

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

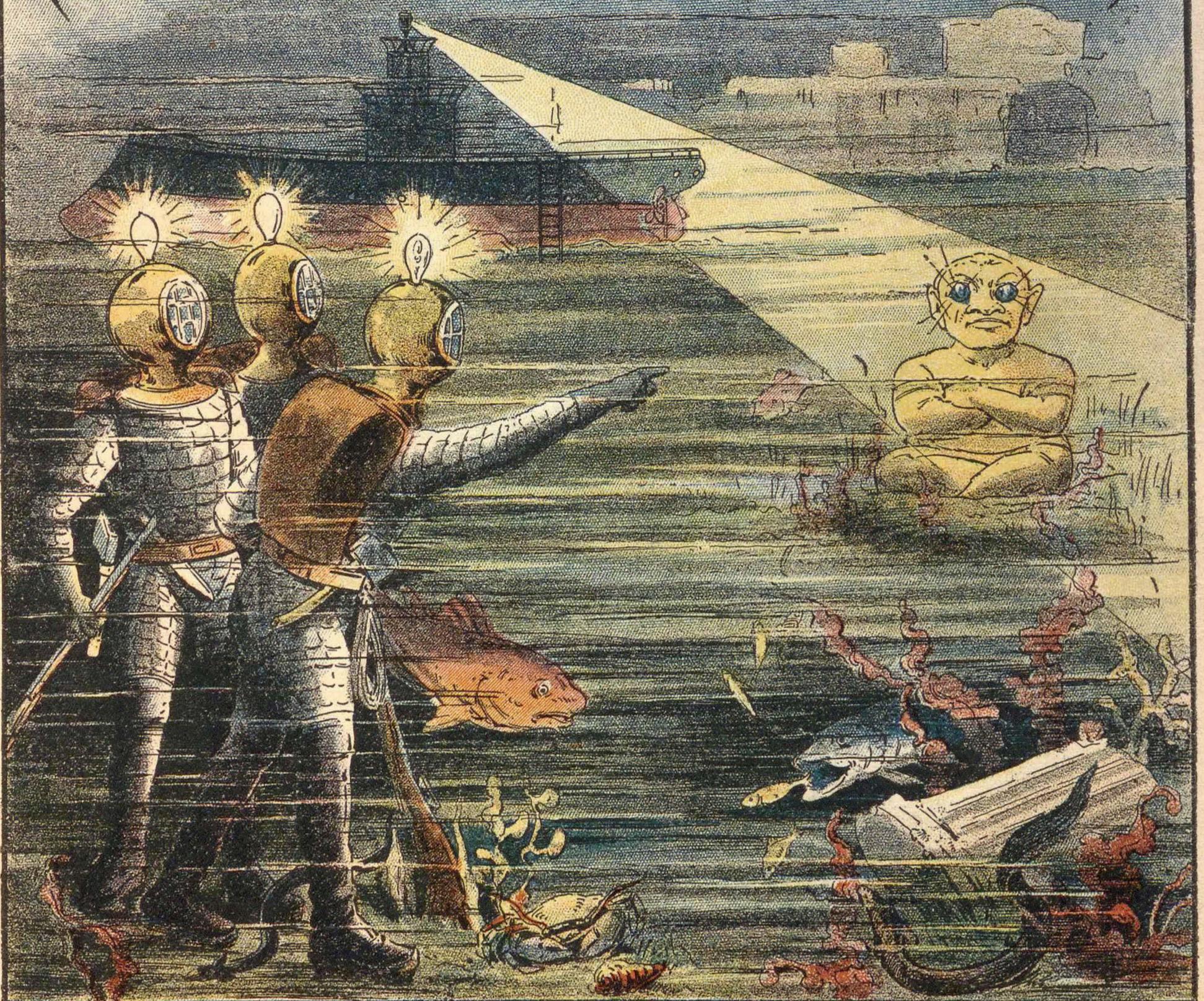
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No. 139.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 30, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS DEEP SEA MONITOR; OR SEARCHING FOR A TON OF GOLD. —BY NONAME.—



The last door brought them into a courtyard in the centre of the building, and the three divers gave utterance to cries of the utmost astonishment. For there in the middle of the place stood the Golden Idol!

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CHAPTER I.

THE BOY AND HIS BOAT.

Our story opens on the afternoon of Friday, the 24th of April, 18—, in the beautiful town of Wrightstown, on the Atlantic seaboard, at the head of a small, pretty bay.

A cluster of vine-covered cottages lined the shore, among which were strewn numerous seine nets, oars and overturned boats; in back of them were a number of more modern houses, stores and streets, while at anchor off an old wooden pier floated a number of boats.

A creek ran in from the bay, and a short distance from the bay shore a beautiful plot of fenced-in ground ran down to the creek bank, a magnificent house standing at the front of this garden, and a fine brick workshop at the foot of the grounds beside the creek.

The house was owned and occupied by a boy between eighteen and nineteen years of age, named Jack Wright, who was accounted one of the most wonderful inventors of submarine boats in the world.

By the aid of his father, after whom Wrightstown was named, he had first begun to devise these contrivances. But his only parent died before their boat was finished, and the boy had completed and used it, and since then invented several more wonderful under-water marvels, by the use of which he had amassed a large fortune from various sources under the sea.

Jack Wright's name and fame thus became world-wide, and at the time we now refer to he was a young millionaire, a sturdy fellow, with an athletic figure, flashing black eyes, a pointed nose, curly dark hair, and of a courageous, ambitious and inventive nature, that to ordinary minds was simply marvelous.

Upon the afternoon to which we call your attention, Jack had just put the finishing touches upon a new submarine vessel of his invention within his workshop, and, uttering a sigh of relief over the ending of his arduous task, he viewed the graceful craft a moment with unbounded admiration and pride as it floated in the water-filled cellar of the big brick building at the end of which two huge doors opened out upon the creek to give egress to the boats.

The vessel was one hundred feet long, fifteen feet beam, and six feet draught.

The exterior appearance was that of a monitor, with a flat deck, a flat bottom, and a revolving turret pierced by round windows, over which were protecting bars, to guard against breaking the thick glasses.

The vessel was made of a metal called aluminum, lighter and stronger than steel, as white and bright as polished silver; from port-holes in the turret there protruded the muzzles of three pneumatic guns; upon the top of the turret stood the pilot-house, upon which was mounted a powerful search-light of 100,000 candle power, while along the low water line there ran on either side a row of dead-lights, also for illuminating purposes.

The monitor was propelled by twin screws astern, worked

by electro-motive force, a door in the turret was made for surface usage, and traps forward and aft were designed for submarine use.

Upon a scroll on the turret was painted the name The Sea Serpent, and as the glance of the young inventor swept over his singular looking craft, he muttered:

"She's as pretty as a siren, as swift as the lightning flash, as formidable as a fleet of frigates, and yet as safe to handle as a top! I am glad she is finished inside and out, though, for she has cost me a fortune, considerable time, and my anxiety will only be appeased when I give her a trial on the bay tomorrow. Every one in the town has heard about her, and will be down to the water to see her first trip, as they always do, for everybody is interested in my boats. If she should prove to be a failure—but no! She can't be, for in building her I have not only followed the secrets of my former success, but I have vastly improved upon them. I won't borrow trouble!"

Jack took off his working clothes, washed himself, and put on stylish garments.

He then left the workshop, passed through the garden out to the street, and made his way toward the bay by going down the main street, where every one he met bowed, smiled, and treated him with the greatest friendliness, respect and deference.

Within a short time the boy reached the lower part of the town and drew near an old, weather-beaten tavern, over the door of which swung a sign upon which was painted the name of the Sea Spider House.

There were a large number of men gathered about the front of the old hostelry, and the boy saw that they were made up of **the worst characters** in the town.

Most of them had been drinking heavily, and were in an ugly, quarrelsome mood, as their staggering gait and loud talk attested.

Jack had scarcely taken in the looks of the crowd when he was startled to hear a furious uproar suddenly arise within the barroom, made up of hoots, yells, and curses, the jingling of broken glass, the banging of furniture; and a medley of angry voices.

"A fight! A fight!" shouted one of the drunken loafers, excitedly.

Most of the crowd went surging into the saloon, when out through the door came the struggling figure of an old sailor.

He wore the costume of a marine; he had a wooden leg and a glass eye, and his weatherbeaten face was covered by a sandy beard.

It seemed as if the loungers were angry at the cripple, for as he struggled frantically to get through the door, they kicked and punched him, pushed and jostled him and heaped every conceivable abuse upon the poor fellow.

"Belay thar, lads!" he cried, with tears in his solitary eye. "This ain't a fair reckonin'. nohow! It's only a gang o' lubberly cowards as'd pile on to a poor cripple! A score ter one! Fer shame! Fer shame!"

"Out with him!" yelled the leader of the gang. "If he hits one of our crowd he's got to fight the whole lot, see?"

They kept him in their midst, and while some of them held

him, others slugged him right and left, without giving him a chance to defend himself.

A thrill of surprise, anger and grief passed over Jack.

"Why," he muttered, "it's my dear old friend, Timothy Topstay!"

Timothy Topstay was a former marine with Jack's father on the United States frigate Wabash, and had accompanied Jack upon all of his submarine cruises.

He was a regular old sea dog, a man who was so addicted to telling yarns that he got to believe his own lies, and was the owner of a trick monkey named Whiskers.

The boy no sooner recognized his old friend than he sprang into the midst of the cowardly gang, doubled up his fists, and struck out right and left.

Every powerful blow he dealt knocked a man sprawling, and Jack fought his way through the gang up to his friend.

"Jack! Oh, Jack!" cried the poor cripple, gladly, as he saw the boy. "Thank ther Lord, ye ha' come, lad! These lubbers is a rakin' me fore an' aft."

He was cut, bruised and bleeding, and his clothing was badly torn.

"Back, you cowards!" shouted the angry boy, as he pulled a revolver out of his pocket and aimed it at the crowd. "Back with you, or I'll shoot the first man who lifts his hand!"

There was a dangerous flash in the young inventor's dark eyes, and the scared toughs recoiled with cries of alarm.

"Don't shoot!" yelled the leader of the gang, in terrified accents, for he knew that Jack would fire at him upon the slightest provocation.

"I'll put your whole sneaking gang in jail for this!" the boy replied.

By that time the loafers, nearly sobered up, got out in the street, and, recovering courage, they began to jeer at the boy and his friend, and a few of them were indiscreet enough to fling missiles.

"I'll teach them a lesson!" the young inventor exclaimed, as a shower of stones struck him. "They are a hard crowd, Tim!"

He took deliberate aim at the guilty parties, and fired several shots at them in rapid succession, using up all the cartridges in his pistol.

Every ball told, for Jack Wright was a dead shot, and he wounded every one he struck.

A fearful uproar arose from the loafers, and they retreated, swearing and threatening Jack and Tim, and continued their fusillade of missiles.

Goaded to desperation and rage, upon seeing that the boy had used up all his ammunition, they came swarming back toward Jack and his friend, swearing to wreak a terrible vengeance upon them.

Alarmed by the pistol shots and the sight of the crowd, people came swarming from all directions, but it seemed as if the gallant boy and the old sailor would fall victims of the gang's fury before any one could go to their assistance.

At this critical juncture, just as the crowd came rushing up to the two, a spirited team of handsome horses, hitched to a buggy, came sweeping around a corner driven by Fritz Schneider, a little fat fellow with a head of yellow hair, a big stomach and a pugnacious disposition.

With one glance Fritz took in the situation, and, standing in the buggy, he raised his whip, lashed the team, and sent them thundering between his two friends and the gang, bringing the loafers to a pause.

"Shiminey Christmas!" he roared, vigorously, turning his team and fearlessly driving the prancing steeds upon the men. "Got out of mine vay alretty! Hoop-la! You don't fool yourselluf mit mine friends if I can helb id vonct!"

Swish! went his whistling whip, up rose the horses on their haunches, and down went several of the rascals under their steel-shod hoofs.

Fritz rode them down like an avalanche, and, taking fright, the men fled, pursued by all the decent citizens who had witnessed the affray, while the young Dutchman, satisfied with scattering them, drove back to his friends.

The police afterwards captured the whole gang and locked them up in jail.

Amid the cheers of the people who witnessed the victory of our friends, they got into the carriage and Tim drove them to Jack's house, where they resided together.

Jack was holding a pet of Fritz's named Bismarck, that the Dutch boy had with him, and Fritz hauled out an old accordion which he had gotten repaired, and triumphantly ground out a tune upon it, much to the disgust of Tim, who hated the instrument.

In this manner they reached Jack's mansion, and left the team in the hands of a colored coachman, while Tim got up such an outrageous lie about the fight that they were glad to interrupt it by alighting and entering the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE CARIBBEAN AVENGER.

Jack had a beautiful library on the ground floor of his house, and, when the three friends reached it, Fritz turned to the boy and asked:

"Shack, how dot fight vhas all habben vonct, anyvay?"

"I was out for a stroll," replied the boy, "and heard a fearful row in the tavern, saw Tim getting beaten, and went to his assistance. Now, come down to facts, Tim, and don't stretch your imagination—what caused the row?"

"Why, lads, shiver me, but 'twas all a mistake on ther part o' ther gang," replied the old man-o'-warsman, taking a chew of navy plug and giving a hitch at his baggy pants. "Yer see, I tacked inter ther tavern ter get my reg'lar 'lowance o' grog, when one o' them swabs calls ther hull crew up ter ther bar, an' they all orders a drink an' walks away. When I went ter pay fer mine, ther bartender says as I mus' pay fer wot ther gang drunk, 'cause one o' them told him I wuz treatin'. I refused, o' course, an' ther gang tackled me, ter try an' git up a sham fight, so's ter escape durin' ther muss without payin'. When they runned afoul o' me, though, I fit, I did, an' Lor' bless ye, it wuz hot in thar fer a minnit. Then I got hard pressed, an' tried ter git out, when you came."

"Well, they were a mean gang," said Jack, "and must all be in jail now, so let us drop the subject. To-morrow I want you both to join me at three o'clock in the afternoon, for all the residents of Wrightstown, and people from all over the country, will be down to the bay to witness the trial of the Sea Serpent."

"I'm wi' you, lad," assented Tim. "An' now I'll go ter my quarters fer repairs on my figgerhead."

"Und me, too," said Fritz. "I—och! vot's dot?"

Fritz's green parrot had spied Tim's little red monkey, and since the time our friends found their pets in Africa, during a previous voyage, the bird and beast hated each other.

With a swoop Bismarck landed upon Whiskers' head, and fastened its beak upon the monkey's ear, whereupon Whiskers gave a terrible howl, rolled over and over, and, making the parrot's feathers fly, he fled from the room.

Tim stumped out after them to save his pet, Fritz chasing after him in the interest of Bismarck, and Jack was left alone laughing at them.

The boy studied over the plans of his boat until supper time, and then went out. Night had closed, storm-threatening, dark and gloomy, and the boy proceeded toward the little railroad depot to look after some freight he expected in.

As he came to a pause upon the station platform a train came thundering in from New York, and a passenger alighted.

He was a tall, thin, dignified-looking man of about forty-five, his stiff, grim figure clad in a ministerial suit of black, while his long neck was encased in a high choker collar and a black cravat.

He had long, gray hair that was parted in the back, a bell-crowned stovepipe hat covered his head, his face was clean shaven, sallow and angular, his eyes a watery blue, and his nose was very long and red.

In one hand he carried a carpet bag and in the other an umbrella.

Jack saw that he was a stranger in Wrightstown.

He glanced around, saw the station agent receiving some freight, and then approached Jack, with a benign smile upon his thin lips.

He made a sweeping bow, and gave a cough, smiled blandly and said:

"My good friend, pardon my presumption for thus addressing you, but I am Peleg Hopkins, Ph. D., and piscatorial expert of the American Fish Commission, and am anxious to find one John Wright, of Wrightstown. Would you be kind enough to direct me to his residence?"

Jack sized the individual up.

"The fellow you want lives in that big house over there," said the boy, pointing at his handsome residence. "Do you want to see him, sir?"

"I am very anxious to meet with this young inventor, and beg to thank you for your information."

"Jack Wright isn't home just now," said the boy, "but he will return soon, so you can wait there if your business is important."

"Important?" echoed the professor. "Well, it is important—very important indeed—vitally important. Dear, dear! What a trying thing it is to ride for a distance in railroad cars. Really, it makes one so dry he becomes parched. Fortunately, however, I am a man of forethought, and have provided against such a contingency. Pardon me, and I will imbibe of a most refreshing stimulant."

He pulled a flask out of his pocket and took a drink.

He uttered a sigh of intense satisfaction when the liquid contents ceased to gurgle down his throat, and proffered the flask to Jack.

"Pray have some," invited he. "I don't like to tempt the rising generation from the path of rectitude, but when we imbibe as a tonic or medicine, as I always do, why it certainly does us no harm that I can see."

"What is it?"

"Whisky."

"I don't drink."

"Oh!"

And with an approving nod the professor seized his grip from a bench upon which he had dropped it and strode away.

Jack glanced up at the train and beheld a man standing upon the platform of a car intently watching the departing professor.

He was a lithe, active, middle-aged person, in a dark suit, and wore a slouched hat upon his jet black hair, a thick black beard covered his face, and his skin was as dark as a mulatto's.

In fact, Jack saw that he was a foreigner from some southern country.

The eager, devilish look upon his face as he watched Peleg Hopkins startled Jack, for he saw that the man was intent upon a mission that boded no good for the professor.

Without paying any attention to Jack the man alighted from the car just as the train started, and stealthily but swiftly glided after Hopkins, who was then in a lonely spot of the country road at that point hedged by bushes and trees.

Away went the train with a rumble of wheels and the clang of its bell, and Jack only waited to assure himself that the dark stranger was in pursuit of the professor, when he ran after the man.

"He is up to some mischief," flashed through Jack's mind. "He is planning some rascality against Hopkins, as sure as fate. I'll follow them and discover what his design is. Ha! What is that?"

There came a brilliant flash at the dark man's side, and Jack saw that he had withdrawn a long knife and was clutching it in his hand.

"Can it be murder he is scheming?" thought the boy, with a shudder.

Just then Hopkins reached the darkest spot in the road, when the stranger swiftly glided up behind him, and with one spring he landed on the professor's back, clapped a hand over his mouth to stifle a cry that involuntarily arose to the professor's lips, and knocked him down.

The dark fellow fell on top of his victim, who rolled over upon his back, dropping his grip and umbrella when he fell, and, clutching the frightened professor by the throat with one hand, he raised his gleaming knife with the other as if to stab his victim.

The assault was so unprovoked that Jack could not help thinking that it was the result of vengeance or for robbery.

But the boy spent no time speculating over the matter.

He rushed up to the struggling pair, and just as the knife was descending he reached them and gave the dark fellow such a punch under the ear that he was knocked over upon the ground and the knife flew from his hand.

A yell pealed from his lips, and with the agility of a panther he sprang to his feet a moment after he was struck and darted away several paces.

Jack picked up the murderous-looking knife, and the professor scrambled to his feet and hastily recovered his hat, carpet-bag and umbrella.

"You assassin!" exclaimed the angry boy. "I've thwarted you, do you see?"

"Oh, good Lord!" gasped the professor. "It's Kellenda Mixitli, the messenger of death!"

A terrible scowl crossed the dark face of the man, and, raising both of his clenched fists above his head, he shook them in a paroxysm of passion, while his eyeballs glared like those of a furious beast.

"My foulest curses upon you for that blow!" he yelled, gnashing his teeth and stamping his foot upon the ground. "You have cheated me of my prey. But woe unto you for it! I swear by the powers above that you shall dearly repent of that blow. My life shall be devoted to crushing you for it, and the oath of the Caribs never was broken! Remember!"

And with a baleful look of intense hatred at the boy, the dark fellow plunged into the bushes by the roadside and disappeared.

Jack was deeply impressed by the vengeful demeanor of the man, and turned to Hopkins, whom he found as pale as death, and trembling in every limb with the most terrible fear, as he was a great coward.

"You seem to know that man—who is he, and why did he attack you?" the boy asked. "This whole thing was evidently a premeditated job."

"We are most certainly doomed," replied Hopkins, whose teeth were chattering like castanets. "He is an emissary of a most powerful tribe of idol worshipers who dwell upon a volcanic island in the Caribbean Sea. A year ago a number of men from the American Geographical Society were sent to that island and I was among them. We learned that they were idol worshipers and had erected a large idol of gold, with eyes made of enormous diamonds, upon a small adjacent island. An earthquake half a century ago sunk this island with

its idol beneath the seas, and no one knew the location of it afterwards but one of the high priests. Half a century passed by, and fearing death, yet not caring to disclose the location of the submerged golden god, the priest wrote a description of its location in their hieroglyphics, and it passed into the hands of his successor, whom we captured when driven from the island by the natives. He had the metal plate upon which the sign-writing was cut, and it came into my hands. The priest died and one of his men followed our ship in a small boat night and day till we landed upon the island of Cuba. He was a smart, educated man, civilized by missionaries."

"You mean this fellow Kellenda Mixitli?" questioned Jack.

"My dear boy, your conjecture is right," answered the professor, who was fast recovering his composure. "To proceed: this fellow, supplied with precious stones, with which he gained plenty of money, hounded us to this country, and on several occasions attacked us in an effort to secure the sign-inscribed plate and take our lives. But thus far he has been baffled, although he has singled me out as his prey—yet he may succeed in time if I do not get rid of him, or leave the country on the project that brings me to Wrightstown."

"And what is your project?" asked Jack, curiously.

"Having heard of Jack Wright and his wonderful submarine boats, it is my plan to induce Wright to go on a cruise in one of his vessels in search of this idol of gold," replied the professor.

