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BRAVE AND BOLD WEEKLY

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No. 314

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NEW YORK, DECEMBER 26, 1908.

Price, Five Cents

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front of me, not ten yards away, stood a great ape grinning at me; but in its hands it held a club, heavier than mine, and had it raised ready to strike.

The cover of the December 26, 1908 edition of *Brave and Bold Weekly*

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THE YOUNG MAROONER; OR, AN AMERICAN ROBINSON CRUSOE.

By FRANK SHERIDAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE RUNAWAY.

My name is Tom Scott.

At sixteen years of age I ran away from the home of my father, a merchant in old Water Street, New York, and shipped as cabin-boy on the *Maria Ann*, bound for New England ports.

I was awfully sick before we reached the coast of Massachusetts.

Sick! that was but a poor word to describe my feeling.

I prayed the sailors to throw me overboard. I hated life. Death would have been far preferable.

But I was laughed at. My agony was an excuse for mirth. Even the captain, kind-hearted as I knew him to be, laughed at my misery.

I wasn't worth much on that voyage. I did not earn my salt, so the captain told me, and I think he was right.

Anyway, when we reached New Bedford, the port to which we were bound, I was discharged and told that I ought to think myself lucky at being allowed to travel free.

I counted my money. I had just seven dollars and nine cents.

Not a large fortune to begin life with, but to me it looked like wealth.

I was a man. At least, I thought so, and I walked about the docks with all the pride of a wealthy whaler.

I went to a small hotel where I had seen several sailors loitering, and I paid for a bed and breakfast.

New Bedford was the place of all others I had wished to reach, for I had taken a great fancy to be a whaler.

I went to bed, very tired, but could not sleep well. All night I felt the rocking of the ship I had left, and a dreadful sensation that the bed was sinking from under me made me almost sick again.

Then I thought of mother, and the more sick I felt the greater was my desire to go home. I thought of the comforts of home, and had about resolved to return the next day, when I fell asleep and did not awake until ten o'clock.

"Hello, I'm blest if that ain't Tom Scott!"

I trembled, as I heard the speech, for I knew the voice. It was that of an old captain, a great friend of my father.

He put his hand on my shoulder, and said:

"You were a fool, Tom Scott."

"Was I?"

"Yes. But take my advice and make the best of it now. Don't go back, or there'll be murder."

"Murder?"

"Yes, I saw your father the morning after you had skipped, and he swore—yes, he did—that he'd kill you if ever you tried to enter his house again, and so that's settled, as he would say."

"Did you see my mother?" I asked.

"Mother! Bless me, boy, have you got a mother?"

The skipper laughed as he spoke, and I was disgusted. I turned away, and resolved that I would never go back home until I had made a pile of money.

"Want to go in a whaler, eh?"

The voice was gruff and uncouth, but the question was just to my mind.

"Yes, I do."

"So do all young shavers. Well, boy, there's nothing like it. You'll soon cut your wisdom-teeth on a whaler. Come along, and I'll introduce you to two gentlemen what's both recruiting for a voyage to the Pacific."

I didn't like the look of the man, and had it been dark I shouldn't have followed him; but it was broad daylight, and New Bedford was a fairly sized place even then.

He led me into a bar—or, rather, a room leading off a barroom—and I saw two of the worst-looking men I ever laid eyes on.

They were drinking and smoking, and such clouds of

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They were drinking and smoking, and such clouds of smoke rose up from them that I could scarcely see across the room.

"Any fish, Wilkins?" asked one of the men.

"A little gudgeon what wants to be a whaler," answered my guide, pushing me forward.

"Waal, I kinder guess he'd make a decent whaler in time. He looks gritty, an' if he goes with me he'll get a lay of a hundred and fifty — that's what we give the green hands."

"Get out; we give a hundred and seventy to green 'uns, an' we'll kill more whales than any ship that don't do as well."

"When do you sail?" I asked.

"Our ship goes to-morrow," said the one.

"And yours?"

"Not till next Monday; but we'll advance you enough 'ninepences' to have good fun on shore."

"I'll sail with the one that goes to-morrow."

"Good! I told you the lay 'u'd catch 'em every time. Who would take a hundred and fifty when he could get a hundred an' seventy?"

Both men laughed, and I had not sense enough to join in their mirth.

"I know I sha'n't get as much," I said. "You can't deceive me on figures. It is not the lay I care for, but I want to get away as quick as possible."

"Oho, a runaway! That's interesting," said one.

The *Sally* sailed next day, and I was on board. I shall not try to recall that first week on a whaler. I had thought seamen ought to be proud of their ship, proud of the privilege of being on board; but before I had been a week on the *Sally* I knew that I hated every timber in her, from bow to stern.

There were several greenies on board and so we had to undergo tuition.

A boat was manned on deck, and for two hours each day we had to pull dry oars.

The exercise was bad enough, but the taunts were worse.

The second mate was a regular fiend, and delighted to torment the green ones in every possible manner.

One day — we had been out three weeks — one of the new men had been ordered to do something to the mizzenmast; at this late date I forget what the duty was. He was a good fellow, who ought to have been a Methodist clergyman instead of a whaler, and was extremely nervous.

"Tom, my boy," he said to me, as he was preparing to ascend the mast, "Tom, something tells me my hour has come."

"Nonsense, Jake; you are nervous, Go up the mast like a man. It will be all right; your brain is cool."

"Aye, aye, Tom; but good-by, old fellow."

Sure enough, Jake got dizzy or missed his footing in the rigging. He fell, and as bad luck would have it, in trying to save himself he got entangled in the rigging, and when he fell he went overboard.

"Man overboard!" I cried, with all my might.

"Where? Who is it?"

"Jake. See there he is, and look — Oh!"

The latter exclamation was occasioned by seeing a huge shark close to the frightened sailor.

A rope was thrown and Jake caught it.

He tried to drag himself up out of the water.

A red stream of blood stained the billows.

The shark had helped himself to one of Jake's legs.

"Let go!" cried the secondmate. "A fellow's no good on a whaler with only one leg, and sides, we ain't got a hospital aboard."

"Would you let Jake be eaten by the shark?" I asked excitedly.

"Oh, green 'un, it's you, is it? Why don't you jump over and help your pal?"

I seized the rope and commenced hauling it in. This made the mate mad.

"Didn't I say let go?"

"Yes; but I sha'n't."

"Then, by thunder, you shall go over as well!"

I knew he dare not throw me overboard, so I continued hauling at the rope. It was hard work. Jake was powerless to help, and not one of the seamen dared help me."

I pulled and hauled until Jake was by the ship's side and his one remaining foot just level with the top of the water.

A cable was being wound in a coil just where I was standing, and either by accident or design the heavy rope struck me on the calf of my leg. I shrieked with pain.

That was not the worst. I loosened my hold on the rope, and Jake fell back in the water.

I was too late to save him.

A piercing cry rang through my ears. I hear it now. Many a time, when the wind has been whistling through the shrouds, I have heard Jake's pitiful cry.

"Oho! the lay will be all the greater for you 'uns as are left," said the second mate heartlessly.

"You murdered Jake!" I said angrily.

I received a savage kick in reply.

"Look out, green, 'un," said one of the hands who came down for some harpoons which needed sharpening. "Bilger" — the second mate — is a bad 'un, an' he'll do for you an' you'll lose your lay."

I thanked him for the warning, and determined to be on the watch.

Several days passed, and life was a misery.

I began to think the best thing I could do was to jump overboard and end life and my misery at the same time, when a cry roused all my boyish enthusiasm.

The man in the "bird's nest" sang out:

"There she blows!"

Instantly there was a commotion and excitement, the like of which I had never before seen.

"Where away?" shouted Bilger, who was officer of the watch.

"Weather bow!" answered the man on the lookout.

"Haul away the main-yard! Stand by the boats! Bilger, get ready to lower away!"

It was the captain of the *Sally* who was now giving orders.

He had been sleeping, and at the shout of the man in the "bird's nest" had jumped out of his hammock and rushed on deck without trousers, boots, or coat.

The boats were lowered, and I was in Bilger's boat. We pulled vigorously toward the whale.

The sea was choppy and I felt that I was going to be sick. By a strong effort of the will I mastered the feeling, and the excitement prevented its return.

The whale — a big cow — was coming toward us. It was a prize we must not let escape.

The harpooner of our boat stood in the bow ready to hurl the terrible weapon at the whale.

He trembled with excitement, but he was one of the best harpooners that ever sailed from New Bedford.

"Ready! So, ho! avast!" he shouted, and the oars remained out of the water.

The boat rose and fell with the choppy waves.

With a grunt and a muttered oath, the harpooner hove the steel.

It went whizzing through the air and with a sickening thud struck the monster.

A spurt of blood showed that the steel had entered a vital part.

The whale dived down and the cable was played out to its full length.

Our boat was dragged along at a terrific speed. Many a time it was full of water, but as it rose on the waves it emptied itself. I felt dizzy.

Without knowing what I did, I caught hold of the cable. My hands were blistered with it, but I held on, what for I did not know.

Suddenly the cable slackened and nearly pulled me overboard. The whale was getting mad. It jerked away again with such force that a sudden snap was heard. The cable had given away.

The boat was capsized.

I held onto the rope and was dragged through the water at a terrible speed.

I shouted, but my voice was drowned in the roar of the billows.

I gave myself up for lost.

"Fool that I am!" I exclaimed loudly. "Why not leave loose of the rope?"

I tried to do so.

My hands refused to open.

They were cramped and would not obey my will.

Like a death-grip they held onto the rope, while I was being towed through the water at the rate of thirty miles an hour.

"How long will this last?" I cried.

I knew it could not for long, and I resigned myself to a horrible death.

The water roared round me and most horrible sounds filled my ears.

I felt I was dying and had no power to help myself.

And then I thought of home and of my mother.

CHAPTER II.

THE OCTOPUS.

When I had got thoroughly reconciled to my fate, and began wondering how long it would be before I lost all consciousness, my strange escort sounded.

In whaling parlance sounding signifies that the whale dives headfirst toward the bottom of the ocean.

I expected to follow the beast.

But either the harpoon hurt considerably, or the whale thought better of it, for up she came before the rope had got taut.

By great good fortune I managed to dodge the harpoon, and found myself seated on the whale's back, the harpoon serving me as a handle by which I could hold on.

The back of the whale was slippery, and I almost wished to slide off into the water, when I turned and saw something which made me tremble and turn sick.

Close behind, and following in the wake of the whale, was a monstrous cuttlefish, swimming on the surface of the water.

I was fascinated.

I dare not take my eyes from the horrible creature.

I began even to study its peculiarities.

I saw that it was brick-red in color, its eyes, placed level with the top of its head, were prodigiously developed, and glared at me with a frightful longing.

Its mouth was like a parrot's beak; at times it would open that horrible mouth, and I shuddered as I fancied that in a short time I should be within its awful cavity.

There was a magnetism about it which completely overpowered me.

I forgot the whale.

I was oblivious of all danger save from the octopus which followed me.

For the first time I thought of the crew of the *Sally*. What had become of Bilger and the others in the boat? How was it that the other boats had not been lowered in pursuit of the whale?

Then I remembered that the animal had driven through the waves at such an enormous speed that no boat could have overtaken it.

While I was thinking of that a new terror seized me, or, rather, a series of terrors. I almost fancied I was getting hysterical.

It was becoming dark.

What should I do when night came?

I was hungry. What should I do for food?

And again, I fancied that the whale was dying.

It had slackened its speed.

The harpoon was loose; the flesh seemed falling away from it.

If the whale should die, then I would fall into the horrible jaws of the devilfish.

The eyes of the cuttlefish seemed like great balls of burning coals and I fancied that they would set me on fire.

The night was coming on, and the darkness was gathering in great, black clouds.

I shrieked, but the roar of the waves drowned my voice.

I stood up, but my feet kept slipping, and every time they did so the harpoon got looser.

I thought my pursuer opened its horrible mouth wider each time I slipped, hoping to find me a dainty morsel.

I resigned myself to my fate.

Then I seemed to fall asleep.

When I awoke I had no idea where I was.

I had forgotten the whale, the cuttlefish — everything. Only gradually did it dawn on my mind that I had been on a whale's back when I fell asleep.

Where was I now?

I could not open my eyes, for a mucus had closed them, and it required a great deal of rubbing and continual softening with saliva to get them released from their bondage.

One thing I was certain of, and that was I had a whale's back no longer as a reclining-place.

I was on sand and in shallow water. How I had got to land I did not know.

I was pleased, and that was sufficient just then.

I was hungry.

For a hungry lad, without a chance of purchasing food, anything would seem good.

I had never liked shell-fish, but I thought the mussels and small clams I found were the most luscious food I had ever eaten!

It was night when I lost consciousness on the whale's back; it was now broad daylight; in fact, the sun had got pretty high up in the heavens.

I looked round me and saw that the soil was sandy, mingled with stones, and utterly destitute of vegetation.

Walking was painful, because the ground was so irregular.

But I was there, and I wanted to know who shared sovereignty with me.

I walked on and on, peering cautiously round every rock, fearing that some savage might leap from behind it and kill me with a blow.

After walking some half an hour longer, I came to a stop.

I found that I had reached the end of a small promontory, and the sea dashed with savage fury over the point where I stood.

I had to retrace my steps.

Hunger was again making itself very troublesome. Fortunately there were plenty of shell-fish, and, though they did not taste as good as the first, I ate some, and left the ocean behind me and started for the interior.

I had climbed a high rock that I might get a better view of my new country.

The sun was powerfully hot and the perspiration poured from every pore of my body.

When I succeeded in reaching the summit of the rock I was almost prostrated with the heat.

Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of white birds flew up from the plateau and rose above my head like a fleecy white cloud. There were so many of them that they obscured the sun and caused, by the flapping of their wings, a most delicious breeze.

Below me there was green grass and a number of bushes laden with some kind of fruit.

After two meals of shell-fish, the very sight of fruit was enough to make my mouth water.

I scrambled down the rock.

The berries were luscious. Full of juice and not too sweet, they quenched my thirst and satisfied me.

I ate very heartily of them and tested their edible quality much as the cook told the man how to test mushroom.

"If you eat it and it kills you, it is a toadstool," said the cook. "If it doesn't kill you, it may be a mushroom."

I felt the same way, and as the fruit did not kill me — for I am writing this several years later — I knew it was good for food.

I stayed there three days. Fortunately, neither wild animals nor savage men interfered with me.

I ate fruit three times a day and I felt strangely calm.

A feeling of laziness came over me, and I thought that there was nothing in the world so nice as to be able to lie on the soft grass and have nothing harder to do than reach out my hand to gather fruit.

I hardly cared to move.

Whether my joints were stiff or not did not trouble me.

I realized the sweetness of idleness to its fullest extent.

CHAPTER III.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

The calm was succeeded by a storm.

I knew that the fruit would not last forever.

If rain came I should be soaked, and, worse than that, I might be attacked by animals or men, and was entirely unprepared.

I must find out whether I was on an island or whether the land was part of the continent.

I knew practically nothing about navigation and had no more idea in what latitude or longitude I was than the man in the moon.

Even now, though years have passed away, I often wonder that I did not go mad with the thoughts which followed the sweet idleness.

If the land was surrounded by water, was it inhabited?

If not, how should I live?

Should I ever get a chance to escape?

These thoughts worried me.

I commenced active proceedings by taking an inventory of all my possessions.

I found myself rich in having:

One large jack-knife, with blade about four inches long. One small penknife, which I had used in the office of Scott & Co., merchants, Water Street, New York, for making and mending quill pens.

One bit of chalk.

Two small pencils, or, rather, stubs of lead-pencils.

A key-ring of no value.

A piece of string about nine feet in length.

One pocket-comb, with half the teeth broken out.

A few ounces of beads, which I had been told I could exchange for solid gold.

The clothes I had on — of which the coat was torn into various designs by the action of the waves, the trousers almost seatless from the same cause, and, as for under-clothing, I had one good shirt, one pair of drawers, and a pair of heavy woolen stockings — I have a piece of one of those stockings yet, not because it is of any financial value, but my mother knit them as she sat by the great open fireplace in the sitting-room over the merchant's office and dreamed that I should be a merchant, an alderman, the mayor of my native city, the governor of the State, and, most likely, President.

She dreamed this so often that, poor mother! I often wonder whether she suffers as she looks down from the land beyond the stars and sees how different her boy's destiny has been.

Having taken stock of my property, I prepared to investigate my domain.

With fear and trembling I crossed the plateau and climbed to the hills beyond.

Everywhere there was a most painful silence.

As I stood on the top of the hills I could see in the distance the ocean on every side.

I was on an island, not very large, but still having sufficient area to maintain a number of people.

I saw a confused mass of great trees in the valley, but not a sign of smoke.

I strained my eyes in every direction, but no evidences of the presence of human beings could I find.

Cautiously I approached the forest, for such I found it to be, and for the first time used my big knife to cut myself a thick stick which should serve as a weapon in case of attack

Night came on while I was exploring the forest, and a great fear took hold of me. I no longer dreaded human beings; I was afraid of wild animals. Most likely fierce jaguars roamed the forest at night, and I was utterly at their mercy.

Night is always a solemn time to the solitary man, but to me it was awful; however I was alive, and that was something to rejoice at.

Seeking out a good tree, I climbed up into its branches and found a place where I could sleep.

As a precaution against falling, I took the piece of string from my pocket and cut it in two.

With one piece I made a loop round the stem of the tree and with the other piece I tied my left leg, not tightly, to the branch.

Grasping my stout stick in my right hand, I slipped my left arm through the loop and prepared for sleep.

