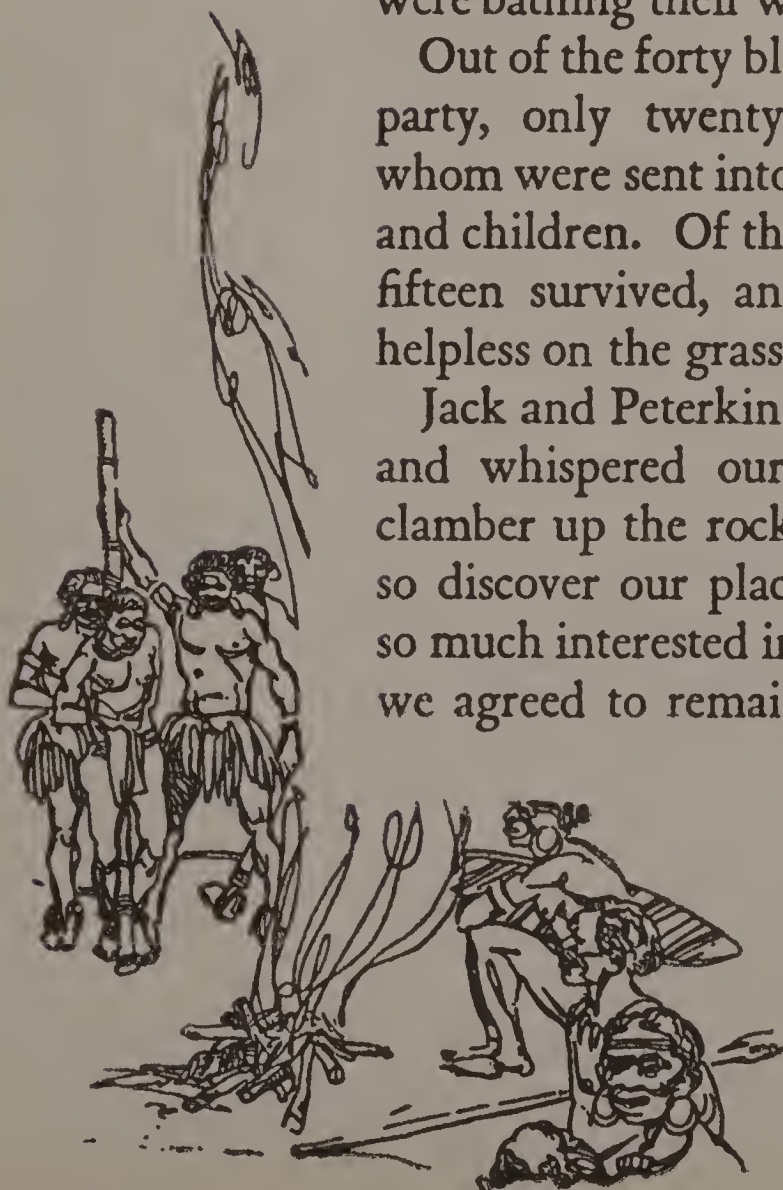
most extraordinary being, who from his size and peculiarity I concluded was a chief. His hair was frizzed out to an enormous extent, so that it resembled a large turban. It was of a light yellow hue, which surprised me much, for the man's body was as black as coal, and I felt convinced that the hair must have been dyed. He was tattooed from head to foot; and his face, besides being tattooed, was besmeared with red paint, and streaked with white. Altogether, with his yellow turban-like hair, his Herculean black frame, his glittering eyes and white teeth, he seemed the most terrible monster I ever beheld. He was very active in the fight, and had already killed four men.