CHAPTER III.

A TON OF GOLD.

Jack was very much surprised at Professor Hopkins' story, for there was a ring of truth about it, and as the boy had been anxious to find some warrantable use for his new inventions, it seemed as if this was the very opportunity.

"Your story has impressed me, professor," said he, "and I am glad you have explained the motive of your trip to Wrightstown, for I am Jack Wright, the very person you are so anxious to meet."

"What! You?" gasped Hopkins, with a start and a happy smile, as he eagerly seized the boy's hand and literally de-voured him with his glance. "Why, bless me! This is a startling surprise, 'pon my word. Permit me to express my supreme delight at making your acquaintance."

He shook Jack's hand with an energy that made the boy wince.

"Come home with me," said Jack, "and you can show me the engraved plate and give me details of your project. I've just completed a new boat, and if you can prove to my satisfaction that it will pay to make a trip to the Caribbean Sea in search of the treasure, I may do so."

The professor was delighted to follow this plan, and accordingly followed Jack to his mansion, chatting all the way there about his adventures at the islands of the Mexican Gulf, and giving the boy details that were destined to be of use to him in the future regarding the location.

They did not observe that they were being followed at a distance by Kallenda Mixitli, but as soon as the swarthy Carib had tracked them to the house, he went away, and, putting up at the Sea Spider House, he there learned from the public conversation all about Jack's boat, and the proposed trial trip under water on the following day.

Having posted himself on various points, the man stole away to the young inventor's house, scaled the fence, crossed the grounds, and got in the workshop without being seen.

The place was brilliantly illuminated by electric lights, the

monitor lay close to a railed footpath that encircled the wall of the cellar, and the Carib sprang on board.

His jet black eyes had detected several screw-caps on the roof of the turret, and, getting on top of it, he unscrewed them, and put them in his pocket, showing several apertures leading into the interior.

"This boat, they said at the tavern, is to go below the water to-morrow on exhibition before a multitude. If Jack Wright fails to observe the absence of the things I have removed when they get below the surface the sea will rush in and drown them. My vengeance will then be complete. Now to escape, as I can do no worse," said the Carib.

He crept from the building, left the grounds, and escaped in the darkness of the storm, which now had broken with great fury, satisfied that the man was right whom he had heard say that if these screw-caps had become loosened the divers in the boat would lose their lives.

Jack and the professor met with Tim and Fritz in the house, and, after introductions, the boy stated the cause of Peleg Hopkins' visit, and explained about the enmity of the civilized savage.

They adjourned to the parlor and there the professor produced his metal tablet, and showed it to the three friends.

Upon examination they saw that it was about the size of a sheet of note paper, and not much thicker, made of hard copper, and had strings of well-preserved hieroglyphs cut into one side of it, such as were used by the Aztecs at the time of Montezuma.

The professor had had it translated, and handed Jack a slip of paper upon which was written and signed by a well-known professor of dead languages:

TRANSLATION.

"The earth, shaken by the wrath of our war-god, cracked in many places, was tumbled in confusion, and burst into a mass of fire, then sank forever beneath the water, from which it had arisen in one night. Our tribe fled in their canoes, and then the Magic Isle disappeared, carrying down with it the city of the priests and the golden image of the sun-god, within the grand temple where our people were wont to worship it. Its weight was as great as that of this plate, multiplied 8,960 times, and the diamond eyes are as large as the egg of the water fowl, and as brilliant as the sun. At exactly midday, a stick thrust in the ground of the isle whereupon the white men first came, on the side where the sun rises, will cast a shadow in the direction where sunk the isle of the sun-god, and to reach it by canoes they must be paddled for as much time as it takes to heat water over a fire."

Jack was struck by the primitive style of the composition.

The savage who inscribed it clearly showed an ignorance of weight and time divided into pounds and hours, and the boy had faith in the tablet.

He balanced it in his hand a moment, and asked:

"How much does this plate weigh, professor?"

"Exactly four ounces."

"Four ounces multiplied 8,960 times gives 2,240 pounds—just one ton."

"Und dot golden idol vos weigh so much as dot?" queried Fritz.

"Exactly so, without counting the diamond eyes," replied Jack. "Gold is worth about four cents a grain, and there are 5,760 grains to a pound. The market value of that ton of gold would be about half a million dollars."

A triumphant look overspread the professor's thin face, and he exclaimed:

"Isn't that a prize worth going for, my Christian friends, to the isle of San Salvador?"

Jack looked at Tim and Fritz a moment, and saw that they were eager.

"The case stands this way, boys," said he, after a moment's thought. "We have got the boat and want an object to use the boat. This gentleman has furnished the object and we can add to our riches if the trip proves to be a success. On the other hand, if it turns out to be a failure, we can't lose much, as we are all anxious, anyway, to make a trip in the Sea Serpent."

"And now, lad," said Tim, cheerfully, "for my part, I'm wilder make ther v'yage."

"Und me, too," said Fritz.

"And I," added the professor, enthusiastically.

"That settles it, then; in one week from to-day we will start on our voyage in the monitor searching for this ton of gold," said Jack, quietly.

After some further desultory conversation, during which it was ascertained that the professor was alone in the world, and had a commission to bring back specimens of deep sea fish, shells and aquatic plants for a noted university, if he succeeded in going off in Jack's boat, they laid out their plans, and Hopkins deciding to remain at Jack's house, they all retired.

On the following day the four were up early, found that the weather had cleared, and after breakfast they boarded the Sea Serpent by going through the turret door, and showed the professor the boat.

Inside of the turret was a large, handsome room, bull's eyes of thick glass letting in daylight, and shutters over the front being lifted disclosed a large window by which everything was lighted.

There was a wheel to steer the boat in the room, in front of it a circular table with a white top, upon which a camera obscura reflected from the dome of the roof, while along one side of it were several numbered levers that controlled the machinery of all the working parts by electric wires.

The breeches of three pneumatic guns were secured in the floor below their feet, and the walls were covered with gauges, indicators, maps, charts, etc.

In back, a narrow flight of stairs led them down into a large, handsome cabin, fitted up with fine carpets, elegant furniture, handsome pictures on the wainscoted walls, and every known comfort and luxury.

Forward of it there was a stateroom containing a dozen curtained berths, with running water and handsome lockers.

The room back of the cabin was a well-appointed galley and pantry, in back of that a store-room for provisions, and apparatus for diving, arms, ammunition and all sorts of equipments suited to their needs.

The small compartment aft of it was the battery room, which supplied the boat with power by the distributing wires, a small dynamo for storing the jars standing at one side, and everything was fastened tight.

Two small compartments in the bow and stern were used to go in and out of the boat while she was beneath the water, and down in the hold there were three more rooms below them.

The two end ones were used to hold air pumped from the central chamber, into which water was let to submerge the boat to any desired depth; while to ascend, the water was again forced out, and the air let into the middle chamber again.

Having shown the professor everything, Jack and his friends began to work at getting everything in readiness for the trial trip that afternoon, but failed to observe that the pilot-house screw-caps were missing.

They had dinner on board, as Fritz was a skilled cook, and just before three o'clock repaired to the pilot-house, attired in diving suits of aluminum, looking like suits of mail worn by ancient knights, with electric lamps on top of the helmets and air-reservoirs like knapsacks upon their backs.

Jack seized the wheel and rang a gong, two of the workmen

opened the doors leading out to the creek, Tim standing on the forward deck, Fritz on the after deck and the professor upon the pilot-house.

They all held flags in their hands, and as the boat sped down the creek and out on the bay, a round of cheers greeted them from thousands of people who lined the shore, covered the pier and sat in rowboats and on fishing smacks.

People from distant cities, town and villages had come to witness the exhibition; farm wagons, carriages, and, in fact, every known vehicle was crowded, and Jack worked his boat skillfully, his friends waving their flags in response to the cheers of the people.

The boy inventor's heart throbbed with joy, for the boat acted better than he expected, showing a speed of forty knots, turning in her own length, and doing everything that he desired of her.

"And now for the last trial!" he muttered, "to see how she behaves under water!"

He fired a shot from one of the guns into the air, and, turning a lever, he put the pumps in motion, compressed the air into the end chambers and let in the water.

Down sank the boat, till Tim and Fritz were submerged to their bosoms, when he brought her to a pause, and started her off in a circle.

The wildest applause greeted this maneuver.

It was Jack's intention to sink her to the bottom when he had tested her partly submerged; but the moment the extreme top of the pilot-house became submerged, the water was bound to rush in through the open screw-cap holes.

CHAPTER IV.

BENEATH THE WATER.

Upon finding that the boat behaved properly, Jack turned a lever and sent her toward the bottom, when the water rushed in through the screw-cap holes in the pilot-house roof.

The moment Jack found the water pouring into the monitor, he imagined she was leaking in some defective spot, and turning another of the levers, he brought her to a sudden pause.

She was then, according to a gauge he glanced at, forty feet below the surface of the bay, and turning a lever controlling the electric lights, a halo shot out of the dead-lights all around the boat, while a broad shaft from the searchlight darted ahead through the water.

The boy then glanced around, and saw several streams pouring down through the opened screw-cap holes in the roof of the turret overhead, dispelling his first impression of a leak, when he saw the real cause.

"Some one has been tampering with the boat!" was the thought that flashed across his mind, but he never for a moment suspected that it was the work of vengeance consummated by Kellenda Mixitli.

There was a rubber, water-tight disc in one of the windows, looking like the mouth-piece of a telephone, and each of the diving suits worn by the four were furnished with them in the helmets.

They were an invention of the boy's, called audiphones, and enabled them to speak and hear under water almost as plainly as if they were on land without their helmets on, for water is a good conductor of sound.

"Hopkins!" shouted the boy, "the boat is filling up! Cover the open holes on the roof there with your hands, and call Tim and Fritz!"

"Oh, Lord!" he heard the professor yell, in horrified tones. "Go up to the top again! I don't like this! We'll drown un-

der here! Quick—take us up again, do you hear? Heavens and earth! do you want to kill us?”

In spite of their jeopardy, Jack smiled at the cowardly professor's alarm, for their knapsacks then held enough air to last them five hours each, and even if the boat went down, they would be safe if they did not descend more than three hundred feet into an extraordinary pressure.

Jack rushed down into the fast-flooding cabin, and getting some cotton waste he hurried back with it, and made an effort to stop up the holes to keep out the water. He was partly successful.

By this time Tim and Fritz came up to the turret, and Hopkins hastily slid down to the deck, and piteously begged them to bring him to the top.

“Avast thar, professor!” growled Tim, shaking off Hopkins' clinging hands, “don't yer see as Jack's in trouble in thar?”

“Shiminey Christmas! vos someding habben vonet, Shack?” roared Fritz.

“The turret screw-caps were taken off by somebody,” replied the boy, pointing upward where the water was dripping through the stuffing.

He seized the pump-lever to empty the boat of her ballast, in order to raise her to the surface, when he heard a startled exclamation from his friends, and glancing up through the window, he saw the figure of an immense shark appear in the halo of light.

For an instant the monster paused, glaring at the boat, and then it shot forward directly toward the men on deck.

Tim and Fritz started away to the right, and with a shout of horror Peleg Hopkins rushed to the port side.

The shark passed over the spot they had just left, and darted by the turret with great rapidity.

The professor was so terrified that he became panic stricken, and looking back over his shoulder, he continued on with such impetus, never looking where he was going, that he struck the wire-rope rail surrounding the deck with a violent shock.

Losing his balance he pitched over head first, and the next moment he plunged from the deck down into the dark yawning gulf below, and disappeared from the view of his companions.

“Donner und blitzten!” cried Fritz with a shudder. “He vhas gone down und dot boat vhas in such conditions alretty dot ve don't been able to sink her down und help him vonct. Och, vot ve do now, neider?”

“Keelhaul me, lad!” gasped Tim, “ther water may be so deep here we may not be able ter dive down arter him without a losin' our lives!”

Jack had not been idle, however, for as soon as he saw the catastrophe occur to the professor, he hastened into the store-room, where duplicates of most parts of the boat were kept in case of an emergency, and secured several screw-caps.

With these in his hand, he passed into the water-room under the after trap, and, closing the water-tight door, he let in the brine.

It filled the compartment, and, ascending the companion-way, he unbolted the trapdoor and went up on deck.

Within one minute he reached the turret, ascended to the top, and screwed new caps on in place of the ones that had been stolen.

“The boat is all right, boys!” he cried, cheerily. “Now stand by to aid me rescue poor Hopkins, for I'm going to send the Sea Serpent down in search of him, as deep as I dare go.”

And, not waiting to hear the replies of his friends, Jack returned to the water-room, closed the trapdoor, turned a lever in the wall, and, starting a pump that emptied the compartment of the water it contained, he opened the door and passed on to the turret again.

Tim and Fritz had gone to the railing and peered over,

down into the yawning abyss, without seeing any signs of the professor, and the young inventor turned a lever and pumped in more water ballast.

Down settled the monitor into darker water, surrounded by thousands of fishes, attracted toward her by the electric lights, and with the increased pressure the air in the boat became heavier.

There were valves in the ceiling for letting off the vitiated air, and automatic atomizers for spraying the atmosphere with a solution of quick-lime and potash, to purify the air.

Carbonic acid combines so readily with water, though, that if a current ran through the boat there would have been no need of the lime solution.

In a few minutes Jack saw by the gauge that they were at a depth of one hundred feet, and the bottom was not yet in sight.

“Tim, drop the plummet, and sound the depth below,” he cried.

There was a sounding-lead of the Brooke pattern on deck, and the old sailor heaved it, and, watching the line till it paused, he cried:

“Ten fathoms more, sir, an' thar's a hard bottom!”

“Eighty feet!” muttered Jack. “We must be near the Devil's Jaws rocks.”

He continued to sink the boat steadily, his heart palpitating with nervous dread lest the unfortunate professor might have perished, and presently the Sea Serpent reached the bottom at a sandy spot.

Not a drop of water now leaked in through the screw-caps, and there was now the enormous pressure upon her of ninety pounds to the square inch, which would have crushed her like an egg shell were she not built of such strong material and so solidly braced with tough steel girders.

Not a sign of the professor was seen anywhere, but the scene around them was strange in the extreme.

Strewn over the top of the sand were numberless sea-stars and prickly-looking urchins of the strangest forms, branches of coral-like mosses, anemones resembling big cactus flowers, and great ribboned grasses floated their long arms about in the most glaring colors, while yellow and lilac fans of the gargona waved from clefts in the rocks like flagree jewelry.

The denizens of the water brilliantly sparkled and flashed in the rays of the electric lights with a metallic red or blue, changing to golden green, or into the softer silvery hue, while great black spider crabs crept here and there, pugnacious crabs fought each other with savage ferocity, and the larger fishes devoured the smaller ones in vast multitudes.

“Do you see anything of Hopkins yet?” eagerly asked Jack.

“Nary a sign,” answered Tim, scanning his surroundings.

“Turn dot searchlight aroundt alretty,” said Fritz.

Jack caused it to revolve by turning one of the levers, and the brilliant light pierced the dark, currentless water in a sweeping circle.

Upon one side there arose a great mass of jagged rocks called the Devil's Jaws by the people of Wrightstown, on another side was a great bed of sand, in which lay the rotting wreck of a fishing smack, and in back of them was a forest of dense eel grass fifty feet high.

Hovering over the latter spot Jack beheld the shark which caused the professor's fall from the deck of the boat, and a moment afterwards they were startled to hear the faint, distant tones of Hopkins calling:

“Help! Help! Help!”

Jack listened a moment, and then yelled to his friends:

“He is over in the eel grass near the shark! He must have seen the lights of the boat to call to us for help.”

“Tack her over thar!” called Ten, “ther shark must be arter him!”

Just then they saw the man-eater dive in among the eel grass and vanish from sight, while a series of terrified cries

from poor Hopkins attested to the fact that he was in trouble, which no doubt came from his fear of the shark.

Jack raised the boat a few feet, by emptying her of very little water, and, starting her ahead, she plunged into the grass, scattering it right and left by her keen prow, and leaving a broad passage astern.

Hardly had she gone into the grass, when the shark appeared in front of her, just faintly distinguishable among the grass, but the cries of the professor had suddenly ceased.

"Can that cannibal of the deep have devoured him?" muttered Jack, violently shuddering. "If it has I'll avenge him!"

He took a brass cylinder from a shelf, and, putting it hastily into one of the guns, he aimed it by a lever, and then touched a press button.

With a fearful whirr, the projectile tore from the gun through the water, and true to its aim, it struck the shark's body and penetrated it.

The shock burst it within the creature's body, there came a fearful smothered explosion, the water was violently agitated, and the shark was blown to fragments that were scattered out of sight.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER THE TREASURE.

"Professor!" shouted Jack.

Startled, Hopkins glanced at the boat, and, with a glad cry, he came hurrying toward it and got on deck.

"Saved!" he cried, joyfully. "Jack Wright, may the Lord bless you! But how are we to get out of this fearful place, may I inquire?"

"Hang on to the boat and I will raise it to the surface," replied the boy.

A moment afterwards he pumped out the water, and up darted the monitor toward the surface at an angle, and she presently emerged not far from the shore near the pier.

A tremendous cheer burst from every throat as the spectators saw her, and the professor uttered a sigh of intense relief.

Jack flung open the window of the turret and saw Kellenda Mixitli standing on the edge of the pier with a scared look upon his face, and it instantly flashed across the boy's mind that the Carib had made the attempt to swamp the Sea Serpent.

Behind the dark-featured fellow stood a policeman, and Jack pointed at the rascal and shouted:

"Arrest that dark fellow, officer! He has attempted to kill us!"

No sooner was this said when the Carib withdrew the screw-caps which he had stolen from the boat from his pocket and began to fling them into the water to hide the proof of his guilt.

Before he could get rid of all of them, however, the policeman seized him, and a struggle ensued between them, but the Carib could not get away, as there were so many people packed on the dock in back of him.

Helped by the bystanders, who all knew Jack would not make such a charge for nothing, the officer rendered the Carib helpless, and he was carried away through the crowd raving like a madman.

Upon seeing that the man was apprehended, with proof of his guilt, Jack again drove the boat out upon the bay and continued the exhibition for the curiosity of the spectators for several hours longer, and then sent the Sea Serpent homeward again.

Twilight was falling by that time, and the spectators dispersed.

Having put the boat in his workshop, Jack and his friends made a minute examination of every part of her and found several defects that required remedying before the monitor would be absolutely fit for sea service.

They divested themselves of their suits of armor, and, having turned out the incandescent lights, they left the boat and adjourned to the house.

Partaking of their supper, the four friends were discussing the merits of the monitor, when there came a ring at the front door bell, and a servant came in and announced a policeman to see Jack.

He went out in the hall, and at the front door met the officer who had arrested Kellenda Mixitli, who had a troubled look on his face.

"I have got some bad news for you, Mr. Wright," said the policeman, in hesitating tones, as the boy glanced up at him.

"What is the matter now?" demanded Jack.

"The man you told me to arrest down on the dock has escaped."

"Indeed? How did it happen?"

"While I was bringing him to jail, he suddenly turned upon me near the railroad depot, and with one blow he knocked me down. Before I could get upon my feet again he ran away and sprang aboard of a train which was just leaving for New York. I did not get half way to the cars before they gathered such headway that it was utterly impossible to overtake them, and he got away."

"Well, glad as I would have been to have had the wretch caught, I am just as well satisfied to see him gone from the town, for it is not at all likely that he will ever attempt to return here."

"How did he make an effort to kill you?"

Jack explained the circumstances, and the officer went away.

On the following day the boy gave his boat an overhauling, and the defective spots were repaired, after which preparations were begun to get the Sea Serpent in order for her cruise to the Caribbean Sea.

A week was thus consumed, and on the first day of May every detail had been attended to, and the boat was ready to start.

At exactly three o'clock our friends went aboard of the beautiful vessel, their baggage having preceded them, Tim carrying his little red monkey, Fritz his green parrot, and the professor his carpet-bag and umbrella.

Every one of the villagers knew about their intended departure on a long cruise, and there was a large crowd at the water's edge to wave their adieus when the monitor sped out on the bay.

The stirring strains of a band of music pealed out, fireworks were let off, and cheer after cheer arose from the people.

Jack was in the turret, guiding the boat for the headland, and fired a battery from his three guns as a salute, while his companions waved their flags out on deck and shouted themselves hoarse.

A few minutes afterwards, the Sea Serpent shot out upon the heaving bosom of the broad Atlantic, and Wrightstown vanished from view.

The monitor began to heave, pitch, roll and rock when she got in deep water, but none of her crew, except the professor, felt uncomfortable over it, as they were accustomed to deep sea boat rides.

Fritz was an expert electrician, and during the first few hours out was detailed to watch the electric apparatus, to see that it worked properly, while Tim, who was an experienced navigator, remained in the turret with Jack.

The professor became deathly seasick, and took to his bunk, where he lay groaning and piteously begging to be set ashore again, until sleep finally overcame him and he lapsed into a nightmare.

Darkness swept over the sea again, the moon and stars gleamed in the dark blue canopy of heaven, and a strong breeze kicked up a ruffled sea, through which the monitor sped southward with her low-lying decks half the time rolled under.

There were no lights shown aboard of the monitor, save a dim glow in the dead-lights on the after side of the turret, and at a maximum speed of about twenty knots she forged along, with the dull, dark coast line about a league to the leeward.

The young inventor kept a keen glance fixed upon the gauges and indicators, for extreme care had to be manifested in the beginning to guard against any defects that might have been overlooked.

Tim stood at the open window with his solitary eye fastened keenly ahead, and his glass eye fixing an awful meaningless glare at nothing, until at last Jack shouted through a speaking-tube:

"How is she working, Fritz?"

"Better as never vos!" came back the reply.