I knew if my foot slipped from the branch the cord would become taut and wake me, and if I was likely to overbalance myself, the loop through which I had pushed my arm would hold me.

I slept as soundly as I had ever done in my own little attic room on Water Street.

In the morning I started out to search for water. That was as essential as food, and, afraid to wander too far away from the beach, I started through the valley, hoping to find some little stream which emptied itself into the sea.

But not a sign of water could I find. I was about giving up in despair when a shower of rain renewed my spirits.

I had no desire to get my clothes wet again, for they had chilled me in drying, so I searched for some rock behind which I could obtain shelter.

There was a great boulder some twenty feet high standing about three hundred feet from the hill I had climbed the day before.

A narrow path passed between the boulder and the hill, the sides of which were as clearly cut as if done by man. In that passageway I sought shelter.

How it did rain!

It came down like a great sheet of water.

I crouched up against the hill and leaned back so that I might escape as much of the rain as possible.

I found the rock giving way, and before I could rise to my feet I slipped and fell backward.

I was under the hill.

Of course I was startled, but I instantly thought there might be a cave, and that would be better shelter than the trees.

I rose to my knees and raised my hand.

The roof was higher than that; I stood up. Yes, I was in a cave hewn out of the rock, and large enough to shelter me from the rain.

But it was very dark.

How could I obtain a light?

I took my knife and struck it against pieces of stone, and at last was lucky enough to secure a flint.

I could get plenty of sparks, but I had no tinder.

I remembered seeing a stump of a tree, well decayed, just outside the little path between the boulder and the hill.

If only I could get a bit of that wood it would take the place of tinder.

I climbed out of my dark cave and thought nothing of the rain.

I broke a piece of the wood, all phosphorescent, as I knew it was, and carried it back to the cave.

I struck my flint with the steel blade, and was delighted to see a spark drop on the phosphorescent wood.

A tiny smoke arose, and I gathered a few leaves to place over the wood.

Imagine my joy when a flame burst up from the leaves.

Alas! I had forgotten fuel, and my fire died out in a few seconds.

I had a light long enough to see that my cave was larger than I had thought.

I could not see how far it extended back, but where I stood it must have measured twenty feet wide.

I waited as patiently as I could for the rain to cease.

I wanted my breakfast, but curiosity was even greater than hunger.

I had laid myself down, so that the rain might beat on my face, hoping that I might assuage my thirst in that way.

Every pore of my skin felt thirsty.

A sudden thought occurred to me.

I was alone on the island, as far as I knew.

I undressed in the cave, and, as naked as I was born, went out into the rain.

How refreshing the shower-bath was! I literally drew in the water through every pore.

I felt refreshed.

Seeing a fallen pine-tree I went to it, while enjoying my bath, and broke off some of the resinous branches.

I carried them to my cave and again lighted a fire.

This time the pitch pine blazed up and showed me a lofty and nearly dry cave of large dimensions.

But what pleased me more than the natural dwelling was the sound of trickling water.

About twenty feet from the entrance a little stream, not larger than my smallest finger, oozed through the wall.

I caught some in my hand and tasted it.

The water was ice-cold and as pure as any I have ever tasted.

I did not wait to catch it in my hand. I let it run into my mouth.

I drank, and drank, and drank until I really felt that I should burst.

But remember, it was nearly five days since I had tasted water.

I dressed myself, and felt content and at peace with all the world for about fifteen minutes, and then I felt hungry.

I had a fire.

Near-by were plenty of shell-fish.

I would have roast clams for my breakfast.

It did not take long to put my plan into execution, and never did roast clams taste better than they, although I had to eat them without condiments or bread.

As for condiments, I felt I had swallowed enough salt to last me a lifetime, even if I lived as long as Methuselah.

After breakfast, I walked along the beach, straining my eyes for a sail.

How I wished I could see a ship!

But not even could my imagination conjure anything at all like a sail.

I walked for fully five miles, and was astonished to find how large the island was.

The farther I went the greater seemed the distance to be traversed before I reached a narrow, jutting line of rocks I had seen from the hilltops.

I gave up any thought of reaching it before sundown, and so left the balance of the journey for the next day.

As my hotel was a moving one, being anywhere I happened to be, I selected a good tree again for my night's rest, when I should be tired of the beach.

About an hour after sunset, I was standing watching the last light glimmer across the waves of the ocean, when suddenly the sky grew brighter and the water more green.

It was almost as transparent as glass and shone like a polished mirror. I wondered what it meant.

I was transfixed with awe, for I had never seen a twilight like that.

While I watched a cloud appeared in the center of the bright light.

Gradually the cloud grew less dense and took the form of a ship.

I saw the hull, the masts, the rigging, the shrouds.

As I looked at it, with my eyes like balls of fire, hot and glaring, I thought I saw the captain on the bridge, giving orders.

The sails were unfurled and were speedily filled with the wind.

Across the sky the vessel swept, until the brightness was swallowed up on the dark clouds of night.

Then I saw the vessel still more plainly.

Every line — the masts, the hull — all appeared illumined with a phosphorescent light.

I saw the captain, like a man of white fire, still on the bridge.

He seemed to point toward the island.

Then, for the first time, I noticed that the vessel was really sailing on the water. I had fancied it was a vision in the sky.

On it came, nearer and yet, nearer.

I had heard sailors speak of it.

I knew now it was the phantom ship.

Nearer it came to the island.

What could I do?

If the phantom captain landed I was doomed — doomed to the horrible fate of an eternity on the phantom ship.

I threw myself down, with my face buried in the sand, to hide from my eyes the terrible sight.

A low rumbling shook the earth. The trees cracked and creaked, and the rocks groaned as if they were living things.

I dare not look up, but I felt the light of the ship near me.

I was afraid almost to breathe, and yet I knew that in a few moments I should be claimed by the phantom ship.

An awful rumbling and roar sounded through the island.
All nature was convulsed.
I could stand no more.
I shrieked in agony.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LUMINOUS SEA.

When I returned to consciousness I was afraid to raise my head.

Long before I had run away from home I had heard of the phantom ship, and knew that its appearance boded ill to those who saw it.

Several of the captains who drank rum while they spun yarns in my father's office declared they had seen the ship, and one of them, who could draw artistically, presented father with a large pen and ink sketch, which I remember seeing framed and hanging over my father's desk.

It showed a ship, furnished with a bowsprit and three masts — namely, a, foremast, a mainmast, and a mizzenmast, square-rigged and with full sails set.

A score of skeleton sailors stood on the deck, while others were climbing the rigging and were in the shrouds.

I used, as a child, to tremble whenever I caught a glimpse of the terrible specter drawing.

While on the *Sally* one of the crew declared he would "take his 'davy" that he had seen the phantom ship.

What could I do but believe in its existence?

I never knew a sailor who doubted the reality of the phantom.

The night was dark; scarcely a star twinkled in the sky. Heavy clouds were hanging over the land. Gusts of wind roared and rattled through the trees.

Still I was hardly brave enough to look toward the sea.

I felt the awful presence of something.

For several minutes I stood with my back to the water.

How the waves roared!

I heard them break upon the beach with a savage thunder.

"I will face it," I said; but still I dare not turn.

The thunder rolled in horrible peals.

A violent shaking of the earth startled me.

A second shock threw me to the ground.

I was not safe anywhere.

A madness took possession of my senses. I resolved I would rush into the water and end my life in its angry billows. Again I rose to my feet.

I turned toward the sea, but kept my eyes rigidly closed.

"Courage, Tom!" I said to myself, and tried to open my eyes; but fear still held me in thralldom.

Nature could not endure much more, and I screamed with fright.

There seemed a balm in that scream, for I felt strong enough to open my eyes.

A strange sight was spread before my vision.

The sky was black; the stars had disappeared. Above me — as far as my eye could reach, the blackest of velvet could not have been more somber than the sky.

But the sea was white. It sparkled like a silver ocean bestrewn with flashing diamonds.

As the waves broke on the shore, it was, for all the world, as though a mass of silvery white fire had been thrown there instead of water.

I looked at the black sky and at the white, luminous sea, and the contrast pleased me.

For the time I forgot the phantom ship.

My mind was all absorbed in the contemplation of the beautiful, silvery sheet of fire spread before me.

"I wonder if the sailors on any ship admire the beauty of the sea as I do now?" I asked myself aloud.

The thought of sailors recalled the phantom, and I trembled and shuddered at the remembrance.

With a boldness and courage which I did not think I possessed, I looked over the wide expanse of ocean in every direction, but my heart beat slower and more naturally when I found that the horrible phantom had gone from view.

While I looked a flash of lightning lighted up the sky with a brilliancy far exceeding the power of the sun.

I was nearly blinded by the flash, and my knees knocked together as the clap of thunder shook the island.

Another lightning-flash and I heard the trees crack and great branches fall.

But I heard more, for mingled with the crash in the forest were cries of startled animals.

Almost human they seemed and I felt horror-struck.

When the blinding flash had passed away, a terrible darkness pervaded everything.

I heard the waves breaking on the shore and their noise acted as an irritant.

I threw myself down on the sand and waited for morning.

How my nerves were quieted enough for sleep, I cannot understand, but when I awoke the sun was shining with scorching power, the sea was calm and unruffled, and birds were singing as though rejoicing that the dark storm had fled to continue its devastating power elsewhere.

CHAPTER V.

HOISTING A FLAG.

I was hungry.

Yes, even as I recalled the horrors of that night and wondered how I had lived through them, I felt that most human sensation — hunger.

Shell-fish were there in abundance, but my stomach loathed everything which came from the sea.

I sought for fruit.

What a sight met my gaze!

Great trees, giants of the forest, split into fragments by the force of the electric fluid.

Others were uprooted and bent down, as though they mourned their sad fate. But while I looked at them I saw that which had greater attraction for me just then.

A number of coconuts were on the ground.

I started to secure some of them, when my hair began to stand on end.

A horrible monster, in the shape of a crab, crawled across to the largest coconut.

I had never heard of crabs living on land or liking fruit, though since that time many times have I seen them, and nasty beasts they are.

I watched the giant crab as it tore off the fiber at the end where the fruit was. When this was removed, it struck it with its great claws until it had broken an opening through the shell; then, by the aid of its smaller claws, and by turning itself round, it extracted the whole substance of the nut.

I was interested, but, after all, was far from sorry when the crab, having satisfied his hunger, crawled away.

I quickly broke open one of the coconuts and drank the milk, which I found very refreshing.

I ate two of the nuts, and, at peace with the world, I felt better than I had done.

I thought it about time that I selected a dwelling-place, for it was evident my sojourn on the island was to last some time.

I returned to my rocky cave, and was bewildered.

The violence of the earthquake had riven the gigantic boulder in two, and the one half had so fallen that it closed up one side of the little lane.

That I thought a good thing, for I should have only one entrance to the cave to defend instead of two.

I entered the cave, and received my first fright in the subterranean dwelling.

A multitude of birds had gone into the cave to escape the violence of the storm.

When I entered, my presence startled them, and, with many a cry and strange noise, they flew out into the air.

For the instant I was frightened but my nerves at that time were not very strong.

I wanted a light.

There was but one way to procure it.

My knife was called into requisition and striking it against a piece of flint I had the satisfaction of igniting my touchwood and lighting a pine-branch.

Had I made a mistake?

Could I have entered another cave?

There was something peculiar about the one I was in.

The only things which convinced me that I was in the right place were the pine-branches I had carried there the previous day and the wood-ashes which told of my fire.

Instead of one large cave the earthquake had given me two.

A mass of rock had fallen in the center and as neatly divided my room as a mason could have done without tools.

I carried my pine-torch round the rooms, and saw that they were dry, save where the little stream trickled down the wall, and far from uncomfortable.

I rolled a large stone across near the doorway and sat upon it to think what I should do.

I resolved I must have a flag-post, and from its top a flag must float.

How to cut down a palm-tree, with only a common knife, was a puzzle, and still greater was the difficulty of carrying or hauling the flagstaff, digging a hole, and raising it to a perpendicular position.

I went outside the cave and looked round.

Nature had assisted me.

Right near the very top of the hill in which my cave was situated grew a solitary tree.

This I climbed, and fastened to the top a pole, to which I had securely tied my shirt.

It was getting dark by the time my work was done.

There was one other thing for me to do.

The flag would serve for the day, but a fire was requisite in the night.

Fortunately, the storm had overturned a great number of pine-trees.

Ten times I climbed to the top of the hill with as many pine-boughs as I could carry.

When the night grew so dark that my shirt — pardon me, my flag — could not be seen, I lighted my fire.

What a blaze it made!

High up into the clouds the flame ascended.

Alas, it would not last long.

Pine-boughs give excellent light, but they are soon consumed.

Three times more I ascended the hill, carrying each time, or, rather, dragging after me, larger boughs, and the last time I succeeded in getting a good-sized piece of wood to throw on the fire.

Then I made myself a bed of the palm-leaves, and slept until the sun was again shining in the heavens.

My fire was still blazing away, and I thought it would be a good thing to keep it lit as a perpetual signal.

The fire was kept burning all that day and night. The shirt was quite a conspicuous flag, and I felt certain that help was near.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAKE OF FIRE.

The next day was wet, and I could only sit in my cave and think.

My meditations were not pleasant, for the outlook was that I should have to live a solitary life, without the comforting presence of human beings.

I was much occupied with the thought whether it was better to look upon my enforced residence as permanent, or to just live from hand to mouth, waiting to be rescued.

I could not decide.

I must set about furnishing; I had quite decided that the cave would make me the best dwelling.

It was water-proof and comfortable, and, besides, was near the flagstaff.

I wanted a table. Wouldn't the slab of stone do? For the present, yes; but it did not seem civilized.

While thinking about furniture, I heard a faint cry, like that of a child.

I forgot the rain, everything save that, cry.

Out I went, my knife in my hand, ready for any emergency.

Not far from the cave I saw a young goat, with its leg broken.

It cried again as I approached it, but, instead of sympathy with it in its affliction, I only thought what good food it would be.

Stifling all the finer feelings of sentiment, I cut its throat.

The animal was cut into quarters, and I rigged up a rude spit on which I could roast the joint.

While that was being cooked, I went out and brought in two coconuts and a shellful of the sap of a palm leaf.

What an epicurean repast!

Roast kid, coconut in place of vegetables and bread, and a big drink of unfermented arrack.

I had, without knowing why, put the fat which I found round the goat's kidneys into a coconut shell, and it stood by the fire.

Instantaneously as a lightning's flash, a thought crossed my mind.

I had found some dried reeds, which I had intended making into a basket.

Breaking up one of the reeds, I stuck them in the fat.

Like a child, I danced with joy, as I found that when night came I should have a lamp. Very primitive, but far better than the darkness, and yet not giving so much light that I could not sleep.

For three days I was lazy.

Subsisting on goat's flesh and coconuts, I passed my time watching for a sail.

The flesh had been so much better than fish that when I had eaten the last piece I started out to hunt for more.

For the first time since the storm I left the vicinity of my cave.

I was absolutely startled as I saw the evidences of the earthquake's power.

A landslide on the hillside made it easy to ascend the hill which towered above the plain and had been inaccessible before the storm.

Climbing the mountain, I reached a narrow pass.

My love of adventure impelled me to go forward.

A great plain was stretched before me, the grass being unusually green, save in the center, where about an acre was black as midnight.

That was so curious that I was compelled to investigate.

I soon found that the black patch was a monster crater, surrounded by precipices. A zigzag path led down the precipice, the sides of which were covered with a luxury of tropical vegetation.

At the bottom of the precipice the vegetation ceased and a most abandoned and dreary looking place was reached.

What looked to me like a flat plain from the top, I found to be a wilderness of blackened lava.

The lava was cold. That reassured me. Shapes of thousands of huge crocodiles, serpents, and unnamed beasts were all around me, cast by nature in the horrible-looking lava.

A great crack or fissure was before me.

Could I jump it?

Anyway, I could try, and across it I went.

I rubbed my eyes.

Was I dreaming, or could it be reality! I saw, or fancied I saw, a lake of fire.

I leaped back across the fissure and sat down on the back of a lava serpent.

Was I awake?

I pinched myself, and was assured that my senses were not numbed by sleep.

Again I crossed the great crack and began to climb down the rocks and lava to the place where I saw — or fancied I saw — the liquid fire.

The atmosphere was getting hotter each step I took.

I had to shade my eyes from the burning heat.

At last I was at the very edge of the wonderful lake.

It was as round as a cup, and about as large as the ring in the circus I had seen at Bowling Green before I ran away from home.

Should I ever see old Water Street again?"

Would I ever listen to the old sea-captains spinning yarns as they drank my father's Jamaica?

Spinning yarns!

Why, bless my soul and body, there wasn't one of them that ever fought a serpent fish; not one ever rode on a whale's back to a desolate island.

And which of them, ever stood by the side of lake of fire?

But to return to the lake, by whose edge I was standing.

The rim of the cup, or the edge of the circus-ring, was ten feet high and about three feet thick.

The cup was full of boiling lava, which was as liquid as thick soup.

I had a stick in my hand.

I dipped it into the liquid.

The stick literally melted with the heat.

I stood looking for a few seconds at a time; the warmth was too great for a constant gaze.

I saw the terrible stuff keep simmering and heaving.

As fresh lava rose to the surface, I saw it break in all directions into most lovely vermilion cracks, changing into violet, and then into dead gray.

All round the edge were scarlet waves, which were tossed up against the side of the cup.

The waves were red hot, and the spray was the color of blood.

A drop of it fell on my arm, and burned instantly a hole through my coat to the flesh.

The waves roared and surged like those of the sea.