Suddenly the yellow-haired chief was attacked by a man quite as strong and large as himself. He flourished a heavy club something like an eagle's beak at the point. For a second or two these giants eyed each other warily, moving round and round, as if to catch each other at a disadvantage, but seeing that nothing was to be gained by this caution, and that the loss of time might effectually turn the tide of battle either way, they apparently made up their minds to attack at the same instant. With a wild shout and simultaneous spring, they swung their heavy clubs, which met with a loud report. Suddenly the yellow-haired savage tripped, his enemy sprang forward, the ponderous club was swung, but it did not de-

scend, for at that moment the savage was felled to the ground by a stone from the hand of one who had witnessed his chief's danger. This was the turning-point in the battle. The savages who landed first turned and fled towards the bush, on seeing the fall of their chief. But not one escaped. They were all overtaken and felled to the earth. I saw, however, that they were not all killed. Indeed, their enemies now that they had conquered, seemed anxious to take them alive; and they succeeded in securing fifteen, whom they bound hand and foot with cords, and, carrying them up into the woods, laid them down among the bushes. Here they left them, for what purpose I knew not, and returned to the scene of the late battle, where the remnant of the party were bathing their wounds.

Out of the forty blacks that composed the attacking party, only twenty-eight remained alive, two of whom were sent into the bush to hunt for the women and children. Of the other party, as I have said, only fifteen survived, and these were lying bound and helpless on the grass.

Jack and Peterkin and I now looked at each other, and whispered our fears that the savages might clamber up the rocks to search for fresh water, and so discover our place of concealment; but we were so much interested in watching their movements that we agreed to remain where we were; and, indeed,



*A dreadful feeling
of horror crept
over my heart*

we could not easily have risen without exposing ourselves to detection. One of the savages now went up to the wood and soon returned with a bundle of fire-wood, and we were not a little surprised to see him set fire to it by the very same means used by Jack the time we made our first fire,—namely, with the bow and drill. When the fire was kindled, two of the party went again to the woods and returned with one of the bound men. A dreadful feeling of horror crept over my heart, as the thought flashed upon me that they were going to burn their enemies. As they bore him to the fire my feelings almost overpowered me. I gasped for breath, and seizing my club, endeavored to spring to my feet; but Jack's powerful arm pinned me to the earth. Next moment one of the savages raised his club, and fractured the wretched creature's skull. He must have died instantly, and, strange though it may seem, I confess to a feeling of relief when the deed was done, because I knew that the poor savage could not now be burned alive.

Suddenly there arose a cry from the woods, and, in a few seconds, the two savages hastened towards the fire dragging the three women and their two infants along with them. One of those women was much younger than her companions, and we were struck with the modesty of her demeanor and the gentle expression of her face, which, although she had the

flattish nose and thick lips of the others, was of a light-brown color, and we conjectured that she must be of a different race. She and her companions wore short petticoats and a kind of scarf on their shoulders. Their hair was jet black, but instead of being long, was short and curly,—though not woolly—some-what like the hair of a young boy. While we gazed with interest and some anxiety at these poor creatures, the big chief advanced to one of the elder females and laid his hand upon the child. But the mother shrank from him, and clasping the little one to her bosom, uttered a wail of fear. With a savage laugh, the chief tore the child from her arms and tossed it into the sea. A low groan burst from Jack's lips as we witnessed this atrocious act and heard the mother's shriek, as she fell insensible on the sand. The rippling waves rolled the child on the beach, as if they refused to be a party in such a foul murder, and we could observe that the little one still lived.

The young girl was now brought forward, and the chief addressed her; but although we heard his voice, and even the words distinctly, of course we could not understand what he said. The girl made no answer to his fierce questions, and we saw by the way in which he pointed to the blazing fire that he threatened her life.