"Can you leave the dynamos now?"

"I dink so alretty."

"Then serve up mess, for I'm hungry."

"Yah!"

"Tim, she is perfect now in every way."

"Ay, lad, I reckon she are," replied the old sailor, enthusiastically.

"Take the wheel and I'll go in and look at the machinery."

Leaving the boat in Tim's care, the boy descended into the cabin, which was now brilliantly illumined, and found Fritz setting the table for supper, while upon a stove, heated by electricity, in the galley, a savory repast was in the process of cooking.

Jack made a careful examination of the machinery, and when he had finished he heard Tim yell through a speaking-tube:

"Jack! Jack! Come up here, quick, lad!"

With a rush the boy reached the turret again, when he beheld the old sailor pointing excitedly out of the window.

The monitor was then passing within a few miles of the Sandy Hook lightship, and a large ship, under a full head of canvas, was sailing majestically from the direction of New York harbor, at a short distance from the Sea Serpent.

It was at this craft that Tim was pointing, and the boy saw that the entire watch on deck were gathered in the bow on the port side, staring down at the submarine boat.

Their faces and figures, at such a short distance away, were plain to be seen, and, to Jack's astonishment, he observed that the most prominent man among them was Kellenda Mixitli, the Carib.

There was a large gun mounted in the bow of the ship, at the breech of which the dark fellow stood with the lockstring in his hand and the muzzle was depressed to bear upon the monitor.

As soon as Jack appeared the Carib saw him.

"Haul to, there!" the dark fellow shouted. "Surrender to us, or we will blow your boat out of the water!"

Jack and Tim exchanged glances of intense amazement.

"He must command that ship!" exclaimed the boy.

"Ay, lad, an' he must be a-goin' back ter whar he came from."

"He little knows our strength," said the boy, "or he would not thus dare to attack us. But since he is bent upon warfare, I shall give him a chance to try a duel with us with our guns."

CHAPTER VI.

OFF CAPE MATTERAS.

Not more than two hundred yards separated the monitor from the ship, and the vengeful Carib did not wait for Jack to reply before he fired.

A thunderous report rang from the gun, and a shot came screaming across the heaving water and struck the deck of the Sea Serpent.

There came a fearful shock, and the monitor quivered from stem to stern, causing Jack to imagine for a moment that she was ruined.

But a moment afterward the boy saw that the tough plates of aluminum resisted the ball, which grazed along the surface, tore away some of the railing, and went flying into the sea.

"Nothing but a scratch," coolly commented the young inventor. "And now to return the compliment. Hard-a-port, Tim!"

While the old sailor spun the wheel around, Jack took a copper cylinder, filled with an explosive white powder, which he named horrorite, from a box, and opening the breech of one of the pneumatic guns, he placed it in.

Then closing it, he sighted the weapon, made due allowance for the swell of the sea, and, pressing a button, the piece was discharged.

Nothing but a thud of the escaping air followed, and, with a howl, the projectile shot through the air, describing a semi-circle, and struck the ship abaft of the cathead upon the starboard quarter.

It penetrated the thick oak planking, and exploded with the roar of thunder.

The vibration made the sea tremble, and there came a fearful upheaval of planks, timbers, an anchor, the gun, capstan, chain-cable and several men.

They were blown high in the air and torn to fragments; the ship was suddenly knocked over on her beam ends, and the boy saw that all the deck-work of the ship, including the heel of the bowsprit, were blown away, rendering the ship unfit for service upon the sea.

Had the shot struck below or even near the water line, the high explosive power of the powder would have sunk the vessel.

A scene of the wildest confusion ensued on board of her, the remainder of the crew rushing up on deck, shouting and swearing, and the ship put off upon the leeward tack, as if to get away from the monitor.

"It looks to me as if they have more of the duel than they bargained for," laughed Jack, loading another of the guns to guard against need of it.

"Dash my figgerhead, but they've come about now," said Tim, taking a chew of navy plug, "an' thar they tacks, back fer N'York ag'in!"

The noise of the explosions brought Fritz and the professor in at a rush, inquiring the cause of the firing, and they were informed.

"I trust," nervously said Hopkins, "that there is no danger of the shots they may fire penetrating the hull of this boat."

"No danger whatever," replied Jack, "for they are so scared and so badly punished that they have fled and won't wait to shoot again at us."

"I t'ink you vas got over dot seasickness, too, alretty?" grinned Fritz.

"'Pon my word the shock has certainly made me forget all about it," answered Hopkins, and he gauged himself rather gingerly to find out if it might return, but was satisfied with the result of his investigation.

As it would be a mere waste of time to pursue the Carib's ship, Jack let them depart in peace with what there was remaining of the craft, and headed the Sea Serpent to the southward again.

The watch was then divided, with Jack and Hopkins in the first and Fritz and Tim in the second.

The moon and stars sent down a silvery glow upon the

heaving waters, and the old sailor and the Dutch boy turned in.

A southern bound steamer came bearing down upon them, and, overtaking the Sea Serpent, they heard the lookout in the bow cry:

"A boat athwart our course!"

"What do you make her out to be?" queried the captain, approaching.

"I cannot tell; she looks like a monitor without a smoke-stack."

"Ah! I see her. What a strange craft! Give her a hail."

"Boat ahoy!" shouted the man, loudly.

"Ahoy!" replied Jack, moving the Sea Serpent aside.

"What craft is that?"

"The Sea Serpent, of Wrightstown."

"What! Jack Wright's submarine wonder?"

"Ay, ay."

"I read of her. Are you bound southward?"

"To San Salvador. You have got a fast steamer there."

"She is the fastest that runs to the Gulf, and can beat anything afloat," replied the commander, in proud tones.

"Anything except my boat," replied Jack promptly.

"Do you wish to try conclusions with me?"

"With pleasure; but I warn you that I can easily defeat you."

"That remains to be seen," replied the captain, tartly, as he passed the word to the engineer to put on full speed.

It was no more unusual for south-bound steamers to race than it was for the Trans-Atlantic liners, and as most of the passengers had come up on deck and witnessed what was transpiring, considerable excitement ensued between them over the result, many of them laying wagers on it.

Jack laughed as he saw the speed of the steamer gradually increasing until it reached the limit of twenty-eight knots.

"They are running ahead of us!" remarked the professor, glumly.

"I see they are, and the crew and passengers look singularly delighted," the boy replied. "But I will soon change their sentiments!"

He glanced up at the patent log register on the wall, and saw that the monitor was going along a trifle slower than fifteen knots.

Turning the lever, he increased the speed of the boat to thirty miles, and burying its prow in the sea while a big wave swelled up astern, she shot ahead like an arrow from a bow.

Rapidly overhauling the steamer, Jack pulled the lever to its furthest extent as soon as he reached her side.

A shout arose from the passengers on the steamer when they saw the boy's marvelous creation increase her speed again, and the Sea Serpent kept forging on until at last the steamer was hull down astern ere Jack reduced speed.

"Wonderful!" ejaculated Hopkins, admiringly. "Such a racer I never met with before. Jack, you are to be congratulated."

"It has taken some of the conceit out of that captain," the boy replied, with a smile of exultation, "and it shows you if we are hard pressed by enemies, ere this cruise is over, what we can do if it comes to a run for our lives."

The wisdom of this conclusion will be shown later on.

At two o'clock Jack called Tim and Fritz, and resigning the wheel to their care, he and the professor turned in.

The night dawdled slowly by, and just before the break of day there suddenly sounded the fierce ringing of a gong.

It came from the pilot-house, and awakened Jack.

He had flung himself down with his clothes on, and started up with a startled exclamation, wondering what occasioned the row.

For a moment he did not realize where he was.

But as soon as the situation dawned upon his mind, he leaped to the floor and rushed up to the pilot-house.

The Sea Serpent was violently heaving and pitching, and he heard the fierce bellowing of wind and waves outside, which at once impressed him with the real situation they were in.

"A storm must have arisen, and has broken with intense fury," he muttered, as soon as he glanced out of the windows.

"Jack! Jack!" shouted Tim, in frenzied accents.

"What is the matter?" he panted, hastening to the sailor's side.

"The rudder lines is jammed," groaned the sailor, in terrified tones, "an' I can't work ther boat!"

"Where are we?"

"Off Cape Hatteras."

The boy glanced out of the window, and a cry of alarm pealed from his lips, for he saw that the tempest was driving the monitor toward the rocks on the cape.

CHAPTER VII.

A BATTLE WITH THE WAVES.

Engulfed in a terrific storm, her rudder lines jammed, and the gale driving her upon the ugly rocks of Cape Hatteras, just as the day was breaking, placed the Sea Serpent in a bad position.

For an instant Jack did not know what to do, and Tim and Fritz glared at each other in terror, while the professor came staggering in.

Two miles to the north there showed a flashing dioptric light of the first order, in a tower 190 feet high, on the great sand bar.

This cape is one of the most dangerous on the North Carolina coast, for its shoals extend far out to sea as a menace to ships.

Unless prompt measures were taken, there was every likelihood of the monitor being drifted upon the rocks and shoals, when the raging sea would pound her to pieces.

"Why didn't you arouse me when the storm broke?" demanded Jack, angrily.

"Lor' bless yer, lad," returned the old sailor, "I hated ter spile yer sleep, jest fer ther sake o' a gale o' wind, as I could easy manage this craft wi'out yer. But as soon as I foun' ther rudder lines jammed, I got skeered, I can tell yer."

"Have you examined them inside of the boat?"

"Yah," said Fritz. "I vhas done dot mineselluf, und I find dot dose drubbles vhas all by der oudsite on der boat alretty."

Jack hastened back to the storeroom and put on a diving suit, saw that the knapsack was filled with compressed air, and taking a wire accommodation ladder with hooks in the end, he went up on deck through the after trap.

Fastening the hooks of the ladder into two ring bolts on the taffrail, he mounted it, and fearlessly descended into the raging waters below the stern.

Beaten along aboardside, the Sea Serpent was making rapid leeway, while breaker after breaker rolled up with hissing roars, and breached clear over her with the noise of thunder, keeping her buried half the time under tons of water, and knocking her about like a cork.

Thunder was roaring overhead like artillery, and the murky sky was riven by the most dazzling flashes of fiery lightning.

The electric lamp on Jack's helmet gave a powerful light, and showed him into what a fearful chaos of waters he was descending.

He had hardly got within the hissing brine when a wave struck him and slammed him against the hull of the Sea Serpent with appalling force.

The breath was almost knocked out of him, and he was bruised and hurt painfully, but he did not retreat, or utter a cry, but, recovering himself, he kept right on going down on the swaying ladder, and hastily bound it to the rudder-post as soon as his body was submerged.

Thus secured, the swaying ladder was stopped, and he had a firm foot and hand hold, so he could retain his position.

The draught of the monitor being six feet, he did not have far to go under, although it would have been better for him could he have gone further below the surface, as he would then have been out of the fierce influence of the raging waves.

Jack flashed the rays of his lantern upon the rudder chains at the spot where they were fastened to the post and then ran through two holes into the hull.

A small piece of driftwood had been drawn into one of the apertures, and was lodged between the chain and the side of the orifice, holding the rudder line as firmly as if it were clenched by a vise.

The boy pushed and pulled at it with all his might, but it would not budge, and every succeeding wave pounded and beat upon him with relentless fury, swaying him about and using up his strength.

He finally withdrew his knife from the belt around his waist, and jamming the point into the wood, he pried at it and split it in two.

He was then enabled to withdraw it from the aperture, and the chain ran freely, whereupon he replaced the knife in his belt.

The boy then swung himself around on the ladder to ascend to the deck, and had just gained a footing, when an enormous billow struck him.

It came so unexpectedly that he was knocked from his hold, and, half dazed, was swept off into the furious sea.

"Help!" he shrieked at the top of his voice, but the howling wind and thundering waves drowned the cry as if it was a whisper.

Away he was flung into the maddened waters like a whisp of straw, and the monitor was carried off in an opposite direction.

"Help!" rang out his hoarse cry again, but down under the sea he sunk like a shot, the appeal smothering under the angry billows that wildly tossed over him as the leaden weights carried him down.

The Sea Serpent disappeared in the gloom.

Jack did not go far.

There were white caps curling all over the surface of the shoal into which he went.

He fell flat upon his face, and lay upon the water-covered sand, swayed by every thundering wave that came rushing in shoreward.

Within a few moments he recovered himself and arose.

The young inventor was worse off than ever then, for he felt the influence of the waves stronger, and they knocked him flat again.

Up he arose a second time, only to get beaten down again and again, as he repeated the effort to walk.

Every wave drifted him nearer and nearer the bleak shore, and finding that it was impossible to walk, he got upon his hands and knees, and crept along, following the direction of the waves.

In this manner he got into such shallow water that he found the waves bursting into surf around him, and an immense breaker came surging in, swept him up with it, and rushed him to land.

Bursting with a continuous roar and a line of foam, it hurled the boy upon the beach, where he lay like a log for an instant.

No sooner had the boy recovered his breath, however, when

he crept up further out of reach of the fierce undertow, and got upon the barren, desolate shore, where he remained in comparative safety.

Here he recovered from the exhaustion brought on by his exertion at fighting the waves, and glancing out over the tempest-tossed sea, he saw by the lightning's flash that the monitor was under way again, and forging out of reach of the ferocious currents that were carrying her ashore.

"They will soon miss me," soliloquized Jack, keeping his glance fastened upon the darkness in the direction of the Sea Serpent, "and will know that I have gone overboard. I need not fear that they will go away from this locality without making an effort to find me."

He sat down upon a rock, resolved to remain there until he could attract the attention of his friends, and heard, rising above the din of the warring elements, the reveille of a bugle at the distant Fort Clark, at the mouth of Hatteras Inlet, leading to Pamlico Sound in back of him.

It began to rain hard now, but above the wailing of the gale his quick ears caught the sound of excited men's voices, and, glancing to the southward, he was surprised to see two soldiers, evidently from the fort, quarreling.

"As we both love the girl, and only one can have her," he heard one say, "we must fight this duel, and the victor shall have the field."

"I have kept my appointment to meet you here," replied the other, loudly, "and am determined to settle the matter in the manner you proposed."

"The winner shall bury the loser in the sand here to hide this deed."

"Ay, and our weapons shall be swords, as we are both expert fencers."

"Charley, one last shake hands. We were dear friends before this jealousy sprang up."

"Do not weaken me, Will. Remember, we are seeking each other's life!"

"Then to the wind with our past friendship, and now—on guard!"

Clash! sounded the two meeting swords.

It was a difficult, dangerous duel, fighting in a dense gloom, which was only broken at intervals by the blinding lightning's glare.

Off to the seaward the Sea Serpent was gliding through the gloom, and one of her crew was flashing the rays of the searchlight over the sea, hunting for some trace of the missing boy.

Jack sprang to his feet, and hastened over to the two duellists.

"Peace!" he cried, pausing in back of them with one hand upraised.

At the same juncture the searchlight from the Sea Serpent was flashed ashore upon the trio, and held there, exposing the startling tableau.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BRUSH WITH A PIRATE.

The duellists were so startled by the sudden flashing of the electric light upon them, and the appearance of Jack in his diving dress, that a superstitious feeling took possession of them.

Flinging down their swords, they recoiled with cries of alarm.

"It's the devil!" gasped one.

"A warning!" panted the other.

"Let us forgive and forget!"

"We will let the girl choose between us."

"And her decision shall settle the case."

They clasped hands in old friendship once more.

Just then the searchlight went out, and Jack dropped behind a rock.

When the lightning flashed the duellists saw that he had vanished, and more convinced than ever that they had seen a supernatural object, they picked up their swords and hastened away.

"They never expected to see such a singular object as I am in the midst of the storm at this lonely spot," chuckled Jack, watching them until they were out of sight. "Their alarm was therefore excusable, and the fearful scene around here would warrant their superstition. Two friends parted by jealousy over a girl, a duel, my interference, and their reunion in the bonds of a stronger affection than before, with a sensible resolution in view—that is the pith of the matter. I'm glad I was washed ashore. But for me they might have slain one or the other, and the survivor would have had much to answer for."

It was evident to Jack that his friends had seen him with their night glasses, else they would not have held the light upon that spot so long, and he concluded that they would beat about the cape until the storm abated so they could get him aboard again.

He did not see the searchlight for some time, but it showed at intervals after that, and he remained several hours upon the beach.

Daylight came at last, and the storm broke and passed away, and then the boy saw his monitor haul to a mile off the cape.

She carried a portable boat, and Fritz put off in it and came ashore.

"Shiminey Christmas!" ejaculated the Dutch boy, delightedly, shaking hands with Jack. "Ve vhas tort dot you vhas lost, undil ve seeded yer by der peach looken on by a fight mit dose two soldiers vonct!"

Jack explained what happened while Fritz was rowing back to the monitor, and upon their arrival Tim and the professor greeted him with every demonstration of joy, and he had to repeat his narrative.

He learned that the rudder-lines worked properly as soon as he got the wooden wedge out, and they told him that he was not missed for some time. Fritz having discovered his loss, they began to search for him.

The boy divested himself of his diving suit, and, after a hearty breakfast, he assumed control of the boat, and she sped along the dark waters of the Gulf Stream on her course to the southward again.

From Cape Hatteras, due south, it was almost a bee-line to the Bahamas, among which was San Salvador Island, and the Sea Serpent took the nearest course, in order to economize time, the distance being about 750 miles.

All traces of the storm disappeared by the afternoon; only an easy swell ruffled the bosom of the deep, the sky was blue, and a fair wind came from the west.

Tim held the wheel, and Fritz and the professor were in the turret with him.

"Goin' at twenty knots," said Tim, presently; "we'd oughter make ther Bahamas to-morrow."

"If no accidents occur to us, we may," replied the professor; "but there's many a slip, you know. Jack Wright's inventions are wonders, ain't they?"

"You oughder know yourself someding about dot," said Fritz.

"Just see how his diving suit saved his life," said Hopkins.

"Lor," scoffed Tim, "that ain't nuthin'! I reckered when I wuz aboard o' ther U. S. frigate Wabash, when somethin' more wonderfuller'n that happened ter me. Yer may not b'lieve it, sir, but——"

"Shestnuts!" said Fritz, a disgusted look sweeping over his face; and, unable to stand the yarn he knew was coming, he bolted out of the room.

"But what?" queried the professor, who did not know anything about Tim being such a consummate liar that he actually believed his own yarns.

"Why, sir," replied the old sailor, giving a hitch at his pants, and following the retreating figure of Fritz with a baleful glare from his solitary eye, "I onct saved my own hulk under Davy Jones' locker, wi'out a divin' suit on, arter bein' sunk more'n two hours an' a half."

"How could it be possible?" asked Hopkins, incredulously.

"Yes see, we wuz in midocean in ther winter o' 59, goin' under easy sail, an' ther commodore wuz a-lookin ower some valuable papers, when ther wind blowed 'em away inter ther water, an' I offered ter git 'em. So I dived overboard, an' seein' ther papers sinkin', down I went arter 'em like a fish. I had took a powerful breath, an', sir, afore I knowed it I reached ther bottom."

"Of the Atlantic?" asked the professor, suspiciously.

"Ay, sir. I don't jest quite remember our latitude, but that don't matter. As soon's I struck bottom, I begun ter search fer ther papers, an'——"

"I think I'll leave you searching for them," said the professor, going out.

"Dash my timbers!" roared Tim. "I guess yer don't b'live me?"

The professor made no reply, and Tim consoled himself with a chew of tobacco.

A short time afterwards Fritz went out on deck, and descried two ships. One of them was following the other, and both were under full sail.

"Sail ho! Sail ho!" he cried.

Jack came out with a spyglass in his hand.

"Can you make them out, Fritz?" he asked.

"Nein. But I t'ink me dot vun vhas chasin' der odder vun."

"That looks suspicious," said the boy, leveling his glass at the vessels.

Jack scanned them long and earnestly, and gave a start.

"Vell?" demanded Fritz, impatiently.

"I thought the days of piracy in these waters was over," returned Jack.

"Holy Moses! Vhas dem birates?" asked Fritz in astonishment.

"One of them is. It carries the ghastly buccaneers' emblem at its truck, and is in pursuit of what looks like an American brig!"

"Donner und blitzen!"

"Tim! Port your helm, and run down yonder vessels!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the old sailor, complying.

"Fritz, go and load the guns in the turret. If there is any pirating going on out there, I'll blow the infernal rascals out of the water!"

"Hurray!" roared Fritz, delighted at the prospect of a fight, and he obeyed.

Off swung the Sea Serpent on the starboard tack, and away she raced toward the two flying ships, when, from the one abaft of the other, there came a puff of smoke, a flash of fire and a dull report.

Still watching them, Jack saw the shot that was fired carry away the topmast of the fugitive brig, and observed that the pursuer was rapidly overhauling the other.

The Sea Serpent, buried to her decks in the sea, bore down upon them rapidly, and Jack passed into the pilot-house.

The monitor was not seen until she arrived within half a mile of the pirate, when the rascal suddenly swung up in the wind, abandoned the chase, and tacked off to the windward.

Aloft there yet fluttered the black flag, and her crew, having seen the Sea Serpent was a monitor, made a hasty effort to pull

it down. Before they could do so, Jack aimed and fired one of his guns.

Away whistled the shot, and striking the ugly flag, it burst and carried the emblem and topsail away.

A cheer pealed from Jack's friends when they saw the flag fall.

As the freebooter had done nothing to warrant Jack's unauthorized right to blow the ship to pieces, the boy let him depart, and ran after the brig, which he now saw carried the American flag.

Finding that help had come, the brig had been hauled to, and when the monitor ran up alongside of her, and Jack questioned the captain, our friends learned that no damage but the loss of the topmast was done.