I was charmed and fascinated.

I shielded my eyes and looked across the lake.
In the very center a little fountain began to play.
It sent up to the height of about two feet showers of golden-colored spray.
Gradually I saw the spray thicken.
Instead of two feet, the spray now rose ten feet.
Higher and higher the fiery liquid was tossed into the air, falling back cooled and assuming the shapes of monster serpents, with horrible contortions of their bodies.
It was a terrible place.
I climbed up the side of the precipice, scarcely able to breathe.
The higher I ascended the purer became the atmosphere.
I did not look back.
When at last I stood amid the black lava forms and breathed pure air, I fancied the lake of fire must have been but a hideous dream.
I sat down on the cool, green grass and thanked Heaven I was safe.
It must have been an hour, perhaps two, before I had strength enough to go home.
I had stuck my stick in the ground, and judged the time by the shadow it cast on the grass.
I longed to be back in my cave.
I had started out to hunt, but instead had spent my time amid creation's wonders.
But I had coconuts and a small piece of goat flesh still left.
When I reached my rocky home, I made a fire and sat beside it, wondering what next would be revealed to me.
I drank a copious draft of palm-juice and water, and ate my goat's flesh and coconut almost mechanically, for my thoughts were with the lake of fire.
After supper I went down to the water's edge, as was my custom.
I looked over the dark-blue ocean, and suddenly a cold shudder passed over me.
I trembled. I laughed and cried.
I was like a madman for the time, for there, in the distance, just on the horizon, I saw a ship.
"A sail! A sail!" I cried, as though my weak voice could be heard over the miles of water.
"Ship ahoy!" I yelled, until my throat was hoarse.
I rushed up to the top of the rock and lighted my signal fire.
Then I waited.
"Ship ahoy!" I called at intervals, until I had lost all power of utterance; but in my soul there was joy, for the sails became plainer; the ship was getting nearer!

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLACK FLAG.

At the very time when my excitement was most intense, just as I was as positive as I ever was in my life that I was to be rescued, a thought entered my mind which made me the most miserable youth that ever drew breath.

Why will such thoughts obtrude to destroy one's happiness?

I thought that perhaps the vessel might be a pirate craft or a slaver.

If the former, I stood a good chance of being a pirate for the remainder of my life, with great odds in favor of ending that life from a yard-arm, with a rope around my neck; but if the latter — I trembled for my fate, for in those days white men were sold as slaves, not to work on plantations, but to fight in some army or serve on board some vessel.

Perhaps my signals had been seen. If so, I should soon know my fate.

I looked at the ship.

My heart rose in my throat and nearly choked me when I saw a flag run up to the peak.

What nationality was the ship?

I stared at it, and yet could not recognize the colors. The wind calmed down and the ensign hung in folds, and it became more difficult to observe it.

"It is not the American flag," I said to myself, "nor the English, nor Russian, which is white, nor Spanish, which is yellow. It is —"

And I paused, because for the life of me I could not think of any other flag.

A slight breeze rose and the bunting floated out from the mast.

My heart sank within me, for now I saw plainly that the flag which floated from the peak belonged to no nation.

It was the black flag of piracy!

I saw the emblem — the skull and cross-bones — plainly in the center, and I felt sorry that I had lighted a signal fire.

"I will hide myself," I said, and straightway I scrambled down the rocks and entered my cave.

The earthquake had aided me by so arranging the rocks that I could, with only a few minutes' work, close up the entrance.

I should then be able to climb up to a high ledge of rock, from which I could see without being seen.

I had but one fear — the pirates, not finding anyone on the island, might make it their rendezvous.

If they did, my liberty would be of but short duration.

I looked out, hoping that the vessel might not heed my signal and continue its journey.

Not a light could be seen. The vessel had become as black as its flag, and I began to hope that it had gone on its course.

As if to mock my hopes, a bright flash across the water, followed by a loud report, showed that the vessel was not going to leave me in peace.

I felt secure until morning, for I did not think any boat would put off to an unknown coast during the hours of darkness. I was right in my conjecture.

I did not sleep. Fear kept me awake, and, though I dreaded the morning, yet I welcomed its approach.

I had a small peep-hole through the rocks, scarcely three inches in diameter, but it acted like a telescope and gave me clearer sight.

I saw a boat put off, manned by an ugly set of men. They were not white, nor yet black. I judged them to be Malay pirates.

They wore a blue blouse shirt and red fez cap.

The boat was so near the shore that I could hear the strokes of the oars, but was unable to see it.

There was silence.

I knew the crew were landing.

They climbed the hill just above my head. I could have touched one of their legs had I pushed my hand out of my little peep-hole, but I scarcely dared to breathe.

I heard them talk about the fire, but the jargon was such a terrible mixture of broken English and some foreign gibberish that I did not understand much.

There was a loud laugh as they hauled down my shirt, which had served as a flag; and a piece of it passing my peep-hole told me that they had torn it into shreds.

"That is how they will serve me," I thought, and I trembled with fear.

Had I good weapons, I should not have hesitated to face the crowd, for I was not a coward, by any means.

But to show myself to eight or nine Malay cutthroats was merely to invite myself to be the principal actor in a tragedy.

I heard them descend.

Their voices grew less distinct.

Had they given up the search?

It was scarcely possible, and yet it was evident they had left the hill.

I was afraid to venture forth, and my range of vision was decidedly limited.

Hour after hour passed away, and I still dare not move.

But I studied out a problem which had perplexed me and had arrived at a solution.

I had wondered how I could keep a record of the time.

I had managed so far, but while I kept a mental count of the days, I was not satisfied; I wanted to know the hours.

In other words, I wanted a clock.

Cautiously I descended to my parlor, and was delighted to find that it was just as I had left it.

I took two of the largest coconuts from my store and reascended to my rocky perch.

With my knife I succeeded in getting out all the fruit of the nut without cutting away too much of the shell.

The nut refreshed me, for I was getting hungry. I unfortunately spilled all the milk out of the first nut.

Having cleaned out both shells, I studied how I could connect them, so that I might have a crude hour-glass, without the glass.

I suppose three or four hours must have been spent over my horological — I think that is the word, isn't it? — attempt.

And when I had joined the shells so that the sand would drop from one into the other, I was as delighted as a child with a new toy.

Of course, when all the sand had run out; I had to empty the bottom basin into the top one, so that the sand could recommence running.

But how could I measure time with this sand clock?

Of course I couldn't do it until I was free to go on the beach and made a sun-dial, then it would be easy, for I knew enough of horology to be able to construct an accurate dial, or, at least, one accurate enough for my purposes.

I looked through my peep-hole and could scarcely credit my senses.

There in the offing was the pirate craft, but it had weighed anchor, its sails were full, and it was evidently leaving the island.

"Good-by, and bad luck to you!" I said.

It was not a good wish, but I couldn't desire good luck to a pirate.

It was a relief when I saw the ship receding, and I ventured out, for the first time in many hours.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPERO.

I went down to the beach, but was as quiet as I could be, and looked at every rock for fear it should screen a pirate.

On the other side of a great, projecting rock, which formed a natural breakwater, was as nice a little harbor as anyone would wish to see.

I don't know why I hesitated about looking at that harbor, but I did, and my heart was in my mouth, as the saying goes, and I felt a nervous fluttering in my internals as I got nearer the harbor.

When I had descended to the water's edge I was so alarmed that I could have screamed out; for there, rising and falling gently in the rippling water, was a boat.

A pair of oars rested in the bottom, but not a sign of life was visible.

What could I do?

Evidently one of the pirates had stayed on the island. The boat was not the one in which the eight or nine had reached land, for it was not large enough for that.

Should I draw up the boat and secure it for myself, or leave it and hide?

Another thing troubled me.

Why should any pirate remain on the island?

Did the ship intend returning?

Were the Malays going to make the island a calling place and store for their captured plunder?

Without actually deciding what to do with the boat's owner, I dragged the craft out of the water and very easily hauled it round the rocks to my cave.

I returned to the beach and walked along the sands.

Right ahead of me I saw an object which caused my heart to flutter.

Twice I turned round and resolved to go back, but curiosity impelled me forward.

Stretched on the sand lay the body of a man.

He was as white as I was — nay, his skin was whiter, for mine had become bronzed with exposure to the weather, while his was as delicate as a girl's, and the face might have been that of a girl had it not been for the slight mustache on the lip.

I felt him.

The body was as cold as ice and rigid as marble.

He was dead.

The clothes were not wet.

Was he the owner of the boat?

If so, how came he there, and what caused his death? The birds of prey, great, hungry-looking vultures, were beginning to hover round, ready to pick the flesh from the bones.

I must bury him.

I took off his coat — that would be useful to me. I felt in his pockets; not a scrap of paper, not an article by which he could be identified.

What was the use of burying good clothes, when I was in such want of them?

I stripped the body.

The shirt was white linen, and much finer than any ordinary sailor would have worn.

When the body was quite nude I scraped away the sand with a shell and made a grave.

It was not deep, but it would prevent the vultures devouring the flesh.

I dropped a tear — I could not help it — on the body, and I felt sad at parting with even a dead man.

But I was young, and I was soon jubilant over the possession of the boat, for it was clearly mine, now that the owner was buried.

I enjoyed my dinner of roast clams better than any meal I had eaten since I had been cast adrift.

My stock of coconuts was nearly exhausted, and I determined to go to the grove for more.

Armed with my heavy stick, which I could use as a club, I started out.

Something seemed to convince me that a change had taken place in the island.

What it was I did not know.

There was a something — a feeling of strangeness which I could not overcome.

I reached the place where I expected to find the coconuts and sat down to rest.

The peculiar feeling of another presence being near again overwhelmed me. I raised my head.

In front of me, not ten yards away, stood an object whose very appearance was enough to terrify anyone.

A great ape, or, to be more accurate, an orang-outang, stood grinning at me, but in its hands it held a club heavier than mine, and had it raised ready to strike.

I knew the orang-outang to be less ferocious than the gorilla and more intelligent than the baboon.

How was it I had not seen this creature before?

If I picked up any of the coconuts, would not the orang pounce down upon me as a thief and quickly deprive me of life?

I had no time to deliberate.

Knowing the imitative powers of the monkey race, I risked all on an experiment.

I threw my club upward to try and knock down some of the nuts.

Of course I knew I could not reach them, but my object was gained, for Mr. Ape followed my example.

I took a nut and broke it with a stone and left it on the ground.

The orang stepped up to it, took it in his hairy hands, smacked his ugly lips, and began to eat it.

He took a whole nut, and, to my horror, brought it to me.

Placing it on the rock where I had broken the first, he gave me a stone and pointed to the nut.

Evidently he wanted me to wait on him.

I broke the shell, and again the orang seemed pleased.

I had heard sailors say that the orang-outangs made splendid servants; and could be trained to do almost anything.

I wondered whether I couldn't train this one.

Anyway, the thing was worth a trial.

I picked up several nuts and started to walk away.

The orang followed my example.

He kept pretty close to me until I reached the cave. Then it appeared as though he was frightened.

I, entered the cave, put down the nuts, and emerged again into the open air.

Mr. Ape did likewise.

It was time to reward him, so I broke a nut and gave him half, retaining the other for myself.

My new companion had a well-proportioned frame, a broad chest, head of moderate size, round skull, projecting nose, skin covered with soft, glossy hair; in fact, he was a very good specimen of the orang-outang race.

When night came I was a little bit doubtful about my new servant, so, finding him asleep, I took the precaution of fastening his legs and hands with the rope I had found with the boat.

I rather liked the company, although it was only that of a big monkey, for it gave me an opportunity of using my voice; and if I could train the beast it would soon be of advantage to me.

I stayed awake, wondering what name to give him.

I thought of Nero, but that was associated in my mind with dogs; then of — But why take the trouble to write down all the names I thought of as I lay awake?

Doctor Jowler had tried to teach me Latin, but I am afraid he failed, for I remembered but little. I fancied, however, that there was such a word as *spero*, which meant "hope."

Was I right?

I had no means of finding out at that time, nor since, for that matter; anyway, *Spero* was a good name, and that was what I determined to call my orang.

The word *spero* haunted me for an hour.

I wondered where I had heard it, and in what connection.

When I was about to give up the difficult problem I suddenly remembered seeing the word, with others, as a motto under a crest.

I liked it at the time, and if only I could remember the other words I would adopt it as my motto.

Again the inspiration came to me, and I saw in my mind the richly emblazoned crest on the writing-paper, followed by the motto:

"Dum spiro, spero."

I asked Doctor Jowler what it meant, and he boxed my ears because of my ignorance, and told me it signified: "While I live, I hope."

What a splendid motto for me!

Although it was in the middle of the night, I got up, and by the light of my little goat's-fat lamp I wrote the words in large letters on a fresh magnolia leaf I had gathered that afternoon.

CHAPTER IX.

SPERO'S FRIGHT.

Although I had been very clumsy in securing the orang, I did not awaken him. I was up and ready for breakfast before Spero showed any signs of life. It was strange. I had always imagined that animals awoke with sunrise. I soon found what it was, however, which caused Spero to sleep so heavily. I had several coconut shells full of palm-juice, and I had stood them in the sun, so that the liquid might ferment. I knew that after fermentation the juice would be stronger than brandy. Six shells had been full the night before, but two had been emptied. "Aha, Spero!" I said aloud. "So you have taken too much arrack! It is lucky I tied your hands and feet, or you might do some mischief." Spero raised his head and groaned. It was very human. "I am sorry for you, Spero," I said, for I knew his head was aching. I fetched some spring water from the kitchen — part of my cave, as will be remembered — and bathed Spero's head. His little eyes spoke to me his thanks. I untied the cord. Again there was an intelligent glance. I loosened his feet. He was grateful. A pocket-hankerchief which I had found in the dead man's pocket was dipped in water and placed on Spero's head. Never did human being appear more grateful. After my morning repast I thought I would venture out in the boat and row partly round the island. With the wet bandage on his head, Spero fell asleep again, and I pulled away with the oars for an hour. I saw no signs of human beings, and I made up my mind I would have to stay some time on the island. I landed at a pretty little grove, about a mile away from my cave. "Here I would build my residence," I said, "if I only had tools." I saw that the grove was situated on a little promontory, and that the water washed three sides of it. I walked to the other side, and saw unmistakable evidences of a wreck. Pieces of timber were scattered about. I was as eager as any wrecker. Might there not be things of value to be found amid the debris? To my delight I found a carpenter's chest.

I broke it open.

The tools were all rusty. What of that?

To one who had been without hope of ever seeing a saw, a hammer, or a chisel again, the rusty tools were as welcome as the finest polished steel ever sent out by cutlery-works.

I went back to my boat, and rowed round to where the tool-chest was lying, lifted it into the boat, and pulled back to the cave.

Spero was awake, but was perfectly content.

"I want you to help me," I said. "We are all alone. You shall be my servant, and we will have good times."

The orang grunted as though he understood.

Perhaps he did.

I believe animals know more than we give them credit for.

I often heard my father say that monkeys could talk as well as we could, only they were afraid of being made to work if they talked, so they wisely kept silent.

Anyway, Spero seemed to understand what I said to him. I got some sand, and, using a tuft of grass, began scouring the saw.

Spero saw what I was doing, and almost angrily took the work away from me.

He squatted down and scoured away until the saw was really bright and almost free from rust.

We treated all the other tools in the same manner, but Spero did not feel so much interest in polishing the smaller ones.

I wondered whether he was getting tired.

I watched, and soon found out the secret of his affection for the saw.

Its broad, bright surface acted as a mirror.

Spero was vain, so I humored him.

Vain people can be won over by being humored a little, and I tried it on Spero.

I stood the saw in front of him, so while he worked he could see his reflection.

Ofentimes he would point to the saw, then to himself.

Was he asking about the reflection?

Perhaps so.

Constantly I found him trying experiments. He would hold some object in front of him and look at the polished steel.

Then, seeing the reflection, he would walk round the saw, and, finding no other monkey there, would grunt his satisfaction.

I had constructed a bow, using some twisted fiber from palm-leaves in place of gut, and a small brad-awl for the point of my arrow.

Taking Spero with me — he insisted on carrying the saw along, so that he could constantly admire his beauty — I went in search of game.

Some bright-colored birds flew past me.

I saw them alight.

Stretching my bow, I took aim, and saw a bird fall to the ground.

Spero dropped his saw and ran on all fours to fetch the bird.

He held it up in one hand, and raised the saw with the other.

He wanted to see the reflection in the polished metal.

I took the bird from him, and saw that it was a species of partridge.

"Come, Spero, we will have dinner."

On our way back I saw a plant which looked uncommonly like coffee.

I gathered some of the seed, and actually shouted for joy when I found that they were really coffee-beans. I at once secured a lot of them and determined to have a cup of coffee, even if I had to make the decoction with cold water.

After plucking my partridge, or, rather, showing Spero how to do it, I lighted my fire.

Selecting the strongest cocoa-shell I could find, I filled it with water and rested it on the fire.

How I watched that shell!

The roasting of the partridge did not worry me.

That I knew would be all right.

But could I boil water?

The shell did not crack.

The water began to get warm.

I put my finger in to feel whether it was really so, or whether my wish had deceived me.

It was really getting warm.

Gradually the little air-bubbles began to rise.

The water was simmering.

Spero watched me closely, and when I turned away to get my coffee-beans, he quietly slipped his finger into the boiling water.

Didn't he yell?

How he danced about the place!

I thought he would go mad, but catching sight of the saw, he sat down and held his finger in front of the steel mirror, and found solace and consolation.

I managed to roast my coffee-beans, and pulverize them in a rude shell mortar.