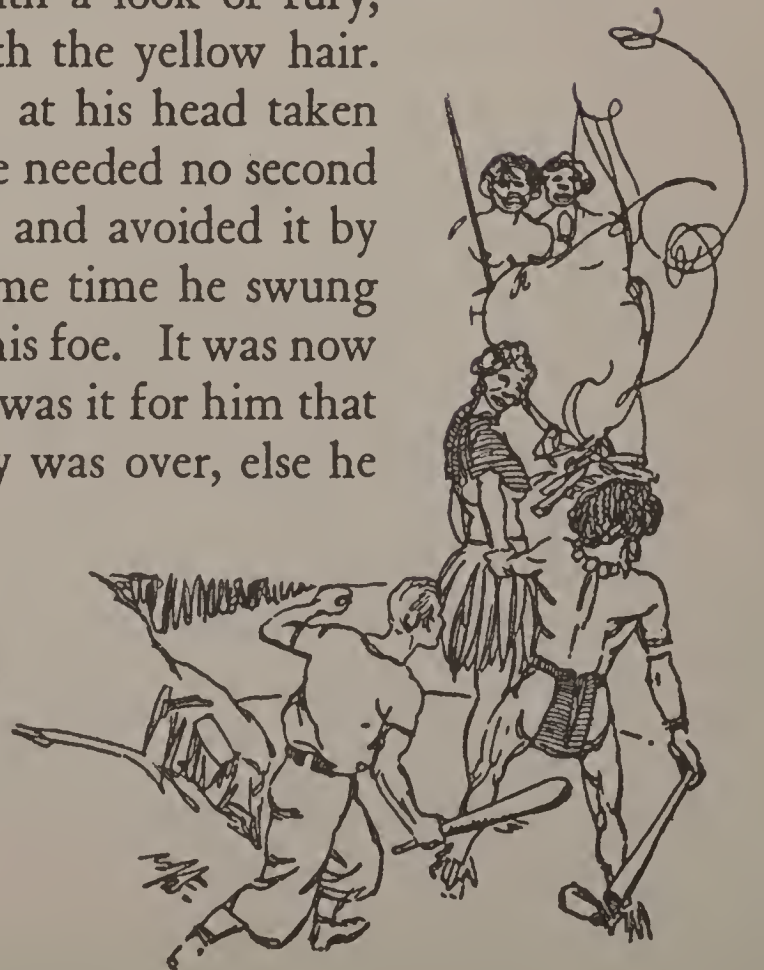
“Peterkin,” said Jack in a hoarse whisper, “have you got your knife?”

"Yes," replied Peterkin, whose face was tense and pale as death.

"That will do. Listen to me, and do my bidding quick. Here is the small knife, Ralph. Fly both of you through the bush, cut the cords that bind the prisoners and set them free. There, quick, ere it be too late." Jack sprang up and seized a heavy but short bludgeon, while his strong frame trembled with emotion; and large drops of sweat rolled down his forehead.

At this moment the man who had butchered the savage a few minutes before advanced towards the girl with his heavy club. Jack uttered a yell that rang like a death-shriek among the rocks. With one bound he leaped over a precipice full ten feet high, and before the savages had recovered from their surprise was in the midst of them; while Peterkin and I dashed through the bushes towards the prisoners. With one blow of his staff Jack felled the man with the club, then, turning round with a look of fury, he rushed upon the big chief with the yellow hair. Had the blow which Jack aimed at his head taken effect, the huge savage would have needed no second stroke; but he was agile as a cat, and avoided it by springing to one side. At the same time he swung his ponderous club at the head of his foe. It was now Jack's turn to leap aside, and well was it for him that the first outburst of his blind fury was over, else he

*With one bound he
was in the midst
of them*



had become an easy prey to his gigantic antagonist. But Jack was cool now. He darted his blows rapidly and well, and the superiority of his light weapon was strikingly proved in this combat, for while he could easily evade the blows of the chief's heavy club, the chief could not so easily evade those of Jack's light one. Nevertheless, so quick was he, and so frightfully did he fling about the mighty weapon, that although Jack struck him almost every blow the strokes had to be delivered so quickly that they lacked force to be very effectual.

It was lucky for Jack that the other savages considered the success of their chief in this encounter to be so certain that they refrained from interfering. Had they doubted it, they would have probably ended the matter at once by felling him. But they contented themselves with awaiting the issue.