The Black Hawk, as the pirate was called, made haste to get away, and the brig continued her cruise in the opposite direction, after the captain had warmly thanked Jack for the assistance he rendered.

Assured that the pirate would not renew the attack, Jack sent his vessel spinning to the southward again, and remarked, complacently:

"I have found use for my guns in earnest now."

CHAPTER IX.

RIVAL TREASURE HUNTERS.

"Land ho! Land ho!"

"Where away, Tim?"

"Three points off our weather bow, Jack."

It was raining hard on the following night when Tim's cry startled all the crew of the Sea Serpent, for from May to October the rainy season of the Bahamas sets in, and everything was wrapped in dense gloom.

The boy inventor hastened into the turret where the ancient mariner stood alone, and his keen glance caught sight of a distant swaying light, evidently upon a moving vessel.

Far beyond it the night glass showed him a dark outline rising above the sea, which was unmistakably a shore, and at one point, toward which the ship he sighted was going, there rolled several lights, which seemed to be peak signals on anchored ships.

It looked to Jack as if they were a number of vessels in a safe harbor, and he turned to Tim and said, anxiously:

"I wish we were anchored among those vessels for the night. We are navigating very dangerous water. It is full of sunken reefs and keys upon which a craft could easily strike and go to pieces in this gloom."

"Ay, now, an' yonder ship is a-tackin' in fer it," said Tim. "Why can't we?"

"So we can. That land is San Salvador Island, where we are bound for, according to my calculation of our locality. Head for the harbor, Tim."

The shore could not have been more than a mile away, and with all his wonted caution, Jack suddenly turned on the searchlight, and flashed its powerful beams upon the spot looking like a harbor.

No sooner had he done so when a cry of horror pealed from his lips.

"Look out!" he gasped. "We are rushing to our destruction!"

"Gosh hang it, wot d'yer mean?" demanded Tim, in startled tones, as he grasped the lever and shut off power, bringing the boat to a pause.

Jack pointed ahead, and Tim saw that the lights were swinging at the end of ropes let half way down the face of a cliff, the wind swinging them, while instead of a safe harbor, the shore was lined by dangerous rocks.

"Coast wreckers!" said the boy.

"Lord a'mighty!"

"They were luring us into a death trap!"

"Ay! An' yonder ship is doomed!"

"Unless we overhaul her, and warn the crew!"

"Shall we attempt it, lad?"

"Yes! Put on full power, and may God help us to save their lives!"

Around Tim pulled the lever, and away dashed the monitor with the speed of the wind in the wake of the imperiled ship.

The Bahamas were the resort of a notorious pirate named Blackbeard, and the natives of some of the islands lived chiefly by coast wrecking, some of the more unscrupulous actually luring ships to destruction upon the rugged shores by means of false beacons, so that they might prey upon the remains of the wrecks.

In a few minutes the Sea Serpent overhauled the ship, which proved to be a bark of about eight hundred tons burden, laden with a miscellaneous cargo bound for Nassau, N. P.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Jack, running out on deck.

"Ahoy! Ahoy!" came the reply, as the monitor ran beside the bark.

"Haul to, on your lives!"

"What for?" came the gruff reply.

"You are running upon wreckers' false beacons."

"Bosh! I don't believe it!" came the ungracious answer.

"Then watch the lights, and you'll see!" said Jack, good naturedly.

He went into the pilot-house and flashed the searchlight upon the cliffs; he held it quivering there, when the crew of the bark caught a good look at the danger they were plunging into.

Cries of alarm pealed from the whole crew.

They brought the bark about, and beat out to sea again as fast as they could go, not even stopping to thank Jack for saving their lives.

The boy laughed at them, and brought the Sea Serpent to a pause.

He left the light streaming upon the cliffs, and they saw that there were numbers of men, roughly clad, swarming on top of the rock.

Jack aimed the forward gun at the cliff and fired it.

With a shriek the brass cylinder of the horrorite shot through the air, and striking the rocks, it burst with a fearful report, and the misleading lanterns were blown to atoms, while a large portion of the cliff was carried away in fragments.

Turning a lever upon the switchboard, Jack caused the turret to revolve, and as soon as the port gun faced the cliff he pressed a button, when a second shot went howling on its way and demolished more of the cliff, striking terror to the souls of the wreckers.

Still revolving, the gun on the starboard came around and was fired, the third shot adding to the fearful destruction of the first two, when the turret resumed its natural position and remained motionless.

Alarmed by the shots, Fritz and the professor came running in, and were apprised of what was transpiring.

"I think I have put an end to the foul work of those fiendish wreckers at this spot at least," said Jack, as he started the boat away. "By their rascality, I have no doubt, they have murdered many a ship's crew and wrecked numberless vessels. Retribution has overtaken them at last."

"Between the pirates, wreckers, and a possibility of Kellenda Mixitli, the Carib, returning to contest our effort to get the sunken ton of gold, my Christian friends," said the professor, ruefully, "I am afraid we are destined to have a not time of it here. But, I say, let me show you an elegant specimen I found on deck to-day."

"Vot vhas dot?" queried Fritz, curiously, as Hopkins held up a corked bottle.

"A sea cucumber. You see it looks remarkably like that well-known vegetable."

Our friends examined it, and then the boat was sunk to the bottom and anchored for the night, as navigation on the surface was too dangerous.

She lay in three fathoms of water on a hard bottom of limestone, honeycombed and perforated with innumerable cavities.

"We could not stop at a better place," said Jack, before they turned in, "for we are at the northern end of the island now, and to-morrow must begin our experiment here to locate the sunken treasure."

They took turns watching that night, nothing occurring, save a fight between Whiskers and Bismarck, to break the monotony, and when day broke at last the rainstorm had passed away and the sun shone out.

Partaking of a good breakfast, Jack brought the Sea Serpent to the surface, when, to his surprise, the first thing he saw was a large schooner lying at anchor half a mile away.

His friends were apprised of the fact, and the gravest suspicions at once began to assail them all.

"What can they be doing there, I wonder?" queried Hopkins, in alarmed tones, as he observed his companions' glum looks.

"The only way to find out is to go over to them," answered Jack.

"Don'd yer see vot's der matter mit 'em?" roared Fritz, as he peered at the boat with a strong binocular.

"Bless us!" Tim exclaimed, a frown gathering upon his brow. "I don't need no glass ter see as thar's several divers on her deck in costume an' some men a-riggin' up air pumps fer them."

"By jove! then they must have heard about the treasure, too!" said Jack, emphatically; "and they are here searching for it as well as ourselves. Professor, who knew about the existence of the ton of gold among your party at the time you were here?"

"Every one of the geographers," replied Hopkins, gloomily.

"Then either one of your former friends must be here on the same mission as ourselves, or else the secret was given to someone else, for that party is evidently here to get the treasure."

"I am afraid they are," said Hopkins.

Jack drove the Sea Serpent over to the schooner, and they saw that there were over a score of men upon her deck.

It was plain to be seen that they were provided with every modern appliance for diving, and they all saw the monitor approaching.

A descent had evidently not been made yet, and the professor failed to see anyone upon the schooner's deck whom he recognized. The leader of the party was a total stranger to him.

As soon as the monitor came up to the schooner Jack hailed her crew, but received a surly answer and an order to keep away.

"Your business here must be a suspicious one," retorted the boy.

"Our business," shouted the leader of the party, "is diving."

"For an idol of gold?" said Jack, suggestively.

"By heavens, he knows our plans!" involuntarily exclaimed the stranger, inadvertently betraying himself, and turning as pale as death.

"Of course I do," laughed Jack; "and as we are here upon the same mission as you are, the first to find the treasure will own it, won't he?"

"No doubt!" was the angry retort. "We have the prece-

dence and choice of location, however, and as we won't allow you to stop in gau range you cannot search this locality."

He spoke to his men, and several of them armed themselves with rifles, which they rested on the bulwarks, pointing at the Sea Serpent.

Jack was not alarmed.

He simply turned a lever and sent the monitor below the surface.

"If the gold is sunk here, I will find it first!" he exclaimed.

Then he rattled out a volley of orders to his friends, just as two divers from the schooner went overboard and descended toward the bottom.

Down shot the monitor beneath the waves, and it then became a contest between her and the divers to see which should locate the treasure first, if it really was submerged at that spot.

CHAPTER X.

ATTACKED BY SAVAGES.

Jack had but little fear of the strange divers getting possession of the golden idol, if, indeed, it were submerged at the place where they were descending.

The bottom was only five fathoms down, and they reached it long before the two divers who followed them from the strange schooner.

Bright as the early morning sun was, it failed to penetrate the gloomy abyss of the sea, and Jack was obliged to start the searchlight in order to see the sandy bottom.

One sweep of the searchlight in a radius of a mile showed the young inventor that they were nowhere near the place where the idol was alleged to be submerged.

Fritz was attired in a diving suit by the time they reached the bottom, ready for action, but Jack did not call upon him.

"The strangers have miscalculated the right spot, professor," said the boy to Hopkins. "Let them keep on their search. This can't be the place. I will drive the monitor away, and we can go ashore with your direction and try the experiment to mark the treasure's location."

"Just my sentiments, my Christian friend," acquiesced Hopkins.

The Sea Serpent glided away, leaving the two divers from the schooner to have the ground, and a mile farther on she came to the surface.

All the crew of the schooner were watching her when she emerged.

Taking the professor's translation, and lowering the portable boat, Jack and Hopkins rowed ashore, leaving Tim to manage the monitor.

As soon as they stepped ashore Jack pointed at the paragraph that referred to the location of the treasure, and said:

"You see, professor, we can't do anything until noontime. The paper says: 'At exactly midday a stick thrust in the ground of the isle whereupon the white men first came--on the side where the sun rises--will cast a shadow in the direction where sank the idol of the sun god, and to reach it by canoes, they must be paddled for as much time as it takes to heat water over fire.' Now, at midday the reflection would be somewhere in the water northeast of here; we are on the island where the sun rises, and it would take water about fifteen minutes to heat in the manner the savages did it."

"The fellows in yonder schooner are not anywhere near the right place for prospecting then," said Hopkins, with a smile.

Jack glanced around, and saw that they were at a desolate part of the island, with a sandy beach, upon which the surf was rolling with a continuous roar. In back of them was a woods, and farther to the north a mass of rugged rocks.

"This place can't be much frequented by the white settlers

on the isle," he remarked. "It has a wild, gloomy look, quite forbidding to see."

Just then an arrow shot out of the woods, whistled through the air, and the point landed with a thud in the sand beside them.

"Savages!" exclaimed Jack, glancing at the arrow in surprise.

"Nonsense!" replied the professor. "When the Spaniards settled on San Salvador, centuries ago, after Columbus discovered this isle, they drove the aborigines away from the island."

"But some of the Caribbean islands farther southward are yet peopled by the remains of the tribe, and some of them may have come here. I don't see any one yet, though."

"They may be the fellows who attacked me, on another island, when I was in this region before," said the professor, nervously.

"In that case they must be Kellenda Mixitli's band."

"The Lord help us if they are!"

A shower of arrows now assailed our two friends, coming from among the trees and bushes, and they retreated to the boat and pulled away from shore, when a score of Caribs burst from the undergrowth and rushed down to the surf.

"Look out!" exclaimed Hopkins, excitedly. "Here they come now."

It was only by the merest chance that they escaped the shower of arrows and spears that the natives sent flying after them, and, reaching the monitor, they hastily got on board.

"Blast ther lubbers, did they hurt yer?" anxiously asked Tim.

"No. Start the monitor ahead!" cried Jack, entering the turret.

"Och, vy don'd yer let us plow dem by bieces?" asked Fritz, pleadingly.

"Not until they do something to warrant our taking their lives," answered Jack, who was averse to killing the savages for nothing.

It was very evident that the Caribs had not molested them for nothing, and Jack deduced from it that they must have been placed there to keep watch for anyone who might venture to search for the sunken treasure. In this they recognized Mixitli's hand.

The crew of the schooner was still watching them, and Jack drove the Sea Serpent around the northern end of the island into Exuma Bay, where she was hauled to for a while, and they scanned the shore.

"We must not venture to descend anywhere near where the treasure lies," said Jack, "for the crew of the schooner will soon find that they are not in the right spot, and, knowing that we are here on the same mission as themselves, will watch us. If we find where the treasure lies, and guide them to the spot, very likely they will try to get it, and that will lead to serious trouble between us, sure."

"With such arms as we possess," the professor replied, "we would have but little trouble in keeping them at a respectful distance."

The Sea Serpent was started again and made a circuit of the island, and they saw the divers working from the schooner the whole morning, the strange vessel moving about from place to place every hour.

When the monitor arrived at the northern end of the island again, just before noon, Jack saw that the savages were there yet in large numbers, intently watching the boat.

"We have got to go ashore again," the boy remarked, "and I have no doubt that those fellows will attack us. But if we don our metal diving suits they can do us no harm with their weapons."

The professor had been feeling very timid, but Jack's words reassured him, and he consented to make the venture,

whereupon they each put on a diving suit and rowed ashore again, where the boat was beached.

Jack carried a watch and a compass, and both were armed.

The Caribs retreated among the trees, and from there kept up a fusillade of arrows and spears, none of which were capable of penetrating their suits, and they went on with their work.

Thrusting a stick in the ground, Jack kept his glance upon his watch, and exactly at twelve o'clock he located the direction of the shadow by the compass, and began his calculations.

The direction indicated was across Ship Channel, northeast of Eleuthera Island, about sixty miles east of the shore.

They were both so intent upon their examination that they did not watch the Caribs for a few moments, and the savages came toward them at a rush.

A warning cry from Tim on the monitor apprised them of their danger; but it came too late, so swiftly ran the islanders, for they reached Jack and the professor before they could fairly draw their weapons from their belts.

Like an avalanche they came upon the divers, and while half of the dusky horde fell upon the professor, disarmed him, and carried him away, the rest attacked Jack with the most savage fury.

Opposed by a score of the Caribs, the boy began to blaze away at them, but they knocked his electric pistol from his hand, and were fighting to get him in their power when he ran for the shore.

The professor was a prisoner, and had disappeared, while Jack, unarmed and opposed by a score, could do nothing unaided.

Some of the savages had captured the rowboat, but the boy hurried out into the breakers, and, pursued by the yelling horde, he plunged into deep water, and was soon lost to their sight beneath the sea.

Afraid of injuring Jack or Hopkins, Tim and Fritz did not fire a shot in their defense.

CHAPTER XI.

A FATAL GUNSHOT.

When Jack saw the monitor floating over his head he cast off his weights and the air reservoir on his back lifted him to the surface.

Fritz was out on deck, and assisted him on board the Sea Serpent.

"I have got the location of the ton of gold," said the boy, breathlessly, as he opened the visor of his helmet, "but they've captured the professor."

"Shiminetty! Dey vhas mebbe killed him alretty vonct!" gasped Fritz.

"Don't you alarm yourself on that point; they can't do him much harm, unless they manage to get his diving suit off," replied Jack, grimly. "If they have plenty of time, however, they could break through an iron-clad."

"Vot yer vhas goin' ter do about it?"

"You and Tim must put on your suits, arm yourselves, and come ashore with me. We must rescue poor Hopkins before those Caribs get a chance to do him any harm."

"Und leave dot Sea Serbend all alone by itselluf?"

"We can anchor her near shore."

"Dot iss so," said Fritz, hastening inside and apprising the old sailor of what Jack proposed doing, and they both got ready.

Jack sent the monitor in close to the shore and stopped her, he then went out on deck, with a grapnel secured by a wire cable, and anchored the monitor within ten yards of the shore.

The schooner at that time was out of sight down the coast, behind a projection of the land, and not another vessel was in view.

Moreover, the savages had disappeared in among the trees.

Fritz and Tim soon joined the young inventor, and they slipped down the anchor cable into ten feet of water and walked ashore.

The portable rowboat lay high and dry upon the beach.

Without pausing the three divers divested themselves of their weights, and boldly proceeded toward the dense shrubbery where the Caribs had disappeared, and easily found the trail they had made.

It led Jack and his friends across the island toward the rocks, which lined that side, and they presently saw the natives among them.

The professor lay upon the ground in a narrow defile between the rocks, and the Caribs were heaping brush and shrubs, dried up by the sun, around him in a great mass.

"Look!" shouted Jack. "They intend to burn him to death!"

"Not when I know's dot!" said Fritz, savagely.

Besides their rifles and pistols our friends were armed with small hand-grenades, loaded with slugs and horrorite—Jack's patent explosive—and as soon as the savages saw them coming they set up a fearful chorus of yells, and began to fire upon them.

"Give it to them, boys!" shouted Jack, energetically.

They flung the bombs among the Caribs, and, striking the ground, the missiles burst with a roar of thunder, dealing destruction to every one and everything in the way of the flying fragments.

With their souls filled with terror the yelling horde scattered.

Many of them were blown to pieces, but those who remained fled up on the rocky heights over the rift wherein lay the professor, and from the top sent down shower after shower of weapons.

One of them had set fire to the fagots piled around the professor, and as Jack saw the smoke begin to pour up in dense clouds, he rushed forward, got into the rift, and began to scatter the embers right and left.

No sooner had the Caribs upon the rocks seen what he was doing than several of them began to roll a rock toward the edge of the rift to send it crashing down upon Jack and Hopkins.

"Belay thar!" roared Tim, excitedly. "Look aloft, Jack! Thunderation, lad, they're a-goin' ter smash yer flat!"

"Shood 'em! Shood 'em!" Fritz bellowed, leveling his rifle.

They both fired at the designing Caribs, and the moment the explosive bullets struck the men they were aimed at they burst inside of them.

Again and again Fritz and Tim fired from their repeating rifles, but no sooner did one man fall at the rolling boulder, when another took his place.

Jack had not been idle in the meantime, however, for as soon as he reached the side of Hopkins he cut the professor's bonds and dragged him out of the rift just as the rock came crashing down.

If the savages had not had so far to roll the rock both would have perished; as it was, particles of the boulder broke off as it came flying down, striking the sides of the rift and mercilessly pelting Jack and Hopkins.

Hastening to get away from beneath their enemies, they joined Tim and Fritz, and the four opened fire upon the Caribs and drove them back out of sight, leaving several behind wounded and dead.

"Are you hurt, Hopkins?" demanded the boy, in a breathless voice.

"Only shaken up a bit—nothing to speak of, dear boy," was the professor's reply.

"Then away with you all to the monitor!"

Further fighting was useless now, as they knew in which direction to look for the sunken treasure, and they had Hopkins rescued.

Ceasing hostilities, therefore, they hastened across the end of the island to the beach, where they had left the Sea Serpent anchored.

But the monitor was gone!

Cries of alarm and surprise escaped the lips of the quartette, and Jack pointed out at the sea, and cried in dismay:

"See there! The pirate has got her!"

The Black Hawk was sailing away to the northward with the monitor in tow, for our friends had scarcely gone to the rescue of Hopkins when Blackbeard's vessel came around the end of the island and swooped down upon the deserted Sea Serpent.

A blank silence of several minutes followed their startling discovery, and they might have given away to their despair had Jack not said:

"Don't give in, boys—there's a chance for us yet."

"How?" eagerly asked Tim, stumping up and down excitedly.

"Don't you see how light the breeze is?"

"Ay, ay, lad."

"Haven't we got the rowboat left to pursue the pirate?"

"Hoop-la!" yelled Fritz, delightedly. "Gief me au oar vonct!"

"Set the boat afloat! There are the oars lying upon the beach. In this light wind we can easily overhaul the monitor, and as we have got plenty of ammunition left for our weapons we can give that pirate a hot tussle for the boat! Lively now, boys; lively!"

They set to work with a will, and, getting the metallic boat afloat beyond the breakers, they all got in, and Tim and Fritz rowed after the pirate.

By that time the Black Hawk was a mile in advance of them, and yet the two strong, experienced oarsmen soon closed up the gap between the ship and themselves, and the pirate saw them.

The remainder of the savages came trooping down to the shore as they put off in the boat, shouting, gesticulating and firing spears and arrows after them, some even plunging into the surf; but they did no harm to our friends, and the boat sped out of their range presently.

Within an hour the rowboat was within a cable's length of the monitor, and the pirate sent a dozen of his ruffianly crew on board of the monitor armed with various weapons to repel our friends.

In the meantime, a gun was trained to bear upon the rowboat from the deck of the Black Hawk, and just as our friends were upon the point of catching up with the monitor, it was fired.

A tremendous report, a blinding belch of fire and smoke followed, and with a howl the ball came flying straight toward the boat.

It struck—there was a crash—a cry from the four friends—the boat's bow went to pieces, flying in all directions, and then there resounded a hoarse cry of exultation from the sea robbers.

Flung from the smashed boat in all directions, Jack and his friends disappeared for a moment beneath the waves, and not a thing remained upon the surface to mark the spot where our friends had been rowing in safety a few moments before.

The pirates cheered their huge, hulking, black-bearded captain, who had fired the disastrous shot, and, gathering headway in the freshening breeze, the Black Hawk gayly sped along, dragging the captive monitor with it.

CHAPTER XII.

DIVING FOR THE TREASURE.

The rowboat was standing at an angle with the course of the gun ball, and it struck the prow, tearing it to pieces.

Several pieces of the flying metal struck Jack and his friends, but their almost invulnerable suits of metal protected their bodies from wounds, although the shock of the concussion flung them into the sea.

All that remained of the rowboat sank beneath the sunlit water, and they, too, went down, but came up again buoyed by their knapsacks.

It was several moments ere they recovered from the shock, but as soon as Jack regained his wits he seized the stern post of the monitor beside which he found himself, and, reaching out his hand, he grasped Tim by the arm, and clung to him tenaciously. The monitor going on, dragged them along with it, and left Fritz and the professor far astern, held afloat by their air reservoirs.