The fragrant aroma filled the cave.

The partridge was roasted just right, and I sat down to dinner with greater pleasure than I had done previously.

Spero would not touch the partridge, nor could I get him to taste the coffee; but as he ate three coconuts and rubbed his stomach to show his satisfaction, I did not think he needed any pity.

Having the tools nicely cleaned, I started off to the grove, rowing round the shore, but Spero would not get into the boat.

He walked along the beach, carrying the saw, and admiring himself constantly.

When the grove was reached, I made my plans.

I would saw down a number of myrtles in the center of the grove, using some of the growing trees as part of my outside walls.

Between them I would place the trees I felled, and so make a log house.

The ax I had found in the chest I kept for my own use.

I was a little afraid that Spero might take a fancy to strike me with it.

I showed him how to use the saw, and while he was cutting down a small tree, I was chopping away at a larger one.

All day we worked.

Night found many small trees felled and we were both well pleased with our day's work.

The next day we returned to the grove, and continued our labor of clearing. Having lopped off the branches and the tops of the trees, we commenced to build. Spero's strength was prodigious.

He grasped a tree, whose end I could scarcely raise from the ground, and carried it to where I wanted it placed.

We had got the walls on two sides about six feet high, and were about to relinquish our work for the night, when Spero threw down his saw and uttered one of the most peculiar, and at the same time heartrending, cries I had ever heard.

I looked to see what had so startled him, but saw nothing. Again he uttered the shriek, and ran and bounded away with a speed which would cause many a horse to blush for shame.

I could only conjecture that he had seen some savage animal which was an enemy to his race.

If so, I must be prepared.

I raised my sharp ax and waited.

CHAPTER X.

MYSTERIOUS FOOTPRINTS.

I waited for some time, with my ax ready to strike, but as nothing appeared and Spero did not return, I thought it better to follow my faithful baboon and see if any misfortune had come to him.

It required a great amount of courage to do so, but it will have been seen by any who may chance to read this narrative that I possessed considerable nerve.

Armed with my ax, I followed for some distance, but could not see him.

I saw signs, though, which made my hair stand on end. On the soft earth I saw the footprints of Spero, but there were extra marks, and undoubtedly made by a human being.

It could only be a man's foot which had left such a mark.

It was not mine, for I still wore shoes; besides, my feet were always small.

These marks were made by a very large naked foot.

I was evidently not alone on the island.

That was thought number one.

I am not very sure that the thought was a pleasant one, for I had become accustomed to being alone.

I followed the trail until I was tired.

But there was another reason for relinquishing it — I began to be afraid my boat might be stolen.

I went back to my house; the walls stood just as I had left them, the tools had been undisturbed, the boat rode calmly on the water in the near distance.

But sitting on the stump of a tree was Spero, looking admiringly at himself in his polished saw.

How did he get back?

How was it I had missed him?

I was surprised, to say the least, and when he lowered his saw and grinned at me, I could not help feeling mad and angry.

"Where have you been?" I asked.

He understood me and tried to answer, but his jargon was too much for me, and I could only conjecture by his gesticulations that he had been through the wood.

Of course, I knew that.

"How did you get back?"

Spero seemed to think how to answer, for he certainly understood.

I ran a little distance, and then returned.

Spero grinned. He had fathomed my meaning.

He ran some distance through the wood, then climbed a tree, and returned by swinging himself from bough to bough.

"Did you see a man?" I asked, but that was too much for Spero.

I led him to the place where I had seen the footprints, and pointed to them.

Spero began trembling and sprang up the tree.

I was satisfied that his fright arose from seeing some man, and that he had pursued the visitor, or had been pursued by him.

Whichever it was, I thought the safest place to spend the night was at home.

So I bade Spero get into the boat, and I rowed round to my rocky dwelling, and was guilty of a sigh of relief when I entered and found everything safe.

The next day I started off on a long walk, to try and find my neighbor.

Several times I came across footprints, but no other sign of human being.

For four days I continued the search, and as I was unsuccessful, I came to the conclusion that some ship had anchored on the other side, and had sent some one on shore to investigate the island.

But though I daily scanned the ocean as far as the eye could reach, I had not seen a sail since the Malay pirate craft.

"We must get along with our house, eh, Spero?" I said, on the fifth morning, and I got a grunt of delight as my answer.

"So back to the house we went, and the thuds of the chopping and the buzz of the saw drowned even thoughts of the mysterious footprints.

Spero was equal to a dozen men; he was as strong as any two human beings, and so quick in his movements that I had no sooner expressed a wish than it was fulfilled.

The sides of the house grew rapidly, and it was time to think of a roof.

A peaked one was out of the question. I was not good enough builder to attempt it, so I resolved on a flat one.

This was easily managed. All I had to do was to lay several long poles across from wall to wall, and on the top of them place palm-leaves for an interior finish, and branches of trees, leaves, and long grass, as a kind of thatch.

I was so pleased with my house that I laughed so loudly that it was repeated by the echoing hills.

But when my laugh was over I saw that my house was far from perfect. It was a good, square room, but I was getting ambitious.

I wanted three rooms, a general living-room and two bedrooms — one for Spero and the other for myself. It was slow work cutting down the trees and building up the partitions, but every work comes to an end at some time, and my house was divided.

A strange noise, unearthly as any that ever came from the grave — if such have ever been heard — startled me as I was resting from my labors.

Spero heard it, as well, and was so frightened that he ran up one of the tallest trees, and hid himself among the great leaves at the top.

That noise set me thinking.

It was not sufficient to possess a house; I must have protection against wild beasts.

To think or desire such a thing was only a trifling preliminary to action.

Early next morning I walked round my house and examined my possessions.

Instead of making a stockade just around my house, I conceived a grander idea.

I would enclose sufficient to give me a good farm, poultry yard, and cattle-enclosure.

At the back of the house was a large plateau of grass, fringed with a semicircular row of palms.

I had only to cut down about half a dozen trees on the plateau to have a clear space of a quarter of an acre, as near as I could judge.

These trees would help to build my stockade.

Spero entered into the spirit of the work with great gusto all that day, and we cut down and sawed a good many trees.

My idea was to cut the trees into ten-foot lengths and stand them on end, splicing them together and securing them to the growing trees by cross-pieces and cord.

I had found a creeping vine whose tendrils were of great length and enormous strength; these tendrils I dried and used them in place of rope, and they were as good as any hempen cord ever made.

"Let us try a length," I said to Spero, and we commenced our work of building a stockade.

Between two trees there was a space of fifteen feet — that was the longest we should have — and so it made the best test.

Having fastened a long tree crosswise to the growing ones, on the outside, we carried our ten-foot lengths of timber and stood them up.

One of our ropes was secured to the growing tree, and twisted round the first loose timber, then to the second, and so on.

It took twenty trees to fill up the space, but when all were in position, and another tree fastened crosswise on the inside, we had fifteen feet of fence which would have required a considerable amount of strength to knock down.

I was beginning to believe Spero a model workman. "One thing in his favor," I said, "he will never strike, or ask for higher wages; he may mutiny, but I don't think he will."

I had been rather premature in my thought, for on the next morning I found myself alone.

I cooked my breakfast, which consisted of some boiled eggs — I had found a species of fowl whose eggs were more delicious than hen's eggs, and it was this breed I intended securing for my poultry-yard.

What had become of Spero?

Perhaps he had gone to the new house and commenced work.

That consoled me, for I grieved at his absence, he was such a good workman, and then, even the company of a baboon was better than complete solitude.

CHAPTER XI.

A MOCKING LAUGH.

On my way to the new house I saw a plant which caused me to pause.

I did not know much about farming, having been brought up in Water Street, New York, but I had seen potatoes growing, and the plant looked uncommonly like that edible tuber.

I had no digging-tools, so down on my knees I went, and scraped away the earth until I reached the roots, and there I saw a cluster of the nicest-looking potatoes ever grown out of Ireland.

The tears came into my eyes — tears of joy — for I liked potatoes, and they would make a good substitute for bread.

I found eight nice large ones, and how carefully I carried them!

I reached the new house, expecting a welcome from Spero, but was doomed to disappointment.

I lighted a fire, and soon had the potatoes ready for roasting in the ashes — the best way to cook a potato.

While the potatoes were roasting I began making a spade.

I sawed a board, which I had found at the wreck, into something like the shape of a spade and handle; then I sharpened the spade end and rounded off the handle with my spokeshave.

My tool broke before I got through, and the accident alarmed me.

What should I do when my tools were all broken?

My spade was worse than the clumsiest snow-shovel ever made, but I could dig with it after a fashion.

My potatoes were ready, and I took one of the largest and broke it open.

It was like a ball of flower.

Never had I enjoyed anything so much before.

But where was Spero? I missed him.

The ten-foot timbers were heavy. I had let him do all the lifting before.

I staggered under the weight, and when I had lifted the first one into its place I found I could not both hold and fasten it.

I struggled for an hour, and gave up in despair.

I was sure Spero would return if he were still alive, and so I deferred the binding and went on with cutting down the trees and sawing them into lengths. But even that was wearisome work, and I quit very soon.

I searched through my tool-chest, more to pass away the time than anything else.

In the dirt and rubbish at the bottom I found two little grains of Indian corn.

I was just about to wash them and eat them, when a new idea stopped me.

I would plant them.

Digging up a piece of ground, I planted my two grains of corn.

Then I carefully surrounded the place with tree-stumps so that no one — and I laughed to think that "no one" could only mean myself — could step on and crush out the life of my cornfield.

All day passed, but Spero did not return.

Two days more of loneliness, and I had relinquished all thought of building a stockade.

Not because I did not think it necessary, but I was not strong enough to erect it unaided.

It was early morning on the fourth day of Spero's absence, when I was awakened from my sleep by a most unearthly chattering.

I had spent the night at the new house, instead of the cave.

I left my bed, which consisted of palm-leaves, and cautiously grasped my ax before I looked out.

I almost fainted at what I saw.

There was Spero, alive and evidently well, but he was not alone.

He had with him two other baboons, uglier than he was.

One of them had a nasty gash on the head, covered with clotted blood.

Spero was showing them how to build the stockade.

He made them carry the timbers and stand them in place, while he tried to secure them with the cords.

Every mistake the baboons made was punished by a heavy blow administered by Spero with a stick.

I understood the situation.

Spero wanted to be a "boss."

He had searched the island for workers, and had most probably beaten the two baboons into submission.

They were now to work for him, as he had done for me.

He had a great head.

I forgave his absence, but I was in awe of his assistants. Suppose that the three monkeys should turn against me.

What chance should I have?

A fly would have a better one.

I saw that I should have to be always very watchful.

Spero grinned as I approached him, and he pointed out the workmen.

He rubbed his chest and patted his head; then he shot out his arm as in the act of striking; he next fell on his knees, and when he rose he shouldered one of the logs of timber and carried it to the wall.

I understood this pantomime as well as if he had spoken.

He felt the work too heavy for him, so he began to think. He started out in pursuit of some of his former neighbors, and, having found them, he beat them into subjection.

I found all three ready workers, but Spero resented my interference with his men.

I had to tell him what I wanted them to do, and he would in some language of his tribe acquaint them.

He was a harsh taskmaster, for he generally emphasized his orders by a good, heavy blow.

I made him understand about the cornfield, that it was not to be touched.

For dinner I had broiled or roast fowl and roast potatoes, with wild grapes and a cup of coffee for dessert.

It was not bad fare, but Spero and his companions would not touch the fowl, and preferred the potatoes raw, so all the cooking was for one, and that one myself.

Nothing eventful happened for more than two weeks.

I had made a calendar out of a very tall palm growing in the center of my enclosure.

I cut a small notch in the bark for each day, a long one, going a quarter round the tree, for each seventh day.

I had lost the actual reckoning, so it was quite probable that my Sabbath was not the same as that observed in New York, but it was the seventh day, and I scrupulously abstained from work on that day.

I had left New Bedford late in April, I had been on the whaler about five or six weeks, so I reckoned that I was landed on my island about the middle of June.

I commenced my calendar with the first of July, which gave me about ten days or so before I began my reckoning.

By the time I had finished my stockade, which now encircled my house with a solid fence ten feet high, it was the end of October.

The weather was getting warmer, and it was far pleasanter to sleep outside than in my room.

In my farmyard I had a gate which could only be opened from the inside, my mode of ingress and egress being by a rope ladder which I had made out of fibers of palm-leaves; these fibers were very strong and as soft as silk.

I had made a tent on the ground with the giant palmetto-leaves — which often grew to be as much as four or five feet wide.

Under this tent I slept, leaving Spero and the others to enjoy themselves in the house or among the branches of the trees.

I had called the assistants Hercules and Cupid.

The one because of his immense strength, for Spero was like a child in his hands, the other because he was so playful and loving that I could not think of any better name than Cupid.

I was lying on my back under my palm-leaf tent, when I fancied I heard something trying to climb the stockade in front of me.

At first the noise disconcerted me, but I remembered that the fence was ten feet high, and that no animal, save one of the monkey tribe, could climb it.

I closed my eyes and tried to sleep.

I fancy I must have dozed off, for I found myself thinking of Water Street and wondering whether the old captains still drank rum and spun yarns in the office.

Then a strange suspicion filled my mind.

Was my father a smuggler?

Well, not exactly that, either, but did he give assistance to and receive profit from smugglers?

I used sometimes to think invoices and charter-parties were queer things.

Once I saw an invoice of a cargo of goods, and was told there was no duty to be paid on that particular shipment. I so entered it on my books, but I was puzzled when, instead of canvas, the vessel contained bales of silk, on which a heavy duty was levied.

I woke myself by laughing.

Did I laugh?

I am sure I did.

But there was a second laugh.

Whence did it come?

Spero could grin, but made no noise.

Hercules could not even do that; he was far too serious a monkey to appreciate mirth in any way, while Cupid danced and grinned when he wished to express his delight.

Yet there was a second laugh.

It could not have been an echo.

I jumped to my feet.

Seizing my ax, I went out of the tent.

There was silence everywhere.

I was soon at the top of the wall, and as it was a moonlight night I was able to see a long distance.

There were no signs of either animal or human being.

Was it possible I had been deceived?

I sat on the top of the wall, wondering about it until I fell asleep.

I have often thought since that it was nothing short of a miracle that I did not fall down and break my neck.

My father used sometimes to jest about me, and say I was born to be hanged, and I often thought of his saying, wondering whether he had any sight into the future.

CHAPTER XII.

LIBERTY ISLAND.

It was morning when I awoke, and I nearly fell, through my surprise, when I found where I had made my bed.

It was some time before I could bring back a remembrance of the reason for my being on the top of the wall.

Then I was perplexed.

Was it all a dream, or had I really heard some one laughing?

I was very positive that no animal could have laughed so humanly.

I lowered my ladder and descended to the sands.

There, clearly enough, was the same mysterious footprint.

A large, naked footprint had been there.

Who could my fellow islander be? Why should he mock me and refuse to be interviewed?

I again set off and explored the country all about, but without any success.

When I returned I saw Spero and Cupid examining my cornfield.

I am afraid I suspected them of being about to steal my corn.

But they looked very innocent and walked away.

The corn was nearly ripe.

Both grains had grown, and on one stalk I had four cobs and on the other three.

I thought in that latitude I could get two harvests in the year, so it would not be long before I could get some corn.

The thought of corn suggested bread, and I could not bake bread without an oven.

That day I, accompanied by my three workmen, went inland about half a mile, to where I had seen some good clay.

Each of my baboons carried a board, while I shouldered my heavy wooden spade.

I dug the clay, and, there being a stream of water near, we soon puddled it and began brickmaking.

It was very easy shaping the bricks; I made them smaller than the usual size, because I thought I should have to trust to the sun to bake them.

When our day's work was done I gave each of my assistants a good, heavy load of clay to carry.

They were the very best of servants, for they did not complain.

I began with the clay as soon as we got home.

Fashioning it into various shapes, I made a rough and rude bowl in which I could hold water, and perhaps boil it.

Why had I not thought of it before?

I had means of making a fire; I would burn my bowl.

Spero watched my every movement with interest; Hercules turned his head away, as though expressing contempt for such frivolous work, while Cupid was mischievously fastening Hercules to the stockade by means of a rope he had tied around his tail.

The flames wound round the bowl, and I was sure my experiment would be a success.

I set to work and made some cups — I had used coconut shells up to that time — and plates.

They were very crude-looking things.

It had appeared a very easy thing to model cups and plates, but when I tried it I saw that art and skill were required.

My bowl was a nice red, and I lifted it from the fire with a stick.

When it was cold I found it quite hard and capable of holding water, though it was as porous as a common flowerpot.

Still it was a success.

My bricks I burned; it was quicker than baking them in the sun.

Hercules was pleased with the work of carrying them to the stockade.

When we had a goodly number there I built an oven.

I raised the walls easy enough, but was puzzled for some time about the floor of the oven, for I had no mortar.

A happy thought occurred to me.

I would make the floor all in one piece.

Working-up some clay, I rolled and patted it out until it made two bricks, each three feet long by two feet broad.

I let it harden in the sun for two days, and after that burned it.

Again my experiment proved a great success, and I had my oven built.

One of the large bricks I used as a floor, the other as the top and lighting a fire underneath, I soon had my oven hot enough to roast a fowl or bake a loaf of bread.

I had dug up a good store of potatoes, putting some on one side for seed and eating from the others.

One day Hercules had been wandering about, and returned eating something which had an unusual but pleasant odor.

It looked like new bread.

I begged a piece, and Hercules gave me all he had.

I tasted a little, and liked it.

I knew at once that it was the breadfruit.