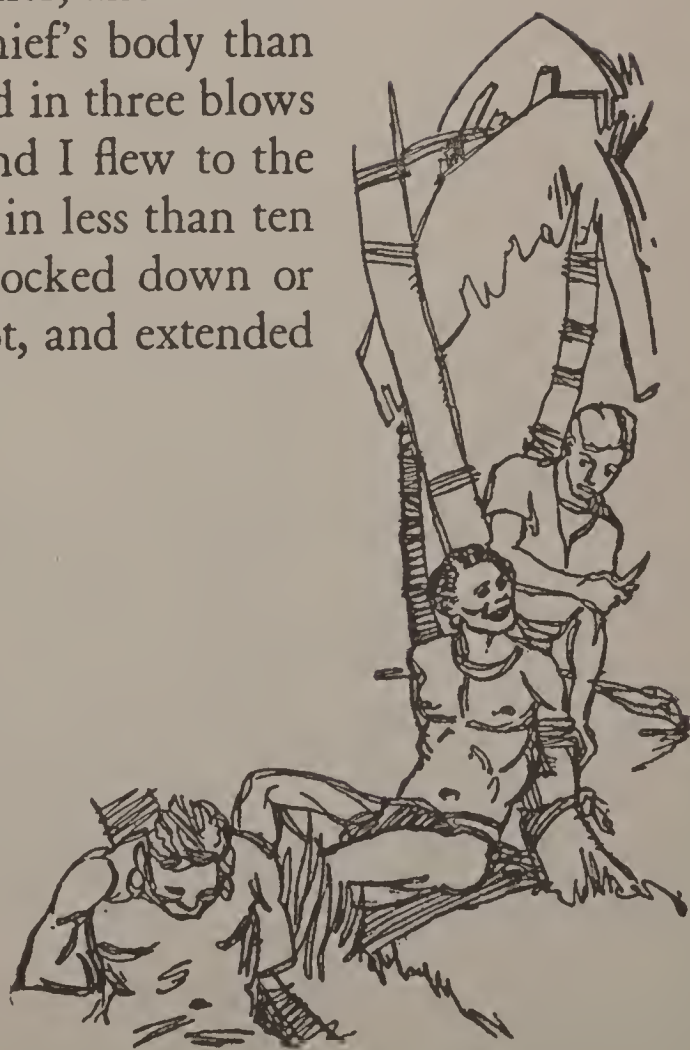
The force which the chief expended in wielding his club now began to be apparent. His movements became slower, his breath hissed through his clenched teeth, and the surprised savages drew nearer in order to render assistance. Jack observed this movement. He felt that his fate was sealed and resolved to cast his life upon the next blow. The chief's club was again about to descend on his head. He might have dodged it easily, but instead of doing so he suddenly shortened his grasp of his own club, rushed in under the blow, struck his adversary right between the eyes



At the same time he swung his ponderous club at the head of his foe

with all his force, and fell to the earth, crushed beneath the senseless body of the chief. A dozen clubs flew high in air ready to descend on the head of Jack, but they hesitated a moment, for the massive body of the chief completely covered him. That moment saved our friend's life. Ere the savages could tear the chief's body away, seven of their number fell prostrate beneath the clubs of the prisoners whom Peterkin and I had set free, and two others fell under our own hand. We could never have accomplished this had not our enemies been so intent upon the fight between Jack and their chief that they failed to observe us until we were upon them. They still outnumbered our party by three, but we were flushed with victory while they were taken by surprise and dispirited by the fall of their chief. Moreover, they were awe-struck by the sweeping fury of Jack, who seemed to have lost his senses altogether, and had no sooner shaken himself free of the chief's body than he rushed into the midst of them, and in three blows equalized our numbers. Peterkin and I flew to the rescue, the savages followed us, and, in less than ten minutes, all our opponents were knocked down or made prisoners, bound hand and foot, and extended side by side upon the sea shore.