Within a few minutes the old sailor recovered from the shock, and, grasping the stern post beside Jack, he relieved the boy of his weight.

"Hang on, old boy!" gasped Jack. "We'll get up on deck presently."

"Ay, lad, but Fritz and the professor?"

"Oh, they're all right. We will try to regain the monitor and go back for them. They can't sink, and the pirates don't know we are here."

"Blast my timber leg if this don't remind me o' wot happened ter me, sir, while I wuz aboard o' ther U. S. frigate Wash, sir."

"No yarns now, Tim," interposed Jack. "Keep as quiet as a mouse, and we will gain our object; betray our presence here, and you will spoil our chances of winning, do you see?"

"I'll stow my jawin'-tackle, sir," acquiesced Tim.

Silence followed for five minutes, and at the expiration of that time the two were fully recovered and ready for action.

The edge of the after deck was but two feet above the water's surface, and Jack and Tim pulled themselves up and peered around.

As the pirate saw no use of his men remaining on the deck of the monitor to repel boarders now, he had called them back to his own ship.

The deck of the monitor was therefore deserted, and our friends lost no time in getting upon it and dashing forward.

No sooner, however, had they made their appearance when the pirates saw them, and set up a loud shout.

"Into the turret with you!" shouted Jack, heading for the door.

"Ay, but why not cast off that hawser fust?" queried Tim, excitedly.

"No need! They'd kill you while doing it! Come on!"

Jack flung open the door in the turret, and Tim came stumbling in after him just as the pirates fired a useless volley at them from their rifles.

Fortunately none of the rascally crew were within the boat, but this was probably owing to the fact that they could not force an entrance as they were ignorant of how to open the knobless door and traps.

The metal shutters were already closed, but there were loopholes in them through which Jack could see, and they were no sooner within when the boy saw the pirates hauling on the hawser to draw the monitor close enough to permit them to get aboard of her.

Hastily opening the breach of the forward gun, he put in a cartridge and aimed the weapon at the stern sheets of the Black Hawk.

As soon as he had a sight drawn upon her, he touched the

press button, and the projectile shot from the gun and struck the ship.

There came a fearful explosion that shook the Sea Serpent.

When the boy glanced out he saw that the hawser was burst in two, the after part of the pirate's vessel was blown to pieces, a number of the rascals were torn to shreds and the vessel was over on her beam ends.

"Tit for tat!" exclaimed Jack. "See—I've wrecked her, Tim."

"Downhaul my foretop," chuckled the old sailor, "an' she's a-sinkin', too!"

"Look at the rest of the beggars taking to their boats!"

"Ay! It don't need another shot in their lubber's locker ter show him ther course ter Davy Jones, by gol!"

Jack flung open the shutters, and they had an uninterrupted view of the Black Hawk and her panic-stricken crew.

The pirates were lowering their two remaining boats from the davits, and were half wild when they felt their vessel lurching as if to go down.

Indeed, the last of them had no sooner got off when the Black Hawk settled into her last resting-place among the sand, fishes and weeds.

She created a vortex as she sank into which one of the boats was sucked, and spun around, capsized, and swamped, leaving her yelling crew struggling on the surface, begging for help from their messmates.

The other boat was so heavily laden with passengers, however, that the addition of two more men would have sunk her, so they left the miserable rascals with the coolest indifference, and rowed away to prevent them from getting hold of their boat.

It was a soul-harrowing sight, bad as the men were, and, his generous soul stirred to pity by their fearful disaster, Jack forgot what joy these men had taken in trying to kill him, and sent the monitor over among them, so that they might get upon her deck.

"They can't do us any harm, and we will land them at San Salvador," the boy said. "I can't see them perish so miserably without lifting a hand to give them a chance to become better men."

"Lord save yer fer bein' a soft-hearted lad," said Tim, taking a chew of plug, "but if I wuz you, I'd give each one o' ther blasted lubbers a ballast o' hot shot ter carry 'em ter ther bottom, I would."

The struggling rascals all managed to get upon the deck of the monitor, and the surviving boatload pulled off to the northwest, heading for Eleuthera Island.

"We can spare no time pursuing the rest of them," said Jack, "for we must hasten back after Fritz and the professor. They are safe enough in one sense floating in the water, but marine monsters may make prey of them, Tim, and they will sadly need our assistance."

"Ay, ay! Then let her go, sir," responded the old sailor, "an' I'll go through ther Sea Serpent an' see if them 'ere vil-yains done anything ter her."

Jack grasped the wheel, and started the boat back the way she came.

Divesting himself of his helmet, he flung open the window and shouted to the pirates who were now grouped in the bow of the monitor:

"I say!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded one of them, sulkily.

"You are to remain where you are until we reach land, then go overboard and swim ashore. Any treachery on your part will meet with the punishment of death, for I'll fire a bomb in your midst to destroy you all."

"We won't do nothin' wrong," growled the man.

Tim soon returned and reported everything to be all right, and Jack kept the monitor on until they met with the pro-

fessor and the Dutch boy, whom they picked up and took inside without any interference from the pirates. Their adventures were explained to them.

Upon nearing San Salvador Jack brought his boat to a pause fifty yards from shore, and ordered the pirates to leave the vessel.

They could all swim, and, plunging into the sea, they made for land, upon arriving at which our friends saw the savages surround them and they all disappeared among the trees.

"That's the end of them," said Jack, "and now let us go under for the treasure, as everything is all right, and we have got the bearings."

Calculating the distance, Jack sent the Sea Serpent off to the spot where the sunken island was supposed to lie, and, sending the monitor beneath the surface, he turned on the electric lights.

Down, down, down went the Sea Serpent in a halo of silvery light, and Jack saw by the register that she sank fifty feet ere she came to a pause with a gentle shock.

The powerful electric lights blazed in every direction, and the inmates of the boat hastened to the turret windows and peered out.

A strange scene met their view, and they gave utterance to cries of the utmost astonishment at the curious picture spread around them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SUNKEN CITY.

The spot at which the Sea Serpent descended was about three miles north of San Salvador, and about sixty east of Eleuthera Island, and although the shadows of twilight were stealing over the Bahamas, the electric lights dissipated the dense submarine gloom.

The singular scene presented to the view of our friends was a ruined city, in the midst of which the monitor alighted—no doubt the city of priests, mentioned on Peleg Hopkins' tablet.

True to the description in the translation, an earthquake had, to all appearances, knocked the strange, Moorish-looking buildings down, for they lay in heaps, some of the pillars, domes and towers yet standing.

Everything was covered with sand, weeds, barnacles, and aquatic shells; plants, and living flowers, such as grow under the sea, while the silent city's only inhabitants were fishes, bugs and serpents.

"It must be the place where the golden idol is to be found!" exclaimed Jack, delightedly. "Professor, your tablet was not a myth."

"Hurrah, dear boy, hurrah!" said Hopkins, waving his hat hilariously.

"I t'ink ve vhas petter found dot idol alretty, don't ve?" queried Fritz.

"Give us a chance ter get the wind out o' our sails fust!" growled Tim.

In the heat of their delight they forgot all about their fight with the Caribs on San Salvador; they never thought of how they sank the piratical Black Hawk, and did not dream of the treasure hunters' schooner hovering near.

But the crew of the latter craft had, unobserved, witnessed where the monitor had sunk, and, disgusted with their own non-success, came forging over the spot to send their divers down there.

Jack raised his boat, and keeping within a dozen feet of the bottom, or about thirty-eight feet from the surface, he sent the Sea Serpent traveling over the sunken city on a tour of inspection.

Everywhere they went strange sights met their view, but paramount to all they noticed several deep, dark fissures in the ground, cutting through the city, evidently resulting from the earthquake that destroyed it.

There presently loomed up in the midst of the ruined city a vast building, one story in height, the front portico supported by huge columns of stone, upon which were cut a number of strange hieroglyphs.

It was the only building left standing, and Jack brought the Sea Serpent to a pause upon the smooth, white sand before it, and they saw that the great structure was half buried in sand.

"Here's a barbarous relic!" exclaimed the professor. "Let us explore it. Who knows but what it may be the very place we are seeking!"

"By all means," replied Jack, shutting off power. "Fritz, prepare three of the suits for use, and fill the knapsacks with air."

"Don't I vhas gone mit yer?" queried the Dutch boy.

"Certainly. We will leave Tim in care of the monitor."

The old sailor's face lengthened, and a broad grin overspread Fritz's, as he hurried down toward the storeroom to obey Jack's request, remarking:

"You don't vhas in it, oldt dimber does."

"Avast, thar," growled Tim. "D'yer know why he wants yer in ther brine?"

"So's dot you vhas don't get your vooden leg vet," answered Fritz.

"No, gol durn ye! Did ye ever see sauerkraut when it wuzn't in brine?"

"Och, shestnuts," said Fritz, with a scowl, as he disappeared.

Tim grinned good naturedly again, lit his pipe, and began to skylark with his little red monkey, and Jack and the professor followed Fritz.

In the storeroom they donned their diving costumes, and when everything was in readiness, they passed into the water chamber aft, opened a valve, and with a hiss, the sea poured in.

Then they went out on deck, where their weights were not felt, and descending an accommodation ladder, they reached the ground.

Tim kept the searchlight reflected upon the huge building, and as they drew closer to it, Jack observed that the windows were closed by massive wooden shutters, and the entrance by great heavy doors.

"How are we going to get in?" questioned the professor, as he walked beside Jack and pointed at the doors.

"They must be rotten or insect eaten by this time," the boy replied.

His words were prophetic, for when they reached the doors, they found them perforated by thousands of little holes, and it did not require much strength to push them open.

The interior of the great hall was filled with water, and sand had sifted in, while the place was alive with all sorts of fish.

No sooner, in fact, had they passed the threshold, when an enormous spider-crab, with a shell the size of a big sea-turtle's, sprang towards them, and fastened its squirming claws on Jack.

He fought the loathsome creature off, but it returned to the attack, and a fearful combat ensued between them, until Fritz came to the boy's assistance with a short-handled ax and killed it.

They then started the electric lights on top of their helmets, and flashing the rays around, saw that they were within a vast court, on all sides of which enormous doors opened.

Passing through the first one, they found that it led them into a series of chambers, in which were swarms of all kinds

of fish and curious-looking shells, with which the professor loaded himself.

The last door brought them into a courtyard in the center of the building, and the three divers paused and gave utterance to cries of the utmost astonishment.

For there in the middle of the place stood the golden idol!

It was a strange-looking object in the shape of a man squatting, and a face resembling that of the Sphinx; its great staring eyes, made of two enormous diamonds, and the precious metal of which it was composed turned almost black by the water.

It was enmeshed in a mass of aquatic plants, covered with barnacles and shells, and a most hideous object to behold, yet its body was the purest gold, and the blazing gleam from its diamond eyes outrivalled the glitter of the finest known gems.

The three friends were so amazed at the strange sight that it was some time before they could speak; but Jack finally found utterance, and exclaimed:

"The golden idol, by heaven!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Hopkins, delightedly, as he rushed up to it.

"I vhas yust goin' ter say dot mineselluf," said Fritz, following him.

Upon close inspection they found that the idol was all that Hopkins had represented, and as soon as the first excitement wore away, Jack said:

"We must shift the monitor into this courtyard in order to get that thing upon her deck, for we can't afford to lose any time, as there are others searching for this treasure."

"Den you shtay here, vonct, und I vhas dell Dim ter prought her in," said Fritz, starting to go off. "Ve can get down troo der roof, 'cause der vash't some roof on der dop of dis place, alretty."

And so saying, he started off.

Within five minutes the monitor came gliding through the water overhead, with Fritz on deck and Tim in the pilot-house.

Settling down into the courtyard near the stone pedestal upon which the statue sat, the boat came to a pause.

Fritz was just about to descend and join Jack and the professor, when suddenly two dark bodies came shooting to the bottom from the surface of the water, and landed near Jack.

Very much startled, our friends flashed the lights of their lamps upon them, when they were amazed to see that they were two men in ordinary diver's costumes.

The strangers were as much surprised to see the boat, Jack and his friends there as they were to see them, and as they recoiled side by side, their glances fell upon the idol.

Instinctively one of them pointed at it.

The other nodded, and began to speak in the deaf and dumb alphabet.

Jack was keenly watching the strangers, and being familiar with the spelled language they used, he easily understood all they said, and observed that the diver implied:

"There stands the idol; but we will have to fight for it!"

The next moment one of the divers approached Jack.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RAIN OF DIVERS.

It did not take the boy inventor more than a moment to realize that if the strangers once went to the surface the people upon the schooner would discover that they had found the treasure.

In that case there was bound to be trouble.

"Professor," said Jack, "those fellows have discovered our secret."

"But what can we do about it, dear boy?" blankly asked Hopkins.

"Prevent them from going up to their boat and apprising their friends."

"What! make prisoners of them?"

"Precisely. We can keep them secured on board the monitor."

"Oh, they can't do us any harm."

"Perhaps not; but they can annoy us a good deal." /

By this time the diver who was approaching paused within a few feet of Jack and peered hard at him for a moment, evidently much astonished to see our friend walking around without air-tubes and life lines, such as those with which they were furnished themselves.

He then hastily retreated to his friend, and they each gave four pulls on their air-pipes, signifying "haul up diver."

"Go for them, professor!" cried Jack. "They are going to ascend!"

The two men at that moment were being hauled up, but Jack and Hopkins reached them just in time to grab their legs.

Both men, very much amazed, began to struggle and kick, but Jack and the professor held on tenaciously, and, straining every effort, pulled them down to the bottom again, as but one man was hoisting them above.

Here the fight was continued, the strangers now drawing knives from their belts, with which they strove to stab our friends.

The man Jack grappled was the biggest of the two, and he made a dig at the boy's throat, but the point of his blade broke against the hard aluminum suit, and left him utterly defenseless.

Hopkins, on the other hand, was more timid, for no sooner had his man aimed a blow at him with his knife than the professor let him go and recoiled a step, afraid the blade might penetrate his suit.

No sooner was the man released than up he shot toward the surface alongside of the Sea Serpent, and he might have escaped our friends, had not Fritz made a jump and caught him.

Clinging to his ankles, the fat Dutch boy's weight bore him down to the bottom again, and the next moment Fritz cut the man's life line, and the professor came to his assistance.

They cut a piece from the life line and bound the fellow, then hastened over to Jack, who was struggling with the other diver.

Between the three they soon rendered him helpless, and, having severed his life line, they carried them both up on the Sea Serpent.

Getting them down into the water chamber, Jack cut their air-pipes, and then hastily dragged them into the boat.

Considerable water was shipped during this operation, but it was quickly pumped out, and the half-strangled divers were revived, after which they were bound hand and foot.

"Didn't you come from the schooner up on the surface?" asked Jack.

"We did," replied one of the men, viewing his surroundings in astonishment.

"How came you to know there was a sunken treasure around here?"

"A man who employed us to find it is a Carib, who knew all about it," answered the man, wondering how on earth Jack could hear and make himself heard with his helmet on.

"And his name?" queried the young inventor, eagerly.

"Kellenda Mixitli," was the diver's reply.

"So this is the man who furnished this outfit?" demanded Jack.

"He purchased the schooner in New Orleans, fitted her out with a number of experienced wrecking divers, and sent her here under the charge of one of his friends to locate the golden

idol and raise it to the surface. We were all well paid by him. And now, tell me, isn't this a submarine boat?"

"Yes, and I have brought it here on the same errand you are on. As we were the first to find the idol, it belongs to us."

"That depends upon whether you get it," grimly answered the diver. "As all our crew are to receive a certain percentage on the sale of the gold, you can depend upon us straining every effort to wrest it from you, my friend."

Jack smiled disdainfully, as he had not much fear of them, and calling Tim, he told the old sailor to guard the prisoners.

He then went out on deck again, and, glancing over toward the idol, what was his astonishment to see a rain of divers coming down from the surface, all around the golden image.

There were ten more of them.

Alarmed by the disappearance of their two friends from the ends of the life and air lines, they had come down to investigate it, and now saw at a glance how matters stood.

Fritz and the professor retreated over to the boat and got upon her deck to learn what Jack proposed to do.

"Look there—an army of them!" gasped Hopkins. "We are no match for so many, dear boy—what shall we do about the matter?"

"Und dey vhas seen us now," added Fritz. "Should ve fight 'em?"

"First let us see what their intentions are," quietly replied Jack.

The divers now gathered in a group, and held an animated talk with their fingers, at the conclusion of which one of them shot to the surface to apprise the men on the boat of what had happened.

A few moments afterwards this individual came down again carrying some ropes with hooks upon the ends, and the rest of the divers signaled their intentions at once by fastening them around the idol so as to hoist it up to the surface.

"Their intentions are plain enough now," said Hopkins.

"But they won't get the idol!" replied Jack. "Come inside."

They passed into the Sea Serpent, and Jack went into the pilot-house, from the window of which he intently watched the divers until they had their ropes securely fastened around the idol.

The boy then loaded the three pneumatic guns in the turret and carefully aimed the bow chaser at the ropes and fired it.

With a loud hiss the shot tore through the water, but passed between the ropes and disappeared harmlessly beyond.

Startled by the thud and rush of the projectile, the divers recoiled, and several of them took fright and ascended to the surface.

Jack uttered an impatient exclamation over the non-success of his shot, and turned the turret around until he got a second shot at the ropes, properly aimed.

While he was so engaged the derrick up on the schooner on the surface was put in operation, for the ropes became taut, and after stiffening up, the idol was lifted gradually from its pedestal.

There was no time to lose now, for if the treasure hunters had a steam derrick, which was more than likely, they were apt to pull the idol up to their boat in a very short space of time.

Having drawn a bead upon the ropes again, Jack touched the press button and the second shot was discharged.

It grazed the ropes, but failed to cut them.

"I must be nervous to fire so badly," muttered the boy, frowning, as he hastily revolved the turret again in order to bring the last gun to bear upon the ropes.

Unless these ropes were severed he knew that the people on the schooner would inevitably get possession of the treasure;

indeed, as he glanced at the idol again he saw that it was now raised a dozen feet from the pedestal, and was rapidly ascending.

"Be careful!" warned Hopkins, breathlessly.

"If I don't hit the ropes with this shot," replied Jack, "they will get the idol and we will lose it as sure as fate."

"Vhy don'd yer let me fire id den?" nervously asked Fritz.

"Ay, or mebbe I could do better, lad," said Tim, in shaky tones.

"No! I shall fire it!" firmly replied Jack, carefully sighting the gun. "See, boys, I'm as cool and steady as need be, for everything depends on the success of this shot. Look out now!" and as he spoke he fired the shot.

CHAPTER XV.

ABANDONED UNDER THE SEA.

With bated breath and anxious eyes, our friends watched the projectile go ripping through the water, and then there came an explosion as the cylinder struck a resisting substance and broke.

For a minute the water became fearfully agitated, boiling into foam, a cloud of sand was stirred up from the bottom, and a great number of fishes were torn to pieces.

The searchlight had been directed at the tackle, and its keen rays penetrating the clouded waters soon showed the Sea Serpent's crew that the ropes had been blown to pieces, and the idol had fallen to the bottom, where it now lay upon its face.

A cheer pealed from Jack and his friends, for they saw that the divers, terrified by the shot, were rushing away in all directions.

"That settles it—the idol is ours!" said Jack, triumphantly.

"Blast my timbers if them lubbers ain't skeered out o' thar wits!" Tim chuckled, thumping his wooden peg on the floor, and shutting his good optic in a grin, while the glass one continued its meaningless blank stare.

"What shall we do—get the idol up on deck, my Christian friends?" asked Hopkins.

"As sooner ve done it as petter," said Fritz. "Come mit me, shendlemens."

He led the way to the storeroom, where tackles were procured, and Jack made them fast to the electric machinery.

They then went out of the monitor, and, as all the strange divers had vanished by this time, they set to work at securing the idol.

Having made the tackles fast to her, Jack went up on deck to guide Tim at working the machinery to hoist the heavy mass up on a portable crane they had rigged amidships.

Fritz manned a guy-line, and the professor the fenders, and in a few minutes the machinery was started, and once again the idol was hoisted.

This time it landed upon the deck of the monitor amidships, and was lowered, released of the tackles, and lashed fast with chains.

By the time this was completed the water had settled and cleared, and our friends had seen nothing more of the divers from the schooner.

"We will run away from here under water," said Jack, when everything was in readiness, "and we need not come to the surface again until we are at a safe distance from those fellows."

"Before you start, my good friend," said Hopkins. "have you any objection to awaiting my return from an exploration of this ruined city on foot? There are many relics scattered around that are of great interest to me, and would add to my already fine collection."

"If you do not stay away long," replied Jack, "I will remain long enough to take an observation with my camera obscura of all that is transpiring upon the surface before we ascend."

"You can expect me back in ten minutes, dear boy," replied Hopkins, eagerly, and with this understanding he walked away and soon vanished from sight, passing through one of the great arches.

Jack and Fritz ascended to the deck and mounted the turret, in which sat Tim smoking his pipe and interestedly watching a fight going on between Whiskers and Bismarck in the middle of the pilot-house.

"Tim!" exclaimed the boy, peering in the window, causing the old sailor to start up, for, as we have intimated before, the pilot-house was furnished with an audiphone.

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the old sailor, briskly, when he saw them outside.

"Send the lenses of the camera to the top, and shut off the lights."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied Tim, extinguishing the electric lights.

Everything was instantly bathed in the densest gloom, and Tim thereupon turned a lever on the switchboard, and a telescopic tube on top of the pilot-house shot toward the surface, with a small box on top of it containing the reflecting lenses.

It could be graded to a height of eighty feet, and as Tim saw by the indicator that they were at a depth of a trifle less than fifty feet, he stopped it when the box was protruded above the waves.