I had heard some sailors on the whaler describe how they cooked it and how good it was.

Hercules was easily persuaded to show me where he had got it, and we brought back twenty good-sized breadfruits.

I cut them in quarters, took out the cores, and got ready to bake them.

I placed some hot bricks in a hole in the ground, and covered them with green leaves; upon this I placed a layer of fruit, then stones, leaves, and fruit alternately, until the hole was nearly filled; then I put more leaves, and finished filling the hole with dirt.

I left the fruit for about half an hour, and then removed it.

The outsides were nicely browned, and the inner part tasted like new bread, though much sweeter.

Hercules turned a somersault when he tasted the baked fruit. Spero clapped his hands, while Cupid was so delighted that he tried to tie Spero's and Hercules' tails together.

My breadfruit was a success.

I baked some in the oven; but it was not nearly so good.

I began to think it time to give a name to my island home.

I had not the remotest idea of its latitude or longitude, and so did not know whether it was marked on the maps or not.

After puzzling my brains for a long time, I said aloud:

"What is the matter with Liberty? Haven't I all the liberty I care for? Of course, so Liberty Island it is and shall be."

After I had so decided, I strutted up and down before my house, inflated with my own importance.

The naming of the island led me to a greater project.

I would explore Liberty Island, make a map of it, and give names to all its capes and promontories, its hills and dells.

The bay in front of my house I drew on my map and called it, Rest Haven.

My house and stockade I dubbed by the pleasing title Castle Content.

I was pleased with my work, and began scratching my head again to find a name for my rocky dwelling, my cave.

I first called it Stony Mount, but a few days later changed it to the name it now bears — Fort Lookout.

The wood I called Hercules Forest.

Quickly the idea came to me that the pretty little valley right at the east of my stockade, where trickled a tiny stream of the purest water, should be called Cupid Dell.

Pretty name, don't you think so?
After amusing myself with the naming of my island home I set to work to gather in a good store of coconuts for future use.
After losing a great many, I hit upon a plan which led to great results.
I sent — at first — Hercules and Cupid up the trees to gather the fruit, which they threw down to the ground, while Spero and myself piled it in heaps.
I sat on the beach thinking, when Cupid came crying and howling to me.
He had his tongue hanging out of his mouth and kept rubbing his stomach.
I fancied he had been poisoned.
"Show me, Cupid, where you have been."
The baboon — all the time uttering the most heartrending cries — hurried along until he reached a place in Hercules Forest.
A little spring bubbled up from the ground.
Cupid pantomimically pointed to the spring and then to his mouth.
I put my hand on what I supposed was water, and found the liquid greasy.
"It looks like oil," I said, and Cupid howled with the remembrance.
I found a coconut-shell near-by, and I filled it with the liquid.
When I reached the stockade I dipped a dry leaf into the oil and held it near my cooking-fire.
It blazed up so brightly that I was startled.
"Eureka!" I shouted.
Spero, Hercules, and Cupid came and squatted on the ground near me.
I got together a big handful of dry grass and tied it tightly together.
I then attached it to a palmetto-leaf parachute.
The three monkeys wondered what new fake I was attempting.
I saturated the grass in the natural oil, and set fire to it.
Presently the leaf filled out with rarified air, and away it wept, far above the trees, and carrying with it the bright light, it looked like a floating fiery star in the early darkness of the evening.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOCO.

In all my journeyings I had not seen any more footprints, and I had about come to the conclusion that a ship must have anchored near Liberty Island, and some of the crew visited it.

The weeks passed away, and I had lost all fear.

I had to look after my harvest.

My corn had been very productive, and I could not resist eating one cob — the rest I kept for seed.

I set to work to stock my poultry-yard, and found that I had undertaken a most difficult task.

But after a number of unsuccessful attempts I succeeded, and fifteen fowls were made captive.

The poultry kept me well supplied with eggs.

A little incident is worth relating here.

One morning I had slept a little later than usual, and should have indulged still longer had I not been aroused by a strange excitement.

Hercules, Spero, and Cupid were shouting and laughing in the most uproarious fashion.

I wondered what could have roused the enthusiasm of my family at that early hour of the morning.

Not wishing to disturb them, and yet filled with curiosity, I crept, with great secrecy, from the house, and saw that the three baboons were in my poultry-yard.

They were having a high old time playing snowball, only, instead of snow — of which I had not seen any on the island — they used eggs.

Not only had they taken all they found in the poultry-yard, but they had appropriated my stock from the house as well. I was mad.

I am afraid I used some bad words.

I got my stick ready to inflict the most condign punishment on the criminal jesters.

But Spero looked round, and the sight was so ludicrous that I sat down and laughed.

Egg all over him.

The bright-yellow yolk mixed with the dark hair of his face.

Chrome yellow everywhere.

Cupid was as bad, and as for Hercules, he looked as if he had literally rolled in eggs, the shells and yolks being all over him.

I laughed.

My sides ached with laughter.

The tears ran down my cheeks.

The more I laughed, the more eggs were thrown.

Had I known that I should not get another egg for a month, I could not have stopped the game just then.

Seeing me laugh caused Cupid to think I enjoyed the game and wished to join in.

He took up an egg — I wonder whether it had been hidden for just such an occasion — and threw it at me.

It struck my face.

More than half of it went into my mouth.

And, oh, the pity of it, the egg had matured with old age into a most offensive object

It must have been laid for twelvemonth.

Where did Cupid get it? That I never knew.

My experience made me angry. I laid about me with my stick. I belabored the three until I couldn't raise my arm to strike another blow.

As soon as I realized my helplessness I saw my danger. What if they turned on me?

But they did not.

They took the matter philosophically.

They had had their little game with eggs; I had taken mine with a stick.

I had found some animals which bore so striking a resemblance to pigs that I captured several small ones and built a pig-pen for them.

I was now enjoying some of the luxuries of life. I had plenty of coffee, I had also eggs for breakfast, and looked forward to the time when I should have bacon.

The breadfruit was almost as palatable as fresh wheaten bread; and quite as nourishing.

I was quite happy in Castle Content.

I thought that I should be willing to stay there the remainder of my life. But that very evening, when I was most contented, I went down to Rest Haven and threw myself on the sands.

I looked out to sea.

I had not seen a sail since the time when the pirates destroyed my flag which floated above Fort Lookout.

I thought of that as I looked out to sea.

I wondered, also, why I had never seen at Rest Haven any of the serpent fishes, or the octopus, such as I had seen on the other side of the island, near Fort Lookout.

A strange desire came over me.

I wanted to tell my adventures to some one.

What would the old captains think if I could just drop in on them at my father's office and tell them where I had been and what I had seen.

Of course, they wouldn't believe one-half, but that would be their misfortune, not my fault.

While I was thinking of home I saw a ship — not floating on the sea, but high up in the clouds and upside down.

It looked quite natural that it should be so.

There was nothing extraordinary in it to me.

I watched it. Its sails were full set.

A flag floated from its masthead, but I could not distinguish its nationality.

I knew it was a mirage.

But young and inexperienced as I was, I knew that a mirage is only a reflection of something actually existing.

A vessel was near.

Perhaps it was within signaling-distance.

Should I light my fire?

She might be a pirate craft.

No, she was too trim for a pirate. She must be a merchantman.

I hurried to Fort Lookout.

I got together all the brushwood I could, and then I went back to Castle Content for big bowl of the natural oil.

I ignited the oil and brushwood.

A column of fire darted up into the sky.

I saw Spero coming toward me.

I ran away and hid in Fort Lookout.

I was ashamed.

I felt that I was trying to do a mean act — that I was trying to leave my faithful friends and get away from Liberty Island.

I argued that the baboons had lived before I went to the island, and could do so after I left.

But my reason whispered:

That is so, but you have civilized them, you have taught them to be almost human, and now to leave them is a cruel desertion.

Higher and higher went the flames, but no answering signal came from the ocean.

The mirage disappeared, and, although I kept my fire burning all night, not once closing my eyes, no sign of any sail appeared.

When morning came I was nearly heartbroken.

I had longed for civilization. I had desired to leave Liberty Island.

My hopes were fixed on a mirage, and, like that phantom reflection, had melted away and left me most discontented.

All day I was idle.

I could not work.

And as if to cap the climax, upon ascending a tree deep in the forest, I slipped and fell to the ground, striking hard enough to lose my senses entirely.

How long I remained unconscious I have really no means of knowing.

It must have been several hours, for the sun had gone down.

When I opened my eyes I saw Spero looking at me with an almost human expression on his face.

Hercules and Cupid were seated some distance away, rocking to and fro, and looking the very picture of misery.

The faithful dumb friend danced with joy when he heard my voice.

He had thought me dead.

Hercules stopped his moaning and came across to me, looked straight into my eyes, and, in his great joy, ran up a tree and swung from branch to branch, shouting and gesticulating in almost human manner.

It was some minutes before I was able to rise, but when I did so I fancied I heard a moan.

Cupid turned away his head when I looked at him, and Hercules dropped from the tree to the ground.

"Where is it, Spero?" I asked.

Spero pointed sullenly to a dense part of the jungle, and I started to investigate.

Hercules gave me a push.

I knew he did not want me to go.

That made me all the more determined, and I waved him on one side.

The moaning grew more distinct.

It was too human to proceed from even a monkey; was I to solve the mystery of the island at last?

After breaking through the brush, I saw a little path which I might have traversed and so saved myself considerable scratches.

Lying on a green bank, in the very center of the almost impenetrable brush, was a man who seemed to be suffering.

"Who — what are you?" I asked.

"A man like yourself," was his reply.

He had a fine, muscular form, strong joints, and well developed limbs, a skin almost mahogany color, face rather pleasing, the lips not so thick as a full-blooded African, but more prominent than a white man's.

He arose to his feet and tried to walk, but was lame.

"He did it," pointing to Spero, and I learned that my faithful baboon had found me soon after I had fainted, and seeing the stranger bending over me, had struck at and lamed him.

"How came you here? Who are you?" I asked.

The man looked at me in astonishment.

"Don't you know? Is it possible that you haven't hunted me?"

"I haven't hunted you because I did not know of your existence. I saw footprints —"

"They were mine."

"I heard a laugh."

"It was my laugh; I could not help it."

"I searched —"

"I know it."

"But only because I wanted company."

"You wouldn't give me up?"

"I don't understand you. Come to my stockade and we will talk over all your troubles, for I see you have some. Can you walk?"

"I don't know; that brute, I'll get even with him —"

"No, you will not. Spero is my friend, and I'll protect him."

The man tried to walk, but after a few steps he fell, and we had to arrange a litter and carry him.

Hercules did not like the task, neither did Cupid.

They were not afraid of him, but they were jealous.

"What is your name" I asked.

"Jocolowski," answered the man.

I laughed at the strange name, and tried to pronounce it. "You won't be offended if I call you Joco?"

"No, no; anything so long as you won't give me up."

"Give you up! What do you mean?"

"It is a long story," he said, "and I am tired and hungry."

"Then you shall not tell me anything until you have had a rest."

I was puzzled over this strange being.

He spoke the English language as well as I did, and yet he was evidently of African or savage descent.

He was afraid of being given up to some one.

What could he have done?

Who could he be?

What if he were a murderer, or a criminal, was I not in danger of my life?

But he was a human being, and although only a little before I declared I never wanted to see any fellow creature again I was now full of joy, because I had discovered a naked savage.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOCO'S STORY.

Joco ate heartily and slept for several hours.

When he awoke he approached me and made a salaam, which told me he had been accustomed to be with superiors.

"I will tell you my story if you desire it," he said. "You ought to know who I am and why I came here. I told you my name — call me always Joco, I like it better. I was born a free man in Jamaica, was educated to be a schoolteacher for the colored children, as the English thought they would learn better than with a white teacher —"

"That accounts for your fluent speech," I said, feeling quite proud of myself for my ready reply.

He did not notice what I said, but continued:

"I was very happy and contented and life was pleasant. But one day I thought I would like a vacation."

"I obtained permission, and purchased a ticket for New York. I intended returning by the same boat, as the sea voyage would take all my time.

"I had been three days out, when we heard a gun fired and we were ordered to lay to."

"The vessel which had waylaid us ran up the black flag to the foremast; and we knew resistance was useless."

"Our ship was captured, and yet it was only through sheer force of numbers, for our people fought well, and it was only when a dozen of the crew and passengers were killed that the vessel was surrendered."

"We had several ladies on board, all white. Of course, as my skin was dark, I was not allowed to sit with the white folks, but when the trouble came they did not care whether I was black, or blue, or yellow; I was just as good as anyone, for I was strong and able to fight."

"All the prisoners who were captured were taken on board the pirate craft and chained together."

"We were given our choice — we could either die at once or become pirates. We each and all thought it just as well to live."

"And so you became a pirate?" I asked.

"Yes, I did become a pirate, and so did all but one, and he was a white man. He folded his arms and answered calmly: 'You can kill me — I am in your power; but I will never be a pirate.' The brave man was thrown to the sharks."

"For several days we were kept in the hold, evidently for fear we might mutiny."

"One day, when we were pining for a glimpse of daylight and a breath of fresh air, we heard the heavy boom of the ship's gun, and knew that another vessel was near."

"We thought we might have a chance to escape, but we little knew the mistrust of the Malays."

"The holds were battened down and we were allowed to listen to the fight without taking part in it, until near the last."

"We were called on deck, and assigned the duty of cleaning up the ship."

"I don't want to tire you, young sir, with all that took place for the eighteen months I was a pirate."

"You shudder, and well you may, but during that eighteen months I never had a chance to escape, or even to land."

"I saw that my only chance was to be as bad as any of the Malays, and, as life was sweet, I appeared to be as bloodthirsty as they were."

"I don't wish to make myself out to be better than I am, yet it is only fair for me to say that I never struck a man except in self-defense, and I don't think I ever seriously hurt man or woman while I was a pirate, until that last, but that I will tell you of later."

"I am glad to hear it," I said, and, as it was dinner-time, I proposed we should eat together before he finished his story.

"No, no, no!" he said emphatically. "If you desire to eat, do so, but I will not touch anything until you have heard all my story."

"Go on, then, I will listen, and may we be comrades after I have heard all."

Joco paused for a few minutes in his narrative, and when he continued it was evident his emotion almost prevented him speaking.

"I determined to escape. Some of the others agreed to join me, but at last they grew frightened, and, through talking too loud, revealed our plot."

"I was lashed to the mast and whipped until my back was scarred and scored in every direction."

"I fainted, but was soon restored to consciousness by the brutes rubbing my bare and bleeding back with salt."

"The pain was so great that I could not cry out. I saw that it was the first officer who was superintending the flogging and brutality, and I resolved that if ever I got the chance he should die."

"For a week I suffered the most horrible tortures, and what made it harder to bear was the continued insults."

Nature does not give in easily, and I got well. My flesh healed, and I was made to do the most menial work on the ship."

"One day we sighted this island, and I thought my time had come. I was desperate."

"The first officer called me, and, pointing out the land, asked: 'Would you like to be put on shore?'"

"I answered that I should, whereupon he laughed and said I should die on board that pirate craft. I seized a boarding-hook, and, without thinking of the consequences, I struck the officer a violent blow on the head. He fell to the deck; his eyes were fixed on me; he never moved. I knew he was dead, and yet he did not bleed."

"I could not understand it, and I was frightened."

"There had been no noise, and no one had seen me do the deed. I was a coward, perhaps, for I became afraid. I lifted the dead body over the gunwale, and the next moment there was a splash."

"The noise attracted attention. All came running forward, and the captain called out to me: 'Here, you nigger, what was that you let fall overboard?'"

"I made some answer, and got cursed for my carelessness. I was threatened with punishment. I did not wait for it, but lowered myself overboard and sat in the chains."

"I heard the captain call for his first officer. I knew the ship was being searched, and that the officer would not be found."

"Then the voice of the captain was heard distinctly by me, declaring that I had killed the officer. I was sent for, but, of course, could not be found."

"I dared not stay where I was, and I dropped noiselessly into the water and swam toward the island, I had only just touched land when I saw the boats put off in pursuit."

"Fortunately for me, you had lighted a fire and hoisted a flag. The crew went there first, scaling the cliff and destroying your flag."

"That gave me a chance to get away. I crawled into the jungle, and, to my delight, saw that the search was given up."

"But I was not safe, for only nine returned to the pirate ship, and ten were in the boat when it left."

"Then you think one remained behind?"

"I am sure of it. And I thought you were one of the pirates, and had lighted the fire on purpose to get some one to stay with you."

I began to wonder whether the white man I had buried was one of the pirates.

I described him to Joco, and he at once exclaimed:

"'Tis he. He was a passenger on the same vessel with me, and tried to escape several times. They must have killed him and left him here."

"But the boat?"

"That is a mystery. But we will find out all about it yet."

"But tell me, are you not afraid of me?"

"No, Joco. I should have done as you did, and we will be brothers —"

"No, I will be your servant."

"That will not do; you shall be my friend. We will live here together and die together, or be saved, as Heaven wills."

"How did you live?" I asked Joco presently.

"Any way. I ate raw fish, berries, leaves, anything I could secure."

"You shall live better now," I said generously.

Joco showed himself to be energetic, vigilant, and a first-class friend, and though I had got on well with Spero, Hercules, and Cupid, it was much nicer to have some one with whom I could converse.

We set to work and added to our poultry-yard, trapping a dozen fine fowls of a much larger breed than I had hitherto possessed.

CHAPTER XV.

CANNIBALS.

I soon found that Joco was an acquisition.

Unfortunately, he always had a fear that the pirates would land and kill him.

For this reason he preferred going out wearing a jaguar dress, he having killed such a beast before I met him.