*Peterkin and I set
the prisoners free*



CHAPTER VII

THE LAST OF OUR ISLAND

AFTER the battle was over, the savages crowded round us and gazed at us in surprise, while they continued to pour upon us a flood of questions, which, because we could not understand, of course we could not answer. However, by way of putting an end to it, Jack took the chief (who had recovered from the effects of his wound) by the hand and shook it warmly. No sooner did the blacks see that this was meant to express good-will than they shook hands with us all round. After this ceremony was gone through, Jack went up to the girl who had never once moved from the rock where she had been left, but had continued an eager spectator of all that had passed. He made signs to her to follow him, and then, taking the chief by the hand, was about to conduct him to the bower, when his eyes fell on the poor infant which had been thrown into the sea and was still lying on the shore. Dropping the chief's hand he hastened towards it, and, to his great joy, found it to be still alive. We also found that the mother was beginning to recover slowly.

“Here, get out o' the way,” said Jack, pushing us

aside, as we stooped over the poor woman and endeavored to restore her. "I'll soon bring her round." So saying, he placed the infant on her bosom and laid its warm cheek on hers. The effect was wonderful. The woman opened her eyes, felt the child, looked at it, and with a cry of joy clasped it in her arms, at the same time attempting to rise, for the purpose, apparently, of rushing into the woods.

"There, that's all right," said Jack, once more taking the chief by the hand. "Now, Ralph and Peterkin, make the women and these fellows follow me to the bower. We'll entertain them as hospitably as we can."

In a few minutes the savages were all seated on the ground in front of the bower making a hearty meal off a cold roast pig, several ducks, and a variety of cold fish, together with an unlimited supply of coconuts, breadfruit, yams, taro, and plums; with all of which they seemed to be quite familiar and perfectly satisfied.

Meanwhile, we three being thoroughly knocked up with our day's work, took a good draught of cocoanut lemonade, and throwing ourselves on our beds fell fast asleep. The savages, it seems, followed our example, and in half an hour the whole camp was buried in repose.

The next three or four days were spent by the savages in mending their canoe, which had been dam-

aged by the violent shock it had sustained on striking the shore. When it was ready, we assisted the natives to carry the prisoners into it, and helped them to load it with provisions and fruit. Peterkin also went to the plum-tree for the purpose of making a special onslaught upon the hogs, and killed no less than six of them. These we baked and presented to our friends on the day of their departure. On that day the chief made a great many energetic signs to us, which, after much consideration, we came to understand were proposals that we should go away with him to his island. This, on Jack's advice, we decided to do, as he urged us to seize this opportunity to learn something more of our whereabouts under the protection of friendly people. He had hopes, he said, that we might discover some means of returning to England sooner if we left our island, which, however delightful, seemed to be off the usual path of trade; and he pointed out to us that we could always secure a boat to return to our own island if we wished. Thus, convinced by him, we made ready to embark with our friends, and a couple of hours later were out of sight of our coral reef.

Some hours after nightfall we arrived at our destination, an island which turned out to be very much like the one we had left, only considerably larger. We were given a hut for the night and despite our curiosity as to our immediate future were soon asleep.

The next morning we were awakened by a voice outside our door. Jack got up to admit a mild-looking native, of apparently forty years of age who, taking off his straw hat, made us a low bow. He was clad in a respectable suit of European clothes; and the first words he uttered, as he stepped up to Jack and shook hands with him, were—

“Good day, gentlemen; we are happy to see you at Mango—you are heartily welcome.”

After returning his salutation, Jack exclaimed, “You must be a native missionary teacher on the island—are you not?”

“I am,” was the answer. “I have the joy to be a servant of the Lord Jesus sent to preach His gospel to the unbelievers on this island.”

Then, seating himself at our invitation, he informed us that on hearing of our arrival he had thought that we might be interested to know that in a few days the missionary ship was sailing back to the station, which was a frequent port of call for traders among the South Sea Islands. If we were desirous of leaving the Islands we could return with this vessel and await a boat which would take us back to our homes.

It was a bright clear morning when we set sail from the shores of Mango. Just as we passed through the channel in the reef the natives gave us a loud cheer. That night, as we sat on the taffrail, gazing out upon

the wide sea and up into the starry firmament, a thrill of joy, strangely mixed with sadness, passed through our hearts—for soon we would be “homeward bound” and leaving far behind us the beautiful, bright, green coral islands of the Pacific Ocean.

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