A gray disc of light suddenly illumined the table, and upon it Jack saw the life-like reflections of the starry, moonlit sky, the dark, green, rolling waves, and off at one side the schooner of the divers and another craft that was tied to it, which had a strangely familiar look.

"Hullo, ther!" exclaimed Tim. "Here's a strange craft, by guns!"

"Don't you recognize her?" asked Jack, as the truth flashed across his mind.

"I t'ink me dot vessel I haf seed pefore, alretty," said Fritz, scrutinizing it.

"It is Kellenda Mixitli's ship, with which we had a fight near New York."

"Wot! Ther cussed pirate wot we blowed ther starn offer!"

"Shiminetty! So she vhas!" gasped Fritz.

Jack studied the reflection intently a few minutes, and although the dim light made objects upon the board more indistinct than they would have appeared in daylight, he was able to distinguish all he cared to see at that moment.

The Carib's ship had been repaired, and had evidently just joined the schooner, for only her jibs were down.

Upon the deck of his schooner Jack plainly saw a dozen air pumps, while mingling with the sailors were the divers who had been using them, the visors of their helmets now opened for air.

Standing alone upon the deck, evidently haranguing the men, Jack detected the well-known figure of the Carib with his bushy beard, sack suit and derby hat.

He kept pointing down at the water, by which the boy judged that he was alluding to what had been going on down there, and the boy observed by the distance at which the boat stood up in the wind that they were not a quarter of a mile away.

"The Carib has joined them at last—do you see him?" cried Jack.

"Wot good'll his comin' do now, I'd like to know?" queried Tim, with a broad grin. "We've got ther idol, an' two o' his men as hostages."

"Dem difers vhas sure ter come down again vonct," added Fritz; "but I t'ink me dot ve don't vhas been here vhen dey ar rife alretty."

"You had better keep a watch on their actions until the

professor comes back," said Jack, "and we will then be posted on their movements and know exactly what they are doing, Tim."

"Ay, ay, sir! Are yer a-comin' in now?"

"Yes. There is need of—"

Bang! sounded a tremendous explosion, somewhat muffled by the water, in the direction in which the professor had gone just then, interrupting what Jack was upon the point of saying.

"Help! Help!" came a faint, distant cry in Hopkins' tones.

"The professor is in trouble!" muttered Jack.

"Och, dot oldt fool vhas a nuisance by us somedimes!" growled Fritz.

Tim rushed to the window and peered out, and just then the two divers whom they had captured appeared in the doorway in back of the old sailor, armed with one of Jack's pneumatic rifles.

By the aid of his teeth, one of them had undone the knots binding the other, and thus liberated his hands, whereupon it was an easy matter for them both to get free of their thongs, and, picking up the rifle in the cabin, they had overcome the old sailor.

Unseen in the gloom, they crouched there and heard Jack shout:

"Turn on the electric lights, Tim, and we will go to the professor's aid."

Just as the old sailor obeyed, casting the monitor in an effulgence of brilliant illumination, Jack and Fritz got down to the ground and hastened away to the assistance of the professor.

Hardly were they gone, when the two divers rushed into the pilot-house.

"Hands up!" yelled the one with the rifle, aiming it at Tim's head.

"Wow!" gasped the startled old fellow, obeying, and glaring up at them.

"You are our prisoner now!" hissed the man.

"Bust my figger-head, they've escaped!" groaned Tim, despairingly.

"Will you do as we command, or shall we kill you?" demanded the diver.

"Bein' as I don't want ter die, I'll obey orders, cap."

"Send this boat to the surface then, or I'll blow your brains out!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Tim, as he turned a lever and pumped the ballast out.

He drew in the camera then.

The weight of the golden idol made very little difference in the buoyancy of the boat, and she began to ascend surface-ward.

Just then Jack, Fritz and the professor entered the courtyard, and saw by the electric lights that Tim was at the mercy of the divers, and that they were being abandoned at the bottom of the sea!

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE ENEMY'S POWER.

Jack and Fritz had found Hopkins engaged in a desperate combat with a devil fish, and the unlucky professor's life might have been lost had they not attacked and killed the monster.

Their consternation knew no bounds upon returning to the courtyard, and seeing the Sea Serpent ascending to the surface with the golden idol on her deck, and Tim at the mercy of the two divers.

"The trouble is, they will surely fall into the hands of

Kellenda Mixitli now," said Jack. "Let us cast off our weights, and we will go up, although it is very doubtful if we can get aboard of the Sea Serpent again, for, as you can see, she is traveling along the surface now, surrounded by a halo of light, going in the direction of the schooner and Mixitli's vessel."

They accordingly let their leaden soles go, and their knapsacks carried them half way to the top; then they abandoned their breast weights, and went all the way to the surface.

Upon seeing the monitor bearing down upon them, the crews of both vessels hastily began to raise their anchors and sails expecting an attack, when one of the windows of the pilot-house was flung open, and one of the divers yelled loudly:

"Schooner ahoy! Belay there—it is I—Robinson. Don't move. The submarine boat is in my power!" Thus assured, as they recognized the voice of the speaker, the crews of both vessels desisted, and in a few minutes the Sea Serpent reached them, and ran between the two boats.

A moment afterwards, to Jack's astonishment and delight, he saw a shot burst from the first starboard, and then the port guns in the turret, and they both struck the ships on either side and exploded.

The fearful reports had scarcely ceased vibrating when out shot the figure of the man who had been keeping Tim covered with the pneumatic rifle.

Tim had fired off the guns by deceiving his captor with the belief that he was stopping the machinery, and the recoil having flung the man to the floor, the old sailor had pounced upon him ere he arose, and hurled him through the window, shut it, and closed the metal shutters over the glass panes.

He thus had possession of the boat again.

The shot that struck the Carib's ship tore away the weather bulwarks ere it sped on into the sea, while the projectile that burst upon the schooner had ripped the after-deck all up, destroyed most of the divers' pumps, carried away the wheel, binnacle and taffrail, and almost ruined the rudder.

"Hurrah for Tim!" shouted Jack, excitedly. "See what he did!"

The monitor remained stationary for several minutes; then it started suddenly on, and shooting from between the two vessels, it forged ahead of them.

Not caring to stand any chances, Tim sunk the monitor beneath the waves, where she was comparatively safe.

At this juncture Jack saw some of the men on the schooner pointing at him, and realized that their presence upon the surface had been discovered, and that an attack was now inevitable.

In fact, upon seeing the monitor speeding away unharmed, the crews of the two vessels brought their boats about and steered them toward the trio in the water.

"It is useless for us to try to get away now," said Jack, as he saw the two vessels heading toward them, and observed Tim bringing the monitor to the surface some distance away. "There is no escape for us. We will have to submit whether we wish to or not. But we can make it as hard for those villains to handle us as if we were hot coals by filling our metal suits with electricity with the batteries on our knapsacks. The rubber lining will insulate our bodies from the currents."

A grim smile came over their faces when they made a connection by wires between their armor and the electric batteries.

The two vessels soon reached them, and a dozen men on each boat stood at the bulwarks, aiming their rifles and pistols at the three floating divers, when Mixitli shouted:

"Come aboard of this boat or we will riddle you with bullets!"

"Don't fire," replied Jack. "We will obey you."

"Fling them ropes!" ordered the Carib, turning to his men.

"Stand together now, boys," said Jack, in low tones.

Down came several ropes, and our friends caught hold and drew themselves upon the deck of the Carib's ship.

"Seize and bind them, and stow them in the hold," ordered Mixitli.

The crew laid hands upon our friends on all sides, when they were suddenly shocked by the current flowing through the suits.

With wildest yells, groans and oaths the men released them and started back, feeling as if they were struck by thunderbolts, and the next moment our friends had their weapons in their hands ready to repel another forcible attack.

CHAPTER XVII.

HELD AT BAY WITH A GUN.

"What is the matter with you idiots?" roared Mixitli, observing the queer actions of his men, and glaring at them in deep surprise. "Are you afraid of these men? Seize them, I tell you!"

"They are charged with electricity and we can't hold them!" one of the sailors yelled, in furious tones.

"Fire upon them, then!" snarled the Carib.

He set the example by rushing at the trio with a pistol pointed at them, firing as he came.

The bullets rattled like hail against the suits of aluminum, but failed to penetrate or do any damage, and when the rest of the rascals began to fire, had not our friends been so securely protected, they would have been riddled like sieves.

"This won't do!" exclaimed Jack. "Give them a volley, boys!"

The electric and pneumatic arms were discharged at the Carib's crew, and when the explosive bullets burst in their midst, scattering death and destruction among them, the rascals became panic stricken, and huddled in a bunch, rushed up forward.

With one spring Jack reached one of the port guns, and aided by his friends they swung it back from the porthole, and trained it to bear upon the alarmed crew.

Jack seized a lock string, and taking up a position at the breech of the gun, he shouted warningly to Mixitli:

"If you or any of your crew dare to venture out of the bow I will fire this gun in your midst, as I see it is loaded!"

"Don't fire!" shrieked Mixitli, in terror, holding up his hand.

"Fritz," said Jack, aside, "seize the wheel and steer for the monitor. Tim is watching all our actions with a glass, I see."

The monitor was bearing down upon the ship.

In a few minutes the two boats were close together, the schooner having tacked away at full speed when the monitor approached.

"Run alongside, we wish to board you!" shouted Jack.

Tim obeyed, and our friends jumped aboard the Sea Serpent, when, to their amazement, Mixitli and his friends followed them.

Up they swarmed on the deck of the monitor, pell mell, led by the wild Carib, who shouted, fiercely:

"They have got the idol! Don't let them get inside! Once they get away not one of us will escape with his life!"

In a moment they were most all swarming over the deck of the boat, and rushing upon Jack and his friends in a body, they disregarded the fearful shots fired into their midst, and in one grand assault overwhelmed the trio.

Despite the electricity in their suits, the rascals bound our friends and made prisoners of them just as they felt most assured of an easy escape.

The desperate men next scaled the turret, and although Tim poured a heavy fire down upon them from the window of the pilot-house, several of them got in and attacked him.

Within a few minutes he, too, was knocked down and bound. It was a complete victory for the Carib.

His men yelled themselves hoarse, and beat the quartet about the deck with capstan bars, without doing them any damage.

"The idol and this ship are ours!" screamed Mixitli, delirious with delight. "Signal the schooner to follow us back to the island of San Salvador. I left Blackbeard there with some of my native friends, and we will take these accursed Yankees ashore and avenge the deaths and injuries they have created in our midst!"

Tim had brought the monitor to a pause.

Jack watched his enemies narrowly.

"They have got us bad," he remarked, with a crestfallen air.

"But see at what a fearful cost," consolingly answered Hopkins.

Just then Mixitli came out on deck through the turret door, and with a dark scowl upon his face he approached Jack and asked:

"How do you work this boat?"

"I refuse to give you any information," bluntly answered the boy.

"Beware! I can torture and force you to speak."

"Proceed, then, and see if you can!" defiantly replied Jack.

The Carib ripped out a malevolent expletive.

Mixitli saw that he could gain no information from the boy then, but swore he would do so ere putting Jack out of the way.

He turned upon his heel and walked off, a dark look on his face.

The schooner hove up to them just then, and after an interchange of explanations towing hawsers were made fast from the monitor to the two vessels.

They were then brought about and headed for San Salvador, dragging the captive Sea Serpent along astern of them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNG FROM THE CLIFF.

When the three vessels reached the island and hauled to in a small, sheltered lagoon, the anchors were dropped, and a large body of men came out of the bushes on shore.

Jack and his friends were taken ashore, as they had shut off the electric flow by the aid of each other's teeth, and were carried to the cavern in which Blackbeard had been dwelling.

On the following day they were given some food, and then were left alone in the cavern with the pirate and the Carib.

A conversation then ensued between the two men, to which Jack listened with great and absorbing interest, as they had taken his helmet off.

It was decided between the two men that the three vessels should be turned into piratical cruisers, manned by the mixed gang of white and black men Mixitli had at his back.

They were to scour the vicinage of the West Indies and Bahamas together, Mixitli in command of the Sea Serpent, the pirate to control the schooner and one of their men the other craft.

"We all hate this accursed boy inventor," said the pirate, when their conference was almost ended, "and it now remains for you to devise a means of punishing him in a manner that will expiate all the indignities he has heaped upon us, Kellenda Mixitli."

"There are a thousand methods of so doing in my mind,"

the Carib answered, rising to his feet. "He is high strung. Bodily pain will not force him to open his lips. We must reach his heart. It can be done by injuring one of his friends. He is devoted to them. Sooner than see them suffer, he will confess how he operates his electric boat. We will then put him out of the way."

"Then begin with the sailor," said Blackbeard, with a hideous leer.

Jack started, and glanced hurriedly at Tim.

It stung the boy to see how easily they had divined his weakest point, and tears sprang to his eyes.

The old sailor observed the look.

"Avast thar, lad!" he exclaimed, energetically. "Don't yer go far ter give in about me. I'm a tough ole oak timber, I am, an' they kin flay me from bow ter stern, but dash my ornary ole figger-head if they'll make me cave!"

They carried Tim out of the cavern bodily, and left the three prisoners remaining lying on the floor near the fire to gloomily wonder what they were going to do to poor old Tim.

The day passed quietly by, one of Blackbeard's men coming in to feed Jack and his friends, but toward evening they heard the sounds of drunken revelry going on outside, by which they knew that their enemies were having a good time drinking.

The carousal continued, the laughing and jesting voices soon breaking into ribald songs, hilarious chaff and loud talk.

It was evident that the orgy was at its height.

Mixitli and Blackbeard came staggering into the cavern after a while with bloodshot eyes and unsteady legs.

"Come!" said the Carib, pointing down at them. "You—hic—are wanted."

"We can't move, unless you unfasten our ankles," said Jack, who observed that the pirate was only simulating intoxication.

"Black—Blackbeard," said the Carib, gravely, as he shut one eye, rocked unsteadily on his heels and toes and spread his fingers, "will you do me ze favor—hic—ze favor to cutch vonch?"

"Ay, messmate, I will see to them," replied the pirate.

He stooped over Jack with a knife and hissed in his ear:

"He is drunk, I am sober. I will give you a chance for your life if you will trust me. To remain in his power you are doomed."

"Treachery!" muttered the startled boy.

"Hush!" fiercely whispered the pirate. "He may hear you. Now, then, in whose hands do you place your fate—his, to perish miserably, or mine, to live? I have a plan—a good one."

"What is it?" questioned Jack.

"To wrest the ships and treasure from him and his crew."

"He is cruel, vindictive, and bloodthirsty—a savage at heart and soul, while you—well, you may be ten times worse, but you are a civilized Christian, and I'd fare better at your mercy."

"So be it. Follow your own ideas. Come—you are able to walk."

"And my friends?" asked Jack, wistfully.

"They go with you," said the pirate liberating Fritz and Hopkins.

The two scoundrels led our friends out, and in the twilight Jack saw that the worst part of the damage on the schooner was repaired by the large force of men who were put to work at it.

The pirates, as we may now call them collectively, then rowed our friends out to the monitor, which had been towed around on the other side of the cliffs in Ship Channel, and a noise attracting Jack's attention on the cliff-tops, he glanced up and saw a crowd of men there.

They had Tim in their midst, released of his bonds, and lowered him over the precipice, and left him hanging down

from the edge by his hands, over a mass of jagged black rocks below.

A terrible shudder of horror passed over the boy as he saw the old sailor hanging there by main strength, and turning fiercely to Mixitli, he asked:

"For God's sake, man, what do you mean by having that cruel work done?"

"He'll hang zere till his—hic!—his strength givesh out, an' zen he'll fall," chuckled the Carib. "He'll get killed on zem rocksh below him, if——"

"If what?" hoarsely asked the agonized boy, as he paused.

"If you don't—hic!—don't tell how to operate zish boat!" said the Carib.

Jack burst into a cold sweat, for the suspense was awful.

Every moment Tim's strength was waning, and if he did not comply the old sailor would get so weak his fingers would relax their desperate clutch, and down he would fall to his destruction!

"And if I comply?" he asked, hoarsely, of his fiendish tormentor.

"My men will pull him up!" came the Carib's reply.

The boy wavered for a moment; then his resolution was made.

"I won't do it!" he said firmly.

CHAPTER XIX.

SAVED BY THE SAILOR.

A veritable howl of fury escaped the dusky Carib's lips when Jack gave his answer, for he did not expect a negative reply.

The fumes of the liquor he had imbibed seemed to clear from his brain, and he jerked a dirk knife from his belt, sprang at the bound boy from whose head the metal helmet had been taken, and, pressing the point of the weapon at his throat, Mixitli yelled:

"I will know at once from you how to work this electric boat, or by the stars above us, I shall bury this dagger in your jugular! Speak now! Curse you, speak, I say!"

The plucky boy cast a cool glance at the enraged man.

"By killing me you lessen your chances of learning what you are so anxious to know," he said, quietly.

Fritz and the professor withdrew their glances from the figure of the old sailor, clearly outlined against the face of the cliff, to the edge of which he was hanging by his hands for his life.

There was a dark scowl on Mixitli's face and a frantic glare in his snake-like black eyes, and he hissed:

"You will not tell me anyway?"

"True," answered Jack, ringingly. "We are bound to die at your hands, and the death you are putting my friend to will be as sudden an ending as that with which you now threaten me. Strike, you infernal coward! Strike! I am not afraid to die!"

"I shall!" screamed the Carib.

He drew back his arm, and the boy unflinchingly met his rabid glances without a tremor or change of color.

The flashing knife darted toward the boy's neck.

Blackbeard struck it aside.

"Fool! Regain your senses!" he cried.

Staggered by the unexpected interference, Kellenda Mixitli gave a yell of ungovernable temper, wheeled round and glared balefully at the pirate.

"Why did you do that?" he hissed, in choking tones.

"In your rage you are spoiling all our chances," calmly replied the pirate. "Once he is dead we can learn nothing—absolutely nothing, and the way everything on this monitor

is electrified now, we dare not touch any of the complicated machinery for fear a shock may kill the one who does it."

As he said this he placed a whistle to his lips and blew it.

The shrill blast went up to the cliff top where the pirates were assembled around Tim Topstay, and, hearing it, they followed the signal it meant by hauling the old sailor up on terra firma.

"What did you do that for?" asked Mixitli, in petulant, surprised tones.

"Because, in the first place, nothing can be gained from it, as you have found by a trial," replied Blackbeard, secretly nudging Jack, "and in the second place, I have got a better plan."

"Name it," growled the Carib.

"I shall, when we have more privacy," answered Blackbeard, glancing around at his own men, who were the only ones besides themselves on the deck of the Sea Serpent. Mixitli was forced to be content with this vague reply.

He never suspected the treacherous part Blackbeard was playing against him, and knew nothing of the pirate's offer to aid Jack in order to further his own schemes.

The boy detected at once the diplomacy of Blackbeard in thus saving Tim's and his own lives from the foe; it was evidently a stroke to win the boy's confidence.

The men on the cliffs, according to prearrangement, conducted Tim out to the monitor in a boat, upon receiving the signal to lift him from his perilous position.

They now brought the old sailor aboard of the Sea Serpent, and Blackbeard asked one of them:

"Have the savages and the dissenters boarded the ship?"

"Ay, sir," replied the man, saluting respectfully, "an' they threathens ter keep the schooner back in the lagoon, an'——"

"That will do. The schooner is renamed, isn't it?"

"Ay, ay, sir. She's now called ther 'Error, as you ordered."

"You may now take Mixitli ashore or aboard of the ship——"

"Me?" echoed the Carib, in extreme amazement.

"Exactly," was Blackbeard's cool reply.

"What does this mean?" queried the astounded man.

"Simply this—I am the master of these vessels now."

"What! Have you been playing me false, Blackbeard?"

"I have schemed to get you and your whole crew drunk to seize this monitor and the schooner. Most of your men have deserted you and joined me to sail under the black flag and share with me the ton of gold massed in the idol lying upon the deck."

"Traitorous rascal!" gasped Kellenda Mixitli, in horrified surprise.

The Carib uttered a groan and turned deathly pale.

This blow was so unexpected and heavy that it took him some time to realize the position he was placed in.

He reeled back against the golden idol, trembling like an aspen, and breathed hard for a few moments, the fiendish glare in his eyes having a sullen look that portrayed the fire of conflicting emotions raging in his bosom.

Within a few moments he recovered from the shock, and, restoring his composure by a violent effort, he cried in tones of the bitterest chagrin:

"So this is the end of all my plans?"

"Precisely," answered Blackbeard, in mocking tones.

"Give me, at least, the satisfaction of killing my enemies."

"Not one. They are my prisoners, and as such I shall protect them."

Mixitli gnashed his teeth.

"I shall, then, have revenge!" he yelled, madly.

And, dropping the dagger to the deck, he withdrew a pistol and shot Blackbeard, pocketed his weapon and sprang overboard.

With a cry of woe, the pirate clapped his hand to the wound

in his bosom, reeled back, one hand upraised, and fell to the deck.

All his friends rushed to his side, some of them firing after Mixitli.

Tim was left unguarded for a moment.

Quick to act, the old sailor snatched Mixitli's dagger up from the deck, glided over to his friends and cut their bonds.

"Inter ther boat wi' yer!" he gasped.

Before Blackbeard's men could divine what had been done, they dashed across the deck into the pilot-house, shut the door and locked it.

"Saved!" exclaimed Jack, jubilantly.

"One good turn deserves another," chuckled the old sailor.

Fritz rushed up through the turret and closed the shutters of the pilot-house windows, while Jack followed after him.

The boy peered out through one of the loop-holes and saw Blackbeard's men scatter and make a rush at the door. The monitor was anchored.