Such was his fear of the pirates that I arranged for him to live at Fort Lookout — a place where he was absolutely safe.

Each morning he would come to the stockade and help me devise various things for our future comfort.

Joco was, well educated, and, being some years my senior, I soon learned to treat him with great respect.

One of the favorite studies of his had been chemistry, and he often talked of the way in which gunpowder could be made.

I wondered whether we could not make some, and so be in possession of more powerful weapons.

Joco, however, while he saw but little difficulty in making the powder, was not able to make the guns; so we gave up that idea, at least for a time.

"Have you never thought of escaping?" he asked me one day.

"I have watched for a sail, but in vain."

"Why not make a large boat, so that in case of necessity we could go out to the vessels' tracks?"

"Could we make one which would be seaworthy?"

"We could easily try."

There was a quiet confidence in the words that impressed me. We talked over the plans and discussed the details.

Joco, a school-teacher, knew more about practical boatbuilding than I did, who had been at sea for some little time.

Spero was quite proud when he started off with us to cut some trees.

Joco suggested that we should first make a raft and navigate the coast. We should perhaps find some more wreckage which would be useful.

The idea was a good one.

We soon had a raft made which measured fifteen feet long by about ten feet wide.

A mast in the center was so heavy at first that it would persist in dragging over the raft, but after considerable patience we got it balanced just right, and, with a sail made of palm-leaves, we started out on our voyage.

Spero, Hercules, and Cupid begged so hard to go that we could not refuse.

We took our boat along, in case of any accident to the raft.

It was not a pleasant sail, for the water washed over us all the time.

Our provisions' were high and dry in the boat, which we had lifted on the raft.

We had been out only about half an hour, when Cupid leaned over to let his hand drag in the water.

A sudden lurch of the raft caused him to fall overboard.

A more frightened monkey never existed than Cupid when we fished him out and placed him again on the raft.

We passed round the eastern boundary of Rest Haven, and entered upon a stretch of water unknown to me.

I got an idea that Joco had been there before, and I began to be very suspicious of his actions.

Poor fellow, he was loyal enough to me, but I had been so long alone that I mistrusted everything, man included.

"Scott, hush!"

"What is it?"

"Hark!"

"I don't hear anything."

"I do: listen to the splash of oars."

I did listen, and I fancied I did hear oars dipping into water.

Was it so, or only imagination?

"Lie low!" suddenly whispered Joco.

I stretched myself full-length on the raft, as did Joco and the baboons.

Right in front of us we saw two large boats, or canoes.

We hoped our raft hadn't been seen, but yet wished to know where the canoes were going.

I managed to pull down the sail, and as I did so I unloosened the mast, and it toppled over into the water.

We wished to land, but did not know how to do so.

I suggested getting into the boat and towing the raft to land; but Joco discovered that we had neglected to bring the oars.

Quietly the colored teacher lowered himself into the water, and with bold, vigorous strokes swam toward the shore, towing the raft as easily as we could have done with the boat.

We landed safely, and drew the boat up into a dense brushwood which grew close to the beach.

Climbing to the top of the rocky eminence, from which we could get a good view of the valley, we lay flat on our stomachs and watched the canoes.

About twenty naked savages landed from the boats.

They were well armed with spears and a weapon like a tomahawk.

I shuddered when I saw them, and more so when I saw that they had a prisoner with them.

They got near enough to enable us to see that the prisoner was a young girl.

She was painted all over her body with bright colors.

Joco looked at her and her captors intently.

"They are going to kill and eat her," he said.

"Oh, horror! Are you sure?"

"Certain! Look, they are getting the fire built, ready to roast her."

"Then, by Heaven! we'll spoil their feast!" I exclaimed.

"Are you mad, Scott? What can two of us do against twenty?"

"Wait and see."

CHAPTER XVI.

SURROUNDED BY FIRE.

I had not formed any definite plan by which I could save the girl's life, but I was determined to rescue her.

The naked savages danced round the victim they were about to kill and eat.

The child looked frightened, but did not make a sound.

Either she had become resigned, or else was too agitated for speech.

Joco was very sure we should not save her, but he was equally confident our lives would be sacrificed if we made any attempt.

"Are you afraid, Joco?" I asked.

"No."

"Then do as I tell you, and we will frighten those fiends so that they will not come near the island again."

I saw that there was a small cave running from the side of the hill, and, as I fancied, opening close to where the altar of fire was being prepared.

I had with me a sheep's bladder full of the mineral-oil.

I gathered a lot of grass and saturated it with the oil.

When I had a good quantity gathered, I told Joco my plan.

Taking a good big handful of the grass; I crawled into the cave.

Unfortunately, it got smaller and smaller, until I could scarcely move.

Had I not seen a slight glimmer of light at the other end, I should have given up, though I was fearful I could not push myself back again.

But I managed to wriggle and push my way through, and succeeded in getting so close to the opening that I could almost touch the feet of the chief of the savages.

It was better than I expected, for there was no one I wished to scare more.

I had to be very cautious what I was doing, for if my hand should be seen I was bound to die.

Cautiously I pushed my handful of grass through the opening, and nearly spoiled all by some of it coming in contact with the chief's feet.

He, however, merely kicked it away and continued watching the building of the fire.

I had some slow-match, which I always carried with me, and, placing one end in the saturated grass, I struck my flint with my knife, and a spark dropped on the fuse.

With only a slight hissing, the slow-match burned until the sparks came in contact with the oil-soaked grass.

Then there burst up such a flame that startled every savage almost out of his skin.

It blistered the chief's legs.

The flame spread along the dry grass, and everything seemed on fire.

The savages began to run, but as they did so, Joco threw handfuls of the grass in their path, and almost before they fell the sparks would reach the grass and the flames would welcome the savages with warm affection.

I had forced my way through the hole, and, seizing the girl's arm, tried to drag her away.

She was more afraid of me than of those who wanted to eat her.

I tried to make her understand that she was safe, but she struggled so much that I had to relinquish my hold on her arm.

When we were fully satisfied that the enemy had gone off to sea in fright, we began to look for the girl.

We searched everywhere.

She had disappeared as effectually as if the earth had opened and swallowed her.

Hour after hour passed, and we began to think of Castle Content, but the wind blew big guns, and we thought it better to stay for the night in the shelter of the trees.

Neither of us slept.

The wind moaned and groaned through the trees, making weird sounds which almost drove me frantic.

I was glad when morning came.

Constantly the image of the frightened girl appeared on my mind, and I wondered what had become of her.

Joco declared I was silly to take any notice of a little savage, and shrugged his shoulders when I said I would have liked to feel we were all alone on the island.

"She is but a girl. If it were a man, why, it would be different," he said.

Early next morning we returned to Castle Content, and felt quite happy at being once again within the stockade.

For several days I was occupied with the necessary work about the farm. The poultry needed attending to, and I set several hens.

Then some more ground needed spading, so that we could plant our potatoes and corn.

The climate of Liberty Island was so perfect that we could plant and sow at almost any time, being sure of two crops in the year.

Joco had a surprise for me.

He had not said anything about it, but had quietly given me a cup of the most delicious milk.

"That is not goat's milk," I said, but he only laughed as though he had deceived me, and said no more about it.

When I had staked out the ground for the potatoes, he took me to a small enclosure, which we had made for our cows, when we should catch any, and there, stood one of the meekest-eyed, pretty cows I had ever seen.

"Where did you get her?"

"Cupid caught her."

"Cupid?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I can only surmise, but yesterday, when you were hunting the interior for that black girl, Cupid went away right early, and I saw nothing of him until I was looking out the last time for you. I saw some strange-looking object coming toward me at a fearful rate. When it got nearer, I perceived that it was Cupid seated on the head of a cow, and holding on by the horns.

"I opened the door of the stockade," said Joco, "and in rushed the cow. When it saw how nicely it had been trapped, it bellowed in anger. Cupid had sense enough to leap from his very uncomfortable perch to the top of the stockade. The cow soon became reconciled, and now we can have plenty of milk daily. I waited until to-day, to surprise you."

Of course, a herd of cattle must have at some time in the past swum to the island from a wreck, or else other Crusoes had once lived here, which would account for many things, such as my finding coffee, potatoes, pigs, and domestic fowls at large.

When we had got things pretty straight at Castle Content, and inspected Fort Lookout, I suggested that we explore a cave I had recently discovered.

Joco smiled as he answered:

"I am ready."

I led the way to a precipice, down which I clambered, with Joco following closely.

He was filled with amazement when he saw the great boulders of cold lava, and tears ran down his cheeks when later he stood by the side of the lake of liquid fire.

"I am so sorry for doubting you," he said, and I saw how much he felt it.

I accepted his apology.

"Come!"

He followed me willingly.

I easily found the passage through which I had reached the lake.

It was dark, but a light in the distance gave us confidence. The cave, so brilliant with stalactites and stalagmites, was reached, and Joco shouted with joy.

I learned that he was a geologist, and he told me the constitution of the various minerals.

"See," he said, picking up a bright piece of stone, "this is almost pure soda; how it got here I cannot say, but if we can get sulfuric acid, and I think we can, we can make some glass for windows."

"Glass?" I repeated, in astonishment.

"Yes. Glass is made of sand, chalk, and soda. We can easily get sand, there is plenty of lime from which to get our chalk, pyrites will give us the sulfuric acid and we have plenty of fuel, so we can get the glass."

I could not help saying:

"Fancy a learned pirate."

I could have bitten my tongue out for saying it when I saw the pained expression on Joco's face, and I very humbly, begged his pardon.

He said no more about geology at the time, but motioned for me to proceed.

Gulping down a lump which would rise in my throat, I led the way along the passage until we came to another cavern, of which I had no remembrance.

Two large fissures in the roof gave sufficient light.

We were more than astonished when we saw evidences of food scattered about.

"Some one has been here recently," I said.

"Haven't you?"

"Yes, but I did not eat," I answered.

The food was fresh.

Berries and wild grapes, some breadfruit and some meat were still fresh.

"Come!"

I was impatient.

Joco very obediently followed me.

The way became darker until it was impossible to distinguish each other.

Joco placed his hand on my arm, and, in an awfully solemn voice, said:

"Listen!"

A low, rumbling sound was all that I heard, but it made me afraid.

"What is it?" I asked, and was fearful, for I dreaded his answer would be the one word, "earthquake."

"It is the sea."

"Oh!"

I breathed more freely.

"We are under it."

"What do you mean, Joco? You frighten me."

"It is a fact, we are really under the sea."

"Let us get away from here," I said, and he answered very quickly:

"With pleasure."

I led the way, or, at least, went first; but darkness prevented us from seeing each other.

The sound of the ocean grew plainer.

I almost fancied I could hear the breaking of the waves on the shore.

It was weary walking, and many times I stumbled.

"A light," said Joco, after an extraordinary long pause.

"Yes, it is the sunlight," I answered.

I was right, for an hour later we reached a plateau overlooking the ocean.

We were once again in the open air.

We were standing on a black rock which stood out in the ocean like a deserted giant.

Far away — it must have been three or four miles — we could see the shore of Liberty Island.

What a distance we had walked!

No wonder we were tired.

How glad I was that I had filled the great hour-glass at Castle Content, for had I not we should have lost all record of time.

When we got back we could tell pretty accurately how long we had been away.

We were both tired and sleepy.

There was nothing to prevent us from taking a nap.

The water could not reach us, and we had no fear of anything else.

We were soon asleep.

I was the first to awake.

When I did so I took hold of Joco and shook him until he awoke.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Some one has been here — I saw them."

"Saw them?"

"Yes; some one was close here when I awoke, but ran away before I could speak."

"It is a mystery, but we will solve it," he said seriously.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MYSTERIOUS RIVER.

"Are you sure you saw them?" Joco asked, with a look of incredulity on his face.

"Sure as I live. I am not dreaming," I answered, feeling vexed with my companion for his doubt.

"Let us search for these mysterious visitants, then, and if we find them —"

"We shall get roasted for our trouble."

"Or find a way to escape from our lonely life," said Joco, sighing as he spoke.

We turned back, entering the cave through which we had reached the rock.

After going some distance. Joco stopped so suddenly that, as he was leading, I fell against him with such force that we both rolled over on the slimy floor of the cave.

"What did you do that for?" he asked.

"What made you stop so suddenly?" I asked, by way of reply.

"We are going the wrong way."

I could not help laughing, the whole thing was so absurd.

How could we be going the wrong way? We had entered the cave and walked on and on, until I fell over Joco.

"This cave is not the one we passed through before."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. You may laugh, Scott, as much as you please, but just think. We were able to touch the roof all the way in the other cave; you can't do so here."

That was true enough, and yet it was not likely there could be two cavernous passages so much alike.

"What do you propose? Shall we turn back?"

"No, let us go on."

"Agreed, my dear fellow, Go on, and I will follow."

Joco led the way in silence, and I began to believe that he had been right.

We could scarcely keep our feet, the way was so slippery, and I thought it strange that I should not have noticed it before.

"Hello!"

The exclamation was as sudden as Joco's previous stopping, and I asked:

"What now?"

"Keep to the right, close to the wall; there is a great hole in the middle. Better still, stay until I can get a light."

My companion spoke so rapidly that I was sure something serious had been discovered by him.

He was carrying my jackknife and flint, and very quickly a spark dropped on the tinder, and we lighted one of our candles.

Joco had made some splendid candles out of goat-fat and the mineral-oil. The wick was made of twisted grass, and when lighted produced a brilliant light.

Joco had fortunately brought one of the largest of these candles with him, and right glad we were that he had done so.

As the candle burned up we saw that we were no longer in a narrow passage, but in a large cavern, the roof of which must have been a score of feet above our heads.

The walls were wet and slimy, the water trickling down from innumerable crevices.

A great, yawning chasm was right before me.

How Joco escaped I could not conceive.

"I kicked a stone down there," he said, "so I felt my way cautiously round it."

"There seems to be water at the bottom," I said.

"Yes, and it is running water. We have found some subterranean river."

I was young and inexperienced in those days, but I fondly imagined I knew everything.

I laughed at the idea of a river underground.

It was like a fairy-story, and although I had seen many wonders which I thought could never have existed, such as the lake of fire, yet I was not prepared to believe in a stream of running water away under the ground.

I began to argue with Joco.

"Where could such a river rise?" I asked, with such confidence that I fully expected my companion to say:

"Of course, it cannot possibly be a river."

Instead of that, he answered:

"It may be some great lake emptying itself down a fissure of the rocks."

"But how could it empty itself, seeing that it must be below the level of the sea?"

That was a poser for Joco.

He was silent for a few moments.

He was evidently listening to some sound.

When he spoke I was almost inclined to think he had gone mad.

"Scott, we are under the sea."

"Under the sea?"

"Yes; the sea is above us, and a river is below."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

I was compelled to laugh, and yet I felt far from mirthful.

The idea of a river flowing under the ocean was too much for me.

"It may be a lake," I said, as I looked down at the water beneath.

"We will test that."

Joco unwound a long grass rope which he had round his body, and, tying a small stone to the end, lowered it until it touched the water. The stone was borne along so rapidly that the cord was almost dragged from Joco's hand.

"Do you believe now?"

"Yes, I must believe; but it is very strange."

Joco drew up the rope, and, in place of the stone, fastened the lighted candle in such a way that it remained upright.

"It won't burn," I said, feeling confident that I was on safe ground.

"Why?"

"There will be so much carbonic acid gas that the flame will be put out."

But again I was wrong.

The light continued to burn and it really seemed to increase in brilliancy the lower it got.

"There must be a lot of oxygen down there," said Joco, and I was compelled to agree with him.

The candle touched the water and the light was extinguished.

"Scott, will you do me a favor?" asked Joco.

"Of course I will, old fellow; what is it?"

"I am going down there" — pointing to the river — "if I never come back, will you, when you escape from Liberty Island, tell my friends — you will find their names and addresses at Fort Lookout — how I lived with you and how I died?"

"Of course I will; but why go down there? Why tempt fate?"

"I must go. I am so full of curiosity that even if I were sure I was going to die I should go just the same."

I knew Joco well enough to be sure that he had as much obstinacy as any white man — white man, I mean, as regards the color of his skin — for Joco was as white in soul as any man that ever drew breath.

Making fast the rope — he had tested its strength many times before — he shook my hand hastily, and began to lower himself down the great shaft.

He had fastened his light to his head by means of a lump of clayey dirt, into which he stuck the candle.

Down, down, lower and lower, he went, until I felt the rope was hanging looser.

I called down the shaft:

"Joco! Hello!"

But there was no answer.

I waited — what else could I do?

An hour must have passed, for I know I had given up all hope of ever seeing Joco again.

I was wondering how I should ever find my way back to Liberty Island, and mentally pledging my vows that, once back, I would never wander away again.

I was about to draw up the rope, and yet hesitated.

What if he were alive, and found the rope gone. He would never reach the top.

But even as I laid my hand on the rope I felt it taut, and again I called:

"Hello!"

To my great joy, a response came back:

"Hello!" I

Hand over hand, Joco climbed the rope, and in a very few minutes he was standing by my side.

"Well?"

It was all I could say. Joco looked as frightened as any one I had ever seen.

He shook worse than anyone with the chills, and that is saying a great deal.

"What have you seen?" I asked, when I found he did not speak.

"I have been in another world," he answered.

I could not laugh.

A strange feeling overcame me; my tongue seemed to fill my mouth, my throat was parched, my heart was too large for my body.

"Another world!" I gasped.

"Yes; I will tell you some other time. Let us return."

I was perfectly willing, and we retraced our steps to the plateau from which we had started.

We searched for another cave, but could not find one.

And yet both were sure that we had not come by the way of the mysterious shaft, at the bottom of which was the still stranger river.

"Let us take a light and explore the cave," I suggested.

Joco was in favor of my staying there while he swam to Liberty Island and came back by way of the cave, but I would not stay alone — no, not for all the wealth of the world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

Carrying the lighted candle, we again entered the cave and proceeded along its rugged floor for ten minutes or so. Then we saw a division.

Two passages converged at so sharp a point that any one walking either to the right or the left in the semidarkness would never have known that there was more than one.

As we had found the mysterious shaft in the road to the right, we now followed the one leading to the left, and after considerable delay we emerged, to see the great crater where existed the lake of fire.

We shouted for joy when we found ourselves once more on Liberty Island, and ran like schoolboys to Castle Content.

There was a look almost of reproach on the faces of our animals when we returned, for they had exhausted all their food, and were beginning to think that we had forgotten them.

Our first work was to provide them with food, and many a cry of satisfaction and cackle of delight rewarded us.

When evening set in, we lighted a big fire and filled our cups with arrack.

We felt we needed some stimulant, and excused ourselves that way.

All day, and it was early morning when we returned, we had called at intervals for Hercules and Cupid — poor Spero we had lost by accident recently — but they did not answer.

We missed them almost as much as they had been human beings, and felt lonely without them.

After a big draft of our homemade arrack, I screwed up courage to ask Joco about his experiences by the subterranean river.

He shuddered, drank some more arrack, and commenced:

"There is a mystery there which I shall try to settle some day. I found, when I got to the bottom, a swift-flowing river, but it scarcely seemed like water."

"It was thick and greasy."

"I put my hand into it, and nearly lost it for my curiosity, for a hideous monster leaped up and snapped at me."

"A monster! What was it like?" I asked.

"Its head was round and seemed to be enveloped in a hood. The head was very large, the mouth very wide, and eyes quite small, but they rolled about until I believed they must belong to a human being. Behind each eye there was an orifice, shaped like a crescent, which seemed to answer no other purpose save increasing the horrible look of the beast. It had two wings, and I saw that they were useful for both flying and swimming."

"How large was this monster?"

"It must have been seven feet long, for as it sprang out of the water it was very much taller than me."

"It must have looked awful."

"It did. I never saw anything like it before, and I don't want to again. I never heard of such a fish, and it seems to me to belong entirely to that particular river."

"The water," continued Joco, after taking another draft of arrack and lighting a cigar, "was warm, and, as I told you before, was greasy."

The fragrance of the smoke which rose from Joco's rude cigar was too much for me, and I had to make one for myself.

I had found a plant which closely resembled tobacco, though there was a very different perfume emanating from it when smoked. We gathered a lot of the leaves, and dried them.

When we wanted a smoke, we took some of the leaves and rolled them together until we had a cigar, which was very enjoyable, but certainly not salable, had we offered it in New York, for its looks were against it.

I made my cigar and commenced to smoke.

Joco continued his story, puffing at the tobacco between almost every word.

"I walked along by the side of this strange river, and saw that the descent was something frightful. The grade was so steep I could scarcely keep on my feet. Where did the water empty itself? That was and is a mystery. I saw some other strange animals, or fishes — one, a small fellow, fortunately, had a head just like a horse, but its tail, which was very long, was like an alligator's, with the difference that it was very small and was used very much as an elephant uses its trunk, for the purpose of conveying food to its mouth."

"I knew you would be worrying, and so I returned."

"You looked very frightened when you got back," I said.

"Did I? Well, I felt so. I had been to the infernal regions; of that I am convinced, and I shall go again."

"Not until after you are dead," I ventured as a joke; but Joco did not take it as such, for he answered seriously:

"Yes, I shall go again soon; I must and will know where the river rises and where it finds an outlet."

I was getting sleepy.

Perhaps I was tired, or it may have been the arrack; anyway, I scarcely heard the last part of Joco's speech, and I am afraid that if he said anything more I was too far gone to have heard it.

The next day we decided on having some bread.

That was a luxury I had not enjoyed since I left home. The hardtack, or biscuits, on ship could scarcely be called bread.

Joco set to work to grind some of the corn which we could spare.

He had found a large rock with a smooth top to it, and this he used for his grinding-table. A heavy, round piece of granite was lifted on the rock. It strained us pretty hard to lift it.

Where could Hercules and Cupid have got to? Their strength would have been useful.

Joco rolled this stone back and forth, to and fro, over the corn until we had a fairly fine meal.

The perspiration poured from Joco as he worked, for it was a pretty steep kind of labor, but we felt we were well repaid.

We had nearly a bushel of corn-meal.

How we should laugh at such a small quantity in New York, but to us, the inhabitants of Liberty Island, that bushel appeared to be an enormous amount.

We talked of griddle-cakes and corn muffins, of pies and bread, as though the meal would last forever.

But after making some cakes, we pulled long faces, for we saw what a hole we had already made in the meal.

Did ever cakes taste better than those?

Did ever cook make griddle-cakes equal to them?

We couldn't imagine anything superior, for it was the first bread we had tasted for months.

For several days, we worked about our far, looking after the little chickens, making a more comfortable house for the goats and pigs.

Joco said nothing more about the mysterious river, and I hoped he had determined to leave it a mystery forever.

Nearly two weeks passed before Hercules and Cupid returned.

They slunk in as though they were ashamed of themselves.

Where could they have been?

They could not tell me in words, of course, but I gathered from their actions, from the way in which they moaned and groaned, that they had been searching for Spero, whose burial they had not witnessed.

They worked just as well as ever, and we found them of great use.

The climate was so equable that we did not hesitate to plant and sow at any time.

We put in quite a large patch of potatoes and corn, and looked forward to a plentiful harvest.

"Do you know you are counting on three crops in the year?" asked Joco.

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"Well, if nature can stand it, I can," I answered, as though nature was trifling with and teasing me by its bountifulness.

I had forgotten one thing.

I had entirely left the rainy season out of my reckoning. When I did remember I was appalled, for it was due at any time, and we had put all our seeds in the ground.

Of course, everyone knows that seeds will not germinate and grow without rain; but the rainy season on Liberty Island was something beyond compare. Every drop seemed to plow up the ground.

The valleys became rivers, the great hollows were lakes, and yet it only rained three or four days at most.

"What shall we do, Joco?" I asked, in wild despair. "We cannot dig up the seed, so we must protect it."

"How?"

Joco laughed at my ignorance. He had lived all his life in the tropics, and knew that at times seeds had to be protected.

"You shall be boss," I said. "Tell us what to do and we will do it."

I answered for Hercules and Cupid, as well as myself.

Acting under Joco's instructions, we dug a deep ditch, or moat, all round our potato and corn-patch. That would prevent it, being flooded.

When this was done, Joco got the baboons to cut a quantity of palm-leaves and brushwood.

With this he made a thatch porous enough to allow moisture to pass through, but yet strong and close enough to prevent the heavy rain beating into the ground.

In reality, we covered in a quarter of an acre of ground with a thatch roof, with drainage on each side into the deep ditch.

"What if we don't get the rain after all?" I said, when we had placed the last leaf in position.

But before Joco could answer, a big drop landed on my nose and another struck me with almost the force of a hailstone on my cheek.

"It is here," said Joco; "and Castle Content will be pleasanter than the open.

We ran to our shelter, and were only just in time.

The rain came down in torrents.

Like great sheets of water it fell on the dry and parched earth.

Our house was nearly water-tight, and we were glad.

It was the first storm which had come to test its strength of resistance.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOCO'S DISAPPEARANCE.

We dare not stir outside;

For five days we were prisoners.

It was not the fear of getting wet, but the rain beat down so heavily that it was almost impossible to breathe.

We were not idle.

Both Joco and I needed clothes, so we set to work with jaguar-skins, and made garments which were certainly unique.

Coat and trousers all in one piece.

That was my idea — not that I thought myself a dress reformer, but it seemed to me the easiest way to make the clothes.

We spread a jaguar-skin on the ground, and then I laid down upon it.

Joco, with my sharp knife, slit the skin half-way up, and cut out a V-shaped piece. Another skin was cut in the same way, and this made the back and front of the trousers; the coat was a straight and very ungainly looking article, but using the skin of the forelegs for sleeves, we made a very warm and comfortable dress.

The great objection was that we had to' draw it on from the feet and fasten it round the neck.

When the rain was over we went to look at our farm.

The thatched roof had saved our seeds, the ditch was full of water and nearly overflowing.

We soon made an outlet, and the ditch was drained dry.

The cattle seemed refreshed, for the air was clear and beautiful, while the earth, which had been parched, was now, moist and the grass green.

A strange noise attracted our attention. Outside we saw a flock of animals very like sheep, with long, shaggy wool.

They had sought shelter from the rain, and were half-starved and soaked.

We drove them into the cow-house, and congratulated ourselves on the great increase in our live stock.

"They want shearing badly," said Joco.

"Yes, and wouldn't it be jolly if we could make some cloth with the wool?"

"But we cannot."

"Don't be so fast, Joco. I went to school at Doctor Jowler's, and one thing he made me study as a punishment was how to make cloth."

"Cloth?"

"Yes, or, at least, felt."

"But we have no mill."

"We don't want one. You shear the sheep, and I will make the felt, at least we will all help."

It took us two days to manufacture a pair of shears out of our jack-knives, but we managed it, and started to make our cloth.

I forgot about the great quantity of grease in the wool and nearly spoiled the whole of it through that piece of forgetfulness.

We warmed some water and poured it over the wool. This was repeated a dozen times, Cupid and Hercules fetching the great earthen kettle of water and pouring the contents over the wool.

Joco had found some soda, and that helped us very materially, although the soda was very crude and dirty."

When the grease was extracted, we spread the wool out to dry.

Then we wetted it again, and repeated the process of wetting and drying a dozen times or more.

While this was taking place we were engaged in making a long, shallow trough.

It was not a very artistic piece of work, but it answered our purpose.

Joco manufactured some soap from the mineral oil, goat's fat, and soda, and I made a strong lather of the soap.

The wool was placed in the trough and the lather poured over it.

Now commenced our work of cloth-making.

We had no hot cylinders with which to press the wool, so we went back to the ancient method.

Each of us took a heavy wooden mallet and pounded the wool until it began to adhere and interweave itself.

Cupid and Hercules enjoyed this work, and we kept them at it until our felt was about half an inch thick.

We had to make a wider trough, use more soapy water, and hammer still harder.

At the end of three weeks from the time of catching our sheep, we had twelve yards of cloth two yards wide and nearly a quarter of an inch thick.

It was of no value as a marketable article.

No house would offer it, or anything like it, over its counter, but the two inhabitants of Liberty Island were prouder of it than they could have been of the finest woven texture.

The excitement of making the felt had caused us to forget everything else.

The mysterious river was never referred to; the disappearance of the girl we had saved from the cannibals, even, had been forgotten.

We were, however, brought back, to a memory of the past by seeing the imprint of human feet outside our stockade.

The footprints were small, and the thought occurred to both of us at the same time:

The girl must have returned!

We followed the trail for some distance, and were at sea, for beyond Cupid Dell there was not the faintest trace of any human presence.

Not a tree nor a shrub seemed to have been touched; the brush was dense, but had not been disturbed.

And yet we traced the footprints right up to the dell.

Joco was more excited than I had ever seen him.

He almost became frantic.

Several times he went back and forth from the stockade to the dell, each time losing the trail at the same place.

"I will find it out, even if I die in doing so!"

"Don't be silly, Joco. If anything happened to you, I should go crazy."

All day his excitement continued, and although we searched everywhere, we could not discover who had made the footprints.

I laughed at Joco's anxiety, and reminded him how he had puzzled me until, at last, I had discovered his retreat.

I managed to get him to help me make some clothes out of the felt.

They required more skill than the jaguar suits, and Joco became interested.

I cut out the cloth, and Joco sewed it; we had a most primitive needle, using a long thorn, and the fiber of a palm-leaf for thread.

Gradually the interest in tailoring overshadowed that of the footprints, and for several weeks we lived perfectly happy.

Two coats had been made out of the felt, and right comfortable they were.

We had started on trousers, but had not made so much headway.

When I thought all was working so satisfactorily, Joco became ill at ease, and told me he was going to spend a day or two at Fort Lookout. Of course, there was no objection to that, for Fort Lookout was his home.

But when a week passed by and Joco did not return, I became uneasy.

I was beginning to feel lonely.

I was unfitted to live alone after having had companionship.

Hercules and Cupid saw that something was wrong.

I was irritable and cross.

At last I could stand it no longer.

Joco had asked me not to disturb him, and I had promised. But a week had passed.

I went to Lookout.

My spirits went down to zero, my heart into my boots; for it was evident that Joco had not been there at all.

And I had not seen him for eight days.

What had become of him?

CHAPTER XX.

JOCO DISCOVERED.

My only human companion had gone, but where?
Had he sought again the wild life in the jungle, from which I had rescued him?
That I could not think possible.
I thought of the mysterious river, and of his resolve to explore it from its rise to the sea.

There must be his hiding-place, but how could he live?
I went back to Castle Content, and waited for his return.
I was not superstitious.
I did not believe in omens, but I was certain I should never see Joco again.
No one who reads this can realize how lonely I felt.
Everyone knows what a strange feeling is experienced on entering an empty house and staying there some hours.

Every sound becomes magnified, every creak and crack of the wood sounds weird and ghostlike.

So Castle Content was a lonely place.
Hercules and Cupid were romping about and jabbering, but their presence only made the solitude more distressing, for I felt, more than ever I had before, that they were only monkeys.

And Joco was a man, well educated, intelligent, far more so than myself, and a gentleman in manners, although he was dark-colored and had been a pirate.

Why did I not search the cave and even descend the shaft to the mysterious river?
I will confess my shortcomings.
I was afraid.
Yes, I trembled and shook as I thought of the horrors of that subterranean region.
I liked Joco, but not enough to go alone to search for him in the caves below the sea.

I waited two days more.
Ten days, and no companion!
Could I endure it much longer?
My head seemed as if it would burst; my heart was beating so fast that I could scarcely breathe.

I must seek him.
Leaving Castle Content, I crossed the Hercules Wood in the direction of the lake of fire.

I was tired, the least exertion took away all my strength. Seating myself on a rock, I fell asleep.

I was wearing the jaguar-skin garments, and must have looked an unearthly object.

Was I dreaming, or did some one touch me?
I raised my head.
My eyes were wide open, and I knew I was not asleep. Standing in front of me, I saw the girl I had rescued from the cannibals.

How did she get there?

It was evident she had not been hiding in the wood ever since, for her dress was different.

There was not a superabundance of clothing, for she wore a string of beads round her neck and a short skirt of grass cloth was her only additional attire.

"Where did you come from?" I asked, but she only laughed and showed two rows of ivories, which were as pretty as any I had ever seen.

She put her hand on my arm and pulled me.

Had she been able to talk my language, she would doubtless have asked me to follow her, but she merely motioned with one hand, while she pulled with the other.

I rose and resolved to go with her.

She was human, and, although black, was certainly better company than my baboons.

She led me to the precipice, and almost dragged me down the steps.

A shudder passed over her as we reached the lake of fire, for she was evidently afraid of it.

On, with rapid steps, she led the way into the cave, and I still followed. How far we went I could not tell, for I stumbled so much trying to keep up with her that I was really no judge of the distance.

We reached the large cavern from whose roof hung the stalactites glistening and dazzling bright as the sun shone through the fissures of the rock.

Then she stopped, took me by both shoulders, and forced me to a seat.

Perhaps she thought I was tired, on account of my stumbling.

She was not, evidently, for she ran from the cavern with the fleetness and surefootedness of a deer.

For what had she brought me there?

I wondered as I waited.

Then I fell asleep and dreamed,

I thought I had found Joco again.

When I awoke, the girl was standing in front of me, looking at me very intently. Her mouth opened, and a merry laugh rippled between her teeth.

The girl seized my arm again and pulled me forward.

There was a strange magnetism about her which I could not resist.

I went through a long passage and entered another cave, which was lighted by the sun, whose rays crept in through a narrow opening in the rock.

My companion pointed to one corner, and ran away so rapidly that I had not the remotest idea which way she had gone.

I crossed to the dark corner, and saw Joco.

He was lying very contentedly asleep.

Here was a new mystery.

Should I wake him?

I did not hesitate long. I shook him somewhat roughly, and was a long time before I could rouse him from his sleep.

"Scott! Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed, when he saw me.

"Where have you been? How came you here?" I asked.

"I will tell you all I know when we get back to Liberty Island. But, Scott, can you help me? I am lame."

"Try me."

He leaned on my shoulder and stood up. I could see that it pained him to do so.

"Can you walk at all?" I asked.

"I think I can; I will try."

Something impelled me to remain silent on our way. By easy stages — he had to rest every few minutes — we reached the large cavern.

"I am hungry," he said.

I had some cocoa-leaves in my pocket. I had found the cocoa shrub on Liberty Island, and soon learned the value of its leaves.

He chewed some of them, and was invigorated.

For hours we walked and rested, and were rewarded at last by reaching Castle Content.

Hercules turned a somersault as soon as he saw Joco, and Cupid was so delighted that he bit his companion's tail so hard that Hercules cried out with pain.

Joco fell asleep almost as soon as he got into the house, and although I watched beside him, he never moved all night.

In the morning I prepared a soup of mutton, potatoes, and yams, and was well repaid by seeing Joco swallow a large quantity.

"Did you wonder where I was?" he asked, and I told him how I had searched and the way by which I had at last found him.