Consequently Jack could not run away with her.

But he saw the schooner swiftly bearing down upon them, saw the yelling pirates arm themselves to burst down the door, and as there was but one way to get rid of them, the boy turned a lever.

The monitor sank down, and the panic-stricken pirates were left struggling in the water upon the surface.

A moment later the Sea Serpent disappeared beneath the waves.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRUNK TURTLE.

Down went the monitor, and when she reached the bottom Jack glanced at the indicator and saw they were in ten fathoms of water.

He started the electric lights, and as the silvery glow spread around the boat, he observed that the boat was in an extremely muddy spot, through which many black, slimy rocks were cropping out.

Jack opened the window shutters, and, glancing out, he saw that the anchor was imbedded in a mass of rocks some distance away, and said he would go out and loosen it.

Fortunately, there were a number of diving suits on board, and the boy procured a helmet in place of the one the pirates had taken away from him and put it on.

While Tim and Hopkins were taking an inventory of the contents of the Sea Serpent to see if the pirates had broken or stolen anything, the boy left the boat.

The lights radiating from the lamps and searchlight sent a glow a long distance around the Sea Serpent, and he found that although the muddy bottom was oozy, he could travel over it.

Making his way over to the anchor, Jack pulled it up and carried it over to the deck of the monitor, and then began to coil in the wire cable through the hawser hole.

While so engaged he suddenly felt something seize him from behind on the thigh of his leg, and, glancing back, he saw that it was an enormous trunk turtle.

These creatures are the largest in the world, reaching a length of ten feet, and weighing over a ton, their shells along the Mediterranean being used for small boats and animals' drinking troughs. It was one of the largest that ever grew which seized the boy with its enormous beak in a grip like a vise, its ridged shell glowing darkly in the electric light.

Never apprehending any trouble from the tremendous creature, Jack made an effort to drag himself away from its clenched jaws, when he found that he could not budge.

His strength was inadequate to free his leg, and before he could repeat his effort the creature darted up from the boat dragging him with it toward the surface.

In vain Jack fought to get away; he was as helpless as a child in the jaws of the Cyclopean beast, and he gave utterance to a cry of alarm that brought Tim to the window, peering out at the unequal struggle.

For a moment it looked like a great joke to the old sailor, and a broad grin overspread his weatherbeaten face; but this look soon changed into an expression of alarm when he saw Jack pitch over back to back with the monster, and observed it carry him rapidly away into the dense gloom beyond the lights.

Away swam the trunk turtle into the dense gloom, which was entirely unbroken except where the light streaked from the small electric lamp upon the boy's metal helmet.

For the first time a thrill of fear passed over the boy, that if he were carried into the gloomy realms far beyond the pale glow of the searchlight, he might not find his way back again.

Reaching for a knife handle in his belt, he pulled it out.

By this time the turtle was floating a dozen feet from the bottom, going at a prodigious rate of speed, and never once relinquishing its determined hold.

The boy reached under the shell's edge for a point where the turtle's leg protruded, and, finding it, he touched a spring which caused a blade ten inches long to fly out of the handle.

Into the soft, fleshy part it darted, and with an upward move of his wrist, the boy gashed off the turtle's front leg.

Instantly it came to a pause and sank.

Open went its beak, releasing the boy, and off its back he dropped to the bottom among a lot of tall eel grass.

The monster came down beside him, and he made a slash at its neck, but it saw the knife coming, withdrew its head into the shell again, and drew in its legs.

There it lay safely snuggled up in its armor, and nothing could induce it to show fight or protrude its beak again.

Jack cast a disdainful glance at it, and walked away very angry at being thus injured by such an ordinarily harmless object.

He could not see where he was going through the dense grass, but made a direct line for where he supposed the monitor to be, and traveled along for some time.

Instead of reaching the boat, however, the boy came to a rugged wall, which proved to be a coral reef, and climbed upon it in hopes that he could see where he was located.

A dark object shot down from the surface past his head the moment he got on top of the reef, and struck the coral beside him.

Had the boy not glided aside it might have crushed him.

Glancing down at it in surprise, Jack saw that it was a ship's anchor, with a cable attached to it, and one of the flukes catching in a crevice in the coral, held fast there.

He watched it closely, and saw the line become taut.

What craft had sent it down? he cogitated.

Then he concluded to climb up the rope and see.

It was an easy matter to do this, as the water buoyed his body, and he ascended like an acrobat, and his head popped out of the sea.

Beside him lay the pirate's schooner, the Terror.

Jack clung to the anchor line, and, listening, heard voices.

One of them he recognized as that of Blackbeard; the other he knew not.

"No," the pirate was saying, "Mixitli did not give me a serious wound. The ball passed through the fleshy part of my hip. You say he swam to the shore and got aboard of his ship, eh?"

"Ay, sir, while you and the rest, left in the water by the monitor sinking, were swimming toward this schooner," replied the other.

"The dusky hound will very likely hasten to get away from

here now, as he fears me. We will lay to here until to-morrow, and at daybreak we must set sail in quest of prey, as the whole crew clamor for active work now."

"And if I get a chance," muttered Jack, "I'll keep you in view, thwart your pirating plans, and put you in the hands of the law."

He glanced around and located the spot where the monitor had sunk.

The boy had just come to the conclusion that he could now find his way back to where his boat lay, when Blackbeard chanced to glance down and saw him.

Realizing in an instant who the strange diver was, the cunning rascal suddenly picked up a long boat-hook, reached over the bulwarks with it, and caught the boy under the arm with the hook.

"I've got one of those accursed divers!" he yelled, pulling in on the pole.

To Jack's dismay, he found himself being pulled over toward the boat.

CHAPTER XXI.

TO THE RESCUE.

The boy's hands were dragged from their hold upon the anchor line as the two men began to pull upon the handle of the boat-hook, and he felt himself being lifted up toward the bulwarks.

Catching hold of the pole above the hook with both hands he energetically hoisted himself up toward the boat.

By so doing he released himself of the hook.

He then made a backward leap into the water, and a yell of anger pealed from the pirate's lips as he plunged into the brine close to the rope, seized it again in passing and slipped down.

Within a minute Jack disappeared beneath the surface, and, letting himself slide he reached the top of the reef once more.

Fearing that his enemies might bombard him, as they knew where he had descended, Jack hastened to get down to the bottom among the eel grass again.

As he now knew in about which direction to go in quest of the Sea Serpent, he accordingly started off, and after a long walk came in sight of the electric lights.

Here he found Tim wandering around in a diving suit looking for him, and in a few words he explained to the old sailor what had befallen him when the trunk turtle carried him off.

They then went inside and took off their diving costumes.

Fritz and the professor were in the saloon, where a fine supper was laid by the Dutch boy, and upon hearing Jack's story they all sat down at the table and enjoyed the repast.

"Blackbeard is bent upon mischief," said Jack, during the course of the meal, "and is determined to carry out his piratical expedition. He can do a great deal of harm unless we watch him closely, and as the burden of that ton of gold can't interfere with us, I propose that we shadow the schooner and baffle his plans.

The rest readily agreed to this.

"Den dot Carib don't vhas in id some more?" queried Fritz.

"He is such a vindictive rascal," the boy answered, "that I am of the opinion he will not let Blackbeard off without a fight. It would not surprise me to learn that he and his crew of natives got on the pirate's track, followed him up and made an effort to do them all the injury they could for acting so treacherously."

Jack afterward sent the boat over near the coral reef in plain sight of the anchor, the removal of which, indicating the departure of the schooner, they could detect in a moment.

In the morning they saw the schooner's anchor go up.

Fritz and the professor were then on watch, and the Dutch boy sent the camera's telescopic tube to the surface, put out the lights and saw daylight reflected upon the white board.

The broad expanse of dancing sea was plainly depicted upon the board in natural movement and colors; at one side they beheld the end of the island, and off the shore the schooner, upon the deck of which the crew were busy making preparations for departure.

Fritz rang a gong, and Jack and Tim soon came in, glanced at the camera board and observed what was transpiring.

By that time the schooner's anchor was afloat, her sails were filling away, and she stood off through Ship Channel to the sea, going around to the southward with a quarter wind.

"We must follow him at once!" said Jack. "Go to the surface."

"Yah," said Fritz, turning the pump lever.

The machinery failed to operate, however, and a look of blank astonishment overspread every one's face.

"I must go aft and see what the trouble is," said Jack.

He hastened down in the cabin, passed through the galley and store-room into the machine compartment, and glanced around.

A series of most dismal howls reached his ears, and, directing his glance at the spot from whence they proceeded, he beheld the cause of the pump's refusal to work.

The monkey was jammed in between the wheel and the belt, and nearly had the life crushed out of his little body as it effectually jammed the broad leather band, preventing it operating.

How he got in there was a mystery that never was solved.

Jack hastily got him out, the belt ran, the wheel whirled, and in a moment the machinery began to operate properly.

The water was rapidly pumped out of the hold, and the Sea Serpent began to ascend to the surface.

As soon as she began to go up Jack lowered the camera tube to accommodate their nearness to the surface, and when the monitor was within ten feet of the surface, he brought her to a pause with the tube projecting a few feet above the waves.

"By this means," he remarked to the professor, "we can remain concealed ourselves and observe all that transpires upon the surface.

"The monitor, dear boy, is a wonder," said the scientist, glancing down at the camera board. "But I see the Terror has vanished."

"Och, she vhas vent herself yust aroundt dot hetlandt." said Fritz, "und so soon dot ve got oudt ourselves by der sea, ve soon seen her again alretty. Oxcuse me, but dit you vhas seen mine pipe?"

"You laid it down on the floor beside your chair," said Hopkins.

"Donner und blitzen! looker dot Bismarck!" cried Fritz, pointing at his pet, who had stolen the pipe and was walking off with it. "Dit you effer vhas found a barrot so schmart like dot, vonct? I t'ink me poody soon he vhas gelearndt ter shew derbacker somedimes."

He rushed after Bismarck, and the parrot flew out of the room with the pipe.

The monitor soon got out into deep water, when Jack saw the schooner flying along the eastern shore of the island under a full head of canvas, in purusit of a bark which had come out from Exuma Bay, from behind Rum Island.

She bore the Stars and Stripes at her mast top, and was heading straight out to sea, when suddenly a gunshot burst from the schooner, and a ball went flying athwart her course.

Hauling to, she rode up in the wind suddenly, and the pirates came swarming out from under cover upon the deck of the schooner, armed with cutlasses and firearms.

As soon as the crew of the bark observed the character of

the Terror, she swung away before the wind and ran away, upon seeing which the schooner started off in hot pursuit of her.

Jack increased the speed of the monitor, and overhauled the pirates' vessel, which was a fast sailer, and rapidly was gaining on the bark.

The camera showed a second gunshot from the Terror, and the ball was seen to strike the bark in the hull astern above the water line, shattering her rudder to pieces.

Up into the wind's eye rode the bark at once, and the overjoyed pirates swiftly swooped toward their victim, the bloodthirsty crew eager for the fray which seemed to promise them a rich reward.

In five minutes the pirate would reach its prey.

But scarcely half the distance was covered, when up from the sea rose the Sea Serpent between the Terror and the bark.

A yell of consternation pealed from the pirates, and away they sent their craft careering upon the leeward tack, firing a heavy broadside as she skipped along.

Half a dozen screaming shots went flying toward the monitor and struck her hull in different places, knocking her over upon her beam ends.

CHAPTER XXII.

OFF FOR THE PIRATES' STRONGHOLD.

The broadside of half a dozen shots from the schooner that struck the Sea Serpent and knocked her over upon her beam ends were incapable of penetrating the heavily clad aluminum hull.

In a few moments the monitor recovered an even keel, after the first shock, and Jack sent the professor on a tour of examination to see if any damage was done.

Tim and Fritz went to help him.

The bark which had come out of Exuma Bay, near Rum Island, lay helplessly upon the waves with her rudder shattered by the pirate's shot, which had penetrated just above the water line.

In the east the early morning sun was just arising on a beautiful day, and nothing was to be seen of Kellenda Mixitli's ship and crew, which had been at San Salvador when Blackbeard so treacherously deserted the Carib.

The Terror had gone off on the leeward tack to fire that broadside, and never stopping to observe the result, although the schooner was well armed and her decks bristled with a large crew, she fled from the dreaded monitor.

It must have been chagrining to the pirate to watch the electric boat, with the golden idol on her deck, which he coveted so much, putting him to flight.

There was a small crew on the American bark, and Jack now saw that her name was the Texan Queen.

Her men were all cast into a wild panic by the pirates' pursuit and attack, and were astonished to see the submarine monitor rise up from the sea between themselves and their enemies.

Jack gauged one of his guns to bear upon the flying schooner. With one shot he could blow her to pieces.

"It's lucky I followed her under water from San Salvador," the boy muttered, grimly. "If I hadn't, that bark would have fallen the pirates' victim."

He was just about to fire the gun, when the schooner shot around a rocky promontory and faded from view behind the isle.

"Shase yourselluf after him vonct!" exclaimed Fritz, excitedly. "Don't you vhas see dot ve couldn't pompard him now alretty?"

"Ay," said Tim, giving a hitch at his pants, "but I reckon as we'd better tack ower ter that 'ere bark. She looks as if she wuz founderin'."

"Tim is right. The shot she got must have passed through the bottom of her hull," said Jack. "She is filling and sinking."

"We can pursue the pirate at any time, dear boy," said the professor.

Jack let Blackbeard go.

Steering the monitor over to the bark, he ran alongside of her.

"Ahoy, there!" he cried through the window.

"Take us off—we are sinking!" came the reply.

"I can do better than that—I'll tow your craft ashore, and you can beach and mend her well enough to reach your port of destination. How will that do?"

"Much better, if you will aid us."

"Tim, go down on deck and make their hawsers fast."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the old sailor, stumping away.

"F'ling over a towing line!" cried Jack.

"Stand by to catch it, then."

Tim went out on deck just then, and, catching the rope, he made it fast to a stanchion, and Jack sent the Sea Serpent in toward the island.

The bark was dragged along into shoal water, and with a grating noise came to a pause, high and dry.

She was in a favorable position to be repaired, and there Jack left her to her crew's resources.

Paying no heed to the profuse gratitude of her crew, he steered the monitor away, and started off in search of the fugitive schooner.

A detour was made of the island, but nothing was seen of the schooner, although the young inventor and his friends not only sharply scrutinized the shore with their powerful glasses, but they also swept the sea with them in all directions.

The Terror had no more than half an hour the start of them, but in that comparatively short space of time she had vanished as completely as if dissolved into air.

"I am of the opinion that the pirates knew of some safe harbor along the shore somewhere," said Jack, when the monitor got back in the vicinity of the Texan Queen, "and that they are lying concealed there till we go away. As it would consume a long time to search the whole coast line, we had better give it up, and await our chance to meet the rascal again."

"You say he intends to cross the Gulf to the island of Ruatan, and join the pirates of that stronghold?" asked the professor. "Then why not go ahead and lie in wait for him?"

"Perhaps I may," answered Jack, thoughtfully. "Hello, Fritz, what's that you've got there in that little jar?"

"Dot vhas a fish I vhas catch me for Dim's breakfast, when ve vhas under der vater, I guess so, und I vhas taken it down by der galley now ter fix me it alretty," answered Fritz.

"Wot's that?" demanded Tim, just then coming in.

"A fishes ter make you a kidney stew vonct," said Fritz, with a grin.

Tim fastened his solitary eye on the fish, which looked like a good-sized polly-wog, and a look of disgust crossed his face.

"Avast, thar!" he exclaimed. "D'yer mean ter say as yer wuz a-goin' ter sarve this 'ere penckake-headed, ring-tailed thing on me?"

"Cerdainly, of course, yes," promptly replied Fritz.

"Waal, now, I'll be blowed if yer will," said Tim, and he made a grab for it, and knocked the jar out of Fritz's hand.

The Dutch boy's jar was shattered to pieces, and the fish fell out on the floor, where it began to wriggle and flop.

Snatching it up with a triumphant chuckle, Tim was just about to fling the fish out of the window, when it gave him a terrible electric shock that knocked him flying.

A wild roar pealed from his lips, and he hopped up in the air.

"Murder!" he bellowed. "I'm full of pins and needles!"

"Haw! haw! haw! haw! haw!" brayed Fritz, till the tears ran from his eyes.

"Oh—ouch—wow—whoop!" yelled Tim. "This is a trick!"

"It vhas a torpedo!" chuckled Fritz, delightedly.

The fish was filled with electricity powerful enough to knock a mule down, and the Dutch boy knew it well enough.

The old sailor dropped the torpedo, scrambled up on his good foot, and caught Fritz a tremendous bang, as he bent over, with his wooden leg.

It lifted the Dutch boy clear off the floor, and he gave a grunt.

He didn't say a word, except:

"Donner vetter!"

Then he fled, and the irate sailor pursued him.

A few minutes afterward a terrible thumping, clattering and banging noise came from the pantry, interspersed with choice adjectives in sailor lingo and Dutch dialect.

"They are having a red-hot time of it in there," observed Hopkins.

"Just a little scuffle," replied Jack, with a smile. "If you are a good surgeon, professor, they may call upon you to sew on a few pieces of arm, a nose, scalp, and a few ears when they finish."

Hopkins looked as if he did not doubt it, and said so.

"Which way are you taking the boat now?" he asked.

"Toward Ruatan," replied Jack. "It is the worst rendezvous in the world for pirates, and as Blackbeard is going there, I don't see why I can't break the pestiferous place up, as well as blow that scoundrel and his schooner out of the water."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NEGRO.

It was a long run from Rumi Island through the Caribbean Sea into the Gulf of Mexico, for ordinary vessels, but the monitor made quick time of it, and soon hove in sight of the Bay of Honduras.

The afternoon had closed when they came in sight of the island, and the big blood-red moon began to rise over the eastern waters like a ball of fire, which sent a broad sheen glittering across the gulf.

Jack stood silent and alone in the pilot-house when the far-distant island was sighted, and he was wondering what the best disposition would be that he could make of the golden idol, when he was startled by hearing a cry coming from the water.

A moment afterwards there sounded a violent crash.

He thought at first that the bow of the monitor had struck upon a sunken reef, and hastily stopped the wheels and reversed them.

Upon a quick glance ahead, down into the water, however, he observed that the prow of the Sea Serpent had struck a row-boat, smashed it to pieces, and spilled its negro occupant into the water.

He was swimming lustily at that moment, and crying for help.

The boat he had been in was almost the same color as the water, and this fact, coupled with the abstracted mind Jack was in, and his not expecting to meet with a rowboat in this isolated spot, occasioned the accident.

As soon as the young inventor saw the negro's kinky head floating upon the water, he whistled through the speaking tube.

"Fritz!" he shouted in the pipe.

"Yah vohl!" came the Dutch boy's reply.

"Man overboard. Fling him a rope!"

"Shiminey Christmas! Vhas dot so? All right!"

A moment afterwards Fritz dashed out on deck with a line in his hand, and hurrying to the bulwark he peered over.

"Steamer ahoy! Help, dar! Help, dar!" yelled the swimming coon.

"Shtrike out! You vhas ofer your het!" bawled Fritz. "Caught yourselluf aholt by dis rope alretty quick."

He let the coiled line fly, and it dropped in the brine beside the negro, who eagerly caught hold of it, whereupon Fritz hauled him in, and he got up on deck, soaking wet.

Jack soon found out that the negro was well acquainted with the shoals and rocks in the neighborhood, and promised him five dollars if he would point out a safe passage to the pirates' rendezvous. This the treacherous rascal swore he would do.

"Tim, go down in the bow on lookout," said the boy to the old sailor, who stood beside Hopkins in the doorway.

"Hull on, dar!" exclaimed the negro.

"Ay, now, what's amiss?" queried Tim.

"'Tain't no use ob habin' lookout; de water am cl'ar ahead, boss, an' dis yere coon know ebery bit ob it, fo' shuah."

"That don't make any difference. Go ahead, Tim."

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded the ancient mariner, limping away.

A look of disappointment overspread the darky's sable face.

The monitor passed on like a shot, and in due time came within half a mile of the rock-bound coast, when suddenly Tim, stationed in the bow, yelled lustily:

"Haul to! Haul to!"

"What's the matter?" asked Jack, complying.

"Reefs ahead, sir."

"I don't see any."

"Ay, but looker that 'ere riffled water athwart our course."

"By jove! a sunken reef, or a sand bar!"

A guilty look crept over the negro's face, and Jack turned to him angrily, and exclaimed:

"Say! Are you playing me false for any purpose?"

"Lord a-massy, no, boss," quickly answered the coon. "I done fo'get dat de tide wuzn't all de way up, sah. Wif plenty tide, yo' done could go ober dis yere reef easy 'nough."

"Do you know a passage to get inside of it?"

"Spec's I do. Golly—how I could fo'git dat reef. G'wan."

"How far?"

"Opposite dat palm tree asho', boss."

Jack started the boat, when a narrow opening was found in the barrier reef, and they passed through toward the rugged land. Nothing but rocks, black and beetling, lined the shore.

"Now which way am I to steer?" queried Jack.

"See dat stone castle yonder, on top ob de rocks?"

"Yes—so I do. Is that it?"

"Yassah. I'se a-gwine fo' ter leabe yo' heah. Gimme 'de money."

"Going to swim ashore?" asked Jack, handing him a bill.

"Fo' shuah. D'yo' s'pose I'se gwine ter stan' de shots from de cannons up dar on de bluffs? No, sah! No, sah!"

He wished them good-by, went out on deck, and, leaping overboard, he swam away to the shore.

Hardly had he reached it when a gang of men jumped out from among the rocks and surrounded him.

An energetic conversation followed, whereupon one of the men with an ax cut down the palm tree by which the passage in through the reef was marked.

Unless there were other openings, Jack could not now get his boat out on the Gulf again, as he had no landmark.

The negro and the men sent the tree adrift and disappeared.

No sooner were they gone when a light flared up on the

cliff top, there sounded a thunderous report, and a shot from a heavy gun came whistling down toward the monitor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN A TRAP.

"Treachery!" cried Jack, as the shot went flying over the Sea Serpent. "Do you see what that nigger did, boys?"

"It looks to me as if he was in with the pirates," said Hopkins.

"Of course he is," assented the boy. "He spotted the golden idol and designed to wreck us on the reef first, so his friends on yonder cliffs could fish the gold up afterwards."

"Blast his black mug!" growled Tim, angrily.

"Now he has destroyed the landmark by which we could have found our way out from behind this reef. That looks very suspicious to me," said the boy, loading the three guns.

"He must be a member of the pirates' gang," said the professor.

"Of that I am sure, since he joined their band on the shore," Jack replied. "It is a put-up job. I see through it. I'll fix them, though."

He aimed the gun at the cliff and fired a shot below where the castle stood, at an abutting mass of rock.

With a howl like a buzz-saw ripping through a board, the projectile rushed through the air and struck its mark.

There it burst with a terrific report.

The entire wall of stone was smashed to pieces, showing that it was hollow in back, and it fell with a crash.

In back of it a sheltered lagoon was revealed, in which floated a dozen ships of various sizes and kinds.

"The piratical fleet!" exclaimed Jack, in surprise.

"Dot vall vhas almost shust so t'in like baper," said Fritz. Another gunshot thundered from the cliff-top, and, striking the water beside the Sea Serpent, splashed it up and sank.

Jack flashed the searchlight up on the rocks.

They were swarming with armed men.

Some of them were hastily filing down different paths toward the ships in the lagoon.

"They mean to board their vessels and attack us," said the professor, grimly.

"I'll stop the barking of the guns up in that fortress!" said Jack, as he revolved the turret, and brought his port gun to bear upon the castle. "Watch it!"

He carefully sighted the piece.

Then he pressed the button.

Away shrieked the shot on its course, and struck its mark.

A tremendous mass of debris flew up in the air, they heard the distant sound of a chorus of yells, and when the dust cleared away the castle-like structure had disappeared.

The shot had torn it to pieces.

"Bull's-eye!" exclaimed Tim, jubilantly.

By that time several of the ships in the lagoon, swarming with men, got under way and came gliding out.

"They mean to show fight," observed Jack, dryly.

"Ay, lad, an' thar's hundreds o' them to each of us," said Tim.

"I am not alarmed; I have silenced the battery up on the cliff. Wait—I'll draw all the ships out. Tim, return to the bows on lookout. I'm going to run away."

"Ay, sir; but I hopes as ye ain't skeered on 'em?"

"Not much! It's only a ruse."

Thus satisfied, Tim stumped away.

Starting the monitor off at full speed, it dashed away, and Jack saw ship after ship come out in pursuit of him.

Presently, every one of them had emerged.

On dashed the monitor, and on came the pirates' ships in pursuit, when the foremost sent a shot flying after her from a bow-chaser, but it fell short, harmlessly.

Just then Jack glanced up at a cliff they were passing. Behind a breastwork there were mounted over a hundred guns, pointing out from the cliffs, and he saw scores of men around them preparing to pour a deadly battery down upon the monitor.

"Fasten up all openings—quick!" exclaimed the boy.

Fritz and the professor obeyed, and Tim came in.

As soon as this was done, the boy glanced up at the registers and seeing that there was plenty of air in the boat for a few hours, he opened the valves and let in the water.

Down plunged the Sea Serpent under the waves, just as a broadside, that shook the island to its foundation, was poured from the siege battery on the side of the rocky bluff.

The cannon balls came whizzing along, and pounded the water all around where the monitor had been, without doing her any harm.

She had just gone below in time to save herself from being blown to pieces, thanks to Jack's quick forethought.

Down she went about five fathoms ere the boy brought her to a pause in her descent, and drove her ahead.

He kept her going half a mile under water, the powerful searchlight shedding a broad glare ahead, and then he brought her to the surface again, beyond the range of the battery.

The full moon had arisen by this time.

It flooded the sparkling waters with a mellow light, and showed Jack that the ships were still pressing on after him.

A few minutes afterwards several shots from long-range guns came screaming after them, and while some fell short others passed over the monitor, and dropped on either quarter.

"It's getting uncomfortably hot here!" remarked the boy. "I'll give them my remaining shot and sink a ship."

The fastest sailor, in advance of the rest of the fleet, was singled out, and the boy turned the turret and aimed at it.

He then fired a shot, and the projectile hit the ship.

Nothing was left of the crew or craft a moment afterwards.

There came a cry from Tim a few minutes later.

"Breakers ahead!" was his exclamation.

"Where away?" asked Jack, in startled tones, as he turned the turret.

"Athwart our course," replied Tim.

Jack glanced ahead, and saw a long line of surf, stopped the monitor, and followed it with his glance.

It led from the shore to the first barrier reef they came through.

"We are cooped up in a natural basin, formed by that semi-circular reef!" he remarked. "This is more of the coon's treachery. He knew very well what he was doing when he lured us in here."

"Dem shibs vhas overhauled us puddy soon," said Fritz.

"We can easily give them the slip by sinking, as we can't go any further," coolly replied Jack. "Don't alarm yourselves. Wait—I will load the guns and give them fight for a while."

He hastily put a copper cylinder into each of the weapons, and, turning the monitor around, awaited the approach of the pirates.

They were cheering themselves hoarse, for they now considered the electric boat at their mercy, as they knew the reef would stop its further running, and they bore straight down on the monitor.

Jack fired the first gun, and another ship vanished.

Around went the turret, and the starboard gun was aimed and discharged, with equally as disastrous effect, but the shot from the port gun missed its mark, ripped the water all up, and, ploughing its way to land, burst against the cliffs.

Undaunted by the awful effect of the Monitor's shots, the

rest of the fleet pressed steadily on, assured now of an easy victory over the Sea Serpent.

Jack laughed scornfully at their confidence.

"We will descend and disappoint them!" he remarked.

He turned the lever, but the valves failed to respond!

Instead of filling, the boat remained stationary on the surface.

"Something is the matter with the spiracles!" exclaimed Jack, in alarm.

"If we remain here five minutes longer," said the professor, "yonder fleet will reach us and blow the monitor to pieces!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WOLF-FISH.

Jack and his friends were alarmed when they found that they could not make the Sea Serpent sink, for the fleet of pirates' ships were now in easy gun range.

"There is nothing for it but to engage them with the guns till we find out what the trouble is," said the boy, hastily loading the weapons again.

"Lord save us, lad!" gasped Tim. "D'ye want me ter go below and find out what ther trouble are?"

"Yes, and remedy it, too, if you can!"

Just then several gunshots came from the oncoming ships, and one of them struck the monitor, giving her a shock that knocked her around on her beam ends.

It glanced off again without doing her any harm, and Jack returned the shot, while Tim hurried out, and Fritz worked the machinery controlling the turret.

The projectile from the Sea Serpent tore away the leeward side of the ship, and sent her foremast by the board.

"Turn the turret!" exclaimed Jack, in hurried tones.

Around it went and a second shot was discharged, which smashed another of the ships to pieces.

The third shot completed the loss of the first ship Jack struck.

While the boy was reloading the gun several more shots came from the pirates, battering the hull of the monitor without doing her much damage, as her thick aluminum plates protected her.

Tim came in just then, and exclaimed:

"Ther valves wuz all choked up with seaweed!"

"Have you got them clear?" queried Jack, anxiously.

"Ay, lad. Ye kin send her down now."

Just then another cannon ball came flying along, and, striking the golden idol, knocked it into the sea from the deck.

Down it plunged beneath the waves with a loud splash, and sank to the bottom, disappearing from Jack's view.

"Sink her here," said the professor. "The idol is gone."

Jack lowered the monitor to the bottom, a yell of the most intense delight pealing from the lips of the pirates, who did not know she was a submarine boat, and imagined that one of their shots had sunk her.

The electric lights at the ports were started, and she came to a pause among a mass of coral, in a halo of silvery glory.

Great ridges of yellow, white and red coral were strewn about the bottom, myriads of fishes of various kinds swimming here and there among the grottos, and upon a slight plateau on one side they beheld the ton of gold.

Our friends put on their metallic suits, and, going out on deck with the proper kind of tackle, they at once began to work getting the idol back on the monitor's deck.

Upon restoring the idol to the deck of the boat they set to work with drills and saws upon it, and cut it to pieces.

Then they stored it inside of the monitor.

Daylight arrived by the time this work was finished, great swarms of turtles constantly interfering with their labor, for the island of Ruatan was densely infested with these creatures.

Jack was just about to follow Tim and Hopkins down through the trap-door, when there sounded a loud "swish" in the water in back of him; he glanced around, and something bright and metallic flashed before his eyes.

The next instant it struck him on the back and knocked him down upon the deck flat on his face, passed over him and disappeared beyond in the gloom.

It was a fierce-looking wolf-fish, of a savage, voracious and ugly appearance, five feet in length, its slimy skin covered with tubercles, and its gaping, powerful jaws filled with sharp teeth, which added to its hideous appearance.

Jack shuddered when he observed what a terrible monster it was, and observed that its huge, bulging eyes were staring at him with a most malignant expression.

He tried to leap out of its way, and partly succeeded, but the tubercles on its rough body caught in the scales of aluminum of which his armor was composed, and, while the onward rush of the fish was checked, the impetus knocked Jack down upon the deck.

The wolf-fish now became terrified at finding itself caught fast to the boy, and struggled with all its mighty strength to tear itself free again.

A fearful strain was brought to bear on the suit, pulling the scales of metal backward in the wrong direction, and Jack was dragged along to the bulwarks in the bow.

There he caught hold of the rope lacing and hung on.

The straining of the fish to get free continued.

It was caught in a defective spot in Jack's suit, and there came a sudden ripping sound as the rubber cloth under the metallic plates was suddenly torn and gave way.

The wolf-fish tore the caught tubercles from its body in the powerful tug it gave, and, badly lacerated, got free.

Bleeding from its wounds, it swam away, pursued by a white shark, which, swimming by, scented its wounds.

The moment Jack heard the ominous rip his heart sank.

He felt the water begin to gush into his suit.

By the time he reached the trap-door he was strangling.

He could not hold his breath under such a pressure.

The blood rushed to his head; he staggered like a drunken man; a gasping cry escaped him; he tried to recover himself; then he blindly fell.

He inhaled the water, and in a moment was drowning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST OF THE PIRATES.

Down into the water chamber fell Jack with a bang.

His body struck a hard substance, and the trap-door closed with a loud thud after him.

"I say, dear boy, do you want to kill me, falling down upon my head in that manner? Dear me, you have broken my helmet lamp, and I declare——"

It was the professor Jack had fallen on.

"Help!" gurgled the drowning boy.

His voice was half inaudible, yet Hopkins heard it and realized in a twinkling that something had gone wrong.

He did not waste a moment in idle speculation, but opened the door leading into the interior, without waiting to pump the water out of the compartment.

No more water could come in, as the deck trap had been automatically closed, but the water in the compartment instantly gushed into the boat, flooding the floor to several inches of Jephth, and knocking Fritz down.

Into the boat Jack was pulled, the Dutch boy roaring with wrath, as he imagined that he had been knocked down for a joke, and Hopkins rapidly unscrewed Jack's visor glass.

Then he took off the boy's suit.

The young inventor, half drowned, was unconscious.

In such experienced hands as those of the professor and Fritz, however, he was soon revived, and in half an hour had entirely recovered from the effects of his adventure.

Soon afterwards Fritz gave them their breakfast, and they all turned in for a much needed rest.

It was late in the afternoon before they were up and about again, and Jack returned to the pilot-house.

The air gauge indicated that they would soon have to go to the top, and the boy then examined the batteries, and found that they were in excellent working order.

The machinery needed lubricating, and he sent Tim to attend to it, while the professor examined the guns.

Jack sent the camera to the top, shut off the lights, and the board reflected the scene above the sea.

It was a clear day.

Not a man or ship was anywhere in sight, but he observed that the pirates had marked the spot where the monitor went down with a white painted buoy.

"They evidently intend to come back some time in the near future to go fishing for our dead bodies and the golden idol," laughed the young inventor, withdrawing the camera.

"Verily, my Christian friend," smilingly answered the professor, accidentally treading on Whiskers' paw, "but they won't find it."

Jack went back into the storeroom, and opened a box containing several hundred small copper cylinders, pointed at one end with needle-like spikes, and finished at the other end with electrical binding-posts.

They were filled with his own patent high explosive, and as Tim and Fritz came in, he pointed at them and said:

"Each of these cylinders is capable of blowing up a hundred tons. I am going to use them in a short time."

"Ay, then I reckon as ye want us ter help yer?" said Tim.

"Exactly. We are going to the pirates' lagoon, and get underneath their fleet. Fritz can put on a diving suit."

"Yah, I t'ink so. But vot iss? I can do me someding for you?"

"It will be your business to jab one of these bombs into the bottom of each one of the ships. Then attach a running wire from one binding-post to the other, till we have got them all strung together, after which the line can be brought into the pilot-house. I will then send a current of electricity through it and burst the bombs. When they explode there won't be a ship left."

Tim and Fritz were delighted with this plan.

Jack returned to the pilot-house, brought the monitor to the surface, and when a supply of air was stored on board, he submerged the Sea Serpent again twenty feet.

Then away she started for the pirates' lair, the camera on the surface showing them the way, and Fritz merrily playing a tune on his old accordion.

In due course of time the Sea Serpent reached the place where Jack had bombarded the cliffs, and she passed over the fallen rocks into the lagoon.

Here they saw the pirates' squadron of ships calmly lying at anchor, most of the crew being ashore.

From within the lagoon they saw the pirates' village clustered on a plateau up among the rocks, and fluttering from a tall flag pole, rising from the midst of it, there was a huge black flag with a white skull and cross-bones in the middle.

There came sounds of music, song and revelry from the stronghold, which would soon be subdued by the dire tragedy then menacing the ocean outlaws.

Like a shadow the Sea Serpent glided over among the ships, Fritz standing out on the forward deck clad in a suit of mail, the box of bombs standing beside him.

From one handsome ship to the other glided the avenging deep sea boat, and cylinder after cylinder was attached to the hulls of the fleet.

In a short time every one of the ships had a mine affixed to its flanks, with a wire running from one to the other.

As soon as they were all in readiness the end of the wire was secured to a binding-post on the outside front of the turret, and the Sea Serpent recoiled out to the sea.

Fritz came inside presently.

"Is everything in readiness?" asked Jack.

"Everyt'ing!" replied the Dutch boy.

"Then here goes the whole fleet!"

As the boy spoke he touched an electric press button, and an electric current flashed to the torpedo.

Instantly there came a roar that shook land and sea.

The camera showed them a cloud of dark debris flying up to the sky from the lagoon, and when it came down every ship of the fleet had been blown to fragments.

A scene of wildest confusion ensued upon the rocks.

The terrified pirates fled inland at full speed, and in ten minutes not a man was left in the place.

Jack then brought his boat to the surface.

Hopkins had loaded the three guns, and as soon as the boy maneuvered the monitor into a favorable position, he fired two shots at the pirates' village, and left it in ruins, after which he sent the Sea Serpent away.

Then he ran along the coast until he reached the siege battery upon the face of the cliff.

Shot after shot was fired at it, until at last not a gun was left, and the pirates' stronghold was entirely wrecked.

Jack had carried out his purpose.

The pirates of the island of Ruatan were exterminated.

"And now to find the passage out to the sea!" he exclaimed.

He drove the monitor over the barrier reef, when Tim cried:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away?" the boy asked.

"On our starboard quarter, sir."

"What do you make her out to be?"

"Blackbeard's schooner, the Terror, an' she's a-bearin' down on us fast, sir," replied the old sailor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

Jack opened the shutters on the pilot-house windows, and, peering out over the sea at the craft Tim was viewing with a binocular, he saw that she was the Terror.

The schooner was heading for Ruatan, and her crew having observed the monitor, Blackbeard had changed her course till she bore away to the southward for Port Royal.

"We must find our way out from behind this reef," said Jack, "for I wouldn't let that rascal escape me for anything."

"Dere vhas only vun vay," said Fritz. "Ve vhas got ter run along dot reef, und keep on runnin' till ve found oursellufs dose obenings, troo vat ve sailed alretty—ain'd id?"

"Then you go out on deck and keep a lookout, Tim," said Jack, acting upon this sensible suggestion.

The tide had fallen, but did not expose the top of the dangerous reef. They had only the ruffled streak of water to let them see where the coral bank ran.

The Sea Serpent was kept as close to the reef as Jack

deemed it consistent with safety, and Tim posted himself on the bow and fixed his solitary eye upon the water.

Had the treacherous negro they picked up not chopped down the palm tree on shore, they would have had no trouble to locate the precise spot where the opening was.

Now they had to trust to luck to find it.

The monitor had not gone very far, however, when there came the shout from Tim of:

"Here it are!"

Jack glanced down and saw smooth water alongside.

Instantly turning the Sea Serpent, he drove it slowly into the opening, and she passed out from behind the reef.

A cheer burst from our friends as soon as they found the Sea Serpent in clear water, and the young inventor headed his craft for the flying schooner.

Extra speed was put on, and she began to rapidly overhaul the Terror, when the pirate, in a fit of desperation, drove his craft in shoreward.

She struck with a terrible crash upon the hidden reef, a hole was stove in her hull, and the bow rising, lifted her up out of the water upon the coral.

There she hung, her stern submerged, and her broken bow hanging upon the reef, a hopeless wreck.

Down went her quarter boats, in tumbled the crew, and away some of them went for shore.

Up to the wreck dashed the monitor like lightning, and upon seeing Blackbeard yet on her deck, Jack shouted:

"Surrender, or we will blow your craft to pieces!"

"Never!" yelled the big rascal, defiantly.

Jack brought the monitor to a pause a few yards from the schooner, and he was just about to open fire upon the rest of the piratical crew when the cabin door of the Terror burst open, and a man rushed out.

He was Kellenda Mixitli, the Carib.

Having followed the schooner in his other vessel, he attacked the pirate, and his ship was blown to pieces.

All his native crew were slaughtered, and he himself had been made a prisoner.

The Carib looked like a veritable fiend.

He picked up a belaying pin, and, rushing across the slanting deck, he attacked Blackbeard with the ferocity of a demon, and a terrible struggle ensued.

They lost their footing on the slanting deck, and fell down, rolled over and over, and dropped in the sea.

Here the struggle was continued with unabated fury, the dark Carib thirsting for vengeance, and utterly reckless about his own life.

Several times the snarling pair sank and rose again.

The last time they came up, Blackbeard clutched a dagger in his hand, and plunged it in the Carib's heart.

"Oh, God!" shrieked Mixitli. "I'm killed!"

"May the arch fiend take your soul!" hissed the pirate.

He flung the Carib from him and swam away.

Mixitli sank beneath the waves forever.

"Fire upon Blackbeard!" cried Jack.

Tim and Fritz rushed out on the pilot-house on the turret with pneumatic rifles in their hands to carry out this order, but the pirate dove down and vanished.

When he arose again he was hidden from sight behind one of the escaping boats, and, reaching land in safety, he made his escape.

His subsequent exploits have been narrated by historians under his own name of Edward Teach.

All his crew had escaped from the schooner, either by making off in the boats, or by springing overboard and swimming away to Ruatan's shores.

"Shall we kill them?" the professor asked.

"No," replied the boy. "They can't defend themselves now.

It would be wanton murder. Let the rascals live. Sooner or later their many crimes will find them out, and be expiated on the gallows."

"Vot about dot schooner?" asked Fritz, anxiously.

"She will never serve their purpose again. I'll blow her up."

"Blast thar timbers, they've all escaped but that 'ere Carib!" growled Tim, taking a big chew of ravy plug.

Jack backed the Sea Serpent away from the Terror, and, aiming one of his guns at her, he fired a shot.

The schooner was blown to atoms.

Jack Wright was satisfied at last.

"Mixitli is dead!" he exclaimed. "Blackbeard's craft is destroyed. The stronghold and fleet of the pirates of Ruatan are blown up, and we have got the ton of gold we were in search of. There is nothing to keep us here any longer. Now, what say you, my friends, to return home and enjoy the fruits of our labor?"

"Yea, verily, my Christian friend!"

"I t'ink so, neider!"

"Ay, ay, my hearty!"

Thus chorused the rest, and as Whiskers and Bismarck just then chimed in, with a howl and a screech, the motion was carried.

Jack then turned the Sea Serpent homeward, and drove her through the Mexican Gulf and up the American coast.

In due time, and without further adventure, she reached the vicinage of New York, when the ton of gold was brought ashore and sold. Jack kept the big diamond eyes as souvenirs.

The professor's original calculation of the amount of money it would bring proved correct, and the sum was divided in four parts among them, giving each a large fortune.

Peleg Hopkins resided in New York, so he stayed there, and after bidding our friends a hearty good-by, he took the shells and fossils he had gathered and went off to make a report of the result of his investigation to the societies he represented.

The Sea Serpent then proceeded on to Wrightstown, and our friends stored the wonderful craft away and met with a great ovation from their fellow citizens when their stories were told, the monkey and parrot coming in for a share of the praise.

The inventive genius of Jack Wright began to assert itself again, when once more he was comfortably settled at home, and a newer and more wonderful contrivance than the monitor soon began to engross his attention. And so engaged we must leave the boy and his two friends for the present, promising to show you in the future the new marvel he was inventing, and all that it did.

THE END.

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