"She is an angel!" he said, his eyes filling with tears as he spoke. "She saved my life, and I shall never forget her. But where is she?"

"I don't know; when she pointed you out she ran away, and I have not seen her since."

"It is very strange."

"Very. Tell me, won't you, where you have been?"

"I feel well enough now, and I will do so, for I want you to love that girl as I do."

CHAPTER XXI.

JOCO'S STORY.

"When I left you I started for Fort Lookout."

"That was where you said you were going," I interrupted.

"Yes, but I did not go. I had a strange premonition — a feeling of something hanging over me — and I wanted to find the secret of the river.

"It haunted me. I was insane, if you like to call it so, but I must find the source of the river and where it emptied itself.

"So, instead of going to Lookout, I thought I would go to the shaft and look down at it, anyway."

"I reached the lake of fire safely, and sat for some time looking at the molten lava."

"I threw a stone into the lake."

"It sank quickly, but was forced, by some strange power, to the surface again. I knew it by its peculiar shape."

"I threw in another, with the same result."

"What power was it which drove the stones upward with such force?"

"The same which melts the lava," I answered, more for the sake of saying something than anything else.

"Of course, but I got the idea that the meeting of the waters of the river with the fire which was burning in the volcano generated a gas of enormous power."

"Very likely," I said, "but what better are we for knowing that?"

"Science, my dear fellow — science, which always benefits the world."

"But we are not of the world, and shall never see civilization again."

"I may not, but you will, and some day, Scott, you will be a great author, telling the world of the wonders of that lake of fire."

Joco had rolled up some tobacco-leaves, and was smoking' very contentedly while I had been doing some necessary work about the house and thinking.

He was just about to resume his story, when a most horrible cry startled us both.

Hercules and Cupid had got some tobacco, and were taking their first lesson in smoking.

They had become so deathly sick that they became frightened, and screamed out almost humanly.

"Go out, you varmints!" I shouted, more expressively than politely, and they quickly went outside the house. They threw themselves on the ground, and cried and rolled about in the greatest agony.

Joco laughed at their misery, and said that he felt about the same when he smoked his first pipe. I never had such an experience. If I had, I should never have had a second, for I would not have touched tobacco again.

"To return to the lake of fire: I entered the cave, intending to note carefully whether I descended or ascended as I walked," continued Joco. "But I soon forgot to do so, for I was anxious to reach the shaft. I must have missed my way, for I found myself on the brink of a ledge of rock about five or six feet high. I knew that I had not been along that passage before, and became all the more interested. I dropped down carefully, and walked about a hundred yards."

"I heard voices."

"What did I tell you?" I asked quickly.

"I heard voices; and ran forward, to my cost, for I fell down another precipice, and knew no more until I found myself in the great cave where you saw me."

"But where had you been?"

"The girl we rescued from the cannibals spoke a fair language, the Mamsutta, which I understood, and she told me all about how she had saved my life."

"Then you spoke to her?"

"Yes, and I sent her for you. Once she came to Castle Content, but saw Hercules, and she became frightened, for her sister had been carried away by a huge monkey, and has never been seen since."

"How interesting tell me all."

"This girl, whose name is Waupango, lived on an island about six miles from Liberty. Her people are not cannibals, but through the cruelties of pirates who have landed there, they kill all who come as strangers.

"The Wallalooos, a savage tribe of islanders, made war on her people and captured several women and children for food, as they are cannibals.

"They had fattened Waupango, and were going to have a feast, when you stopped them with the fire."

"But how did she escape from the island?"

"She knew of the passage under the sea between, the islands, and was not long in reaching home. Well, Waupango came several times to the island, but could never reach us on account of the baboons; she was making another attempt when she found me. She dare not take me to her island home, for she knew I should be instantly killed, so she took me to the cavern, and fed me until I was strong enough to be moved. Then she fetched you, and we have not seen her since."

I had no reason to doubt the story, although it seemed improbable.

I felt I would like to see Waupango, and suggested that together we should explore the passage to the other island and take our chances as to living.

Joco agreed to this, but counseled delay.

He wanted to be stronger, and, as he confided to me later, he wanted to be sure of safety.

He had been experimenting and had nearly succeeded in making an explosive stronger than gunpowder.

"If I can do it," he said, "we will risk the visit, and, then, should they pursue us, we can return to the cave, and blow up the rocks behind us, so closing the passage and insuring our safety."

I thought the idea a good one, and consented.

Joco got strong very quickly, and the weeks flew by with astonishing rapidity.

I devoted all my time to the farm, while Joco attended to his experiments.

We saw no more of Waupango, and had become quite reconciled to our loneliness.

Everything on our farm was a success.

The corn was most prolific, the potatoes equal to any I had ever tasted in New York.

We had built ourselves a brick wall on the east of the house, which sheltered us from the wind, which sometimes was most piercing.

If any two men could be happy on an island in mid-ocean, cut off from all communication from the world, we were.

Sometimes I sighed as I thought of home.

Sometimes I would strain my eyes, hoping to see a sail, but we were out of the track of vessels, and not even the pirates came near Liberty again.

Occasionally we would see a whale spouting away in the distance, and then we would watch and wait for the appearance of a whaler, but none ever came.

Up to the time of Joco's disappearance I had been careful to keep up my calendar, but after that had got careless, and lost my reckoning.

I tried to remember and recall the events of each day, but there were big blanks, and I ceased to bother.

What did it matter about time? We should not die any sooner or live any longer had we possessed clocks and calendars.

CHAPTER XXII.

WAUPANGO.

As near as I can remember, a year must have passed before Joco finished his experiments and had made a powerful explosive.

We tried its force on rocks, and saw the great giants of the mineral world blown into thousands of pieces.

"When shall we go and see Waupango?" I asked.

"To-day, if you like."

That was rather earlier than I cared about, so I suggested that we get together a good quantity of food and start the next morning.

Joco thanked me for the suggestion, and the day was devoted to preparations for the journey.

Joco had a great parcel of his explosive grass — for it was really grass soaked in some peculiar acids he had made and I had an equally large parcel of food.

We carried the parcels on our backs, like soldiers carry their knapsacks.

We made our way quickly, until we came to those places where there was a steep decline.

For several hours we walked along, jumped over chasms, dropped down small precipices, and all without accident.

At last we were rewarded by hearing voices.

We stopped to argue upon our plan of action, and decided to ask, boldly for Waupango.

It was a risky action to take, but the only one which seemed to augur well for success.

We walked about a hundred yards farther, and almost suddenly passed into the open air.

I say almost suddenly, for the passage was so dark that we could not believe we were so near the end.

We saw a most luxuriant plain, the grass growing to an enormous height, looking almost like wheat, as the gentle breeze blew it to and fro.

From the cave a path had been cut through the grass, and along this we walked. I went first, for Joco thought the sight of a white man would disarm suspicion.

In the center of the plain a large circle had been mown, and seated round a fire were some hundred naked savages.

As soon as I emerged from between the walls of tall grass, they arose and gave a wild whoop.

As if by magic, the scene was changed, for scores of women and children came trooping into the circle.

The women were all dressed as I had seen Waupango; the children were naked.

Almost instantly the men and women fell into line, forming a solid square, the women and children being in the center.

Joco stepped forward, and, making a very low salaam, said:

"Most noble and worthy chief and great people, a daughter of thy race hath shown mercy to those who rescued her from her enemies. The fire was kindled which was to prepare her for the food of her foes, but thy servants rescued her. Where is Waupango that she may receive our thanks?"

Every man uttered the name:

"Waupango!"

Every woman and child muttered it, and the very grass seemed to bow and mutter the name.

The chief answered Joco:

"Art thou the one who gavest life to our daughter — our Waupango?"

"We are those who gave her back to life."

"Then thou shalt be cared for. Take them to the kraal of the chief," he said, turning to the savage nearest him.

I did not like the turn things had taken, but Joco was pleased.

It appeared only a friendly act to him.

I had lived so long alone that I was very suspicious, and saw a lurking danger in this apparent friendliness.

We were surrounded by the savages and taken to a stockade, or kraal, into which we were hurried unceremoniously.

"I don't like this," said Joco, when we were quite alone.

"Neither do I."

"They left us our food and our explosives, that is one good thing."

All day we were kept there in solitude.

No one brought food or water, and we were parched, for we had not brought water along with us."

Night came, and we threw ourselves down on the grass, tired and exhausted.

We had no intention of falling asleep, but nature had to have her way, and we dropped into a quiet slumber.

A gentle hand passed over my face so softly that I was not alarmed, and yet with such force that I awoke. It was Waupango.

She placed her finger on her lips, and I knew she meant for us to be silent.

She crossed to Joco and whispered for some time in his ear.

In as low a voice he translated her speech.

"They will kill you," she said; "but as you saved my life, you will be killed as a chief is killed when he is too old to be a chief, and all the people will honor you. But it isn't nice to be killed any way, and I thought I would save you."

"Why are we to be killed?" I asked, and Joco repeated to her.

"Because you are strangers, and no stranger can live on our island; and another reason, you have seen me, and I am the daughter of a chief. No one can see me and live, unless he is of our nation."

"What shall we do?"

"Get back as fast as you can."

Waupango opened the door of the kraal, and we passed out.

She fastened it securely, and pointed out the way for us to go.

Wishing the kind-hearted girl good-by, we went along the path as quickly as possible.

We had not got far before a war-whoop startled us.

"It is a trap," I said, as I ran.

"A trap?"

"Yes; the girl was sent to tell us how we were to die; you see now that she did not mean us to escape. We are to be killed like a chief — that is, killed as a soldier, with spear and lance."

We ran as we talked.

A shower of arrows fell around us, but we were without a scratch.

What a relief it was when we reached the cave.

But, to our dismay, the fighting, howling savages rushed into the cave, carrying lighted torches.

They gained on us every minute, for they knew the roadbed better than we did.

Joco was unstrapping his explosive, to be ready for use; but the danger was that we might be killed as well as the savages.

We reached the rock which we had noticed as a good place for the explosive, and Joco halted.

"Run for your life," he said.

"Not without you," I answered.

The savages had halted.

We could see their torches in the distance.

Did they intend going back, or was their halt only to plan some vigorous action?

Joco fixed his explosive and lighted the slow-match.

We looked back once, and saw the torches getting nearer.

A thundering noise shook the earth, and hundreds of pieces of rock fell about our heads.

Joco had stopped up the cave.

Were the savages killed, or did they escape?

I never knew; I had lost all curiosity respecting them. How glad we were when we sat round our fire once again, at Castle Content!

I resolved never to leave it until I left the island forever, if such a time ever came.

Joco was, however, still inclined to explore, although much of his ardor had cooled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER TRIALS — HOME AGAIN.

For several months we lived a life of blissful content.

We were not bothered by neighbors, nor did we trouble about the affairs of the world.

I was getting manly, for a thick beard covered my chin and a heavy mustache my upper lip.

I could not shave, and so, perforce, the hair had to grow.

We had just finished our harvesting and ground our corn.

Together, Joco and I had constructed a windmill, which did the grinding better than we could.

We had corn bread at every meal, and were so civilized that we could scarcely imagine we were far away from the world.

We had made cups and saucers, basins and plates, and had become so practical that they were well shaped. Our earthenware, pots, and kettles were our greatest trouble, for they were constantly getting cracked with the heat, but as clay was to be found in abundance, all we had to do was to make more.

Joco's knowledge of chemistry enabled us to put a white enamel gloss on our earthenware, and this improved its appearance.

We had delicious coffee and plenty of good milk, bacon, mutton, wild birds, and fish, with plenty of potatoes and corn bread, which gave us considerable variety.

Then we had soup whenever we felt like it, fruits in abundance for dessert, and a copious supply of arrack, which, however, was so strong that we could only drink a very small quantity.

It seemed strange that whenever we felt most settled something would come to disturb Joco's serenity.

Perhaps he had never given up the idea of exploring the river, but I thought he had.

One dark, cloudy day he startled me by saying that it was too miserable to do any work outside, so he would go and look at the river.

I tried to dissuade him, but it was no use. He was set as firm as a rock when once he made up his mind.

He had not been gone three hours when the clouds became blacker and the wind blew a hurricane.

I fancied he was safer than I was, and almost wished I had gone with him.

Soon a low rumbling noise startled me.

I tried to believe it was thunder, but I knew differently. It was an earthquake.

The waves rose mountain-high, the wind blew an enormous gale, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed with terrible vividness, but that was not the worst.

The mountains seemed to groan. The valleys trembled. All the island was convulsed.

At last came one gigantic roar.

Trees fell prostrate, rocks were split asunder, a river bed was opened right past my stockade, and then all was still.

The shock of the earthquake seemed the last convulsive gasp of nature's agony.

All was silent — the wind ceased to blow, the sea looked like a great, fresh-water lake, the birds began singing as though to rejoice over nature's silence.

I wondered where Joco had been at the time of the earthquake, and I trembled for his safety.

All day, all night, the next day and the next night I watched and waited; then I could endure it no longer.

I started, for the entrance to the mysterious river.

I reached the place where the shaft had been.

Alas! it was there no longer.

Huge rocks filled up the shaft, and if Joco had descended he had met his death in the waters of the mysterious river.

Poor Joco!

Faithful friend and loving companion, though thy skin was dark, thy heart was as white as an angel's.

Years, many years have passed since that earthquake shock, but I have never seen Joco since.

I was left alone!

My solitude was worse than ever it had been, for even Hercules and Cupid had fallen victims to that terrible storm.

I shudder when I think of that day.

Again and again have I pictured to myself the dazzling brilliance of the lightning, the awful roar of the thunder, and the rolling and throbbing of the earthquake shock.

Sometimes I fancy I can see the interesting face of Joco looking at me from the waters of that mysterious river.

And when I fancy it, I shriek with agony, for I loved Jocolowski as though he had been my brother.

* * * * *

I had been on Liberty Island, as nearly as I could reckon, close on thirty years. It may have been more, or it may have been less, for I had lost much of my zeal for accurate reckoning of time.

Joco had been dead, or, at least, missing, over twenty years, and from that day on I never spoke to human being, save once.

I followed the cave I had originally traversed, and was seated on a ledge of rock, when I was startled by feeling a pair of arms round my neck.

I was still more surprised when a kiss — the first I had received since I left my mother in Water Street, New York — was pressed on my lips.

I turned and saw Waupango.

She had found a way to the rock, and daily came, hoping to see Joco, for he it was she expected to find.

I had learned a little of her language from Joco, and I told her of his death.

It was some time before she really understood what I meant.

I was sorry I had told her, for no sooner did she really comprehend that she would never see him again, than she set up such a wailing cry that nearly broke my heart.

In the wild eloquence of her race she told me that she had fled from the man the tribe had ordered her to marry, because she loved Joco; but as he was dead, she would die, too.

Before I could prevent her, she had thrown herself into the sea, and a moment later a man eating shark had ended her life.

That was the last human being I spoke to while I remained on Liberty Island.

One day I saw a school of whales nearer to the island than usual.

I watched them disport themselves in the water, and wished I were the owner of a whaler just in their vicinity.

I watched them for hours.

As I looked, I fancied I saw one of the whales come nearer the island.

I was excited with the antics of the great monsters.

As I kept my eyes fixed on them I saw a boat.

I shouted for joy. I screamed with hysterical laughter.

A boat!

I hadn't seen one for thirty years.
There must be a whaling-ship near.
Yes, I could see the sail!
At all risks, I must signal. A sudden hope took possession of my soul.
I gathered together brush and trees, grass, anything which would blaze.
On it I poured gallons of the mineral oil, and when I fired it, a column of flame seemed to pierce the clouds.

The whale had been harpooned, and was making for the island, dragging the boat along with it.

I thought of the way I had been landed on the island, and I wept — wept tears of joy to think I might be saved through a whale's struggle, against death.

I knew no more until I heard voices above me. I had fainted.

I looked up and saw some white men.

They were rough seamen, but they looked like angels to me then.

I took them to Castle Content. I gave them arrack, and they laughed and talked about the long cruise.

The next day the skipper came ashore, and I told him my story, and asked him to let me go with him.

He searched the island, and got to believe my story of loneliness.

I bought my passage, for I gave him pots, and pans, and earthenware as a memento, and a whole lot of jaguar skins.

But that night I bade farewell to Liberty Island. I

I looked in a bit of looking-glass in the skipper's room, and saw the reflection of a wrinkled face, with heavy, shaggy eyebrows and long beard.

I could not help quoting a sentence from the Bible: "'Tis not good for man to live alone;" for I saw how loneliness had made me close akin to the beasts of the field."

The ship, the *Gray Lion*, did not reach New Bedford, for she was wrecked, and for months the crew and, myself dwelt among the Fijians.

We narrowly escaped death at their hands.

Two years after I left Liberty Island I was again on the high seas, and, what was better, was entering the harbor of New' York, having been rescued by a merchantman bound for that city.

I landed in my native town, but, alas! I was a stranger in a strange place.

How it had changed!

The old office in Water Street had gone, and my father and mother were resting in the family grave.

I found baby Jane, the only surviving member of my family, but she would not own me. I was dead to her, as I had been to my father.

I have lived since a wandering life.

I inherited a small income from my dear, patient mother, and have added to it by doing odd jobs, but my life was happier when on Liberty Island.

I have suffered, and am still suffering, and I know that I have brought it all on myself, so I should have honored my father and mother in my youth, instead of running away and taking my chance on the battlefield of life.

I broke my mother's heart, and have led a life of no use to myself or others.

Let my career be a warning, for though it may be interesting to read of, it is far from pleasant to be a modern Robinson Crusoe.

THE END.